Special Olympics and the UN SDGs

An overview of how Special Olympics’ work is driving long-term outcomes that help achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Executive Summary: Supporting the UN SDGs

GOAL 10: Promotion of inclusion of people with Intellectual Disabilities

GOAL 11: Strengthened communities through local programming

GOAL 16: Social justice for people with disabilities, leveraging major invents to foster goodwill

GOAL 17: Collaboration and partnerships around the SDGs

GOAL 3: Improvement of physical and mental health via Health programming

GOAL 4: Advocacy and education through Unified Schools

GOAL 5: Empowerment of women through sport, health, youth and leadership programs

GOAL 8: Increased social and leadership skills that support careers
Goal 3: Health and Wellbeing

Linkage to the Goal
Improvement of the physical and mental health of people with ID is at the core of our work. With continuous sports, fitness, health education and physician training, we support athletes and families from early childhood development to adult life.

Contribution to SDG Targets
✓ 3.4: reduce mortality rates from non-communicable disease
✓ 3.7: ensure access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, information and education
✓ 3.8: ensure access to essential healthcare services
✓ 3C: substantially increase training of the health workforce

Relevant Special Olympics Programming:
- Sports Training and Competitions
- Fitness Programs
- Healthy Nutrition
- Healthy Athletes (Screenings)

Special Olympics Outcomes:
- Athletes improve physical well-being
- Participants improve social & emotional well-being
- People without disabilities behave more inclusively
- Organizations become more inclusive
Linkage to the Goal

We enhance knowledge and skills through education, and leadership development of our athletes, families, teammates, students, teachers, health workers and volunteers to foster inclusive behaviors, greater empathy and understanding. To amplify the impact of this work, we focus on changing school environments to be more inclusive.

Contribution to SDG Targets

- **4.2**: ensure access to quality early childhood development
- **4.4**: increase vocational skills of youth and adults
- **4.5**: eliminate education disparities among vulnerable groups
- **4.A**: upgrade or create accessible education facilities

Relevant Special Olympics Programming:

- Unified Champion Schools (Special Olympics integrated into schools)
- Global Youth Leadership Summits
- Unified Leadership approach (educating leaders without disabilities to be inclusive)

Special Olympics Outcomes:

- Athletes improve physical well-being
- Participants improve social & emotional well-being
- People without disabilities behave more inclusively
- Organizations become more inclusive

Goal 4: Quality Education
Goal 5: Gender Equality

Linkage to the Goal

Sport and inclusion empower women and girls with intellectual disability with skills and tools to resist discrimination. We help them acquire health information, strength and skills, social networks and leadership experiences, while reducing their risk to physical and sexual violence. We also offer support and assistance to mothers of children with ID.

Relevant Special Olympics Programming:
- All Special Olympics programs and activities
- Unified Leadership approach

Contribution to SDG Targets
- 5.1: end discrimination against women and girls
- 5.6: ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

Special Olympics Outcomes:
- Athletes improve physical well-being
- Participants improve social & emotional well-being
- People without disabilities behave more inclusively
- Organizations become more inclusive
Relevant Special Olympics Programming:

- Athlete Leadership
- Unified Leadership approach
- Youth and Athlete Innovation Projects
- Unified Champion Schools

Linkage to the Goal

We increase athletes’ self-esteem and self-reliance and teach them leadership and work readiness skills such as project management, communication, adaptability and patience. We help partner companies to build more inclusive cultures so that they provide more and better career opportunities to people with ID.

Contribution to SDG Targets

- **8.5:** achieve productive employment and decent work for people with disabilities

Special Olympics Outcomes:

- Athletes improve physical well-being
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- People without disabilities behave more inclusively
- Organizations become more inclusive
Relevant Special Olympics Programming:
- All Special Olympics programs and activities
- Unified Leadership approach

The core objective of Special Olympics is inclusion and the breaking down of barriers for people with ID in society. We do so through local implementation of inclusive sports, health, leadership, early childhood development and education programming. This promotes inclusive practices, equal access and equity for one of the world’s most marginalized populations.

**Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities**

**Contribution to SDG Targets**
- 10.2: empower and promote social and economic inclusion
- 10.3: ensure equal opportunity and end discrimination
- 10.4: achieve greater equality through improved social and fiscal policies

**Special Olympics Outcomes:**
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**Linkage to the Goal**

The core objective of Special Olympics is inclusion and the breaking down of barriers for people with ID in society. We do so through local implementation of inclusive sports, health, leadership, early childhood development and education programming. This promotes inclusive practices, equal access and equity for one of the world’s most marginalized populations.
Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Linkage to the Goal

Through continued collaboration with partners, supporters and volunteers, Special Olympics promotes full social inclusion as a core element to the sustainability of cities and entire communities - offering quality services to citizens of all abilities. We utilize and harness existing physical, technological and human infrastructure to ensure a sustainable and effective use of community resources.

Contribution to SDG Targets

✓ 11.7: ensure universal access to safe (free of harassment), inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces

Relevant Special Olympics Programming:
- Local, regional and global sport events
- Athlete Leadership
- Unified Leadership approach
- Publics awareness outreach and campaigns

Special Olympics Outcomes:
- Athletes improve physical well-being
- Participants improve social & emotional well-being
- People without disabilities behave more inclusively
- Organizations become more inclusive
Relevant Special Olympics Programming:
- All Special Olympics programs and activities
- Unified Leadership approach

Special Olympics celebrates difference and supports global solidarity and social justice, for example through work that promotes adult/child protection and inclusive decision-making. We leverage sport for development and peace, and use our platform of unity to inspire investment in individuals with ID as part of a shared commitment to social inclusion globally.

Goal 16: Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions

Linkage to the Goal

Special Olympics Outcomes:
- Athletes improve physical well-being
- Participants improve social & emotional well-being
- People without disabilities behave more inclusively
- Organizations become more inclusive

Contribution to SDG Targets

- 16.2: end violence against and aggression towards children
- 16.6: develop effective, accountable and transparent public institutions
- 16.7: ensure inclusive and responsive decision-making
- 16.B: promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies
Relevant Special Olympics Programming:
- All Special Olympics programs and activities
- Unified Leadership approach

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Linkage to the Goal
Special Olympics empowers partners, governments and communities to ensure equitable access to sports and leisure, health care, education, social services and dignified community living. As a global movement, we contribute financial and technical assistance and foster mutually beneficial connections between developing and developed countries.

Contribution to SDG Targets

- 17.9: enhance financial and technical support to developing countries
- 17.15: extend the use of country-owned policy tools and frameworks for sustainable development
- 17.17: encourage effective public-private and other partnerships
- 17.18: support countries to produce good data for sustainable development

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