



SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Global Strategic Plan

2021-2024



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

OUR VISION

Our vision is an inclusive world for all, driven by the power of sport, through which people with intellectual disabilities live active, healthy and fulfilling lives.





INTRODUCTION

IMAGINING THE NEXT 50 YEARS OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS: STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

OUR FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

The first 50 years of the Special Olympics movement made it the most prominent sports organization in the world working towards full inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities (ID) in society.

We reach:



5.4 MILLION
ATHLETES
AND
920,000
UNIFIED PARTNERS



COUNTRIES
193

Building on the previous strategic plan, there are two key ingredients to our success:

- Frequent opportunities for training, physical activity and improvement of health for participants
- Meaningful social interactions between people with and without disabilities on and off the sports field

WHAT IS CHANGING:

Based on consultations and an environment of unprecedented global change, over the next 4 years we will:

1. Refocus our work in sport and fitness at the local level as the key way to achieve social change through community building activities, trainings, and games
2. Act on our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion through hiring and outreach to marginalized communities
3. Digitize the Movement to find innovative ways to expand our activities for greater impact
4. Become a truly athlete-led movement by adopting a 'Unified Leadership' approach where people without ID learn from and empower people with ID
5. Increase our local Program capacity to implement our work with a focus on results, using evaluation to prioritize our efforts



INTRODUCTION

THE ROAD TOWARDS OUR VISION

HOW WE WILL GET THERE:

This Plan calls for Special Olympics International and Programs to prioritize activities that create sustainable and widely accessible sports and inclusion opportunities in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our aim is to achieve this by:

Increasing our existing, proven **initiatives in sport, health, education and leadership at the local level** to create sustainable social change

Achieving the **right balance between quality and quantity** in how we implement programs, learning and adapting based on data

Utilizing technology to enhance our community-level reach, goal achievement and operations at all levels

Paving the way to true inclusion by people without disabilities who learn from our athletes and let them lead



WHAT WILL GUIDE THIS JOURNEY:

Governments, organizations and individuals – especially young people – require evidence that our work, and their support, are making a difference. We have millions of stories that highlight our results – now is the time to add data to these stories to show our impact. We will do this through focusing on outcomes, the long-term results of our work.

FOCUSING ON
OUTCOMES
ALLOWS US
TO:

- Measure and understand the quality of our work and meaningful progress towards our vision
- Make strategic decisions about resource distribution and priority activities
- Create powerful external communication campaigns that drive awareness
- Explain our impact in a way that resonates with donors and supports our fundraising

Outcomes are not tied to any one part of our work. All of our activities can and should lead to multiple outcomes.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS FRAMEWORK FOR 2020 - 2030

A focused approach that drives long-term outcomes will be the foundation of our work over the next decade. We will contribute to sustainable development globally over the next four years through the goals, strategies and targets outlined in this plan.

This is how we create sustainable change in our communities:

Achieving an inclusive world for all, driven by the power of sport, through which people with intellectual disabilities live an active, healthy and fulfilling life

This will enable people with ID to achieve their full potential and enjoy the same rights as anyone else and respect by wider society,

Then we will create inclusive mindsets which in turn improve organizations, policies and social norms to create more inclusive environments

If we provide high quality sports opportunities, improve health, share the achievements, gifts and leadership skills of people with ID, and create opportunities for people with and without ID to interact through and beyond sports

OUR WORK

This is the difference we make in society:

OUTCOMES

1. Athletes improve physical well-being, skills, fitness and health
2. Athletes, teammates, families, volunteers and others improve social and emotional well-being
3. People without disabilities behave more inclusively
4. Organizations are more inclusive through the work of Special Olympics and influence of athletes

Delivering UN Sustainable Development Goals:



And the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)



THE STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE

Special Olympics changes attitudes and behaviors through sport. We do it by showcasing the gifts and talents of people with ID, creating friendships and demonstrating the best of the human spirit. **This Plan has two goals:**

GOAL A

Improve local sports participation and well-being to strengthen communities

GOAL B

Remove barriers to inclusion and expand reach through digital technology

Three strategies will lead to achievement of these goals:

- S1. Improve quality and reach of local programming**
- S2. Empower athlete leaders and other change-makers
- S3. Foster inclusive practices and settings

All of this will be made possible through **four enablers:**

- E1. Digitize the Movement**
- E2. Diversify Revenue
- E3. Build the Brand
- E4. Drive Excellence (People and Practices)



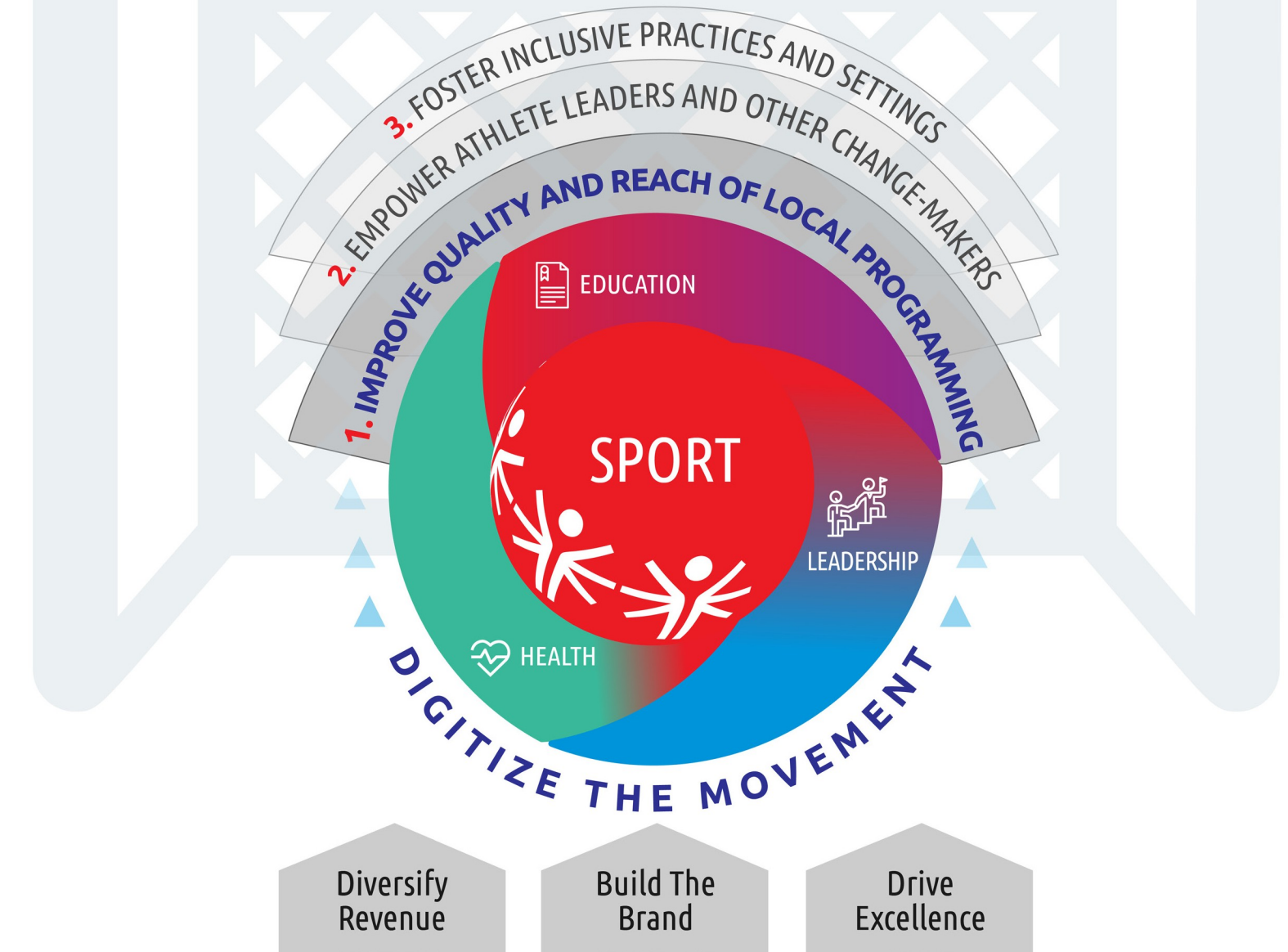
OUR **VISION** IS AN INCLUSIVE WORLD FOR ALL, DRIVEN BY THE POWER OF SPORT, THROUGH WHICH PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES LIVE AN ACTIVE HEALTHY AND FULFILLING LIFE.

GOAL A

INCREASE LOCAL SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND WELL-BEING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

GOAL B

REMOVE BARRIERS TO INCLUSION AND EXPAND REACH THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY





MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS

STRATEGIES

QUANTITY - By end 2024, we will:

QUALITY (OUTCOMES)

- S1.**
Improve quality and reach of local programming
- S2.**
Empower athlete leaders and other change-makers
- S3.**
Foster inclusive practices and settings

LEAD TO

- REACH:**
7.5 million athletes
3.2 million social media followers
- CREATE:**
8,000 local programs/clubs, to reach 35,000 in total
6,000 Unified (Champion) Schools, to reach 114,000 in total
50,000 meaningful athlete and youth leadership roles/jobs in Special Olympics to reach 200,000 in total
- EDUCATE:**
200,000 certified coaches to reach 600,000 in total
85,000 health workers to reach 365,000 in total
1,000 organizations about Unified Leadership

RESULTING IN

- Physical well-being:**
% of participants with improved health and lifestyle
- Social and emotional well-being:**
% of participants with improved confidence and sense of belonging
- Inclusive behaviors:**
% increase in perception by people with ID of their inclusion in society
- Inclusive organizations:**
of organizations and systems with more inclusive policies or practices

MEASURED BY
CENSUS AND
GRANT DATA

MEASURED BY
SAMPLING
THROUGH
EVALUATION

S1. IMPROVE QUALITY AND REACH OF LOCAL PROGRAMMING

Delivering UN Sustainable Development Goals



UNCRPD
Article 30: Participation in Cultural Life,
Recreation, Leisure and Sport

Thought Leadership Opportunity

Use evaluation of programming and research partnerships to expand understanding of athletes' physical development and performance

Special Olympics will focus on sustainable development of local programming that benefits everyone in the community. This means focusing on the organization and expansion of activities in diverse urban and rural communities to enable lifelong athlete involvement in quality sports as participants and leaders and actively promote healthy lifestyles and inclusion of people with ID. We will:

1. Strengthen and grow local structures, operations and outreach to engage and retain more diverse athletes of all ages and ability levels by investing resources and training that enhance and sustain year-round community-based activities. This includes Unified programming, Young Athletes and the Motor Activity Training Program (MATP).
2. Enhance the knowledge and skills of coaches to improve sport quality, leadership and athlete well-being and fitness through increased coach training and certification.
3. Increase the frequency and quality of sports training and local competitions to improve athlete life and leadership skills, fitness, healthy habits and social and emotional well-being.
4. Establish and expand local area partnerships to recruit more sport experts, gain facility access, and change attitudes through the facilitation of sport, health and other leadership roles for people with and without ID.
5. Increase programming that leverages sport to promote and improve the health and well-being of athletes and the wider community.

S2. EMPOWER ATHLETE LEADERS AND OTHER CHANGE-MAKERS

Delivering UN Sustainable Development Goals



UNCRPD
Article 8: Awareness-raising and Attitude Change

Article 19: Supported Decision Making

Thought Leadership Opportunity

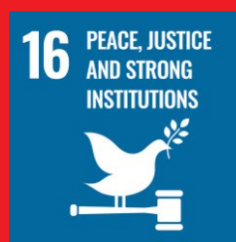
Develop research-tested methods to define, evaluate and advance inclusive mindsets and behaviors

Special Olympics will enhance the knowledge and skills of families, Unified partners, students, teachers, coaches, health workers and other volunteers so that they adopt inclusive behaviors and influence others to do the same. Enabling the voice and building the capacity of athletes and young leaders will drive this work, and ensure they have meaningful leadership roles and play an active role in educating other change-makers. We will:

1. Increase the capacity of all key audiences to improve and promote inclusive health and well-being by investing in appropriate training, opportunities and support.
2. Expand Unified (Champion) Schools to improve social inclusion and physical activity through sport and inclusive youth development programming, and grow a Unified Generation of inclusive thinkers through building networks of key influencers.
3. Increase the number of athletes with internal roles and jobs to demonstrate their ability to lead by adopting the Unified Leadership approach, identifying and adapting roles, and supporting athletes to lead.
4. Showcase talents of youth, including students, and athletes as teachers of inclusion to drive positive change on and off the playing field by creating interactions between athletes/youth and external groups.

S3. FOSTER INCLUSIVE PRACTICES AND SETTINGS

Delivering UN Sustainable Development Goals



UNCRPD
Article 9: Accessibility and Independent Living

Thought Leadership Opportunity

Promote Unified Leadership as a unique approach that provides a new understanding of 'inclusive leadership'

Special Olympics will work with targeted government entities and organizations from global to local levels to tackle injustice and inequality, and create more access to services and opportunities for people with ID. We will:

1. Influence development of inclusive sport, health and education systems favorable to people with ID – for example Healthy Communities to reduce chronic disease and improve well-being – through building on existing relationships and creating new partnerships with governments, multi-jurisdictional and other system-level entities such as the European Union, the World Bank and the United Nations.
2. Inspire individual organizations, such as sports federations, health professional bodies, companies, universities and non-profits to create inclusive organizational environments where people without ID learn from and empower people with ID through Unified Sports and the Unified Leadership approach.
3. Use National, Regional and World Games, and new forms of recognizing organizations, as catalysts to attract and inspire collaboration and action by external stakeholders.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are at the heart of Special Olympics as we strive to promote unity among all people. Greater diversity and inclusion will enable us to reach those parts of the global population who do not yet have the gift of Special Olympics. It will enable us to tap into the broadest possible base of talent and enrich our range of perspectives. It will model what we demand of other parts of society for our athletes and what our athletes can teach society.

Driven by the Board and the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, we aspire not only to include people with ID in all areas of our operations, programming and events but as well to transcend boundaries of race, disability, gender, geography, national origin, religion, political philosophy, and sexual orientation. We recognize we have progress to make,

and there will be challenges on that journey. We also acknowledge that diversity and inclusion will look different around the world and require different strategies for success.

Within Special Olympics at all levels, we will improve diversity in leadership, volunteers and staff, and ensure meaningful roles and jobs for athletes. We will change the status quo through working with programs as they assess their current situation and introduce policies and practices that deliver more diverse teams and truly inclusive cultures. And we will show the world the power of the Unified Leadership approach as a cornerstone of diversity and inclusion that teaches leaders with and without disabilities to value and learn from each other and create environments where anyone can succeed.

E1. DIGITIZE THE MOVEMENT



Special Olympics will ensure people with ID, and the Special Olympics movement, are not left behind as societies embrace technology. We have a golden opportunity to significantly increase the reach and effectiveness of our work using digital solutions that meet the future demands of our existing stakeholders, and enable us to connect with millions more athletes, families and coaches. We will:

1. **Innovate** through creating digital platforms and introducing entirely new approaches to programming, fundraising and operations.
2. **Increase** our early intervention, sport, health, education and leadership content and tools by prioritizing digital solutions that directly reach people with ID and their families while addressing access, connectivity, translation and accessible formats to ensure that everyone can benefit from our initiatives.
3. **Improve** how we collect and use critical stakeholder and evaluation data, and enable consistent organization of sports and competitions, to improve quality from local to global levels.
4. **Nurture** the development of a powerful global Special Olympics community through enabling communication, interaction and learning via a secure online environment.
5. **Modernize** our movement by working with partners to improve technology access, connectivity, training and support for Programs so they are well positioned to serve all our key stakeholders.

E2. DIVERSIFY REVENUE

Special Olympics will add new ways to raise funds, creating a cohesive global to local fundraising effort built around our strategies. A strategic approach to generating fresh, diverse revenue will enable us to provide sustainable funding and quickly react to change. We will:

Strengthen Global to Local Fundraising

1. Make multi-year integrated investment (marketing/fundraising/government/communications) in 1-2 international focus markets in an effort to establish awareness of Special Olympics, inspire giving and secure funding.
2. Target mass-markets, governments, multi-lateral organizations and development banks/organizations that align with our focus markets.
3. Develop revenue allocation protocols for new markets and refine protocols in existing markets.

Develop Capacity and Sustainability

4. Build capacity to fundraise and manage donor relationships in Programs and SOI.
5. Provide Programs with tools to begin to build a foundation of funding at the community level.
6. Strategically invest in proven mass market funding channels based on data, analysis and performance in given markets.
7. Resource channels providing the greatest ROI while ensuring diversification so as not to have total reliance on any one source or channel.

E3. BUILD THE BRAND



Special Olympics will increase awareness of the brand globally, through existing and innovative digital and traditional channels, to enhance relevance and influence, while attracting more people and new audiences, especially at the community level. We will:

Strengthen Global to Local Brand

1. Expand the reach of our brand, including converting the public into informed and active physical and digital 'fans in the stands,' through focus markets and audience engagement.
2. Capitalize on flagship events, such as the World Games, by generating attention and action through locally-relevant global communication campaigns, including digital activation.
3. Use traditional and digital global, regional, and local cultural moments to attract target audiences through marketing and communications.
4. Position athlete leaders as spokespeople and facilitators of inclusion creating more demand among our audiences to hear from and engage with them.

Develop Capacity and Sustainability

5. Increase marketing and communications capacity at Program and Regional levels to support consistent visibility for sport and inclusion content.
6. Prioritize and support growth of local brand-building capacity using tools and training for local leaders, especially maximizing digital techniques/channels.
7. Engage with pro bono partners to support capacity building at the local level.

E4. DRIVE EXCELLENCE

Empowered people and an enabling working environment are crucial factors that determine the success of our Programs and promote excellence in sports, health, youth and leadership work. We must improve how we recruit and work with diverse staff, coaches and volunteers, and ensure they have the tools and skills necessary to achieve commitment to excellence in program delivery. We will:

Transform Global to Local Leadership

1. Integrate the Unified leadership approach in program delivery and development of all leaders.
2. Cultivate and support the growth of diverse leaders at all levels by providing ongoing, graduated learning opportunities that further professional development and performance.
3. Enhance Program Board of Directors' diversity and effectiveness.

Develop Capacity and Sustainability

4. Improve recruitment with a focus on diversity, training/development, retention, and succession planning for volunteers and staff.
5. Enable a focus on quality through agreed standards, training and continuous support.
6. Strengthen outcome evaluation & research and use results data to inform strategies and activities.

Create a “One Movement” Culture

7. Empower Programs through flexible tools and practices, such as using ‘easy language’ formats, that address social, economic, educational, cultural and capacity differences.
8. Improve internal communication and project management to support execution, collaboration and knowledge transfer.

www.specialolympics.org

