



**Special
Olympics**

2013

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC **ANNUAL REPORT**

**TRANSFORMING LIVES
IN 27 COUNTRIES**



MESSAGE

FROM THE ACTING PRESIDENT & MD

Special Olympics transforms the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, promoting inclusion and dignity through Sports, Health and Education within Communities.

Overall in 2013, 13 Special Olympics countries in Asia Pacific posted double-digit athlete growth, contributing to the region ending the year serving 1,295,317 Special Olympics athletes. This represents a 10% increase from 2012. 33,157 competitions were held in the region, allowing athletes to reveal their inner champion at every opportunity.

Special Olympics Asia Pacific would like to congratulate Special Olympics Bharat (India) for reaching one million athletes and Special Olympics Indonesia for achieving 100,000 athletes.

Our progress as a region was reflected in the inaugural Special Olympics 2013 Asia Pacific Games held in Newcastle, Australia. The event served as a platform for the region to celebrate the outstanding achievements, not only of our athletes, but also our coaches, volunteers, supporters and committed program leaders.

Special Olympics Unified Sports®, an icon of social inclusion, continues to drive attitudinal and behavioral change towards people with intellectual disabilities. The Special Olympics Global Unified Football World Cup Asia Pacific qualifier was held in Bangkok, with Bangladesh and Thailand emerging as contenders for the World Cup. To reach out to more athletes and unified partners, we hosted the first 'Train The Trainer' course in Singapore for Special Olympics coaches.

Special Olympics has become the largest global public health organization dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities, and continues to improve the health of Special Olympics athletes across the region. Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® delivered 14,910 health screenings and follow-up care in seven disciplines. Special Olympics Healthy Communities is a new initiative that builds on the principles of Healthy Athletes®, expanding it from a series of single health screening events to consistent health education and follow-up care for athletes and their families. This initiative was launched in Malaysia and Thailand, made possible with the support of U.S. philanthropist Tom Golisano.

Recognizing that the Youth are powerful advocates for attitudinal and behavioral change towards people with intellectual disabilities, we appointed Youth Leaders in Bharat (India), Indonesia, Philippines and Pakistan, building communities of acceptance for the next generation.

The Asia Pacific region is poised to reach greater heights to transform the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through our strengths in sports, health, youth advocacy, childhood intervention and athlete leadership.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Special Olympics movement in the Asia Pacific region.



Dr. John Dow, Jr.
Chief Regional Growth
Acting President & Managing Director
Special Olympics Asia Pacific



GOAL OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Special Olympics is dedicated to transforming the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, empowering them with the opportunity to become contributing members of society.



DEFINITION OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Intellectual Disability (or ID) is a term used when a person's intellectual functioning level (IQ) is below 70-75; has certain limitations in activities of daily living and skills, including communication, social and self-care. Intellectual Disabilities can lead to physical disabilities that are either genetic or acquired (e.g. Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, traumatic brain injury, etc.).

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPICS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



Special Olympics and Paralympics are two separate non-profit organizations recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Special Olympics and the Paralympics differ in three main areas:

- 1

Who we serve
(athlete eligibility)
- 2

Sporting philosophy
- 3

Structure of
the respective
organizations

	SPECIAL OLYMPICS	PARALYMPICS
WHO WE SERVE (ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY)	Special Olympics welcomes all people with intellectual disabilities (ages 2 and older) of all ability (ID) levels, to train and compete in 32 Olympic-type sports.	Paralympics welcomes athletes mainly with physical disabilities who have to fulfill certain qualifying performance standards to participate. Only the top performing athletes can participate in competitions.
SPORTING PHILOSOPHY	Equal ability groupings are the foundation for competitions at Special Olympics. Athletes are categorized into four divisions based on their gender, age & ability (IQ) levels. Winning is not the goal at Special Olympics. Maximizing participation is.	Athletes go through a stringent qualification process before they can qualify for participation in competitions, where only the best are selected.
ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE	Special Olympics is a community-based grassroots movement for people with intellectual disabilities of all ability (IQ) levels.	The Paralympics are run by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the international representative organization of sport for athletes mainly with a physical disability.

AN INVISIBLE GLOBAL CRISIS

Intellectual Disability: one of the largest disability groups in the world and the most common developmental disability. People with intellectual disabilities are the most underserved and socially isolated population in the world. They are denied healthcare services, education, social inclusion and employment opportunities.



MORE THAN
200
MILLION PEOPLE

IN THE WORLD HAVE
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES,
MAKING IT ONE OF THE LARGEST
DISABILITY GROUPS WORLDWIDE.



MORE THAN
72
MILLION PEOPLE

IN THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS
ASIA PACIFIC REGION
ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.

OUR SOLUTION

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MODEL OF CHANGE

The Special Olympics' unique Model of Change combines the power of Sports, Healthcare, Transformative Education & Community Building, allowing us to facilitate and engage in transformative experiences.



SPORTS
Experience

Changing the typical reality of daily exclusion and humiliation, we enable Special Olympics athletes to experience a different reality. One in which they are defined by their sport and not by their disability.



Sustaining Athlete
HEALTH

Special Olympics is the world's largest public health organization for people with intellectual disabilities that ensures ongoing access to quality healthcare services in seven health disciplines.



TRANSFORMATIVE
Education

Classroom education combined with unified activity that equips young people with effective tools to become agents of change and powerful advocates of social inclusion, beyond the walls of the school environment.



COMMUNITY
Building

Special Olympics at its essence is a community-based enterprise. Marshaling resources to unify the power of individuals and organizations to drive positive attitudinal and behavioral change towards people with intellectual disabilities, strengthening the fabric of society.



SPORTS

EXPERIENCE

WHY SPORTS?

Sports is a powerful force. It can shift the focus from disability to ability, from isolation to involvement.

Special Olympics sports are designed to maximize participation. **It is not about winning medals. It is about reaching one's maximum potential and being recognized** - a goal to which everyone can aspire.

More than 90% of Special Olympics athletes who participate in Special Olympics sport activities increase their physical and emotional wellbeing, and expand their social skills.

33,157
COMPETITIONS



1,295,317
ASIA PACIFIC
ATHLETES



755,299
MALE
ATHLETES



540,018
FEMALE
ATHLETES



112,470
COACHES

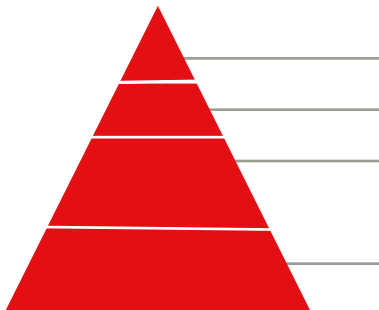


TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF SPORTS

SPORTS, ALL YEAR ROUND: Special Olympics delivers year round, high quality sports training and competition. The Asia Pacific region offers 28 out of the 32 Olympic-type sports.

EQUITABLE DIVISIONS TO ALLOW FOR ALL ABILITY PARTICIPATION: Sports is designed for athletes with similar ability levels, gender and age to allow fair competition. Each sport has four equitable divisions.

COACHING EXCELLENCE: Coaches bring out the best in athletes and advance their athletic growth. Coaches are required to go through a certification process supervised by an experienced coach.



INTERNATIONAL

REGIONAL GAMES

DISTRICT / STATE / NATIONAL
(Various age levels - Under 12 / 19 / 21 & seniors)

NEIGHBORHOOD / COMMUNITY EVENTS

EXPERIENCE, EXPECTATIONS & EXCELLENCE THAT MATCH ATHLETE'S INTEREST, ABILITY & WILL.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED SPORTS® POWERS SOCIAL INCLUSION

Special Olympics Unified Sports® activates attitude and behavioral change via an inclusive sport experience between Special Olympics athletes and unified partners (athletes without intellectual disabilities) with team sports participation.

Through shared training and competition experiences, Unified Sports® triggers a transformation in behavior, not only between a Special Olympics athlete and the unified partner, but also between their respective family members and friends.

- More than 95% of athletes feel better about themselves and have increased skills on the playing field.
- More than 80% of unified partners after participating have increased knowledge and more positive attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities.

With Unified Sports®, Special Olympics addresses some of the biggest societal challenges facing the world today. The acceptance and inclusion found on a unified playing field has the power to transcend borders and break down barriers.

33,370
UNIFIED ATHLETES



30,926
UNIFIED PARTNERS



SPECIAL OLYMPICS YOUNG ATHLETES™ FOR EARLY INTERVENTION

Young Athletes™ is an early intervention program for children ages 2 - 7 with intellectual disabilities, to improve physical and emotional development. Motor skill development is a key factor for overall health and growth.

This access to inclusive early childhood development helps them reach their fullest potential. Early childhood intervention programs have been shown to benefit developmental progress in infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

IMPROVEMENTS IN CHILDREN REPORTED*

DEVELOPMENTAL SKILL AREA	REPORTED BY TEACHERS
MOTOR	75%
COGNITIVE	71%
ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR	69%
SOCIAL	65%
COMMUNICATION	62%

11,538
YOUNG ATHLETES
IN 26 COUNTRIES



*SOI RESEARCH

WORLD AND REGIONAL GAMES

Special Olympics World and Regional Games are flagship events that highlight on a global scale the work we do in **sports, health, transformative education and community building.**



2013 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD WINTER GAMES

PYEONGCHANG, SOUTH KOREA
29 JANUARY – 5 FEBRUARY 2013

Over 200 athletes from 16 Asia Pacific countries participated in the 10th Special Olympics World Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, winning 83 medals in 8 Olympic-type sports. A total of 2,300 athletes from over 100 countries participated at the games.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS 2013 ASIA PACIFIC GAMES

NEWCASTLE, AUSTRALIA
1 – 7 DECEMBER 2013

Over 2,500 Special Olympics athletes, coaches and support staff from 29 Asia Pacific and East Asia countries participated in the inaugural Games for the Asia Pacific region. Other events held throughout the week included the Law Enforcement Torch Run[®], Special Olympics Healthy Athletes[®], Health Symposium and Special Olympics Young Athletes[™].



SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES 2015

LOS ANGELES, USA
25 JULY – 2 AUGUST 2015

In summer 2015, Los Angeles will become the global stage for more than 7,000 athletes from over 170 countries to compete in 25 Olympic-type sports. The Special Olympics World Games will return to the United States after 16 years, having last been held in the United States in 1999 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

“When you attend a Special Olympics games and watch the sheer joy and faces – not just of the athletes, but more overwhelmingly among spectators – you begin to realize there is much more at work than simply athletic competition. On one hand, it is the story of years of tragedy, transformed into pure joy, driven by the beauty of sheer effort. But at the same time, it is a profound statement of inclusion – that everybody matters, everybody counts, every life has value and every person has worth.”

Nelson Mandela



SUSTAINING ATHLETE HEALTH

WHY ATHLETE HEALTH?

The public believes that people with intellectual disabilities receive better healthcare than the rest of the population. **WRONG.** People with disabilities experience poorer health than the general population and have unequal access to healthcare services (WHO 2011, SOI 2001).

People with intellectual disabilities are the most underserved and isolated population in the world.

Good health empowers every individual to realize their potential. This requires ongoing access to quality healthcare practitioners, who understand health issues that impact people with intellectual disabilities.

A GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS

Women with intellectual disabilities have a shorter life span of 20 years, while men with intellectual disabilities have a shorter life span of 13 years, compared to the general population (University of Bristol, 2012).

People with intellectual disabilities have a 40% higher risk of contracting several preventable health conditions than the general population.

Health examinations have found that people with intellectual disabilities (Special Olympics athletes) in Asia Pacific are at increased risk of secondary health issues:



54.3% never had an eye exam.



30.6% failed hearing tests.



44.1% have at least one kind of skin or nail condition.



28.8% of youth and 40.4% of adults with intellectual disabilities are overweight or obese.



43.7% have obvious, untreated tooth decay.



16.5% have low bone density.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS HEALTHY ATHLETES®: QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR THE UNDERSERVED

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® has delivered more than 1.4 million free health examinations in more than 100 countries, creating the world's largest database of health data for people with intellectual disabilities. It is the leader in cutting-edge research and evaluation to better understand the many health challenges for this underserved population.

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® also trains healthcare professionals, who return to their practices with increased knowledge of health issues that affect people with intellectual disabilities, greater compassion for people with intellectual disabilities and a greater willingness to have them as patients.

For every 1 dollar that is made available to Special Olympics, more than 7 dollars in healthcare value is delivered. This is possible through powerful leveraging of partnerships with institutions, trainers and medical practitioners. (SOI Research)

SUSTAINING ATHLETE HEALTH IN SEVEN DISCIPLINES



Opening Eyes:
Vision



Healthy
Hearing:
Audiology



Special Smiles:
Dentistry



Fit Feet:
Podiatry



FUNfitness:
Physical
Therapy



Health
Promotion:
Health and
Wellbeing



MedFest:
Sports Physical
Examinations

	2008	2013	Growth (% p.a.)
Number of Asia Pacific countries with Healthy Athletes®	13	26	15
Number of athletes screened	4,354	14,910	28
Number of clinical volunteers	166	292	12

SPECIAL OLYMPICS HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Special Olympics Healthy Communities builds on the principle of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®, expanding it from a series of single health examinations to consistent health education and follow-up care for athletes and their families. Medical professionals are provided with specific training, with the aim of reducing the disparities that exist in access to health services and health status for people with intellectual disabilities.

In Asia Pacific, Healthy Communities was launched in Malaysia and Thailand.



THAILAND

Special Olympics Thailand created the “Village Health Volunteer” project, recruiting and training health volunteers. The volunteers not only provided health education but also basic health services to people with intellectual disabilities. In its first year, Special Olympics Thailand delivered a total of 645 health examinations throughout Thailand.



MALAYSIA

In Malaysia, two Family Health Forums were held in the state of Sabah, introducing local Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Centers, Special Schools, athletes and their family members to the Healthy Communities project. This is to educate them on the importance of addressing the healthcare needs of people with intellectual disabilities and facilitating direct access to healthcare providers.



TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Special Olympics' transformative education builds communities of acceptance for the next generation. Special Olympics' vision of inclusion is about transforming society's views on intellectual disabilities. Only through an accepting, inclusive society can we empower people with intellectual disabilities to achieve their personal best.

Special Olympics believes that the youth can be powerful advocates in leading attitudinal and behavioral change in society towards people with intellectual disabilities – they know first-hand the pain of being left out, teased and excluded. They are open to new thinking and have the courage of conviction to step up and defend their beliefs.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS PROJECT UNIFY

Special Olympics Project UNIFY mobilizes youths with and without intellectual disabilities as 'one' team through youth-led activities. Combining education with unified activity empowers the youth to lead and advocate attitudinal and behavioral change in society.

Education: Educating the youth that intellectual disability crosses all boundaries of age, gender, religion and culture, and showing that everyone has something to contribute.

Unified Activity: Inclusive sporting events involving youths with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It seeks to develop a deep mutual understanding, activate attitude change and demonstrate the power of inclusion to friends, families and communities.

Leadership and Advocacy: Youths with and without intellectual disabilities work as a team to take on leadership roles in promoting Project UNIFY activities in various schools and communities. By working together, they learn about each other, while breaking down barriers and serving as role models.

Special Olympics Project UNIFY in Bharat (India) worked together with schools in Delhi, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to engage youths with and without intellectual disabilities. The project was made possible through the generosity of Stephanie and Ray Lane.



529
SCHOOLS



8,693
YOUTHS



795
TEACHERS



257
YOUTH
ACTIVATION COUNCILS



2013 GLOBAL YOUTH ACTIVATION SUMMIT

The 2013 Global Youth Activation Summit brought together over 80 youth leaders with and without intellectual disabilities, from over 20 countries, to address issues of acceptance facing people with intellectual disabilities. Held in Pyeongchang, South Korea, the summit equipped the youth leaders with the tools to advocate for attitude and behavioral change at both school and community levels.

Youth leaders from Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines represented the Asia Pacific region. Brina Maxino and Sashi Montana from the Philippines were elected as Co-Chairs of the next Youth Summit to be held during the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles, California.

YOUTH ACTIVATION GRANT

Special Olympics Indonesia, Pakistan and Philippines increased the number of youth leaders with and without intellectual disabilities, through volunteer and leadership opportunities. This was made possible with a grant from Mattel.



INDONESIA

Youth leaders held a five-school awareness drive in Jakarta to recruit new leaders. All with the aim of attracting more young people to be advocates of social change in their schools and in their communities.



PAKISTAN

Youth leaders in Karachi held Youth Rally and Unified Sports® events in schools for students with and without intellectual disabilities.

Youth leaders also partnered with The Citizens Foundation, a non-profit organization which runs schools in remote areas.



PHILIPPINES

To demonstrate social inclusion, youth leaders planned a “Spring Bling” prom, pairing youths with and without intellectual disabilities together in a party setting. At the prom, youth leaders also shared educational talks and videos on Special Olympics, motivating youths to get involved with the Movement.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

World Winter Games, PyeongChang 2013



COMMUNITY BUILDING

Special Olympics at its essence is a community-based enterprise. The community is the channel and the place where the action happens and where the work of the Special Olympics, on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities, makes a difference.

Special Olympics connects with a diverse cross-section of the community, through sports, health and transformative education. Making them come together to achieve social inclusion between people with and without intellectual disabilities, and accomplish the goal of creating a better place to live that could be the new reality.

Mobilizing resources, implementing diverse programs and acting as a convening power of stakeholders, we drive positive attitudinal and behavioral change towards people with intellectual disabilities, thus strengthening the fabric of society.

We seek the support of governments and policy makers worldwide, to shape practices that improve education, healthcare, and employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

The Special Olympics Family Support Network provides a structured approach where family members of our athletes reach out to new families to welcome them into the Special Olympics community.

Special Olympics significantly boosts family members' perceptions of and expectations for their children's futures and expands the social networks both within the family and the wider community. (The Universal Impact of Special Olympics: Challenging the Barriers for People with Intellectual Disability, 2009)

The Family Support Network's objective is to support families, develop partnerships with community organizations, and train new Family Leaders. These aid our primary goal of empowering and transforming the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE LEADERSHIP



Photo: Darren McGilvray

Asia Pacific Athlete Leaders and their mentors with Special Olympics International CEO Janet Froetscher (first row, in blue) at the Special Olympics 2013 Asia Pacific Games.

As a key part of our dedication to empowerment and dignity, Special Olympics Athlete Leadership offers specialized training for athletes to help them develop their leadership skills.

This initiative allows athletes to show their abilities in leadership roles. Athletes learn how to speak persuasively as leaders and spokespeople; be interviewed by the media; mentor and speak up for other athletes; discuss their opinions on policy and governance; research and prepare for fundraising events and presentations as well as spread the word about the transformation Special Olympics can bring to individuals and families.



4,192

Asia Pacific Athlete Leaders serve in leadership roles.

"In my 11 years with Special Olympics, I competed in running and swimming. With the Athlete Leaders training, I am now giving speeches about Special Olympics in Indonesia, encouraging new athletes and volunteers to join Special Olympics."

Mayang Sari
Special Olympics Indonesia Athlete Leader
(front row, second from right)

TRANSFORMING LIVES

IT IS NOT WHAT SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES DO. IT IS WHAT THEY BECOME.



Mampi Das (left) Special Olympics Bharat (India)

18-year-old Mampi Das is on her way to recovering her sight, after a successful right cornea transplant in May 2013, a direct result of the Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Foundation partnership to support the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® Opening Eyes program in Tripura, a remote northeast state of India.

Mampi has multiple disabilities – intellectual disability, mixed deafness and cornea dystrophy in both eyes. When Mampi took the program’s vision test, the eye specialist expressed hope of recovering Mampi’s vision with a cornea transplant, starting with her right eye. Mampi now sees with her right eye. She will be assessed for a second operation on her left eye.

Mampi joined Special Olympics Bharat in 2007, participating in athletics. Through sports, Mampi’s motor skills have improved, together with physical fitness. Sports has also given Mampi confidence in her abilities – she is now more articulate, confident and outgoing, a change from her previous withdrawn and quiet personality.



Zia (left), Waheed (right) and Osama Rehmat Din Special Olympics Pakistan

In rural Pakistan, like in other developing countries, children with intellectual disabilities, along with their parents, face social discrimination and stigma. For the Rehmat Din family, this prejudice led them to feel ashamed of their sons Zia, 21, and Waheed, 22, both with intellectual disabilities. The sons were chained at home so that they would not be seen and mistreated, when the parents were away at work. This went on for 10 years, even as Zia and Waheed grew into young men.

Special Olympics Pakistan volunteers from the Family Support Network found out about this situation from the boys' mother, and started visiting Zia and Waheed daily for two weeks, playing ball with them and teaching them basic skills like catching and throwing, encouraging them to be active. Zia and Waheed have been included in Special Olympics activities in their area, throughout the year. The family's third son Osama also has intellectual disabilities and he too is involved in Special Olympics activities.

Special Olympics Pakistan's commitment to transforming the lives of Zia and Waheed has inspired the boys' parents to get more involved in determining their children's futures. They attended a Special Olympics family summit in Karachi, where they met other families who have experienced the same struggles with finding acceptance and social activities for their children. This experience has given them a new sense of confidence in the transformation that the boys are experiencing.

The transformation of Zia, Waheed and Osama continues, with each day looking brighter — as the whole family and the community at large learn to be more accepting and to rejoice in the range of human ability mirrored in every human society.



Shewli Shanthi Special Olympics Bangladesh

Shewli was born with multiple disabilities to a poor family. For the first 15 years of her life, she could not stand up or walk without help, as her muscles were wasted, most likely due to malnutrition.

It was only when Shewli was 15 that she could visit a doctor. Shewli was assessed as a person with intellectual disabilities by the psychologist at the Society for the Welfare of Intellectually Disabled, Bangladesh (SWID) and admitted in their Special Education program.

Special Olympics Bangladesh and SWID work together to support and help each other in their missions. Shewli joined Special Olympics sports training in Athletics, Bocce and Badminton. With three dedicated coaches supporting her abilities, Shewli grew to be skillful at these sports – at Athletics she became the fastest runner in her class.

In the past 13 years, Shewli transformed steadily from a shy teen to a confident adult with much improved motor skills, picking up the self-help, social and communication skills that comes from sports activities in an inclusive culture. Shewli made new friends and gained accolades and acceptance from the community at large.

She advanced from competing at local games, to state games, national games, and then international games. At 21, she represented Special Olympics Bangladesh at the World Summer Games Shanghai in 2007. The next year, Shewli competed at the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Bocce Games Brunei, and again in 2012. This exposure garnered her medals, and, more importantly, the confidence that comes from achieving her full potential.

Shewli has also benefitted immensely from other Special Olympics initiatives like Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®, Special Olympics Unified Sports and Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Program.

Special Olympics Bangladesh has empowered Shewli to be self-reliant. Shewli works as an assistant teacher in a special school, teaching cultural dance, earning a salary that allows her to help support her parents.

Shewli's goal is to become a Special Olympics Athlete Leader and advocate for the Special Olympics Movement in Bangladesh. As an Assistant Coach, Shewli wants to help people with intellectual disabilities achieve what she could. Visit <http://youtu.be/3curmFF5Ato> to see Shewli's transformation.



Photo: Jetjaras Na Ranong, Bangkok Post

Supakorn Gesmankit Special Olympics Thailand

21-year-old Supakorn Gesmankit from Special Olympics Thailand is the first Special Olympics athlete to be employed full-time by Japanese casual wear brand UNIQLO.

Supakorn has been involved with Special Olympics Thailand for more than eight years, playing sports at the local and national level. In 2013, Supakorn represented Special Olympics Thailand in snowshoeing at the Special Olympics World Winter Games 2013.

Supakorn attended the Special Olympics Athlete Leadership training and supports Special Olympics Thailand in various leadership roles: Emcee, Public Speaking, and as an athlete spokesperson.

According to Mrs. Rachaniwan Bulakul, National Director for Special Olympics Thailand: "In Thailand, it is not easy for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) to get a job, simply because employers do not expect a person with ID to be capable of performing any task properly, let alone being capable of any responsibility. This opportunity to work at UNIQLO has given Supakorn a further boost to his confidence and social skills, empowering him to achieve his full potential."



Foo Hou Jing Special Olympics Singapore

“Don’t limit them. Give them an equal chance.” That is what Mdm. Sim Bee Hah, Hou Jing’s mum strongly believes. She believes that through Special Olympics, Hou Jing’s life has deepened in meaning, building up his confidence, social skills, sporting and motor abilities.

23-year-old Hou Jing joined Special Olympics Singapore more than 10 years ago, training to play bocce and bowling. Hou Jing was quiet, passive, kept to himself and depended on his mother to accompany him to the Special Olympics sports training sessions.

Special Olympics sports training in an inclusive culture has empowered Hou Jing with skills and capabilities, transforming him far beyond anything that his family and friends could have imagined. During a game, he strategizes his tactics to improve his performance, volunteers as a line judge and assists the coach in guiding and teaching younger athletes during training sessions. Hou Jing is now independent and travels on his own.

Mdm. Sim believes Special Olympics has been the catalyst of transformation for Hou Jing as he continues to realize his full potential. Hou Jing has been proactively competing in many local bocce competitions, most recently the Special Olympics Singapore National Games in 2013. Hou Jing has now turned to volunteering, supporting Special Olympics Singapore on corporate activity days, while also playing bocce with corporate employees.

Hou Jing works in a business that recycles audio headsets. These opportunities have helped widen Houjing’s circle of friends beyond school and home. He’s now more cheerful and sociable, interacting with other people and communicating better with his peers.

Mdm. Sim is more confident than ever about Hou Jing’s future, and believes that his transformation will continue to take him to greater heights.



Rosa Nega (2nd from left) Special Olympics Papua New Guinea

Rosa joined Special Olympics in 2012. Rosa was shy, timid, afraid to meet people, did not want to shake hands with anyone and would keep to herself.

2013 was the year of transformation for Rosa Nega when she was selected as the sole representative from Papua New Guinea to participate in the Special Olympics World Winter Games 2013. And later in the year, she represented her country at the Special Olympics 2013 Asia Pacific Games.

The Winter Games exposed Rosa to a new reality. Rosa was the star when Special Olympics Chairman Tim Shriver walked with her to the cheering and applause of a packed stadium. To compete in snowshoeing at the Winter Games, Rosa trained on sand and ran the 50m distance with much grit and determination. Rosa very quickly adapted to the games village and became friends with Special Olympics athletes from all over the world.

Later that year, Rosa participated in the Special Olympics 2013 Asia Pacific Games, winning gold in the 100m run, and silver in shot-put. Rosa's coach noticed the change in her as she started becoming independent and was capable of taking care of herself during the daily routine of morning walks, breakfast, and catching the team bus to the competition venue.

"When Rosa stood on the podium to receive her medal, her face just lit up. I could tell that that was her best moment of her life. She still carries her medal to school and tells her classmates where she got the medal from. Every time I see her she reminds me that she won a medal at Newcastle," said Sophia Tuna, secretary of Special Olympics Papua New Guinea.

These two personal triumphs have triggered a change in Rosa's personality, from a very shy and timid girl to a confident young lady. Rosa's family is thrilled with her transformation and are advocating on behalf of Special Olympics Papua New Guinea, reaching out to more people with intellectual disabilities to join the Movement. The family feels accepted, "The community now looks at Rosa, and sees a young confident lady who has done her country proud."



OUR SUPPORTERS

GLOBAL PARTNERS



A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS

ASIA PACIFIC PARTNERS

P&G

P&G ASEAN continued their valued support in 2013 to raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics in the Asia Pacific region. P&G's 'Thank You Mum' campaign was launched in Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam, where P&G partnered local supermarket chains to raise funds. This support helped deliver the funds needed to send Special Olympics athletes to participate in the first Special Olympics 2013 Asia Pacific Games.



FIFA FOOTBALL FOR HOPE

The FIFA Football For Hope partnership provided essential support for Special Olympics athletes in Malaysia and Thailand in football training and competition opportunities.



UNIQLO

UNIQLO partners with Special Olympics Asia Pacific in three countries. It offers employment to Special Olympics athletes at their retail stores in Singapore and Thailand and encourages its staff to connect with Special Olympics athletes through volunteering.



NBA CARES

The NBA's global partnership with Special Olympics began more than 30 years ago when the league helped introduce basketball as a new sport to the organization. In 2013, NBA Cares visited the Philippines and Singapore, where NBA stars ran a skills clinic together with Special Olympics athletes.

"NBA showed the rest of the world that Special Olympics athletes are important," said Kaye Samson, National Director of Special Olympics Philippines.



THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY AND ESPN

The Walt Disney Company and ESPN have become the Global Presenting Sponsor and official media sponsor of Special Olympics Unified Sports®. ESPN will support Special Olympics' goal of registering one million Unified Sports® participants (Special Olympics athletes and unified partners) by 2015.



A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS (AVSC)

A Very Special Christmas (AVSC) is the single most successful benefit recording in musical history. For the last 26 years, the biggest and brightest voices in the recording industry have generously lent their time and talents to Special Olympics to create this holiday album series. The series has brought joy to the world of people with intellectual disabilities through the transformative power of sport, via grants disbursed by the Special Olympics Christmas Record Trust (CRT).



In 2013, the CRT grant enabled 11 Special Olympics countries in the Asia Pacific region to further their work to change society's attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities, from competitions to athlete empowerment.

VALUE IN KIND

The Local

Since 2012, The Local has steered the creative direction of the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Annual Report, providing services in kind towards this project. Now in our third year of partnership, the Singapore-based creative agency continues to devote great professional commitment, especially when it comes to articulating Special Olympics' key message, objectives and achievements.

SG Story

SG Story supported the regional media relations campaign for the inaugural Special Olympics 2013 Asia Pacific Games. This pro bono partnership included strategic counsel and analysis of topics leading up to and during the Games, managing news releases prior and during the Games period as well as pitching potential interviews for the Special Olympics CEO, Janet Froetscher.

Saatchi and Saatchi Singapore

Saatchi and Saatchi Singapore provided pro bono creative support for an advertisement to raise awareness and solicit funds for Special Olympics Asia Pacific. The advertisement was published in 'Crossroads', an annual business guide for U.S. companies in Singapore.



CELEBRITY SUPPORTERS

Hidetoshi Nakata

Japanese football legend Hidetoshi Nakata (top) visited the Special Olympics 2013 Asia Pacific Games in Newcastle, Australia to support the competing athletes, playing in a unified football match with Special Olympics athletes and other honored guests.

Reflecting on his experience, Nakata said, "Sports has the potential to connect culture and people."

LA LIGA & PREMIER LEAGUE CLUB COACHING CLINICS

FC Barcelona, Manchester United FC and Liverpool FC engaged with Special Olympics athletes in Thailand, Australia and Indonesia respectively as part of their Asia Pacific tours in 2013.

FC Barcelona teamed up with Special Olympics Thailand and UNICEF Thailand to promote social inclusion for children with intellectual disabilities, where players Lionel Messi and Jose Manuel Pinto coached Thai athletes and unified partners in a skills clinic.



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AMERICAN SAMOA

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BANGLADESH

BHARAT (INDIA)

BHUTAN

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

CAMBODIA

FIJI

LAOS

MALAYSIA

MALDIVES

MYANMAR

NEPAL

NEW ZEALAND

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