



**Special  
Olympics**



**SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
ASIA PACIFIC**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2015**

**UNITING PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT  
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN 26 COUNTRIES**





“

Special Olympics athletes are an inspiration for all of us. Every day they have to fight to overcome not only their disability, but also the discrimination they face. In this they are not just athletes, but real heroes to be celebrated and supported.

The needs of the intellectually disabled remain achingly unaddressed in the developing world. Though they face uncommon challenges, the intellectually disabled don't demand uncommon treatment. Instead, like people everywhere, they seek only to be treated equally and fairly, and to be provided the same opportunities as anyone else.

”

**BAN KI-MOON**

*United Nations Secretary-General*



# The flame at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum has long been doused since the end of the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games,

but the euphoria from witnessing the incredible display of grit, determination and camaraderie lingers on. It inspires us to keep at what we do – changing mindsets and behaviors towards people with intellectual disabilities (ID), from exclusion to acceptance.

For the world's most neglected population, the Games are a life-changing experience. It provides a welcoming, inclusive environment for people with ID. One where they are not isolated, but celebrated.

A total of 1,178 delegates from 26 countries represented the Asia Pacific region at these Games, which saw the participation of 6,500 athletes from 165 nations. We achieved a breakthrough in India when Special Olympics Bharat secured State funding in the form of bursaries for medal-winning athletes. This helped transform the lives of athletes and their families.

Beyond the Games, we delivered year-round transformational experiences through sports training and competition, health screenings and follow-up care, leadership training, youth advocacy and community outreach. In 2015, the Asia Pacific region served 1.5 million athletes, achieving a 7.4% growth over 2014.

We remain committed to be the driving force for social inclusion of people with ID. The most powerful tool to inclusion lies in unified activity, which brings together people with and without ID on the same team. In 2015, the global movement achieved a milestone of 1.2 million people around the world having taken part in our Unified Sports activities. In the Asia Pacific region, we reached a total of 350,074 athletes and unified partners.

2016 marks the start of our five-year strategic plan. Moving forward, our focus is to win the battle for hearts and minds towards people with ID, and create inclusive communities all over the world.

We will continue to help people with ID perform at their best both on and off the field. We plan to do this through improved quality coaching to develop fit and skillful athletes. We will expand our Unified Sports and Young Athletes initiatives, especially in developing countries where access to programs is low. We will also continue to grow our Healthy Athletes (which delivered 13,104 screenings in 2015) and Healthy Communities initiatives to provide better healthcare for people with ID.

At Special Olympics, there are only winners. You can help us make this a reality beyond the sporting arena, to build a truly inclusive society where no one is left behind.

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



**DR JOHN DOW, JR**  
*Regional President and Managing Director  
Special Olympics Asia Pacific*

**04**  
THE SPECIAL  
OLYMPICS PROMISE

**08**  
POWER TO  
TRANSFORM LIVES

**32**  
THE MAGIC  
OF THE SPECIAL  
OLYMPICS  
MOVEMENT

**38**  
MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE IN  
26 COUNTRIES



the  
Special  
Olympics  
promise  
from  
the  
shadows  
to  
the  
light



#### **OUR GOAL**

Special Olympics is dedicated to transforming the lives of people with intellectual disabilities (ID), empowering them with the confidence and opportunity to realise their full potential and become contributing members of society. Fostering an inclusive environment for people with and without ID lies at the heart of all that we do.

#### **THE GLOBAL CRISIS**

There are up to 200 million people in the world with ID, and they are one of the world's most socially isolated and underserved populations. Intellectual disability still carries the unfortunate stigma of an extreme "loss of face". It affects not just the individual, but his or her immediate family.





THERE ARE UP TO  
**200**  
 MILLION  
 PEOPLE IN THE WORLD  
 WITH INTELLECTUAL  
 DISABILITIES

*\*Source: World Health Organisation*

**DEFINITION OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

According to the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), an individual is considered to have an intellectual disability based on the following three criteria:

- 1 Intellectual functioning level (IQ) is below 75.
- 2 Significant limitations exist in two or more activities of daily living.
- 3 The condition manifests itself before the age of 18.

Disabilities are either genetic or acquired, and can range from autism and Down syndrome, to cerebral palsy and traumatic brain injury.

**JOIN THE MOVEMENT**

Participation in Special Olympics starts at age 2, with no maximum age limit.

Children with ID aged 2 through 7 can take part in the Young Athletes™ program, which helps cognitive and physical growth, preparing them for Special Olympics sports.

Children and adults need to be certified as a person with an intellectual disability by a medical professional or institution before they are eligible for participation in Special Olympics.

Special Olympics activities and services are provided **free of charge** for eligible individuals.

# Special Olympics vs Paralympic

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

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

Special Olympics and Paralympic differ in three main areas:

- 1. Who we serve
- 2. Sporting philosophy
- 3. Structure of the respective organizations

	<b>SPECIAL OLYMPICS</b>	<b>PARALYMPIC</b>
<b>WHO WE SERVE (ELIGIBILITY)</b>	Special Olympics welcomes all people with intellectual disabilities (ages 2 and older) of all ability (IQ) levels.	Paralympic welcomes athletes mainly with physical disabilities who have to <b>fulfill qualifying sports specific performance standards.</b>
<b>SPORTING PHILOSOPHY</b>	Equal ability groupings are the foundation for Special Olympics sports, allowing them to compete within their own ability levels. <b>Winning is not the goal at Special Olympics. Maximizing participation is.</b>	Athletes go through a <b>stringent qualification process</b> that meets certain sports specific performance standards.
<b>ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE</b>	Special Olympics is a community-based grassroots <b>movement for people with intellectual disabilities, combining Sports, Healthcare &amp; Community Inclusion.</b>	Paralympic is run by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), mainly for athletes with a physical disability.



# power to transform lives

We believe that people with ID must no longer be a hidden population in our midst. We do this through the Special Olympics model of change – which combines the power of all ability sports, healthcare, social inclusion and community building – to change mindsets and behaviours towards people with ID and help transform their lives.

## ALL ABILITY SPORTS

Changing the typical reality of daily exclusion and humiliation, we enable Special Olympics athletes to experience a different reality – an inclusive environment where they are valued and respected, giving them the confidence to maximize their potential through training and equal ability competition.

## HEALTH

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

## SOCIAL INCLUSION

Through unified activities that bring together people with and without ID, we foster mutual understanding and acceptance. We nurture agents of change among young people who go on to help alter mindsets and behaviours towards people with ID.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

We mobilise resources to unify the power of individuals and organisations to drive positive attitudinal and behavioural change towards people with ID.

DEPENDENT ► INDEPENDENT  
ISOLATED ► INCLUDED  
DISABILITY ► ABILITY  
SHY ► CONFIDENT





# sports for people with ID – of all abilities

From Disability to Ability – that’s the transformative power of Special Olympics All Ability sports.

**More than 90% of people with ID who participate in Special Olympics sport activities increase their physical and emotional well-being.**

Training sessions become the source of social inclusion, through friendships with fellow athletes and with people without ID.

Research commissioned by Special Olympics has shown that many people around the world underestimate the potential and abilities of people with ID. Special Olympics All Ability Sports not only helps to change perceptions, it creates an opportunity to improve self-esteem, self-worth, and social inclusion.

## ASIA PACIFIC REGION

NUMBER OF  
ATHLETES

1.5  
MILLION

NUMBER OF  
COACHES

139,858

NUMBER OF  
COMPETITIONS

36,336



### ONLY WINNERS

Special Olympics sports allows people with ID of all ability levels, an equal chance of winning. Through a unique process we call divisioning, people with ID of varying ability levels get to participate and compete in a sport of their choice with others of similar ability in equitable divisions. Every athlete is recognized for his or her performance.

### TRAINING THE TRAINERS

Special Olympics recognizes the important role that coaches play in maximizing each athlete’s potential. They have the ability to equip each athlete with the courage and confidence to grow and improve, and to inculcate a deep sense of self-worth. We give our athletes the best possible training by continually providing coaches with certified training and relevant resources.



# Special Olympics Unified Sports®

Unified Sports® brings people with and without ID with equal ability levels together on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle – training and playing together is a **quick path to attitudinal and behavioral change.**

Through inclusive equal ability team sports and shared competition experiences, athletes with and without ID experience a new understanding, dispelling negative attitudes about intellectual disability and also impacting their respective family members, friends, and the community at large to change their opinions of and behaviours towards people with ID.

Research on Unified Sports® has found that Special Olympics athletes experience improved social competence and social inclusion while decreasing problem behaviors.



## ASIA PACIFIC

NUMBER OF  
YOUNG ATHLETES  
**20,168**

# Special Olympics Young Athletes™

## START EARLY

Young Athletes™ is for children with intellectual disabilities aged two to seven, designed for long term impact that accelerates their development. Starting early to improve motor skills, cognitive, social and emotional development are key factors for future health and growth.

Special Olympics Young Athletes™ uses a sports play program to introduce children to the world of physical activity, to develop essential motor skills and hand-eye coordination. A study showed that after two months of participation in Young Athletes™, children with ID experienced a **seven-month gain in motor skills. Participants improved motor skills at twice the rate of children who did not participate.**

### MEET SIDRA...

Sidra is a 6-year-old girl with a developmental disorder that hinders her speech and visibility. Before joining the Young Athlete's program, she had trouble walking and was timid and fearful of people. Not only did she have an intellectual disability, she was also born with ambiguous genitalia. Her parents wanted her to have an operation so that she could grow up as a female, and not have to deal with the additional stigma. Special Olympics Pakistan funded her life-changing operation. She also joined the Young Athletes program, and her motor skills have since improved. She is now able to walk on her own. Her teachers say she has overcome her fear of people and takes part actively in games.

## ASIA PACIFIC UNIFIED SPORTS PARTICIPATION

NUMBER OF UNIFIED PARTNERS

**182,126**

NUMBER OF ATHLETES

**167,948**



# healthcare providing health services for the most underserved

**PERCEPTION** The public believes that people with ID have better healthcare than the rest of the population. (WHO 2011, SOI 2001).

**REALITY** People with ID have unequal access to public healthcare services (WHO 2011, SOI 2001). They have a 40% higher risk than the general population, for several preventable health conditions (SOI Research).

**A GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS** Women with ID have a 20-year shorter lifespan, while men with ID, a 13-year shorter lifespan than the general population (University of Bristol, 2012).

## **THE SOLUTION: SPECIAL OLYMPICS HEALTH**

Special Olympics has provided over

1.6 million health examinations to people with ID, resulting in the **world's largest public health program** and database on the health status of people with ID.

We offer **free** health examinations and healthcare services, specially designed for people with ID, many of whom have never before seen a medical professional in their life. In many cases, it profoundly changed – or saved – their lives.

A volunteer dentist saved the life of a person with ID by early detection and treatment of mouth cancer. An athlete, fitted with a hearing aid, heard her coach for the first time in her life.

We transform lives through two programs: **Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®** and **Special Olympics Healthy Communities.**



## **ASIA PACIFIC REGION**

**NUMBER OF HEALTHY ATHLETE EXAMINATIONS**

**13,104**

**NUMBER OF CLINICAL VOLUNTEERS**

**1,303**



# Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® provides free health examinations and healthcare services for people with ID, across 8 health disciplines. At dedicated health clinics during large events, health examinations are conducted and health services such as prescription glasses, hearing aids, and dental fillings are provided.



## EIGHT HEALTH DISCIPLINES

We offer healthcare services in the following areas:

1

Special Smiles  
*Dentistry*

2

Opening Eyes  
*Vision*

3

Healthy Hearing  
*Audiology*

4

Fit Feet  
*Podiatry*

5

Strong Minds  
*Mental health*

6

FUNfitness  
*Physical therapy*

7

Health Promotion  
*Better health and well-being*

8

MedFest  
*Sports fitness physical exam*



## Special Olympics Healthy Communities

Special Olympics Healthy Communities initiative takes the principles of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® and expands them from a series of one-off events to year-round services – a daily presence in the lives of people with ID and their families that includes a focus on follow-up care, wellness opportunities and education.

To address healthcare disparities, Special Olympics has trained more than 136,000 healthcare professionals and students. New partnerships have also been created with more than 200 organizations, universities and healthcare providers at the local level.

Building Special Olympics Healthy Communities in a country requires the expertise of Special Olympics Health to be integrated into the existing public health

system in the country. This enables local healthcare professionals, institutions and agencies to offer health services to people with ID, building their willingness to have them as patients in the process.

In the Asia Pacific region, Special Olympics Healthy Communities activities continued to thrive in Thailand and Malaysia in 2015.

Partnerships to deliver screenings for people with ID and offer follow-up care were formalized in India, with the Divya Jyoti (DJ) College of Dental Sciences & Research for Special Olympics *Special Smiles*, and the LV Prasad Eye and Lotus College of Optometry for Special Olympics *Opening Eyes*. In Pakistan, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Lions Lahore, to launch Special Olympics *Opening Eyes* screenings.





ASIA PACIFIC  
REGION

NUMBER OF  
YOUTH LEADERS

5,083

NUMBER OF  
YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

64,605

# social inclusion fostering a unified generation

Uniting people with and without intellectual disabilities through the transformative power of sports and other unified activities lies at the heart of what Special Olympics does. Our mission is to create a **Unified Generation** of caring and compassionate individuals, to encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of people with ID in mainstream activities and all walks of life.

## A MODEL FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

We believe that the youth can be powerful advocates in leading attitudinal and behavioral change in society

towards people with ID. They are open to new thinking and have the courage to step up and defend their beliefs. They have the potential to change outdated perceptions and influence the communities in which they live and society at large.

Special Olympics collaborates with schools and communities to bring together youth with and without ID through various unified activities to foster social inclusion. This unified activity promotes an understanding and respect between people with and without ID, which shapes the views of generations of people before and after them.



# GenUin Social Impact Summit



The six-day GenUin Social Impact Summit, held in conjunction with the 2015 Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles, brought together 120 youth leaders from 30 countries around the world to work with mentors to develop their "Impact Projects" focusing on ideas that aimed to make their communities more inclusive for people with ID. The Asia Pacific region was represented by 16 youths from India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Australia, Malaysia, Japan and Nepal. Youths with and without ID from Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines and Nepal were among the top five teams chosen to be coached by industry experts to have their ideas developed into reality.



## nurturing a unified generation

Special Olympics Asia Pacific and the Singapore Red Cross came together to inspire youths to serve their communities through two events by the Red Cross Youth: the national Red Cross Youth Challenge 2015 (Camp Unity) and the regional Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Red Cross Youth Symposium 2015. The Guest-of-Honor of the symposium was Singapore's Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Mr Baey Yam Keng.

Speaking at the two events in Singapore were Special Olympics Philippines athlete Brina Maxino, and Special Olympics Philippines youth leader Sashi Montaña. The unified pair shared with Singapore Red Cross youth leaders on how they can foster

social inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics Asia Pacific funded two youth activities in Singapore, to promote mutual understanding between people with and without ID. The first was an **Inclusive Sports Day**, which brought together students with and without ID from Metta School and Spectra Secondary School for sports activities. The second was an **Inclusive Social Activity** with Spectra Secondary School and Thye Hua Kwan Pan-Disability Centre (residential care center for adults with ID) for a day of inclusive sports, music, and craft activities. We also collaborated with Spectra Secondary School on a **"Respect & Inclusion" campaign** with talks and

activities promoting acceptance and respect for people with ID for 450 students and teachers. Special Olympics athlete Hanako Sawayama inspired the students with her personal transformative journey from a shy, timid, often-bullied individual to a confident, independent, achieving gold medalist, global advocate and contributing member of the Special Olympics Asia Pacific staff member.

In India, 2015 marked a huge push towards inspiring and engaging youth leaders. In May, Special Olympics Bharat brought together young people from Apeejay School, Pitampura, and Athletes from Pruti Special Education School to discuss ways they could promote social inclusion together. This highly successful activity was followed up with the development of a partnership between Leos (junior members of the Lions Club) and Special Olympics West Bengal focusing on inclusive education, youth-led activation, opening eyes screenings, Unified Football and a Young Athletes Program.



# community building creating networks of support

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

Special Olympics strives to create an environment where people with ID are included and accepted in their communities, through building partnerships with relevant stakeholders, mobilizing resources to benefit sports, or health and education programs.

The movement has a much wider circle of influence than simply athletes and their families. Working with governments and policymakers worldwide generates enormous potential to **shape public attitudes which in turn affect policy decisions and the way people with ID are treated on a daily basis.**







ASIA PACIFIC  
REGION

NUMBER OF  
FAMILY LEADERS

2,624

# family support network

For families, the impact of Special Olympics extends beyond sports. It significantly boosts family members' perceptions of and expectations for their child's future. Families are an important source of support for people with ID, many of whom continue to live with their families into adulthood.

The Family Support Network's objective is to help families develop partnerships with community organizations, and train new Family Leaders. Special Olympics supports families by providing opportunities for them to forge communities and networks with other families of children and adults with ID. It also provides family members with training in sports, coaching, advocacy and mobilizing resources, and empowering them to contribute to the movement as coaches, spokespersons and leaders.

In 2015, Special Olympics Asia

Pacific conducted the regional Special Olympics Family Support Network workshop in Singapore for 14 Family Leaders. The workshop shared effective ways for families to reach out to the community, develop partnerships with organizations, and train new Family Leaders.

## **FAMILY INPUT COUNCIL**

The Family Input Council was formed in January 2015 in Singapore. Made up of 7 family leaders from across the Asia Pacific region, the council's role is to provide a voice for families of people with ID by providing feedback to Special Olympics' senior management and regional office.

The council provides a platform for the exchange of ideas, information and success stories. It provides feedback on policies that affect families and propose new ones, and it also allows family members to assume leadership positions.





Given the opportunity, people with ID can speak for themselves and contribute with valuable insights to help the Special Olympics Movement be more effective. The Athlete Leadership initiative allows people with ID to explore leadership opportunities within the Special Olympics Movement. They can serve on the Board of Directors or local organizing committees; as a spokesperson or member of an Athlete Input Council. They learn how to speak persuasively; be interviewed by the media; mentor and speak up for other people with ID; and voice their opinions on policies and governance.

Athlete Leadership gives people with ID ownership to shape the Special Olympics movement and a voice to champion the remarkable transformations the movement brings about for people with ID and their families.

#### **ATHLETE INPUT COUNCIL**

The Athlete Input Council serves as the voice of people with ID in the Asia Pacific region and provides feedback on policies that affect Special Olympics athletes. The council also represents people with ID at global and regional events and conferences, and creates leadership pathways for them.

athlete  
leadership  
leading  
from the  
inside



#### **ASIA PACIFIC REGION**

**NUMBER OF  
ATHLETE LEADERS**

**6,224**



Let me  
win. But if I  
cannot win,  
let me be  
brave in the  
attempt.

*Athlete's Oath*



# Special Olympics World Summer Games 2015

25 JULY – 2 AUGUST 2015 (LOS ANGELES)

A total of 769 athletes from all 26 countries represented the Asia Pacific region at the World Summer Games in Los Angeles, USA, which saw the participation of 6,500 athletes from 165 nations. The World Games is a flagship event of Special Olympics, which highlights on a global scale our unique Model of Change, combining all ability sports for people with intellectual disabilities, healthcare, and social change to foster inclusion for people with ID.

Special Olympics Asia Pacific funded part of Special Olympics Singapore's participation at the Games. The 42-member Singapore delegation returned with 12 gold, 12 silver and 8 bronze

medals. This life-changing experience went beyond just winning medals – for 10 days, Team Singapore's athletes were not shunned, but celebrated and their potential recognized. They returned with a newfound confidence in their abilities.

Special Olympics Bharat's (India) athletes also had an impressive medal count, winning 247 across 14 sports. The extensive media coverage contributed to greater awareness of the rights of people with ID in India, and helped secure State funding in the form of bursaries for medal-winning athletes. This has helped transform the lives of athletes (people with intellectual disabilities) and their families.





# Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017

14 – 25 MARCH, 2017 (AUSTRIA)

The world's largest sports and humanitarian event in 2017 will be the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Graz, Schladming and Ramsau, Austria. The games will run from 14 to 25 March. Austria will welcome almost 3,000 Special Olympics athletes from 110 nations to compete in nine Olympic-type winter sports.





# the magic of the Special Olympics movement

**We witness amazing transformation when people with ID are in a welcoming environment and are given the unconditional opportunity to do their personal best.**

From athletes and their family members, to volunteers and partners, change affects all who are involved with the Special Olympics movement. Beyond touching lives, perspectives and mindsets towards those with ID are irrevocably altered.

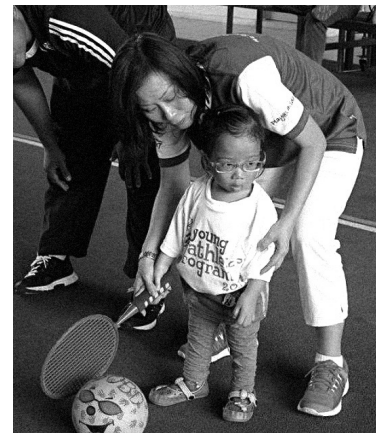
**We celebrate the heroes who have emerged from the shadows to the light, as well as the unsung heroes who have helped bring about this transformation.**

Here, we present their success stories.

## discovering the giant within, at age 6

### **SHRYLIN**

*Special Olympics Brunei Darussalam*



When 6-year-old Shrylin first joined the Special Olympics Young Athletes program in 2014, she was reserved and reluctant to participate in any activities with other children. On top of intellectual disabilities, she also had physical development issues. She was

much smaller in build than her peers, with the height of a 3-year-old child. Her physical and mental development, as well as low self-esteem was a source of anxiety and worry for her parents.

Her parents decided to let Shrylin's younger brother, Mesias, accompany her for the sessions at the Young Athletes program. Having her sibling with her gave her a sense of assurance, and she has since opened up to the volunteer coaches and other children – having fun and trying her best at the activities. She even tried to guide Mesias in certain activities.

The change in her behaviour has extended beyond the Young Athletes program. Her teacher at school and occupational therapist have noticed improvements in both her physical and social skills and are pleased with her progress. She is now a role model for her peers too.

Her mother Suezranne is proud of her daughter's development. She says, "It's great that Shrylin has **the opportunity like other children to learn and develop in an inclusive environment**, and is accepted for who she is. I am heartened by Shrylin's new-found confidence, energy and determination to learn new skills taught by the coaches. I'm overjoyed to see how adventurous she has become."



Before Punsara Dissanayake joined Special Olympics Serendib, she was living like a recluse. The 19-year-old, who has autism, was reluctant to attend school as she feared being bullied. She was timid and had no friends. She was often bad-tempered and refused to even speak to her two younger sisters despite living under the same roof.

Her parents found a teacher who volunteered to teach her reading and writing once a week at home.



# from shy and isolated, to confident leader

## PUNSARA DISSANAYAKE

*Special Olympics Serendib (Sri Lanka)*

## Her world changed after joining Special Olympics Serendib in 2014.

She made friends with others with ID, and became keen to attend swimming lessons and Bocce training. She showed such flair that she became the leader of the Bocce team, and has since helped train other athletes with ID in the sport. She won two silver medals and a bronze at the Brunei Bocce competition in 2016.

Her participation in the sport has been a huge morale and confidence boost for Punsara and her family members. Her parents and sisters have been attending her training sessions and cheering her on at every competition she takes part in. Their unwavering support has brought the family closer, with the entire family now heavily involved in the Special Olympics movement.

Her father has become the president of Special Olympics Serendib in the Padukka electoral area, while her mother is involved in developing swimming and badminton programs for people with ID.

**Punsara has even found the confidence and courage to now pursue her other talents – singing and writing.** She has written two books so far, and her family is now trying to raise funds to get them published. Punsara is also developing her leadership skills through a Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Program.

Punsara's father is determined to make his daughter's dream a reality, as well as the dreams of others like her. He is now working towards developing a training centre in the Padduka area for up to 500 athletes with ID.



# dream of being a champion fulfilled

## BRITTNEY NEILL

*Special Olympics Australia*

Just less than six years ago, Brittney Neill from Victoria, Australia, never dreamt that she would ever represent her country in sport. But a pipe dream became reality for the 15-year-old, when she made it as the youngest member of the Australian team at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles 2015 – the world's largest sporting event of the year.

Brittney, who has autism, says, **"I never thought that I would get this opportunity. That's why I like Special Olympics Australia. I am accepted for who I am."** She returned home with a silver medal (long jump) and two bronze medals (100m, 4 x 100m relay).

## BRITTNEY'S SPECIAL OLYMPICS AUSTRALIA HONOR ROLL

- 2011 State Games (aquatics)
- 2012 State Games (aquatics)
- 2012 Junior National Games (aquatics)
- 2013 Canberra Centenary Games (aquatics)
- 2013 State Games (aquatics)
- 2014 State Games (athletics)
- 2014 National Games (athletics)
- 2015 State Games (athletics)
- 2015 World Games (athletics)

Brittney and her younger sister Brianna, who also has an intellectual disability, joined Special Olympics Australia in 2010. Brittney competed at her first major event – the Special Olympics Australia Junior National Games – in 2012, kicking off her journey to wear the green and gold for Australia.

Her mother Adine Neill says taking part in Special Olympics Australia has brought many positive outcomes for the girls and helped them "channel their energy in an appropriate way."

"They love the training and because they compete against other regions, they get to build up friendships with other kids who have similar intellectual disabilities," Mrs Neill says.

Brittney recently won the Young Sportsperson of the Year award at the Victorian Disability Sports and Recreation awards and was a finalist in the Junior Athlete of the Year for VicSports. She has gained a huge confidence boost, been interviewed in major publications such as The Herald Sun, and become an inspiration for people with and without ID.





# medical help gave her the winning edge

**CHOITY AKTER**

*Special Olympics Bangladesh*

When Clinical Director Dr Md Hafizur Rahman first met 16-year-old Choity Akter in 2013, the young athlete could barely run for more than 10 minutes. She could not maintain her pace, and often developed severe leg cramps which would leave her screaming in pain. It affected her morale and confidence.

She underwent several medical tests and check-ups, and was eventually diagnosed as having iron deficiency anemia along with other nutritional deficiencies. In consultation with her coaches and caregivers, Dr Md Hafizur ordered that she be put on a diet rich in vitamins and minerals. She was then put under a specially designed training program.

The medical intervention and training provided a boost to her health and sports performance. Within two months, Choity was competition-ready. She took part in the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Regional Games in 2013, and took home the Gold medal in the 100-metre sprint.

Dr Md Hafizur, now an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Comilla Medical College and Hospital in Bangladesh, has been a Healthy Athletes Clinical Director with the Special Olympics movement since 2009. He was part of the team that provided health screenings and treatments to people with ID at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens in 2011, as well as the Asia Pacific Regional Games in New Castle in 2013.

Of his experience with the Special Olympics movement, he says, **“It’s an amazing feeling to know that we can help people with ID perform their best, make history at the games and become the pride and joy of their families and their countries. The Special Olympics movement has given me a lot of opportunities to experience the world from the perspective of those with ID.** It has completely changed my world view and fueled my passion for the movement.”

# he no longer fears dentists

**BHAVYA JAIN**

*Special Olympics Bharat (India)*



For 22-year-old Bhavya Jain, the simple act of visiting a dental clinic – something most of us take for granted – was a major cause of fear and much anxiety. He refused to sit on the dental chair and getting him to open his mouth for an oral examination proved to be a challenge for his caregivers. Often displaying hyperactive and aggressive behaviour, he would hit people around him. But the patience and care of Clinical Director Dr Reena R Kumar and her team at the Divya Jyoti college of Dental Sciences and Research soon won him over, helping him overcome his aversion

and apprehension. Today, Bhavya is a compliant patient and is able to undergo treatment without sedation.

Bhavya joined Special Olympics Bharat more than two years ago. Born the eldest of three children to a businessman and homemaker, his parents found it hard to control him with his aggressive behaviour and tendency to unlock cars and drawers, which posed a danger to himself and others.

His father enlisted the help of Nishant Sharma, a coach with Special Olympics Bharat. With Nishant’s guidance, Bhavya has taken part in a number of sporting events including Special Olympics Bharat’s National Championships. Nishant has also helped Bhavya improve the flexibility in his hands through a series of power lifting exercises.

The biggest change is in Bhavya’s behaviour, observes Nishant. He has become less aggressive and more receptive towards strangers. “He has changed so much in his conduct, speech, and even in the way he dresses,” says Nishant. Not only does Bhavya now take part in multiple sports events, he goes for his dental check-ups regularly without fuss.

Dr Reena R Kumar says, **“I believe that the story of Bhavya reflects on the success in changing attitudes in India, which is in reality the hardest challenge to overcome. When medical practitioners have the right mindset in treating patients with ID, the results can be amazing.** The team at the Divya Jyoti college of Dental Sciences and Research have positively impacted the oral health and general health of about 450 people with ID.”





# making a difference in 26 countries

As one of the seven regional offices operating under Special Olympics International, the Special Olympics Asia Pacific regional office's role is to support countries in the region. We build capacity and capabilities to help our countries reach out and serve more people with intellectual disabilities, improve the effectiveness of the model of change through our four platforms (sports, health, social inclusion, and community building). We also help develop leadership abilities of our country leaders, establish partnerships, and build financial sustainability.





# capacity building

## LEADERS AND STAFF AS CHANGE CATALYSTS

Special Olympics believe our leaders and staff are catalysts for change, creating inclusive communities and programs that transform the lives of people with ID. Our leaders and staff receive specialized training, tools and support, empowering them to perform at a higher level, and significantly enhancing our reach and impact.

In 2015, country directors from Singapore, Brunei, Nepal, Fiji, Timor Leste, Tonga, Vietnam and four

Malaysian states (Johor, Malacca, Penang and Perak) received a 4-day training in Singapore. They were given a comprehensive orientation of Special Olympics, and shared ideas to expand the work in their own communities.

In addition, Asia Pacific Communications Managers from Singapore, Australia, India, New Zealand, Indonesia, and Japan were trained to maximize media awareness of Special Olympics in their countries. They networked and shared best practices on how to build positive attitudes towards people with ID.

## REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Special Olympics Asia Pacific hosted the 2015 Regional Leadership Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia from 20 to 22 March 2015, attended by over 80 Special Olympics leaders and athletes. The annual event provides the opportunity for Special Olympics leaders and people with ID from across the Asia Pacific region to share best practices and chart future directions, providing attendees with the skills and knowledge to improve the quality of activities in their respective countries.

## SPORTS COACHING

**Coaches ensure that every athlete plays to their maximum potential. In partnership with the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation, 50 coaches from the Asia**

**Pacific region benefited from English Premier League standard training through two 3-day workshops held in Singapore. Coaches use these skills to enhance athletes' sport performance and fitness, to reach their maximum potential and improve their overall confidence and well-being.**

Special Olympics Asia Pacific also conducted training for National Sports Directors from Brunei, Fiji, Malaysia, Nepal, Samoa, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. Trainers studied the fundamentals of Special Olympics Sports such as the concept of Divisioning (our athletes compete in equal ability levels), athlete and coach development, certification and competition structure.



# Special Olympics Asia Pacific Partners

The work we do in the region would not be possible without the support of our partners.

## **A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS**

A Very Special Christmas (AVSC) is the single most successful benefit album in musical history. For the last 28 years, leading singers in the music industry lent their efforts to Special Olympics to create this holiday album series. Proceeds from the AVSC series go to the Special Olympics Christmas Record Trust (CRT). In 2015, the CRT grant enabled Special Olympics countries in the Asia Pacific region to serve the needs of people with intellectual disabilities, by strengthening capabilities in competitions, outreach, coaching, Board and staff training, and

introducing new sports. It also funded the annual Asia Pacific Regional Leadership Conference, gathering Special Olympics leaders to share practical ideas, skills and knowledge.

## **FIFA FOOTBALL FOR HOPE**

The FIFA Football For Hope supported Special Olympics Bharat (India) and Special Olympics Pakistan to build relationships with respective National Football Federations, recruit youth as coaches and build awareness of Special Olympics through football, and increase the number of football playing athletes, coaches and competitions.

## **LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL**

Lions Club International signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Special Olympics Asia Pacific to fund Special Olympics Bangladesh and Special Olympics Philippines to expand Unified Sports activities.

## **NBA CARES (NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION / USA) CARES**

The NBA's global partnership with Special Olympics spans more than 30 years. NBA Cares is the league's global social responsibility program. In 2015, NBA Cares visited the Philippines, where NBA stars ran a skills clinic for Special Olympics athletes.



## **THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY & ESPN**

The Walt Disney Company and ESPN are the Global Presenting Sponsor and official media sponsor of Special Olympics Unified Sports, helping Special Olympics' achieve a milestone of 1.2 million Unified Sports participants globally (Special Olympics athletes and Special Olympics unified partners) in 2015. As the largest country with Special Olympics athletes in the Asia Pacific region, Special Olympics Bharat received ESPN's grant to increase Unified Sports participation in India. Special Olympics Bharat's success has spurred ESPN to choose Indonesia and Philippines as potential growth markets, to increase Unified Sports participation in these countries.

## **TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR FOUNDATION**

Tottenham Hotspur Foundation (THF) supported Special Olympics Bharat to improve the quality of football coaching in India for people with intellectual disabilities. THF is the first Premier League club selected by Special Olympics for its expertise in delivering high quality training for athletes with all disabilities. More than 2,000 Special Olympics Bharat football coaches in India have received training from THF, to further train 30,000 people with ID across India.

## **U.S. EMBASSY IN SINGAPORE**

The U.S. Embassy in Singapore has provided valued support for the Special Olympics Movement in Singapore and the Asia Pacific region. The Embassy supported the participation of 33 athletes from Special Olympics Singapore at the Special Olympics World Summer Games 2015. The athletes participated in 7 sports, winning 32 medals.

## **VALUE IN KIND**

### **Nielsen Singapore**

Nielsen, a global brand performance management company provided a deep understanding of how the Special Olympics mission could be best articulated for the benefit of all, so as to deliver the greatest impact.

### **The Local**

The Local's stellar work in articulating Special Olympics' mission and achievements continues to strengthen our message and build awareness in the Asia Pacific region.

### **SG Story**

SG Story's pro-bono support in strategic counsel, media pitching and dissemination of press releases has helped Special Olympics Asia Pacific build public awareness on its initiatives.

### **Invisible Artists**

The team produced a video on the Tottenham Hotspur football coaching clinic held in Singapore. The purpose of the coaching clinic was to improve Special Olympics football coaching standards across the region.

### **Singapore Sports School, Coca-Cola & Nike**

Each of them supported the Special Olympics – Tottenham Hotspur Special Olympics Asia Pacific clinic.



# the Special Olympics Asia Pacific leadership team

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**MARY DAVIS**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Special Olympics International

**ANGELA CARMENCITA CICCULO**  
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Special Olympics International

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Singapore Red Cross Society

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Global Head, Citi Private Bank

## ASIA PACIFIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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Council Chair  
General Secretary, Special Olympics Indonesia

**COMMANDER KARTIKAY SAINI CHAIRMAN**  
Council Vice-Chair  
Special Olympics Bharat

**MS KATHY GIBSON**  
IAC representative to the SOI Board  
CEO, Special Olympics New Zealand

**MR BEN HAACK**  
Athlete Representative  
Board Member, SOI

**MR SHINICHI YOKOHAMA**  
Board Member  
Special Olympics Nippon

**DR SOCK MIANGTEO-KOH**  
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**DR SHAMIM CHOUWDHURY**  
Board Chair  
Special Olympics Bangladesh

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC REGION TEAM

**DR JOHN DOW, JR.**  
Regional President and Managing Director (USA)

**SIMON KOH**  
Director, Operations (Malaysia)

**ARJUN CHANDRASEKHAR**  
Director, Marketing and Development (Singapore)

**JERICHO MERCADO**  
Director, Finance, Administration & HR (Singapore)

**DIPAK NATALI**  
Director, Organizational Development (Singapore)

**DR JOHN NAGARAJAN**  
Senior Manager, Sports (India)

**CRAIG CHIA**  
Senior Manager, Sports (Singapore)

**DARREN YU**  
Manager, Sports (Singapore)

**GENEVIEVE JIANG**  
Senior Manager, Communications and Development (Singapore)

**LYNN TAN**  
Manager, Youth Initiatives (Singapore)

**RENE TAN**  
Executive Assistant (Singapore)

**SIDDHARTHA BOSE**  
Coordinator, Budget and Finance (India)

**AVIANTI TANIA NATAKUSUMAH**  
Specialist, Healthy Athletes (Indonesia)

**SAOWAROS (YEE) SAENGSAWANG**  
Specialist, Program Development & Athlete Leadership (Thailand)

**AMRAN SIREGAR**  
Specialist, Program Development & Sports (Indonesia)

**DO ANH TUAN**  
Specialist, Program Development (Vietnam)

**HANA KO SAWAYAMA**  
Administrative Assistant & Special Athlete Regional Representative (Singapore)

# 26

## ASIA PACIFIC COUNTRIES

AFGHANISTAN  
AMERICAN SAMOA  
AUSTRALIA  
BANGLADESH  
BHARAT (INDIA)  
BHUTAN  
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM  
CAMBODIA  
FIJI  
LAOS  
MALAYSIA  
MYANMAR  
NEPAL  
NEW ZEALAND  
NIPPON (JAPAN)  
PAKISTAN  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
INDONESIA  
PHILIPPINES  
SAMOA  
SINGAPORE  
SERENDIB (SRI LANKA)  
THAILAND  
TIMOR LESTE  
TONGA  
VIETNAM





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