



**SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2017**

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH THE POWER OF SPORT

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



# OUR MISSION

Special Olympics provides 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.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

2017 was the second year of our five-year global strategic plan where we made inroads throughout the Asia Pacific with the work we have done as a region. So I would like to begin by thanking each and every one of the Program Leaders, athletes, coaches, families and volunteers, in our Programs for your contribution and hard work. You have truly embodied our mission of ending discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities for a more inclusive society.

The numbers speak eloquently of your dedication and the impact it's had. In 2017, your efforts touched the lives of more than two million athletes and Unified Partners. More than 37,000 competitions at all levels were conducted for our athletes with the assistance of close to 300,000 volunteers and coaches. That's four competitions every hour for an entire year!

2017 began auspiciously with Special Olympics Kiribati joining the Asia Pacific family. January also saw Comms staff from 11 Programs coming to the regional office in Singapore for communications training in preparation for the Winter Games. This set the stage for the annual Regional Leadership Conference, the largest training event we conduct for the region in the course of the year which was attended by more than 100 participants.

The 2017 Special Olympics Winter Games were held in March in the host cities of Graz, Ramsau and Schladming in Austria. More than just an arena for competition, the Winter Games encapsulated the determination and spirit of our athletes as well as the ethos of the Special Olympics movement. I'm happy to report that athletes from 10 of our Programs participated in all the sports on offer, including the newly introduced sport of floorball.

Moving beyond the Games, we rolled out a Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) training workshop for 7 Programs, introducing activities for athletes with severe and profound disabilities, which included table bowling, modified football, heading/spiking beach balls and shot-putting. We also implemented several grassroots level initiatives such as the Fitness Coach Development Programme in Singapore as well as the 2nd Regional Family Leaders Input Council. This council brought together representatives from 10 Programs to share best practices and discuss strategies to implement quality standards and goals for families to make them effective advocates for the Special Olympics movement.

With capability-building such a big part of our mandate, a significant portion of our work was dedicated to raising the technical proficiency of our coaches and Program Leaders. In partnership with the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation, we conducted a three-day workshop to help coaches deliver quality training to our athletes.

## **CONTINUED—**

It was an inclusive event in every sense of the word as the focus for this workshop was to cultivate a wider pool of female coaches with particular attention paid to Programs we have not been able to reach out to previously.

Similarly, our netball Train-the-Trainer session in September taught volunteer coaches how to develop netball programs and semi-annual competitions for players with intellectual disabilities. We also provided training to National and Sports Directors from selected Programs in a constant process of skill upgrading.

Additionally, we harnessed the exuberance of the youth in our region, conducting Youth and Unified Schools workshops to foster inclusive communities with them in the lead. With 64% more Youth participating than the year before, Youth engagement is constant and consistent, giving them opportunities to share their views on a global stage.

Finally, to round up a year filled with superlatives, under the auspices of Lions Clubs International, Special Olympics Bharat received a US\$1 million grant from the Aruna Abhey Oswal Trust. This grant allowed them to further their work in Healthy Athletes, Family Health Forums, Young Athletes and Unified Sports programmes. Also, Special Olympics Nippon received more than US\$300,000 from the Lions Clubs International Foundation to expand their Opening Eyes screening programme, Family Health Forums and Unified Sports together with Lions Clubs' Leos.

At regional level, we forged a partnership with Hong Kong-based insurer FWD to provide a grant of US\$1.25 million to six Asia Pacific Programs and 1 East Asia Program to promote Athlete Leadership and Unified Schools. This was one of several memorandums of understanding we signed in 2017 to secure strategic partners to bolster our efforts.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2018, let us take this opportunity to renew our commitment to the cause and those we serve. Let us remember that our work may begin on playing fields but our ultimate goal is to create inclusive societies where people with intellectual disabilities enjoy the same benefits many of us take for granted. So while our brave athletes compete in sporting arenas, we must similarly be bold and determined in our attempts. Thank you for being a part of the team.

*Simon Koh*

**Simon Koh**

President and Managing Director  
Special Olympics Asia Pacific

# MAKING OUR MARK IN 2017

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

Our network of registered family members numbers 239,276, more than a third of the movement's global number.

## A BIGGER FOOTPRINT

With our 28th Program joining the Asia Pacific family, 2017 saw great inroads in the region where we touched more lives than ever.

## ATHLETE TRAINING

In 2017, Special Olympic athletes in the Asia Pacific region grew to 1.7 million.

## KEEPING ATHLETES HEALTHY

We facilitated almost 20,000 health screenings for our athletes in 2017.

## THE POWER OF YOUTH

Aged 25 and below, our region had 7,705 young people leading the charge against discrimination.

## LETTING THEM WIN

37,740 competitions were held in the Asia Pacific region in 2017. That's 4 competitions an hour!

## PLAYING TOGETHER

Special Olympics Asia Pacific contributes a third of the movement's Unified athletes and partners.

# THE UNSEEN GLOBAL CRISIS

The issues surrounding intellectual disability, such as stigma and lack of access to proper healthcare, are felt acutely in Asia where children with intellectual disabilities are often seen as a liability to the family, or a source of shame and loss of face.

Special Olympics Asia Pacific works to overcome this marginalisation by giving people with intellectual disabilities a platform to train and compete as well as to speak for themselves.

No where is this more apparent than with our Regional Athlete Input Council. Comprising athlete leaders from different countries, the Council demonstrates the promise and possibility that the Special Olympics movement offers.

There are up to  
**200**  
million

people with intellectual disabilities in the world.



**“We are not so different,  
you and I. We all have  
hopes, fears and dreams.  
We are all human beings.”**

**-Hanako Sawayama,  
Special Olympics Athlete Leader**

Special Olympics Asia Pacific's Programs conducted more than 37,000 competitions – both big and small – in 2017. In addition to providing these opportunities for our athletes to compete and develop fitness, we also raised the bar in technical areas through our coach development programmes conducted jointly with specialist partners.

# SPORTS



## MAKING HISTORY

In what will go down in the annals of Special Olympics history as one of the most intense matches ever played, Special Olympics Bangladesh's female floor hockey team held the men's team from Iran to a draw after 3 hours of play and a record 18 overtimes.

# COMPETITIVE SPIRIT

In 2017, competitive sports and the technical advancement of both athletes and coaches continued to be at the heart of our activities in the region.

The biggest showcase for Asia Pacific's athletes came in March at the Winter Games held in Austria. We sent 350 delegates from 10 Programs to the Games where they participated in a diverse range of sports that included alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing. In all, our athletes brought home 72 Gold, 70 silver and 73 Bronze medals, no mean

feat considering the lack of appropriate training conditions in Asia.

Apart from the Winter Games, the Asia Pacific office also facilitated some 37,740 competitions involving more than 2 million athletes and Unified Partners. These events ranged from the National Games in war-torn Afghanistan to the 10th Borneo Cup 5-a-side Tournament held in Brunei. And to prepare, facilitate and officiate at these games, we garnered the support of almost 300,000 volunteers and coaches.



## BENEFACTORS OF INCLUSION



Many of the initiatives and events organised by Special Olympics Asia Pacific are made possible by assistance – both financial and in-kind – from generous partners who see value in our mission.

The 3rd South Asia Unified Cricket Tournament was made possible in part by support from Lions Clubs International and the Aruna Abhey Oswal Trust. They continue to support our work in many areas.

## TOTAL TEAMMATES

576,061

## UNIFIED PARTNERS

327,919

## UNIFIED ATHLETES

248,142

# PLAYING UNIFIED



Unified Sports feature largely in our annual line-up of events. By bringing together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities and giving them a common goal, prejudice and bias are left behind in favour of teamwork and cooperation.

2017 saw the Asia Pacific region grow the number of athletes participating in Unified Sports and their counterparts with intellectual disability by almost 50%, bringing to the total number of teammates to 576,061.

Amongst the hundreds of Unified Sports events where our athletes and their Unified partners played in were meets such as the 6th South East Asia Unified Football Tournament in Bangkok, the Unified Floor Hockey Training Camp in Dhaka as well as the Unified Soccer training for students conducted in tandem with the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation.

## A SHOWCASE FOR UNITY— THE 3RD SOUTH ASIA UNIFIED CRICKET TOURNAMENT

Held across three days in December 2017, the South Asia Unified Cricket Tournament serves as an excellent example of the work we do with our athletes on and off the playing field.

Bringing together Unified cricket teams from 4 Programs – Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, the trophy was fiercely contested with Special Olympics Bangladesh eventually winning the tournament.

Among the athletes playing were Special Olympics Bharat athlete Pravat Bharal and his Unified Partner Raju Kullayappa. Born with multiple conditions including mild Intellectual disability, Pravat has been a Special Olympics athlete since 2007 and has risen through the ranks to captain their cricket team.



# COACH DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Athletes cannot make progress unless their coaches do. True to our mandate in the Global Strategic Plan to help athletes perform at their best, we embarked on an ambitious series of train-the-trainer clinics to

make sure our coaches in the region stayed current.

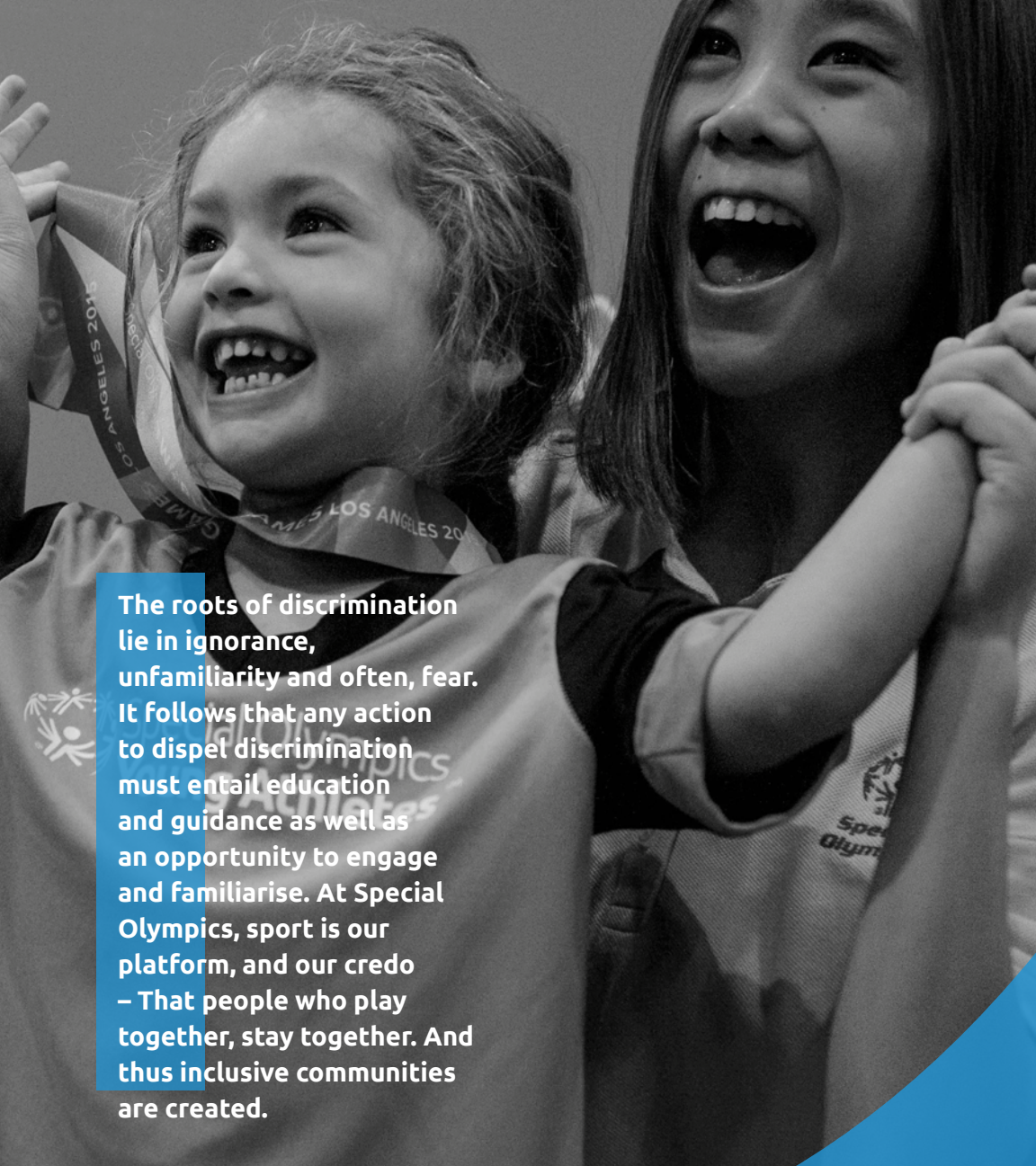
Frequently, expertise for these clinics come from experts based beyond our shores. In the case of soccer, coaches

from around the region were taken through an intensive three-day course by instructors from the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation in October 2017.



Netball coaches from 5 Programs were also put through their paces in September with an emphasis on competition management. Other coach development initiatives included instruction in sports like badminton, bocce and bowling conducted throughout the course of 2017.





The roots of discrimination lie in ignorance, unfamiliarity and often, fear. It follows that any action to dispel discrimination must entail education and guidance as well as an opportunity to engage and familiarise. At Special Olympics, sport is our platform, and our credo – That people who play together, stay together. And thus inclusive communities are created.

# EDUCATION



# YOUTH INITIATIVES

Much of Special Olympics Asia Pacific's work revolves around the nurturing and cultivation of youth leadership because every young person we bring into the fold is one less adult whose bias we must overcome.

At the various leadership and activation events that we conducted, youths from across the Asia Pacific region were given the opportunity to learn about leadership and how to engage and marshal their peers, both with and without intellectual disabilities.

Amongst these events were the Global Youth Summit held in conjunction with the Winter Games in Austria where 11 Youth Leaders and 6 mentors from our region joined others like them from across the globe. Alongside leadership skills, they also learnt about managing projects to help them drive social inclusion in their home countries.

## GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT

**11 youth leaders**

+

**6 mentors**  
from Asia Pacific Region

# YOUTH INITIATIVES CONT'D

Closer to home, the Youth Activation Workshop in Bangkok brought together 40 youths and athlete leaders who received training before going on to guide 157 tertiary students from 6 universities on the finer points of being a Special Olympics ambassador. Following the event, some of the youths and athlete leaders went on to form Special Olympics Thailand's first National Youth Activation Committee.

The activation workshop in Bangkok was mirrored by a similar one in Jakarta for some 60 Youth Leaders over 3 days. In this workshop organized by Special Olympics Asia Pacific and Special Olympics Indonesia, they were given a mandate and the requisite organizational skills to galvanise their peers in their communities and run inclusive events.

## WHO ARE YOUTH LEADERS?

Young people without intellectual disability who are champions and advocates for people with intellectual disability, acting as their bridge to the wider community.

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP

**7,705**  
in 2017

# ENGAGING THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

With a mission this big, the brightest minds must be brought to bear against the issue of discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities. Our efforts to inform and educate don't stop at youths. They also extend to those who are applying an empirical solution to the issue of intellectual disability.

In a collaboration between Special Olympics and IASSIDD (International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities), we would offer IASSIDD use of data collected from our events for research and analysis. Titled "Special Olympics in Asia", this workshop followed through from a memorandum of understanding between our organisations and acted as a forum to introduce our work to IASSIDD members and to discuss specific items and areas that we could work on together.



The Special Olympics mission does not end on the playing field when the final whistle is blown. Our athletes also have to be able to return home to communities that give them equal access to education, healthcare, recreation and work. Toward this end, Special Olympics builds networks amongst families with a member with intellectual disabilities. We also have a well-established system of developing athletes into leaders where they act as ambassadors and advocates for the movement.



# COMMUNITY

# ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

ATHLETE LEADERS IN ASIA PACIFIC

# 6,934

One of the hallmarks of the Special Olympics movement is leadership from within our athletes' own ranks. Similarly, Special Olympics Asia Pacific places emphasis on training athletes to become leaders and living examples for others to follow.

In February 2017, a selection of athletes and their mentors from across the region received training in Singapore where they were given pointers on public speaking and making a presentation, as well as the structure and defining features of the Special Olympics Movement.

This was complemented by similar workshops held in Indonesia and Cambodia.



# ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

A new initiative piloted in India and facilitated by Special Olympics Asia Pacific and Special Olympics Bharat, the Athlete Leadership University involved compiling and standardizing the curriculum for Athlete Leader training as well as developing a pathway for their development. The inaugural Athlete Leadership University was attended by athlete leaders and mentors from 19 states.

Held at the Frank Anthony Public School, the training covered areas such as public speaking, fundraising, health promotion, coach assistance and volunteering. Dr Veenu Seth, Special Olympics Bharat's Regional Clinical Advisor, facilitated a session on the benefits of a balanced diet and the importance of making healthy food choices.

# REGIONAL FAMILY LEADERS INPUT COUNCIL

Special Olympics Asia Pacific has always been a pillar of support to families with a member with intellectual disability. The objective of this workshop was to develop and grow Family Programs in 10 selected Asia Pacific Programs and to train and support Program and Family leaders to work

together. This would allow them to implement quality standards and global/regional strategic goals for families and to make them effective advocates for the Special Olympics movement.

With topics ranging from engaging government bodies and other key

influencers to getting started in grassroots activism, the National Family Leaders were also trained on how to recruit and engage new family members to widen the network and make family leadership self-sustaining.



GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT

10,283

family leaders

+

239,276

registered family members





People with intellectual disability often suffer from undiagnosed medical problems. That means out of 10 people with intellectual disability, 4 will have untreated tooth decay, 4 will have poor vision, 5 will have problems with flexibility, 3 will fail a hearing test, 2 have low bone density and 6 will be overweight. Special Olympics provides health screenings and works to achieve inclusive, equitable access to healthcare for people with intellectual disabilities.

# HEALTH

# HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Despite having higher health risks, people with intellectual disabilities often receive sub-standard health care, or none at all.

Special Olympics approaches athlete health on 2 fronts. Our Healthy Athletes programme educates them on matters such as diet and fitness while providing health screenings at major Special Olympics events. Healthy Athletes currently maintains the world's largest health database for people with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics Healthy Communities, on the other hand, addresses systemic health care issues such as unequal access to health services or lack of awareness amongst health care professionals of the needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

## HEALTHY ATHLETES CLINICS

156

## ATHLETE SCREENINGS

19,397

## COUNTRIES OFFERING HEALTHY ATHLETES

17

## RECOGNISED HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PROGRAMS

2



# HEALTH ACROSS THE REGION

Special Olympics Asia Pacific provides grants to further our Healthy Communities Programmes in selected countries where the funding goes into promoting inclusiveness in health care systems through education, communication and

advocating healthy lifestyle practices for all.

In 2017, we worked in Special Olympics Nippon to organize events where athletes, caregivers, students and healthcare professionals participated in health screenings, harvesting

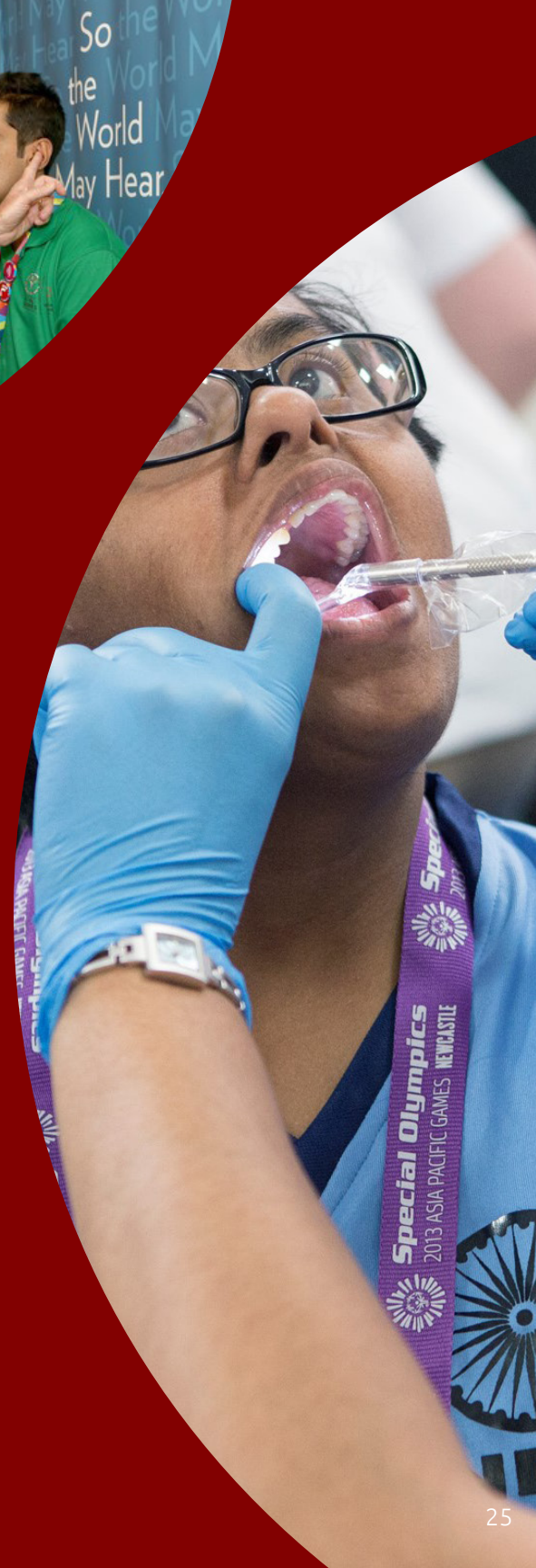
of crops and lessons in preparation of healthy meals.

In Special Olympics Bangladesh, we conducted seminars and training in fitness in addition to regular athlete health screenings.



Delivering training and competition to people, regardless of their level of disability, is a point of pride at Special Olympics. We conducted our Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP) at the Red Cross Home for the disabled, a programme that was developed by Special Olympics Board Member, Dr Eleni Rossides, and designed for people with severe and profound disability and is often performed with the assistance of therapists.

We also promoted fitness in the community at large, particularly important for athletes who have left the regimented system of exercise they underwent in school. Incorporating Special Olympics' proprietary Fit 5 exercise programme, Special Olympics Asia Pacific conducted home-based fitness training several times each month where participants were taught fitness regimens that they could replicate at home.





# REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2017

The largest and most extensive training session we conduct for our Programs in the course of any given year, the Regional Leadership Conference is where Program Leaders get updated on the strategic direction and initiatives for the coming year. Delegates also receive instruction and training from Special Olympics staff and guest speakers on a variety of subjects intended to help them further the Special Olympics mission in their respective countries. To facilitate learning, the proceedings are broken up into plenary sessions where a speaker gives a presentation followed

by break-out sessions where the group is divided into smaller teams to discuss implementation plans.

Themed "Creating opportunities. Breaking barriers. Leading the way", the 2017 Regional Leadership Conference was attended by more than 100 participants and covered topics as diverse as the proper governance and structure for a Program, mentoring athletes, goal setting, financial management, and encouraging family involvement in the movement.

## CAPACITY-BUILDING

Special Olympics Asia Pacific provides our Programs with a comprehensive, well-organised system of support that's built around them to ensure success. One of the ways we do this is to provide Program leaders

with training. Aside from ensuring consistency in delivery that is in line with our brand and values, our regimen of training also imparts best practices on subjects like governance, marketing and fundraising.



# TRAINING WORKSHOPS

We also conducted smaller-scale training sessions for Program leaders who were new to the movement or were up for a refresher in their training cycle. The National Director's Training Seminar was attended by 16 Leaders from 13 Programs including our newest Program in the Asia Pacific region, Kiribati. The 3-day workshop

covered topics such as obtaining Special Olympics accreditation and grants, best practices from across the region, as well as the importance of fundraising and establishing partnerships.

Where necessary, we held training for specific purposes such as the Communications

Training Workshop held in January 2017 to prepare leaders from the 11 Programs headed to the World Winter Games. The curriculum for that workshop spanned topics such as social media, public relationships and videography as well as how to parlay media gathered over at the Games into publicity for their Programs.



There are more than 200 million people with intellectual disabilities in the world, many of whom have no access to the amenities, services and opportunities the rest of us take for granted. Our mission is to change that, but we cannot accomplish it alone. Offering support financially and in-kind, our partners help us extend our reach and amplify our efforts so more people benefit from our work.

# PARTNERSHIPS





A Special Olympics Champion Partner globally, the movement's relationship with Lions Clubs International has been a long and fruitful one. The driving force behind our Opening Eyes programme, Lions Clubs International also backs Mission: Inclusion around the world.

Closer to home, Special Olympics Bharat received a US\$1 million grant from the Aruna Abhey Oswal Trust. This grant, brokered by Lions Clubs International, allowed Special Olympics Bharat to further their work in the areas of Healthy Athlete, Young Athlete and Unified Sports Programmes.



**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). The CRT grant has enabled programs in the Asia Pacific region to serve the needs of people with ID, 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.



A Hong Kong-based insurer, FWD looked beyond its shores for a partner that would complement their vision of inclusion. In a partnership that was forged in 2017 and formalised in 2018, it entailed a grant of US\$1.25 million over a 3-year period that would benefit 6 Programs in the Asia Pacific region. The grant would go toward furthering our work in the areas of Unified Schools and Athlete Leadership.



A stalwart supporter of Special Olympics Asia Pacific and the movement's Official Technology Partner, Microsoft Singapore extended an invitation to us to attend their Partner Gala Dinner where we were able to address the crowd and conduct a brief but fruitful fundraising exercise. A team from Microsoft is also supporting us in the development of a mobile phone application that will help our athletes stay fit.

Globally, Microsoft provides software for all Special Olympics accredited Programs and supports us in our efforts to modernize our Games Management System, Connect.



VML is an award-winning full-service marketing agency that was recently voted one of the Top 10 advertising agencies in the United States. Our primary partner in the development of our online giving site, The Happiest Special Olympics, VML's efforts contributed to our online presence and gave our fundraising efforts an additional dimension.



A digital media campaign company, WE was instrumental in creating 2 video assets for Special Olympics Asia Pacific that have since become the mainstay of any media screenings at events and one of our most frequently employed mediums to convey our mission to the public.



A creator of high-end animation and content, Invisible Artists filmed and produced much of the material Special Olympics Asia Pacific's video assets are based on. They continue to support our work by refreshing and refining our existing body of video footage.



The IKEA Foundation (Stichting IKEA Foundation) is the philanthropic arm of INGKA Foundation, the owner of the IKEA Group of companies. Their aim is to improve opportunities for children and youth in some of the world's poorest communities by funding holistic, long-term programmes that can create substantial, lasting change. The IKEA Foundation supports Special Olympics Young Athletes programmes through their Let's Play for Change initiative in four countries in the Asia Pacific region.



A Special Olympics Global Partner, ESPN is our official media sponsor for Special Olympics Unified Sports. In the Asia Pacific region, ESPN has provided grants to Special Olympics Bharat to increase participation in Unified Sports in India. ESPN was the official broadcaster of the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria and will be for the 2018 USA Games in Seattle and the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi.



Mindshare is a global media and marketing services company created in 1997. One of the world's largest media agencies, Mindshare worked with Special Olympics Asia Pacific to enhance the reach and efficacy of our online giving campaigns.

AFGHANISTAN  
AMERICAN SAMOA  
AUSTRALIA  
BANGLADESH  
BHARAT (INDIA)  
BHUTAN  
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM  
CAMBODIA  
FIJI  
INDONESIA  
KIRIBATI  
LAOS  
MALAYSIA  
MYANMAR

NEPA (NEPAL)  
NEW ZEALAND  
NIPPON (JAPAN)  
PAKISTAN  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
PHILIPPINES  
SERENDIB (SRI LANKA)  
SAMOA  
SINGAPORE  
THAILAND  
TIMOR LESTE  
TONGA  
VANUATU  
VIETNAM



**Special Olympics**



@soasiapacific



[www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)



@soasiapacific



+65 6473 7850



[facebook.com/soasiapacific](https://facebook.com/soasiapacific)



[fundraising\\_asiapacific@specialolympics.org](mailto:fundraising_asiapacific@specialolympics.org)