



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The pandemic has exerted enormous pressure on our society and forced a host of changes to how we live and work. The repercussions of those changes have continued to impact us here in Asia Pacific even as restrictions and social distancing have eased.

We are in many ways still adapting to those far-reaching changes, and rebuilding our efforts as a movement to better address the needs of persons with intellectual disabilities and the communities they live and operate in.

The year 2022 finally marked the triumphant return to international competition for athletes both with and without intellectual disabilities (ID) after more than two years.

This included both the Unified Cup 2022 in Detroit as well as the South East Asia Unified Football Tournament in Bangkok.

Sports and competitions are truly powerful ways for athletes with intellectual disabilities to display their abilities and gifts. They serve as key avenues which demonstrate to the world our athletes' skills and grit, while simultaneously invoking joy, connection and fulfilment amongst the athletes themselves.

During the pandemic, Asia Pacific as a region grappled to shift from traditional program models to deliver services in new and unprecedented ways, including virtual tournaments and campaigns. Nevertheless, ID communities were undeniably hard hit.

Across the region, the isolation, alienation and social distancing restrictions amidst the pandemic drastically reduced athlete numbers, coaching infrastructure, volunteers and funding by well over 80 per cent. Xx

The critical rebuilding process and the drive towards building a truly inclusive society is an important whole-of-community effort, cutting across the public and private sector as well as civil society.

This encompasses strengthening our coaching and volunteer numbers, enhancing inclusive health work, furthering athlete leadership programs and increasing our fundraising efforts so that local programming for these marginalized communities can take place in a way that is impactful and meaningful.

We have kickstarted these rebuilding efforts over the past year amidst numerous challenges.

In addition to sport, our inclusive health work focused on running an accessible healthy lifestyle campaign for our community and we strengthened our family networks with Sibling-Family workshops across 15 programs.

The past year was an opportunity for us to consolidate and share resources, to inspire and empower each other as we built back stronger from the pandemic. This was evident in our youth leadership efforts that included executing the inaugural Best Practice Exchange that galvanised and developed our youth as effective leaders of inclusion in their respective communities.

The road to genuine inclusion, we know, is fraught with challenges. We must reconnect, rebuild and restart and I seek your continued support to realize this important work. For every single one who lent your voices to spread the word of inclusion, we thank you.

Amidst all this, we must take time to celebrate the wins, achievements of people with intellectual disabilities, even as we strive to create a society that values and celebrates the diversity of all individuals.

DIPAK NATALI
PRESIDENT & MANAGING DIRECTOR
SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC

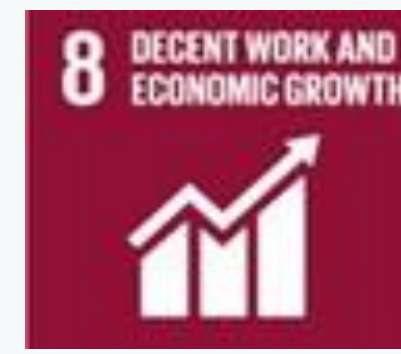
Achieving an inclusive world for all, driven by the power of sport, through which people with intellectual disabilities live an active, healthy and fulfilling life

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

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

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

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



OUTCOMES

People with ID improve physical well-being, skills, fitness and health

People with ID, teammates, families, volunteers and others improve social and emotional well-being

People without disabilities behave more inclusively

Organizations are more inclusive through the work of Special Olympics and influence of athletes

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPIC ARE TWO SEPARATE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS RECOGNIZED BY THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC)

WHO WE SERVE

Special Olympics welcomes all people with intellectual disabilities (ages 2 and older) of all ability levels.

SPORTING PHILOSOPHY

Equal ability groupings are the foundation for Special Olympics sports, allowing athletes to compete within their own ability levels. Excellence is personal achievement, a reflection of reaching one's maximum potential.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Special Olympics is a community-based grassroots movement for people with intellectual disabilities, combining Sports, Healthcare & Community Inclusion.

Paralympics welcomes athletes mainly with physical disabilities who have to qualify according to sport-specific performance standards.

Athletes go through a stringent qualification process that meets certain sports specific performance standards.

Paralympics is run by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), mainly for athletes with a physical disability.



THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS DIFFERENCE

SPORTS

For many of us in the movement, sports has been the first touchpoint, whether as athletes, volunteers, coaches or even family members.

This was undeniably impacted during the pandemic with many programs coming to a near standstill.

2022 was a arduous year for Special Olympics movement in the region as the programs built their way back up – transitioning from virtual competitions to safe in-person sports activities.

While dealing with the disappointment of the cancellation of the Kazan World Winter Games, the athletes continued their preparation for the 2023 Berlin World Summer Games.

We now look forward to the 2023 World Summer Games which is set to welcome 7000 athletes across 26 sports globally.

“

Sport is quite a simple thing. It is play, and in play, people of all ages find the chance to engage their most profound emotions - love, fear, excitement, disappointment, anger and joy.

**– Timothy Shriver,
Chairman,
Special Olympics
International**



CELEBRATING SOUTHEAST ASIA'S FIRST POST-PANDEMIC FOOTBALL COMPETITION

The 9th edition of SEA cup provided the triumphant return of regional competitions for our athletes and unified partners after more than 2 years.

The SEA cup saw participation from 7 countries in the South East Asia sub region with 8 men's team and 6 women's team from 12 to 15 November 2022.

The competition was held at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand.

This was made possible because of the milestone partnerships between the host, Special Olympics Thailand with Chulalongkorn University and Sport Authority of Thailand.

Other major sponsors were Government Housing Bank, BNK48, GMM TV, Bangchak Corporation PLC and Banpu Public Company Limited.

Since its inauguration in 2012, the tournament has seen the number of participating countries more than double.

This year, 14 teams across participating countries Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, and Vietnam come together to celebrate how sport can break down barriers and bring people together, fostering greater inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities.

“

I understand that persons with intellectual disabilities have many capabilities and they have become good friends

– Phithak Khampan, Unified Partner from Thailand, said of his experience

BUILDING SPORTS



BUILDING SPORTS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED CUP DETROIT 2022

The Special Olympics Unified Cup 2022 presented by Toyota showed the world how the power of sport can shape a diverse community that unites and empowers people of all abilities, across diverse backgrounds.

Detroit welcomed over 300 footballers from over 20 nations to compete in football, the world's most popular sport. The competition took place between 31 July to 6 August 2022 and was broadcasted to hundreds of millions of viewers across the globe.

The week-long event showcased athletic performances on the pitch and highlighted stereotype-defying stories off the pitch—changing minds and opening hearts through transformational inclusion.

From the Asia Pacific region, 2 men's teams from Special Olympics Nippon (Japan) and Special Olympics Singapore as well as 2 women's teams from Special Olympics Bharat (India) and Special Olympics Serendib (Sri Lanka)), were selected to participate in the Unified Cup.

Special Olympics Serendib (Sri Lanka) women's team received 'The Fair Play Team award' which demonstrated exemplary behavior, including playing by the rules and respecting teammates, opponents, match officials, and fans.



BADMINTON WORLD FEDERATION PARTNERSHIP KICKS OFF IN ASIA PACIFIC

Following the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Badminton World Federation (BWF) and Special Olympics International in 2019, both Special Olympics in Thailand and Sri Lanka collaborated with their respective National Badminton Members Associations through the signing of a joint pledge of support.

The BWF and Special Olympics continue to encourage and promote cooperation, collaboration, providing free access to resources and training for coaches, which support the delivery of safe, fun and inclusive badminton.



SPORTS: STORY OF CHANGE

FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE WORLD

KESHAV MALIK , SPECIAL OLYMPICS BHARAT



“ Life is a matter of choices, and every choice you make makes you. I, Keshav Malik, too have made choices that define who I am. I was brave in my attempt to chase my dreams, and it has brought me joy, respect, and a story I am proud to tell!.

When I was 2, I was diagnosed with microcephaly, a condition which affected the growth of my brain. My head was smaller in size compared to other babies. The condition delayed my cognitive and physical progress and left me with permanent developmental disabilities.

Growing up, I struggled to clock the milestones most other kids did. I could barely speak and struggled to communicate my thoughts. It was tough getting me a place in a mainstream school.

My parents enrolled me in a special school for children with intellectual disabilities. Although I was slower than others in learning certain tasks, I had a gift when it came to sports. My dad noticed my sporting abilities as he watched me play with my cousins every day. It sparked an idea.

The opportunity came when my dad learnt about [Special Olympics in India](#) at a local event one day. I was 9. I joined the badminton program, and I've not looked back since. That one decision defined my entire life and has made me who I am today.

From following others' footsteps to carving my own path, from repeating people's sentences to finding my own voice, I have come a long way.

In 2011, I represented India in badminton at the [Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens](#) and returned with gold and silver medals. It was an amazing experience and honor to be on the world stage. My achievements were recognized nationally.

I became the first athlete with special needs to receive the Bhim Award, the highest sports honor given by the government of Haryana, India for "outstanding performance in national and international competitions."

It paved the way for bigger things. In 2018, I was among the first persons with disabilities to be employed by the Haryana State Government as a sports coach, a position reserved for persons with exceptional sporting talent and performance..

Sports has completely changed my life. It instilled in me discipline and focus, which I now apply to my daily living. It taught me to manage my time effectively and gave me the confidence to find my voice and vision.

Today, I try my best to enable my students to turn their passion into reality. Beyond just being their sports coach, I strive to be their mentor and pillar of support.

I pass on my learnings and experiences and talk to them about everything, from discipline and safety to respect for elders. I want them to know that there is no challenge too difficult to overcome. Shut out the naysayers and be fearless in pursuing your dreams!

”

HEALTH

ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE

Health disparities, sometimes called health inequities, are preventable or avoidable differences that are typically experienced by vulnerable populations as a result of poor access to and quality of healthcare.

Due to a range of systemic challenges, including inadequate training and inaccessible facilities, people with ID have less access to quality health care and health promotion programs.

Our health programming is dedicated to providing health services and education to Special Olympics athletes, and changing the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities.

Our clinical directors are key to providing better access of health care to our athletes - through free health screenings, training for other healthcare professionals, and evaluation of the health status of people with intellectual disability.



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Successful and sustainable community partnerships, coupled with the power of human compassion, can usher in a world of health equity for those with intellectual disabilities.

–TOM GOLISANO, FOUNDER OF PAYCHEX AND
CHAIR OF THE GOLISANO FOUNDATION

BUILDING HEALTH

SOAP LAUNCHES HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CAMPAIGN



Special Olympics Asia Pacific launched a Healthy Lifestyle Health campaign in May, across the region with 2 additional languages, Thai and Japanese.

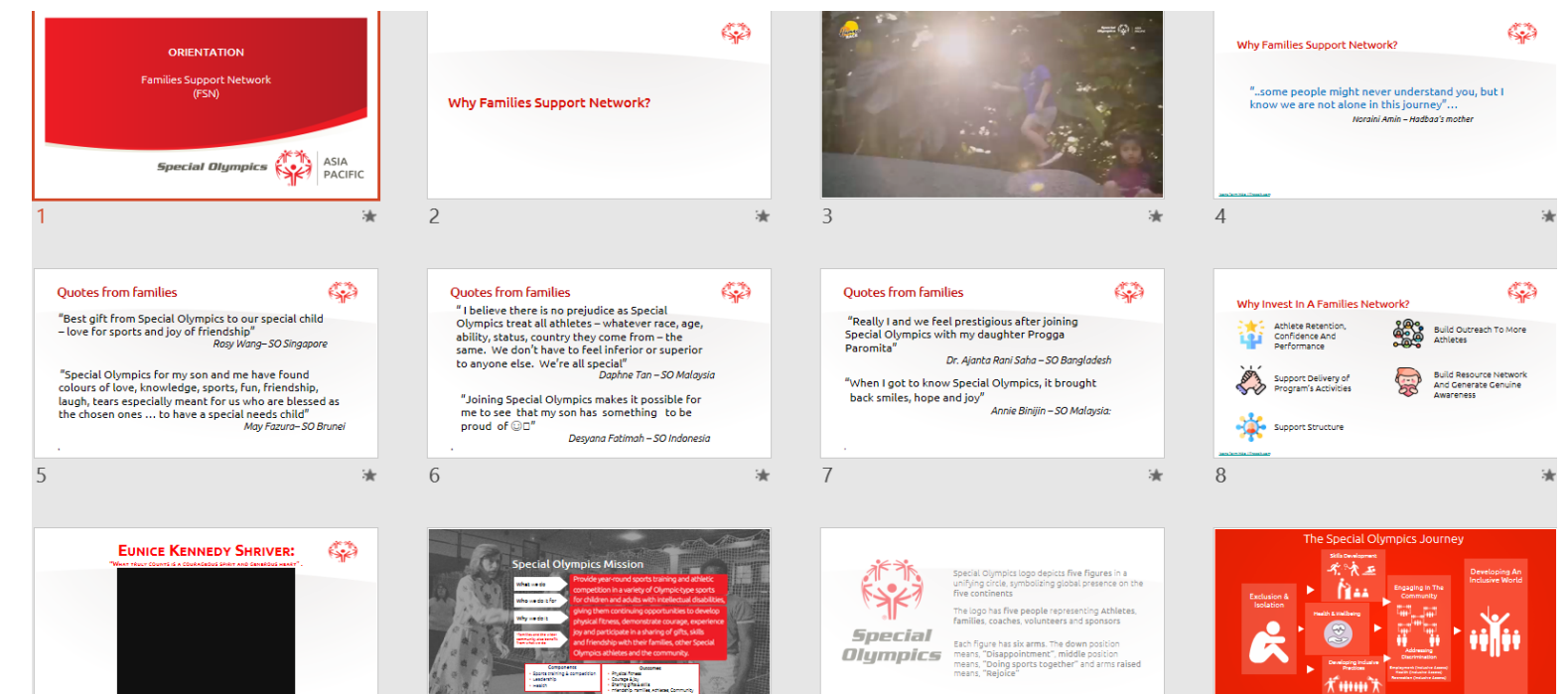
The campaign built on earlier efforts to help athletes stay updated on the latest health information during the pandemic, through the development of a series of easy to read, educational materials that could be easily accessed through any smartphone.

Topics range from nutrition, health, exercise, as well as recommended healthy lifestyle tips to promote the health and well-being, and engagement of people with intellectual disabilities.

STANDARDISE ORIENTATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

To standardize information sharing with the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Family Support Network, the team rolled out a comprehensive orientation that was shared with the Family Input Council in Q1 2022.

This standard orientation served as a consistent resource for Family Input Council and Program Leaders in consistently communicating the importance of Family engagement and outreach amongst families within the Special Olympics, and to effectively engage the families to support programming.



BUILDING HEALTH

SUCCEEDING ON THE FRONT LINES OF HEALTH EQUITY

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities around the world have been marginalized for generations – provided poor access to social, educational, and medical services. Their life expectancy, heart disease rates, and severe dental decay are far worse than that of the general population.

It was in this context that ten years ago, at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), the announcement was made that Tom Golisano, founder of Paychex, gave an initial gift of \$12 million to Special Olympics for a global initiative on inclusive health that has since grown to \$67 million in total giving.

Since then, Special Olympics has trained 175,000 health professionals and students in treating people with intellectual disabilities, engaged 452,000 athletes in fitness programming, and conducted over 1.2 million free health screenings of children and adults with intellectual disabilities, resulting in a 50% reduction in urgent referrals.

The Global Golisano Health Leadership Awards recognize health champions—leaders and organizations—that are making a significant contribution to secure equal access to health, fitness or wellness for people with intellectual disabilities.

The award also promotes awareness of the progress and extraordinary efforts toward fulfilling the goals, values and mission of Special Olympics Health work. This is the highest Special Olympics honor for health partners.

In Asia Pacific, General Incorporated Association of Japan Lions (Tokyo, Japan) Lions Clubs of Japan were given the award. They demonstrated the true value of service by committing to sustain inclusive health initiatives in Japan.

They have engaged in vision screenings, provision of prescriptive eyewear, referral to care that addresses unmet health needs and preventive care including health education to families of people with intellectual disabilities.



YOUTH AND ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

CREATING A WORLD OF CHANGE

Youth make up over half the total force of our volunteer pool – an indication of their interest and the potential power of young people in creating a change in the world together.

At Special Olympics Asia Pacific, we believe in empowering young people with and without intellectual disabilities to be meaningfully involved in the inclusion agenda. This means that we value their skills and contributions. We provide accessible opportunities and resources for them to lead, ensuring a more accepting and inclusive future for all.

Issues that have been addressed by the youths in our movement have ranged from mental wellness, bullying, isolation and marginalisation, to systemic challenges around access to education and employment.

“

Every one of us has the power to be a catalyst for change, particularly so for the young who will be leaders of the future. It is our hope that with youth at the forefront of the inclusion movement, the next generation will be a unified one.

**– Dipak Natali, President
and Managing Director,
Special Olympics Asia
Pacific**



BUILDING YOUTH & ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

SOFT LAUNCH OF NEW YOUTH FOR INCLUSION PORTAL

The conversation continues at our newly launched digital platform, www.YouthForInclusion.com, a first for the Asia Pacific region.

The site is a platform where young leaders from across the region can contribute and access best practices and resources aimed at educating, inspiring and empowering young changemakers with and without intellectual disability.

Resources shared are centred on the themes of 'Inclusive Leadership', 'Inclusive Development' and 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion'.



AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY (ASID) CONFERENCE

For true inclusion and equity in schools and workplaces to happen, it is imperative that accessible communication resources be developed with and for people with intellectual disabilities.

Athlete leaders from Special Olympics Asia Pacific – Hanako Sawayama, Jasmine Sharif, Salihin bin Nawi and Shrey Kadian, were part of the 2022 Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability (ASID) conference held virtually on 4 and 9 November 2022.

The athlete leaders addressed researchers, service providers, policy and advocacy practitioners, self-advocates and family members on how accessible resources can be achieved.

(Video [here](#))



“

Accessible resources help us create platforms for people with intellectual disabilities to participate meaningfully. My friends and I have also shown how we can be involved in this process. So, these resources are not just created for people with intellectual disabilities, but with people with intellectual disabilities.

– Hanako Sawayama, Administrative Coordinator (Initiatives) at Special Olympics Asia Pacific

BUILDING YOUTH LEADERSHIP

BEST PRACTICE EXCHANGE

Over the past 10 years, we have had a wealth of projects spearheaded by young leaders with and without disabilities across the region.

2022 was the time for us to consolidate and share resources, to inspire and empower each other as we build back stronger from the pandemic.

In collaboration with newly appointed members of the Regional Athlete and Youth Leadership Councils (RALC and RYLC), Special Olympics Asia Pacific held its first ever virtual Best Practice Exchange on 6 November 2022.

This exchange was a platform for youth leaders with and without intellectual disability to share about inclusive projects they have led and driven.

Approximately 60 participants listened to 11 presentations from 21 young leaders. Participants found the exchange “inspiring and insightful” as they learnt from their peers and are motivated to advocate for inclusion in their communities.



One of the presentations featured a Youth Innovation scaling project from Special Olympics Papua New Guinea. (Video [here](#)) The project was led by Special Olympics Papua New Guinea Youth Leaders Thomas, Pauline, Ectopia, Junior and Eliuda with their mentors Naomi and Willie.

“

What I like the most about this exchange is meeting other participants from other countries and I look forward to meeting up with them next year. This was my first time being an emcee, it was difficult at first but very fun.

– Qing Hui, emcee and Regional Athlete Leadership Council Co-Chair

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP: STORY OF CHANGE

LEADING THE WAY IN AN INCLUSIVE WORLD

FLORENCE HUI, REGIONAL ATHLETE LEADER, SPECIAL OLYMPICS SINGAPORE

At the tender age of 7, when most children are learning to ride a bike or jump rope, Florence was diagnosed with an intellectual disability. This, for her, meant needing more time to learn and getting used to the momentum of new activities. A saying goes 'fall down seven times, stand up eight', and that's exactly what Florence did.

Through her passion and never-say-die attitude, she graduated from the APSN Delta Senior School with a Work Skills Qualification (WSQ) certification in retail operations.

A Valedictorian of her batch, an esteemed member of The Purple Symphony (a local all-inclusive orchestra), an Athlete Leader with Special Olympics, this young girl can do it all (and then some!)

Getting a step closer to her dream

Studying in APSN Delta brought Florence a step closer to her dream of working in retail. She was first introduced to UNIQLO Singapore through their retail training space in her school. During this training, she felt intrigued by the clothing displays and retail culture and realized that this might just be her calling.

She joined the Work Experience Program and let her passion lead the way. Her positive attitude scored her the gig. "I was over the moon when my trainer came and announced that I'd been selected for the program," she says.



The journey

On her first day, Florence was up before sunrise. "I recall being filled with energy the night before as I was putting together my work attire for the day," she says. Stepping into a new job with new colleagues was intimidating, but Florence was quick to adapt with the support and help of her trainers and work buddies.

She recalls, "Throughout the training, I was taught different skills that a retail staff requires, from the preparation of stocks to attending to customers' queries." As she gained more confidence and independence in the training, she soon unlocked another milestone. She was offered a permanent position in the store, with the responsibility of managing the stockroom and running the sales floor.

Challenges overcome

The job came with its challenges. Florence struggled to attend to inquiries from Mandarin-speaking customers. When she was overwhelmed, she would approach her work buddies for help. They would patiently help her break down the tasks into simplified steps.

She also found her own way to de-stress. "At home, writing about my daily experiences in my diary and playing the guzheng calm me down", she says.

On working in an inclusive environment, she shares that her team "treats me just like any other colleague", allowing her to carry out her daily tasks without being reminded of her disability. She adds, "Knowing I have the support of my colleagues whenever I face difficulties at work keeps me motivated and really boosts my confidence."

Visit [Humanrace.asia](https://www.humanrace.asia) for more stories of change

ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS

RALLYING THE VOICES OF THE MOVEMENT

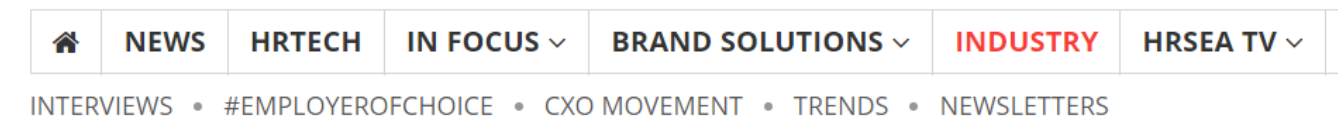
People with intellectual disabilities face stigma in their everyday lives. With the world believing and dictating what they can or cannot do, here at Special Olympics, we constantly find ways to show that they are beyond a statistic and the limitations.

The communications initiatives we drive, strives to amplify voices of those often marginalized by society. We leverage limited resources, collaborative partnerships, and compelling storytelling to challenge stereotypes, break down barriers, and cultivate a more inclusive world

We aim to educate the public about the unique abilities, strengths, and contributions of persons with intellectual disabilities, to inspire empathy, respect, and recognition of the inherent value each individual brings.

Our work extends beyond awareness-building; we actively spearhead thought leadership and advocacy that can influence stakeholders, community leaders, and like-minded organizations to drive systemic change.

By advocating for inclusive policies, promoting accessible environments, and supporting inclusive practices across various sectors, we strive to create a society that values and celebrates the diversity of all individuals.



HRSEA News / Latest HRSEA News / Industry

For employment to be inclusive, hiring needs to go beyond meeting a diversity quota: Interview with Special Olympics' Dipak Natali

In an exclusive interaction with ETHRWorld International, Dipak Natali, Regional President and Managing Director of Special Olympics, Asia Pacific talks about some of the best disability-inclusive employer practices and hiring of individuals with disabilities, a few tips on how to work towards creating a sense of belonging by building an inclusive culture with diverse perspectives to better the workplace and society, and the benefits of having good disability inclusion policies at the

BUILDING COMMUNICATIONS

HUMANISING DIGITAL CONTENT

In 2022, a concerted effort was made to further produce stronger, more humanized content with personalities, illustrations, concept-based posts and reels making up a sizeable chunk of our digital story telling.

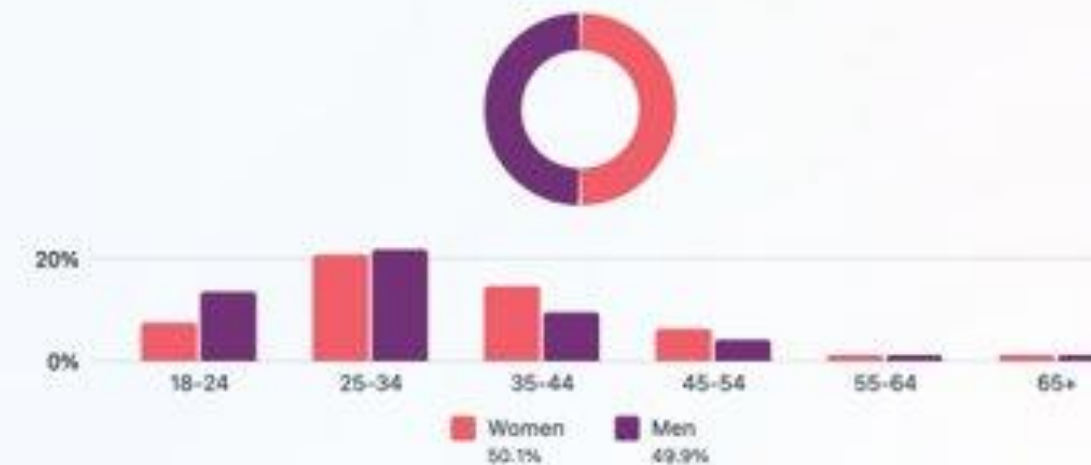
Our Facebook and Instagram page reaches increased by a sizeable 224M% and 235.7M% respectively and were attributed towards the efforts made to build a stronger online community through engagement-driven activities, Q&As and interactive call-to-action content pieces.

Over the past year, the biggest consumer of our content was India, followed by Singapore and Indonesia.

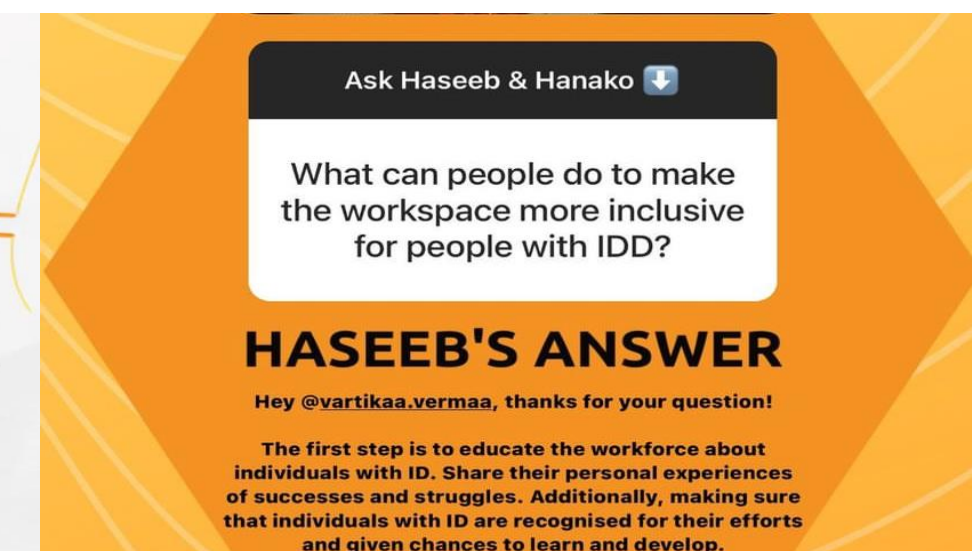
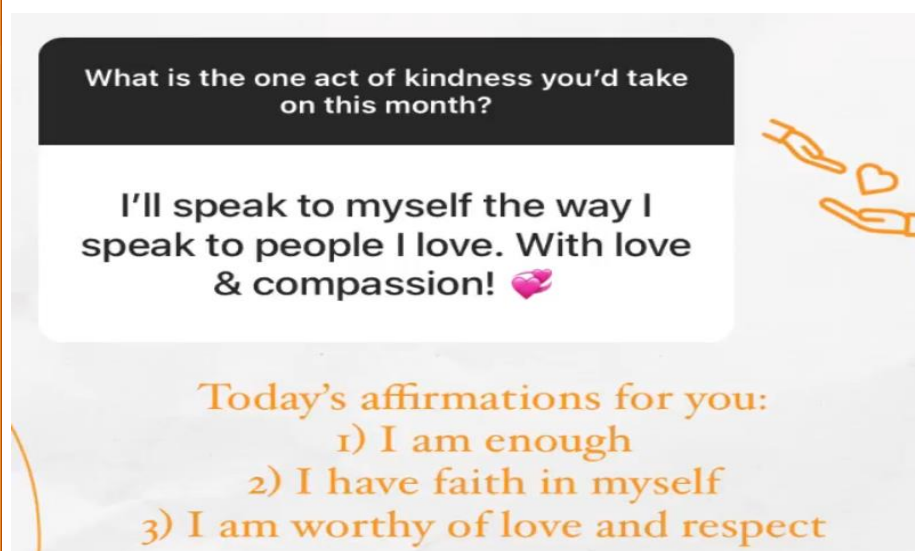
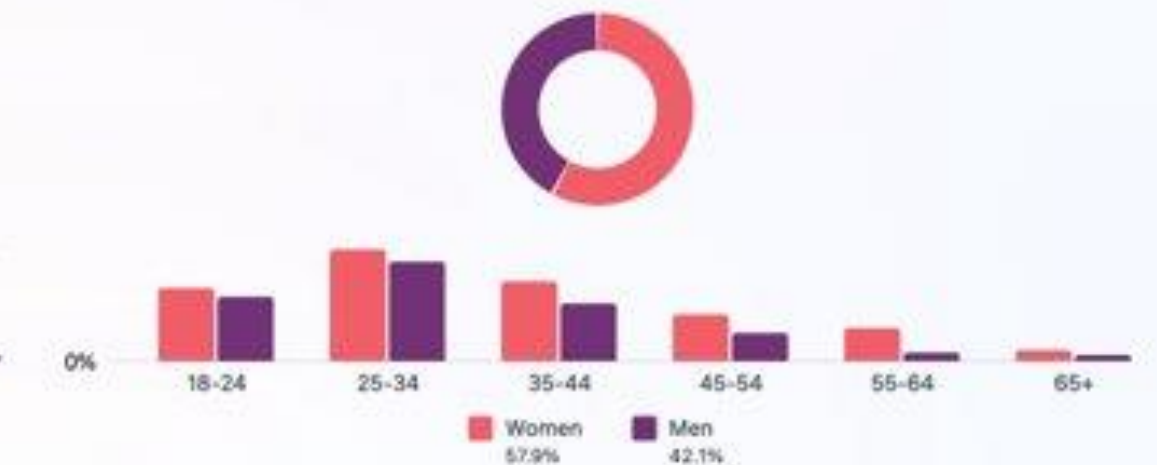
Further deep-diving into our audience breakdown, genders were fairly evenly split with 50.1% consisting of women and 49.9% being men.



Age & gender ①



Age & gender ①



BUILDING ADVOCACY

REGIONAL MEDIA OUTREACH

Media outreach efforts were focused opportunistically on thought leadership, executive interviews and human interest stories that weighed in on how ID communities were impacted post-pandemic as well as providing insights and perspectives on the hot button topics of diversity and inclusion.

Coverage in media outlets cut across both mainstream dailies radio, broadcast, podcasts as well as parenting and human resource trade titles

Interviews were primarily helmed by Dipak Natali, President and Managing Director of Special Olympics Asia Pacific, alongside local key opinion leaders across the region.

Special Olympics Asia Pacific's media coverage reached over 665 million people across the region.

THE IAS GAZETTE

NEWS PUBLICATION



The Opening Ceremony of the 2019 Abu Dhabi Special Olympics World Summer Games | Photo Credit: Special Olympics Asia Pacific.

CAN SPORTS GARNER SUPPORT FOR THE INVISIBLE COMMUNITIES IN THE DARK?

The worst of the COVID-19 pandemic may be over, but some communities, such as people with intellectual disabilities, still seem to struggle more than others. We speak to Dipak Natali, Regional President and Managing Director of the Special Olympics Asia Pacific, as he tries to uplift the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through a love of sport.

THE STRAITS TIMES

Most recently, he has been working with Special Olympics Singapore (SOSG) to send a team of 16 athletes to compete in the upcoming Unified Cup, a football tournament for people with disabilities held in Detroit, the United States. The week-long event to be held at the end of July will gather footballers from over 20 nations. Each football team comprises people with or without intellectual disabilities.



Mr Lee attending the Special Olympics Unified Cup Detroit 2022 flag presentation ceremony, graced by Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law. PHOTOS: MICRON SINGAPORE



Why disability-inclusive hiring matters: Dipak Natali, Special Olympics Asia Pacific's Regional MD

Written by Tracy Chan Category: Talent Management Published: 05 December 2022

“ Only when our society, governments, and businesses start recognising and committing to hiring, training, and assimilating PWIDs into the workforce, will we start to see real and impactful progress. ”

Dipak Natali,
Regional President and MD,
Special Olympics Asia Pacific



Dell Podcast : Future Extraordinaire



Future Extraordi...

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People with disabilities were amongst the most vulnerable and underrepresented populations during the current COVID-19 outbreak due to many health, social and environmental barriers, discriminatory attitudes, and inaccessible infrastructure.

How can we break down barriers and stigmas to improve better engagement and outreach with people who have intellectual disabilities? What is the role of technology in bridging this gap?

LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

STRENGTHENING STANDARDS

The Special Olympics Asia Pacific Organizational Development team, formed in 2020, continued its work aimed at enabling Program leaders and empowering the staff and key constituents to deliver their work effectively.

From providing customer service to the Programs on the topics of compliance, which include Program Accreditation and annual Census data collection, to strengthening national Boards and building intra- regional communication processes, the Organizational Development team is dedicated to quality growth of the Programs in the region.

Over the past year, the Organizational Development team guided and supported Programs increasing their ability to evolve and achieve greater effectiveness by creating, enhancing, and bolstering strategies, structures, and processes.

With Relationship Management serving as a vital catalyst, the team thrives on the following fundamental objectives:

- Operational Excellence
- Capacity Building
- Leadership Development



BUILDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

BOARD GOVERNANCE TRAINING

SOAP conducted four board governance trainings to upskill board members at the program level across the Asia Pacific region with the objective of strengthening their existing skillsets and supporting them in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as board members.

These training courses were conducted by Susan Decker from Board Source, a senior governance consultant working with organizations and individuals to develop and expand the board members' leadership skills. Key areas focused on included reinforcing the importance of governance practices, fundraising, board development to increase engagement and strategic planning.

The topics encompassed boards roles and responsibilities, fundraising and structuring high performance boards. Each session had approximately 30 participants.

Further, SOAP provided customized and individualized Board Trainings for 26 Board members and leaders from three programs.

This included Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

The Program Leaders have been inspired by these training courses to take an active part in leading certain initiatives.

One of them is Mr. Jeffrey Bong, the Sports Director of Special Olympics Malaysia. In cooperation with organizations for learning like IPGKPM, SEAMEO-SEN, and local partners, he established a new State Program, Special Olympics Melaka, and agreed to host the National Games.

Following the prolonged Covid-19 lockdown, he was able to mobilize 450 participants across the country and obtain funding from the State government. It was great a step in SO Malaysia's endeavor to revive its programs post-Covid.

OD – Board Governance

Webinar 1: Board Roles & Responsibilities
12 May
10:00-11:30am SG

Webinar 2: Board Building Cycle
15 July
10:00-11:30am SG

Webinar 3: Board's Role in Fundraising
15 Sep.
10:00-11:30am SG

Webinar 4: Structuring the High-Performance Boards
10 Nov.
10:00-11:30am SG

Does your BOARD...

- ☐ Understand its roles & responsibilities?
- ☐ Govern, not (micro-)manages?
- ☐ Engage with diverse stakeholders?
- ☐ Provide strategic direction?
- ☐ Have a succession plan & rotates its members?
- ☐ Participate in fundraising?
- ☐ Conduct productive Board meetings?
- ☐ Work as a team to advance the Program?
- ☐ Challenge each other in a respectful way?
- ☐ Review its performance regularly?

Join the SOAP Board Governance Training Series to ensure your Board checks all the boxes



BUILDING CAPACITY

PLANNING AND BUDGETARY WORKSHOP WITH BANK OF AMERICA

The Session on Program Planning and Budgeting was organized for Special Olympics programs in Asia Pacific to equip them with the fundamentals of responsible monetary management.

This session was the first of its kind and was led in collaboration with the Bank of America team across both Hong Kong and Singapore.

The workshop highlighted the key factors on how to devise a budget, especially in nonprofit sectors, using real-world examples from the non-profit sector.

One of these illustrated the importance in the diversification of revenue sources and the regular monitoring of spending patterns to ensure sustainability.

The workshop zeroed in on key considerations for solid financial management and practices including building revenue streams to enable self sustenance.

One of the highlights of the session was the introduction and demonstration of how budget tools can be utilized to keep track of cash flow and capital. The highlight of the budgetary tool was its flexible features and convenience.

The training was attended by 57 participants, which consisted of National Directors, board chairs and finance staff across the region.

The session received positive response and feedback and a request was made for more personalized sessions for programs.

66

Good session. The engagement time with other Special Olympics programs in the breakout room was productive too. Thank you for organizing the online seminar. I hope to start using the excel template for our 2023 budget planning.

– A program participant from APAC



BUILDING CAPACITY

GRANT DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT

Providing Programs with the resources they need to establish and sustain their operations is one of Special Olympics Asia Pacific's objectives under the Organizational Development department.

One of the numerous ventures the team began in 2022 was grant development. Several successful alliances for grants were cultivated from corporate donors and philanthropic organizations.

The generous donors in the region included Macquire, Porticus and Illumina.

These grants were disbursed among programs to develop effective health and sports initiatives as well as safeguarding resources.

The CRT grant is another important and committed undertaking for The Program. Over the last 30 years, Christmas Record Trust (CRT) grants have enabled Special Olympics both in the Asia Pacific region as well as globally to implement impactful programming and activities.

It is one of the largest grants disbursed and managed in the Region. Over \$330,000 USD was disbursed to 25 eligible Programs during the year.

One of the newly developed CRT grant initiatives for 2022 was the **Afghan Refugee Project**. The project focused on developing a Young Athletes Community Model for the Afghan Refugees settled in Pakistan. It was implemented at Al-Asif Square, a large apartment complex in Karachi, Pakistan where most of the Afghan migrants from different provinces of Afghanistan were settled.

One of the children under the project is 11-year-old Khalda whose parents accompany her to the playgroup. Her parents were initially worried as Khalda had various delayed developmental milestones. However since being enrolled at a home-based school in Al-Asif Square and participating in Young Athletes' activities, her overall well-being has improved, bringing hope to her parents and all involved in the project.



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE: BUILDING CHANGE

STORIES OF CHANGE FROM THE CRT GRANT REPORT

SPECIAL OLYMPICS PALAU : BRAVE IN THE ATTEMPT



Team Palau joined the Virtus Oceania Asia Games 2022 (OA Games). Virtus Games was an international multi-sport competition in the Oceania Asia region for elite athletes with intellectual impairment that was held in November 2022 in Brisbane, Australia.

This year marks the first time that an Virtus event was held in the Oceania region. There were hundreds of athletes and officials from Asia Pacific and Oceania. The event also marked the first time that Special Olympics Palau was invited to join the games.

Team Palau sent one male athlete to participate in these high-level games in the sport of table tennis. SO Palau athlete, Edwin Tucheliaur Jr. has been training on a year-round basis attending local competitions, as well as national summer games. He is fondly called Junior by everyone at SO Palau. This was a wonderful opportunity to expose him to a higher-level competitions and get him prepared for Special Olympics World Summer Games in 2023 in Germany. This was Jr's first trip to outside of Palau and being away from his family, friends, and home.

Although Junior lost all three games in the Single Men's Competition-Category 11-1, he showed great courage and was brave throughout the competitions. He came, he tried, he conquered and was included. He had a wonderful time meeting new people and made a lot of friends. Even though he had been overwhelmed, nervous and homesick, he nevertheless showed great courage and bravery by competing to his best ability and proudly represented his country. Junior has been trained in public speaking and has spoken at many public forums representing SO Palau.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE: BUILDING CHANGE

STORIES OF CHANGE FROM THE CRT GRANT REPORT

SPECIAL OLYMPICS BHUTAN: BUDDING ACTORS TAKE THE STAGE

The Special Olympics Bhutan team was thrilled but anxious when renowned filmmaker Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche contacted them to shoot with their athletes for his forthcoming short documentary film.

It is a first time for SO Bhutan to be part of any film. The short film portrays Bhutanese culture and family traditions. Two athletes from the Program portrayed the role of a family unit with the rest acting as members of the public witnessing family rituals.

The budding actors followed every instruction of the filmmaker carefully and enacted the scenes to perfection. Although the environment and crew were new for the athletes, they did not seem nervous at all. It was a great platform and provided a boost to the athletes' self-esteem.

The film is in the final stages and will be soon released. The athletes, their friends and families all eagerly await the film screening.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS THAILAND: BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP



After more than 2 years of Covid lockdowns, most Special Olympics athletes in Asia missed the physical interaction and fun of playing sports. The 9th Southeast Asian Unified Football tournament held in Bangkok in November allowed many the opportunity to return to sport fields and experience new friendships.

Without these competitions, athletes like Komkrit Janta Poon, and Unified partners, like Pithak Kampan would never have met.

Pithak and Krom Krit have become great friends since training together for two months prior to the tournament. They travelled to Bangkok together as a pair and then had the time of their life playing and winning the gold medal at the tournament, while making new friends with teams from neighboring countries.

REGIONAL REACH

Athletes
447,130

Youth Leaders
5,055

Volunteers
67,873

Athlete Leaders
2,157

Competitions
6,316

Coaches
39,605

Unified Schools
1,042

Unified Athletes
28,296

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