



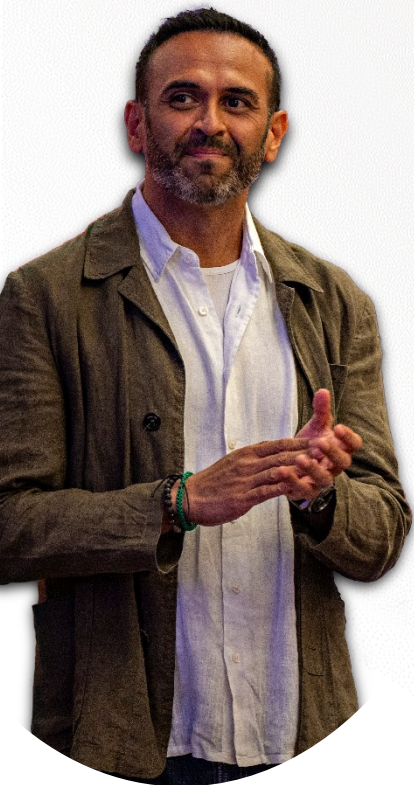
Annual Report 2023



ASIA
PACIFIC

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

RECLAIMING OUR REACH



Dear Friends of Special Olympics Asia Pacific,

2023 was a tumultuous year. We emerged from the global COVID-19 pandemic having to take stock and evaluate its full impact whilst at the same time, looking cautiously ahead at what a post COVID world means for Special Olympics athletes and the entire movement.

We have been devastated by the loss of so much of our infrastructure and engagement of athletes – we have had to appreciate just how much the marginalization of people with intellectual disabilities experience has been further exacerbated by the aftermath.

Where once our athletes were already excluded and forgotten, the impact of the pandemic has left people with ID even further down the list of priorities for communities and society, as we grapple with the economic and geo-political challenges the world has begun to face.

Having said that, whilst we face an uphill struggle to regain and rebuild what we have

lost, I am encouraged and inspired by the resilience and ingenuity the region has demonstrated in the face of these losses. In fact, 2023 saw our countries do amazing things.

We recommenced our whole portfolio of sports activities and events, health screenings, trainings and youth leadership events. And against all the odds, celebrated more than 20 countries and over 600 athletes attending the World Summer Games in Berlin.

The World Games in Berlin in itself was testament to the strength and dedication of our country programs, the staff, volunteers, coaches and athletes that make Special Olympics activities happen each and every day. Whilst there is a long way to go to recapture everything that our region has been within the Special Olympics movement, I am heartened and inspired by where we are and what we have already achieved so soon after such a challenging period in the world's history.

Cont Page 3

In addition, throughout 2023, we showcased our work in ways we had never done before. We offered the wider world a new window through which they could see the power of our work through film screenings of a beautifully crafted film called “As Far As They Can Run”, charting the lives of three people with intellectual disabilities in Pakistan as well as deep diving into the lives of people with intellectual disabilities via “Open Books”, a video storytelling campaign.

Importantly, we kick-started public fund raising and forged new corporate partnerships with UPS Foundation and Macquarie Foundation too.

These activities and our shared commitment across the Special Olympics movement fill me with optimism for the future. In 2023, we lit the touchpaper for a bright new future for the Special Olympics movement in the Asia Pacific region.

Thank you to all of the staff, volunteers and athletes that are involved in our work for your passion, commitment, and support without which this optimism for the future and confidence in our work could not exist. I look forward to another year of learning and growth and furthering our shared vision of a more progressive and inclusive society for all.



DIPAK NATALI
PRESIDENT & MANAGING DIRECTOR SPECIAL
OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC

Where We Operate

34

Countries in
Total

28

Post
Pandemic

Actively rebuilding
programs
highlighted in red

1. American Samoa
2. Australia
3. Bangladesh
4. Bharat (India)
5. Bhutan
6. Brunei Darussalam
7. Cambodia
8. Fiji
9. Guam
10. Indonesia
11. Kiribati
12. Laos
13. Malaysia
14. Maldives
15. Marshall Islands
16. Micronesia
17. Myanmar
18. Nauru
19. Nepal
20. New Zealand
21. Nippon (Japan)
22. Pakistan
23. Palau
24. Papua New Guinea
25. Philippines
26. Samoa
27. Serendib (Sri Lanka)
28. Singapore
29. Solomon Islands
30. Thailand
31. Timor Leste
32. Tonga
33. Vanuatu
34. Vietnam

OUR FOCUS

OUTCOMES

 <p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	 <p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	 <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>
 <p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	 <p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	 <p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>

 Scan to see how our youth leaders are contributing towards the UNSDGs.

- 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

THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS DIFFERENCE



SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPICS 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.

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

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.

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

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

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

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

SPORTS



ON THIS PAGE

Special Olympics Nippon (Japan) athlete at the World Summer Games Berlin 2023

SPORTS

World Summer Games Berlin 2023



ASIA
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At the World Summer Games Berlin 2023, Special Olympics Asia Pacific demonstrated remarkable participation across 23 sports.

Representatives from 23 country programs came together, showcasing their talents and forming lasting memories.

The event saw 689 athletes and unified partners accompanied by 257 coaches, illustrating a strong collective effort and commitment to sportsmanship.

Throughout our journey, subtle shifts in gender dynamics were observed. The composition of athletes and unified partners transitioned from 395 males and 376 females, to 352 males and 337 females. This transition underscores our commitment to fostering gender equity and cultivating an inclusive sporting environment where individuals of all genders can thrive.

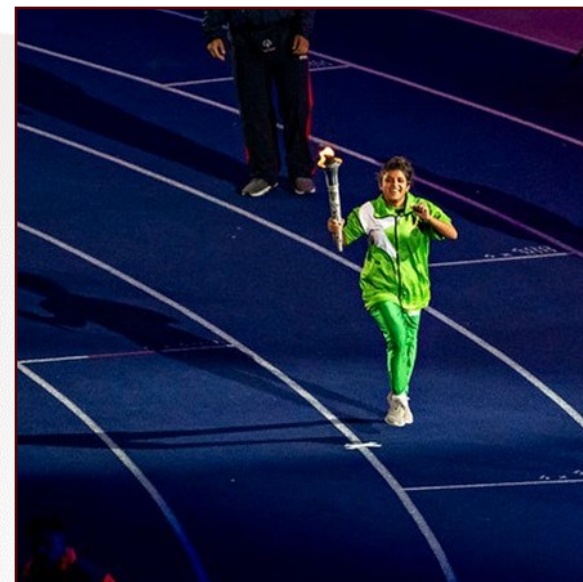
The contributions of coaches were

pivotal to our success, who gamely embraced challenges and celebrated victories alongside our athletes and unified partners.

This evolution reflects our dedication to optimizing resources, fostering mentorship, and promoting a culture of excellence in coaching.

While celebrating growth, we acknowledge challenges faced by few programs which experienced declines in participation.

This underscores the importance of targeted interventions and collaborative efforts to ensure equitable opportunities for all, reaffirming our commitment to championing diversity and inclusivity.



Torch bearer, Sana from
Special Olympics Pakistan

Progressing Coach Development

Coach development stands as a pivotal priority for the Special Olympics Asia Pacific region, fostering a culture of growth, expertise, and empowerment among our coaching community.

In partnership with esteemed collaborators such as Rexona and Gallagher, we have made significant strides in enhancing the capabilities of coaches across various country programs.

Breaking Limits With Rexona

Driven by a shared mission to inspire confidence through movement, Special Olympics Australia and Special Olympics New Zealand collaborated with deodorant and antiperspirant brand, Rexona, to work on the Rexona Breaking Limits Program.

This initiative aims to equip coaches with the skills and confidence to empower young individuals to embrace movement freely.

The Breaking Limits Training Series, designed in collaboration with community leaders and mentors, provided coaches with the tools to instill confidence, motivation, and opportunity through movement-based programs.

Through Rexona's support, coaches were empowered to foster long-term positive behavior change, ultimately transforming lives.



Breaking Limits Training Series conducted in partnership with Rexona

Gallagher's Impact

This year, Gallagher's support has been instrumental in enhancing coaching endeavors across six country programs: Special Olympics Malaysia, Special Olympics New Zealand, Special Olympics Australia, Special Olympics Pakistan, Special Olympics Nippon (Japan), and Special Olympics Samoa.

Each program has seen significant progress in various sports disciplines, ranging from Floorball, Cycling, Athletics, Basketball, Football, and Badminton.

Developing Coaches in Japan

Special Olympics Nippon (SON) in Japan has made remarkable strides in coach development, focusing on training coaches and forging partnerships with the Japan Floorball Federation (JFF).

Through coaching clinics, trial sessions, and the establishment of Unified Floorball programs, SON has laid a solid foundation for the sport's growth.

A coach development seminar, facilitated by JFF Coach Developers, further solidified partnerships, culminating in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between SON and JFF. *(Pic 1).*

Empowering Coaches in Samoa

Special Olympics Samoa has fostered partnerships with National Sport Federations to deliver coach education programs in Football, Volleyball, Athletics, and Bocce.

By adopting the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Coach Development pathway, SO Samoa is integrating coaches into the broader coaching community while ensuring sustainable access to high-quality coach education. Plans are underway to recruit and train Coach Developers to provide ongoing support and mentorship across the islands. *(Pic 2)*

Stratified Coaching Workforce in Malaysia

Special Olympics Malaysia is developing a stratified coaching workforce aligned with the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Coach Development Framework, focusing on Badminton and Floorball, they certified coaches at varying levels to meet diverse community needs.

Leveraging partnerships with local sports authorities and corporate entities, Special Olympics Malaysia is paving the way for formalized coach education programs, ensuring standardized qualifications and elevating coaching standards across the nation. *(Pic 3.)*

In collaboration with partners, Special Olympics Asia Pacific nurtures a robust coaching community, enriching lives, and fostering excellence in sports. These initiatives underscore our dedication to inclusion, empowerment, and the transformative power of sport.



Pic 1: Group photo taken at a coaching clinic conducted by the Japan Floorball Federation (JFF) through the support of Gallagher



Pic 2: High quality coach education developed based on the Special Olympics Asia Pacific coach development pathway



Pic 3: Group photo taken at a coaching clinic in Malaysia

COACH+ is a Canadian-based company that operates internationally, providing support for the development of sports coaches across more than 20 countries.

In 2022, COACH+ partnered with Special Olympics International to select Special Olympics Pakistan for a mentorship program tailored specifically for their coaches.

Throughout the duration of this project, the mentor and mentee worked side-by-side, fostering a collaborative approach rather than a top-down method.

This methodology created numerous learning opportunities for both mentor and mentee alike.

“

This program has truly transformed my life. The personalized coaching and support I received were instrumental in achieving my goals.

- Testimonial from a mentee



Mentoring program for coaches at Special Olympics Pakistan

SPORTS

LANDMARK 10-YEAR COMPETITION CALENDAR

Special Olympics Asia Pacific published its first comprehensive 10-Year Competition Calendar—a landmark achievement for our region.

With meticulous dedication, the regional office crafted this comprehensive calendar to provide athletes with a continuous stream of elite international opportunities.

Our calendar showcases a series of single-sport competitions spanning the entire region, including its three subregions. The selection of sports has been thoughtfully curated, drawing upon historical data and popularity. It encompasses a diverse range of sports, from Athletics, Badminton, and 3x3 Basketball to Bocce, Bowling, Swimming, and Unified Football.

Aligned with our mission, we strive to organize one regional and one sub-

regional competition almost every year. This calendar seamlessly integrates with Special Olympics International's schedule, featuring the World Summer Games (2027, 2031), World Winter Games (2025, 2029), and Unified Cup (2026, 2030).

Furthermore, upcoming competitions for Volleyball, Dance sport, Tennis, and Basketball will be incorporated into the international calendar, offering our athletes even more diverse opportunities to showcase their talents.

The inauguration of this remarkable journey was originally supposed to be marked by the 2023 South Asia Unified Football Competition in Dhaka, Bangladesh during December 2023. However, the competition was later postponed to 2024 due to political considerations.



Great sportsmanship on display at the World Summer Games Berlin 2023

	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
GLOBAL		WSG							WWG			VB		UC				WSG						
REGIONAL							B&B				BM				3x3							A&S		
SOUTH ASIAN				UF																				UF
SOUTHEAST ASIAN												UF												
PACIFIC + NIPPON								UF																UF
	2029				2030				2031				2032				2033							
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
GLOBAL		WWG				UC				WSG							WWG							
REGIONAL				BM			3x3								A&S				BM					
SOUTH ASIAN												UF												
SOUTHEAST ASIAN			UF																	UF				
PACIFIC + NIPPON																UF								

A&S	Athletics & Swimming
B&B	Bocce & Bowling
BM	Badminton
C	Cricket

UC	Unified Cup
UF	Unified Football
VB	Volleyball
WSG	World Summer Games

WWG	World Winter Games
3X3	Basketball 3x3

SPORTS

UNIFIED SPORTS

Special Olympics Australia

Special Olympics Australia forged a key partnership with Football NSW to provide competition pathways for their All Abilities Programs, benefiting around 3000 athletes.

Similar collaborations with State Sports Organizations and Football Australia are underway, aiming for nationwide replication. 'Come and Try' events and coach information sessions, funded by the grant, to expand participation.

The first Unified Competition in Western Australia was successfully held alongside the WA State Games. In New South Wales, partnerships with local universities have recruited six Unified Partners for ongoing programs.

Pic 1.



Pic 1. Unified competition in Western Australia



Pic 2. Unified competition in India

Special Olympics Bharat (India)

Special Olympics Bharat raised corporate awareness through unified sports with partners like Bank of America and Macquarie Bank.

These partnerships not only led to increased involvement in unified activities but also to offers of off-field support, including mentoring and wealth management sessions.

Other partners, such as New Delhi Municipal Corporation, Select City Walk Mall, and Decathlon, expressed interest in supporting athletes through various avenues, showcasing a commitment to inclusivity and support.

Pic 2.

SPORTS – STORY OF CHANGE

FROM ADVERSITY TO TRIUMPH



Muskan Garg SPECIAL OLYMPICS BHARAT



Muskan set her mind towards one goal – becoming a powerlifter.

Have you ever heard a story of a girl who chased her dreams, until they became her reality? That’s my daughter, Muskan Garg.

This is our #OpenBooks story. I’m Neena Garg, Muskan’s mother. My daughter is a powerlifter who represents India, and she has an intellectual disability. In a world where people weigh the worth of an individual based on their abilities, my daughter blazed new paths in the pursuit of her dreams.

With an unmatched zest for life and passion for sport, she set her mind towards one goal – becoming a powerlifter. Today, I’m so proud that she’s not only achieved her dream of competing in powerlifting, but she is also the pride of both our family and country.

People with intellectual disabilities often go through multiple hardships. When

Muskan was growing up, I heard things that pierced right through my heart. “Why are you wasting so much time and money on a girl child?” “How will you raise a child with an intellectual disability? Just give her away!”

Every unkind remark, every thoughtless question, every belittling opinion pushed me towards working even harder to prove them wrong. None of these people could shake my belief in my daughter’s potential, I knew she was born to achieve great things! I went through a painful separation from my husband due to Muskan’s condition. But I’m a mother, and if the father of my child refuses to take responsibility, I will. Even if no one believes in my daughter, I will. I’ll defy all odds to see her shine.

Muskan joined Special Olympics Bharat in 2016, and there has been no looking back ever since! Her involvement in sports has not only given her a sense of purpose and pride, but also taught her valuable life skills. From being an extremely dependent child who used to cling to me, I saw her live independently for weeks, even months, when she was required to attend sports tournaments. She's now a more confident, self-reliant, and independent young woman.

Muskan's passion for sports has led her to win numerous medals and accolades for the country. While powerlifting has been her focus, she also loved participating in other sporting activities like ice skating and floorball.

She participated in the Special Olympics Abu Dhabi World Games held in 2019, with more than 7,000 athletes from across the globe and brought national

pride by winning a gold and three silvers. Watching her achieve this milestone made my eyes well up with tears of pride and joy. When I went to receive her from the airport, I felt overwhelming joy.

She is a shining example of what can be achieved with hard work and dedication and is a testament to the potential that exists within all of us, regardless of our abilities.

My message to fellow parents is simple – learn to recognize the limitless potential of our little ones, support them in their dreams and watch them make you proud. I'm proud of my star. And through our story, I hope you too, can share your #OpenBooks stories to inspire, move and champion for greater inclusion in our communities.

“

These kids we label
'special', are truly born
to do special things in
their lives!

- Neena Garg, Muskan's mother



Scan to read and
watch Muskan and
Neena Garg on
[HumanRace.asia](https://www.humanrace.asia)

HEALTH



ON THIS PAGE

Special Olympics Pilipinas athlete, Flordeliza Baento having her hearing aid fitted at the World Games 2023

Holistic Health Intervention

2023 Maternal & Child Health Intervention Project (MCH)

The Maternal and Child Health pilot project ran from January 2021 through July 2023.

Generously supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the HCH pilot sought to implement a holistic intervention model by combining three core Special Olympics Health programmatic elements together – Young Athletes, Healthy Young Athletes (Pediatric Screening) and Family Health Forums.

The objective

To ensure that children with ID have access to the healthcare and support needed to optimize their readiness for participation in school, play, and social inclusion and to provide their families with the opportunity to thrive.

Healthy Young Athletes, a holistic pediatric screening offered to children 2 to 7 years old with and without Intellectual Disabilities, was also introduced as an additional offering of the pilot project.

Five country programs participated in the pilot globally, with SO Bharat (India) and SO Pakistan piloting for the Asia Pacific region.

Overall Impact

The Maternal and Child Health pilot project conducted across SO Bharat and SO Pakistan generated the following results:

- 12,795 children participated in Young Athletes activities
- 11,413 mothers and caregivers engaged
- 280 Family Health Forums hosted
- 83 children screened

Key Takeaways from the Maternal & Child Health Intervention Project in Asia Pacific

To ensure the validity of the MCH project, Special Olympics conducted a full-scale evaluation to assess the impact of programming on children with ID and their families.

For the entire project, 1320 children participated in the evaluation. This comprised of 773 children from India and 297 children from Pakistan, where their average age was six years old. Of those studied, 71% were male and 80% were delayed in reaching developmental milestones.

The 3 results of the evaluation are as follows:

- 1. Adaptive Behavior Skills** – there was significant improvement showed in terms of communication skills, daily living abilities, socialization, physical activities and internalizing and externalizing behaviors amongst the children studied.
- 2. Parents Empowerment and Efficacy** – parents felt more confident in their ability to parent their children and to connect and communicate with others in their community about the needs of their children.
- 3. Family Health Forum** – parents said that their participation in the forums increased their knowledge (78%) and confidence to meet their child's need (73%). They also derived a better understanding of their own role as parent (77%); and had a better understanding of their child's disability and health needs (75%).



Young Athlete sessions in Pakistan



Importantly, parents and caregivers made personal commitments such as taking their children with intellectual disabilities (ID) for regular health check-ups, making healthier food choices for their families, and advocating to other families about the specific health needs of children with ID.

One key takeaway from this project is the critical role fathers play in the development and well-being of children with ID. While mothers often serve as the primary caregivers in childrearing, fathers play a particular role

in decision making and their ability to engage in activities and education is critical to the overall success of including children with IDD in their communities. As such, and as an outcome of this project, Special Olympics has shifted the name of the project from Maternal and Child Health to Child and Family Health

(CFH), to ensure that the work recognizes the importance in taking a whole-family approach.

This new model for Child and Family Health will be launched globally in 2024.



Family Health Forum In SO Pakistan



Pediatric screening In SO Bharat

HEALTH

2023 Golisano Award

For his work and dedication in supporting Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PWIDs) in Bangladesh, Dr. Hafizur Rahman from SO Bangladesh received the 2023 Global Golisano Health Leadership Award, proudly representing the Asia Pacific representative.

Dr. Md Hafizur Rahman has contributed extensively to the Special Olympics movement in Bangladesh.

He has been actively involved in Healthy Athletes as a Regional Clinical Advisor engaged with the Young Athletes and Fitness programming, and has carried out many family's health education seminars and workshops and trained numerous healthcare professionals in Bangladesh.

He is also instrumental in introducing partners to SO Bangladesh to support and progress the health work being conducted in the country.



Dr Mohammad Hafizur Rahman's from Special Olympics Bangladesh



Scan to read and watch Dr Hafizur's story on [HumanRace.asia](https://www.humanrace.asia)

Healthy Athletes Train-the-Trainer

The first in-person Healthy Athletes training of a new cohort of Clinical Directors, since the pandemic in 2020, took place across two countries in November 2023.

One of the trainings took place in Singapore where three Regional Clinical Advisors from SO Indonesia, SO Singapore and SO Pilipinas supervised and trained 11 Clinical Director candidates from Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia and Maldives across 3 disciplines: Special Smiles, Opening Eyes and FunFitness.

The other was conducted in Melaka, Malaysia, where six Regional Clinical Advisors from SO Malaysia, SO Indonesia, SO Pakistan and SO Egypt supervised and trained 36 Clinical Director candidates from 6 countries including Pakistan, Maldives, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Laos across 6 disciplines including

Special Smiles, Opening Eyes, FunFitness. Fit Feet, Health Promotion and Strong Minds.

As a follow ups from these trainings, SO Bangladesh will conduct their 1st Health Promotion in April, where it will be led by the 2 new Health Promotion Clinical Directors.

SO Malaysia too, will have 4 Healthy Athletes screening in 4 locations engaging the new Clinical Directors.

With the new Clinical Director for Strong Minds, SO Pakistan signed MOU with local organization called Taskeen (working for Mental Health), where SO Pakistan and Taskeen will work side by side in conducting Strong Minds discipline across the country and implement follow up care.



Train-The-Trainer session

HEALTH

Illumina Project

Special Olympics Asia Pacific (SOAP) established a partnership with Illumina Inc, an American biotechnology company that aims to improve human health by unlocking the power of the genome – to improve health programming in Asia Pacific, by supporting three country programs across the region.

SO Singapore implemented three health screenings in the area of physical therapy, eyes and dental. Screenings were conducted for 45 athletes and where required, given further treatment. Others also received prescription glasses.

The partnership also supported the screening of 142 athletes and 18 unified partners from SO Nippon (Japan), who attended the Special Olympics World Summer Games 2023, and SO Nippon National Winter Games.

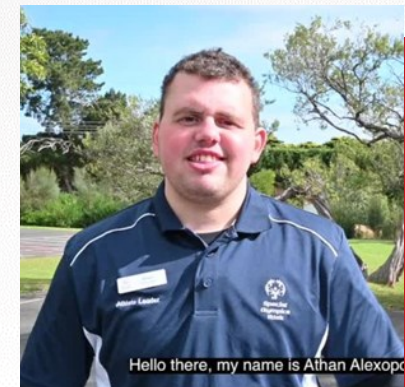
SO Australia conducted 2 Family Health

Forums focused on the topic of carer mental health and wellbeing, from both the perspective of parents as well as siblings. The forums resulted in positive feedback from the participants who picked-up some practical information and skills that could be implemented in daily life.

In addition, SO Australia also created four short films starring athletes who spoke of visiting doctors and medical professionals, and the importance of adapting communication styles to garner the best outcomes for people with disability, and a video with an athlete discussing visiting a health professional.



Health Messenger Mia from SO Australia advocates for better respect towards PWIDs



Health Messenger Athan Alexopoulos from SO Australia, advocating for regular doctor visits

INITIATIVES



ON THIS PAGE

A melting pot of Special Olympics Athlete Leaders from across the globe

INITIATIVES

Empowering Young People



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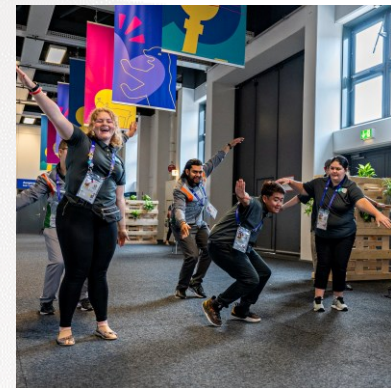
Youth make up over half the total force of our volunteer pool – an indication of their interest and the potential power of young people in creating a change in the world together.

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 marginalization, to systemic challenges around access to education and employment.



Rithik, a Regional Athlete Leader & Council Member from SO Bharat



Athlete Leaders Showcasing Their Dance Moves



Youth Leader Nghi from SO Vietnam participating in group discussions

INITIATIVES

Leadership Growth and Development



ASIA
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The year 2023 was all about leadership growth and development for the Regional Athlete Leadership Council (RALC) and Regional Youth Leadership Council (RYLC) members.

Throughout the year the council members participated in several learnings to further enhance their leadership skill and contribute as leaders to the region. As a start, in March, the RALC and RYLC members participated in the first ever Unified Leadership Academy.

Equipped with skills such as grit and accountability, the council members participated in the Global Youth Leadership Summit (GYLS) and Global Athlete Leadership Congress, in Berlin 2023.

During the 2023 GYLS, over 150 youth with and without ID, and their mentors

from 45 Special Olympics Programs came together.

Youth Leaders received training and tools to lead projects for social impact and inclusion in their schools and communities, while adult mentors learnt from their global peers on how best to engage and empower the next generation of unified Youth Leaders.

A total of 10 youth leaders and 4 mentors from Asia Pacific, participated in the summit. This included Special Olympics representatives from India, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam.

The summit was organized by the Global Youth Leadership Council with Special Olympics Asia Pacific (SOAP) representatives Simran Sahni (SO Bharat) and Salihin Bin Nawari (SO Singapore), with support from mentor Huang Yuchi (SO

Singapore). Not only did they organize the GYLS, they were also invited as panelists at the Global Forum for Inclusion. This forum brought together people to talk about how to improve inclusion in education, communities and international cooperation and development on a global scale.

More than 750 politicians, researchers, board members, sport federation leaders, foundations and corporate partners listened to the panel discussion where Salihin and Simran shared their personal ideas about inclusive schools and what people can do in their own respective countries to close the gap between policy and practice.

Continued next page.



During one of the breakout sessions at the Global Forum for Inclusion, Yumna Masood and Humaira Kazim, youth leaders from SO Pakistan shared with the audience how they are supporting the expansion of Unified Champion Schools in Pakistan.

Listening to Yumna's journey on how she was introduced to Special Olympics through Unified Champion School programming and how she, together with Humaira, have since contributed to getting more schools on board inspired the audience.

Concurrently the Global Athlete Congress (GAC), a platform where Special Olympics athletes lead and champion a more inclusive world, was held for the first time alongside the World Summer Games in Berlin.

Athlete Leaders from all seven regions gathered together to share ideas and projects they worked on in the lead-up to the games. In total, 64 athlete leaders

were present, representing 49 countries. This included eight athlete leaders and eight mentors from Special Olympics teams across Asia Pacific, including Australia, India, New Zealand, the Philippines and Singapore.

The congress was organized by the Global Athlete Leadership Council, which included Special Olympics Asia Pacific representative Shrey Kadian and his mentor Jigneshkumar Thakkar from Special Olympics Bharat (India).

During one of the breakout sessions at the Global Forum for Inclusion, Shrey spoke about the importance of developing coaches to strengthen the foundations at Special Olympics.

Carmelo (Dacki) Sandiego, SO Pilipinas athlete leader who attended the GAC, said his key takeaways were to lead by example and advocate for others undergoing similar experiences as he had. His favorite quote from the session was 'goodbye comfort zone, hello

opportunities' and hopes to put this principle into practice as an athlete leader.

The council members' leadership journey for 2023 concluded with their participation in the Regional Leadership Conference (RLC) in Jakarta. As leaders of our region the council members strategized with their respective Program leaders on how to reclaim their reach. The council members provided meaningful and innovative insights and reiterated the perspective of people with ID that should be taken into consideration when developing Special Olympics programming.

Mahi Dheri (SO Bharat) and Grace Payne (SO New Zealand) moderated a panel discussion on the importance of youth and school engagement and Ruby Lawler (SO Australia) and Hay Qing Hui (SO Singapore) led a breakout session on how to start Athlete Leadership programming.



Youth Leader Mahi Dheri (SO Bharat) and Athlete Leader Grace Payne (SO New Zealand) moderating a panel discussion



Youth Leader Simran Sahni (SO Bharat) and Athlete Leader Salihin Bin Nawi (SO Singapore) facilitating a discussion at the Global Youth Leadership Summit

Athlete Leadership



Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) Congress 2023

Special Olympics Asia Pacific (SOAP) presented an abstract on accessible COVID-19 information for persons with intellectual disabilities (PWID) at the 5th Asia-Pacific Community Based Inclusive Development Congress in March 2023, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Jesslyn Lim, Manager, Athlete Leadership and Hanako Sawayama, Administrative Coordinator, Initiatives, delivered the presentation by emphasizing the importance of how accessible communication resources can be developed with and for people with intellectual disabilities.

SOAP had earlier launched an informational campaign via the Swipe digital platform. The campaign shared accessible information on COVID-19

across the Asia Pacific region, in the countries that we operate within. As a result, critical health and safety information about COVID-19 could be shared with persons with intellectual disabilities in an accessible format.

Using Easy English to interpret content makes a big difference to how persons with intellectual disabilities perceive and understand the information.



Athlete Leader Hanako Sawayama pushing for better accessibility of Easy-to-Read communication resources.

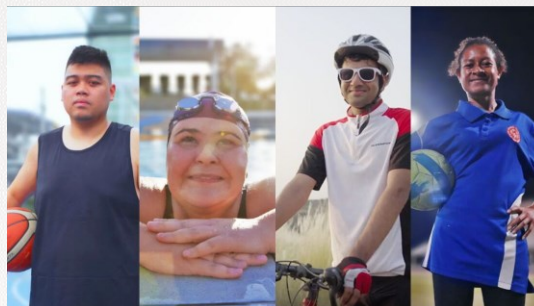
Athlete Leadership



Athlete Leaders Contributing To United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Regional athlete leaders Pauline Paul from SO Papua New Guinea, Haseeb Abbasi from SO Pakistan, Carmelo (Dacki) Sandiego from SO Pilipinas and Ruby Lawler from SO Australia drove change and contributed to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in a video storytelling series. These athlete leaders share their stories to advocate for access to healthcare (SDG 3), inclusive education (SDG 4), training and hiring people with intellectual disabilities (SDG 8) and reduced inequalities (SDG 10) towards building an inclusive world.

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



Scan to read and watch their story on YouthForInclusion.com

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.

“

It was Special Olympics where I decided to use my voice to close the gap between people with intellectual disabilities and those without... To all the naysayers out there, you're missing out by overlooking us. We are more than capable.

- Carmelo Sandiego, also known as Dacki from Special Olympics Pilipinas

INITIATIVES

Unified Schools

One of Special Olympics' programming that champions and progresses systematic changes in education is Unified Schools. Unified Schools begin with Unified Sports to build inclusive school communities for young people of all abilities. This programming creates an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and included both in school and in their local community.

These schools can expand their programming to include inclusive youth leadership and whole school engagement in order to become Unified Champion Schools.

Whilst focusing on sustaining their Unified School programming, SO Thailand, SO Pilipinas and SO Bharat engaged a total of 78 new Unified Schools.

In 2023 SO Australia embraced the Unified Champion School programming

and in total SO Australia, SO Bharat and SO Pakistan built 90 new Unified Champion schools.

These 5 programs trained a total of 1221 youth leaders with and without Intellectual Disabilities (ID). By training and empowering these young leaders across the region to be advocates for inclusion, we are one step closer to creating an inclusive education system.

To recognize their remarkable results in promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people with ID through their Unified Champion School programming, SO Bharat and SO Pakistan received the title of Regional Hub of Excellence.



Unified sports is a great tool to build inclusive school communities.

INITIATIVE – STORY OF CHANGE

Realizing A World Where Friendship Trumps Differences



ASIA
PACIFIC

Humaira Kazim and Yumna Masood, SPECIAL OLYMPICS PAKISTAN



Humaira Kazim (Left) & Yumna Masood (Right) challenges social norms as a unified pair on and off the field.

What makes us different from one another? Is it in the clothes we wear, the cultures we come from, or our accents? No two people are ever the same, we are all unique with distinct quirks and differences. But the one thing we do have in common is being human.

In a world that is often divisive, appreciating differences and fostering empathy and compassion may sometimes seem more of an anomaly than the norm.

Thankfully, its stories like the heartwarming friendship between Yumna Masood and Humaira Kazim that illustrate how friendship can trump differences.

Though they may seem like two young girls united by their shared love for sports, their unique bond goes far deeper than what meets the eye.

Humaira, a remarkable individual with intellectual disability, finds not just a friend in Yumna but a unified partner (individuals without intellectual disabilities that play sport alongside athletes that have intellectual disabilities), mentor, and guide, all wrapped into one incredible friendship.

The two sportswomen earlier represented Pakistan at the Global Youth Leadership Summit in Berlin amidst the backdrop of the World Games. "I have seen so many people represent Pakistan and I am so proud to be a part of this," said Yumna of the experience.

Despite the pandemic, the duo's friendship continued to strengthen, guided by mutual respect and reciprocity. Explained Yumna, "In 2020 and 2021, due to Covid, we couldn't meet each other.

So, we would always be on Zoom calls whenever we had projects to work on. If we had to collaborate, we would get on a call. I talk and she listens. Then she would talk, and I would listen.”

In a distraction-filled world, the duo’s friendship underscores the importance of giving someone undivided attention and active listening.

Yumna said, “we tend to talk over people, especially special children, some of which have verbal challenges.”

She urges society to embrace differences with respect and acceptance, “I would urge people to have the patience to accept special children. They are really amazing people, if you get to know them. They are beautiful people,” she continued.

Humaira and Yumna’s journey challenges prevailing misconceptions surrounding people with Intellectual Disabilities. Yumna’s goal is to ultimately be a role model, a beacon of inspiration. “They already call me a youth leader, but I think there is more to it. It’s a long way to go,” she said.

Humaira adds, “I want to spread awareness in my country about people with intellectual disabilities. Inclusion in society is very important. I want to be a good example for people with intellectual disabilities.”

Humaira and Yumna are doing their bit for a better tomorrow. It’s time we too, play our part.

“

Even special children have the same feelings. We’re great people and we’re very friendly. We just want to be friends with others

- Special Olympics Pakistan athlete leader, Humaira Kazim



Scan to read
Humaira &
Yumna’s story on
[HumanRace.asia](https://www.HumanRace.asia)

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS



ON THIS PAGE

Interviews conducted on-site at the World Summer Games in Berlin, 2023

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Elevating Public Awareness and Understanding



ASIA
PACIFIC

Marketing and Communications dedicated its efforts this year towards rebuilding and strengthening the movement's presence in the Asia Pacific Region both externally and internally.

Capitalizing on the momentum generated by the World Summer Games in Berlin, the region reported the highest number of media coverage across the region in years, elevating public awareness and understanding of the work that Special Olympics does.

In particular, storytelling and interviews through media, social media and the HumanRace website were proactively leveraged as platforms to deep dive into the lives of athletes, coaches, and families, while correspondingly, spearheading thought leadership that progressed a more inclusive society.



Some Key Media Highlights:

1. **Channel NewsAsia:** First 'live' executive interview with a regional broadcaster
2. **German Newspapers Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung:** Featured dedicated full-page coverage of Asia Pacific athletes including Pakistan's Sana and Australia's Karen Messner.
3. **Straits Times:** High quality in-depth interviews featuring athletes and Special Olympics Asia Pacific leadership perspectives on inclusion and the significance of sports.
4. **The Business Times:** Leveraged SOAP and Liverpool FC Foundation collaboration to champion inclusive sports and health

Digital Engagement and Social Media Growth

Our social media reach have increased by 100 per cent between 2022 to 2023, across both our Facebook and Instagram platforms.

We have also managed to increase our overall visitors to Humanrace.asia by 116 per cent between 2022 to 2023.

The World Summer Games in Berlin provided a significant opportunity for us to connect with numerous athletes, coaches, family members and volunteers from far flung corners of the region.

The global competition after years of lockdowns and social distancing proved to be a much-needed occasion to collect as many stories as possible, enabling us to develop a sustainable pipeline of rich content cutting across the geographic diversity of Asia Pacific as well as the sports offerings we have.



A collection of regional stories and social media content

#OpenBooks



You gotta start
from the bottom
to climb
to the top

Finding His Own Voice : Shivam or
Slay-V from SO Bharat



Obstacles are
opportunities in disguise.
Embrace them
to break through
to greatness.

From Adversity to Triumph : Neena
and Muskan Garg from SO Bharat.



Every step that
you take is a
meaningful memory
that you have gained

Changing the World Through Kindness :
Hay Qing Hui from SO Singapore



Kindness has a
greater impact
than we imagine.

Embracing Lives' Challenges with Hope:
Gabriel Moses Lee SO Singapore



Scan to read their
inspirational stories
on [HumanRace.asia](https://www.humanrace.asia)

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

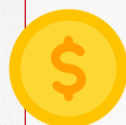
By The Numbers



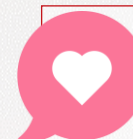
ASIA
PACIFIC



Regional readership
6 Billion



Ad value
11.2 Million



Media mentions
>4,300



YouTube
> 15,000% increase in
views YOY



Facebook
• 100% increase in reach
YOY



Instagram
• 100% increase in reach
YOY



HumanRace
• 116% increase in visitors
YOY

Restarting and Rebuilding Public Fundraising Efforts

Our face-to-face fundraising activities restarted in November 2023, and the Marketing and Communications team played a crucial role in kickstarting this initiative.

The team supported the development of engaging fundraising materials aimed at effectively communicating the mission and impact of Special Olympics Asia Pacific.

Additionally, the team actively participated in co-creating and delivering the training required by our external fundraising partners. Training materials

leveraged compelling storytelling techniques to motivate and equip our brand ambassadors

To further bolster our efforts, we drummed up the cadence of regular newsletters aimed at cultivating stronger donor and stakeholder relationships.

This approach helped to reinforce brand recall, foster trust, and promote transparency, and securing long-term support for our initiatives.



Brand Ambassadors at Work



Leveling up Storytelling Skills across APAC

Impactful storytelling has the power to drive inclusion, reshape perspectives, and foster a culture of inclusivity.

At last year's Regional Leadership Conference, two hands-on workshops were conducted to enhance our storytelling capabilities across the region.

These workshops were tailored to enhance credibility, authenticity, and emotional resonance by drawing upon the personal experiences of our advocates in storytelling.

They also equipped participants with practical tools essential for media interviews and amplifying our voices within broader society.



Group exercises on effective communication with key stakeholders



The who, what, when and how – all critical elements to good storytelling

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



ON THIS PAGE

Programs gathered together at the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Regional Leadership Conference in 2023

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Steering Towards Excellence



At Special Olympics Asia Pacific, the Organizational Development (OD) team plays a pivotal role in steering the trajectory of Special Olympics country programs towards excellence.

Our commitment is rooted in understanding the nuanced landscapes within which Programs operate. This comprehension forms the foundation for crafting progressive, long-term plans that not only enhance their capacity but also fortify partnerships. Our primary objective is to ensure Programs consistently meet and exceed the highest standards of delivery, creating meaningful opportunities for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities.

As we embark on the journey into 2024, the OD team remains dedicated to the continuous development, support, and learning from our programs. Our focus transcends the immediate task of

supporting program delivery; instead, we strive to foster sustainable, long-term development.

During 2023, Organizational Development undertook several noteworthy initiatives, including an intensified emphasis on safeguarding, a return to in-person conferences post-Covid-19, and the continuation of our grant management framework.

These projects underscore our unwavering commitment to maintaining quality standards, supported through essential work areas including Census and Accreditation, coupled with robust Relationship Management practices which is the backbone of the Organizational Development team.

The Organizational Development team's fundamental objectives are strategically categorized into three pillars, elaborated upon in the following pages:

- Operational Excellence
- Capacity Building
- Leadership Development

Together, these pillars form the cornerstone of our efforts to elevate the performance of Special Olympics programs throughout the Asia Pacific region.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Operational Excellence



ASIA
PACIFIC

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a set of policies, procedures and practices employed to reduce harm, abuse and distress. Operation Safeguard was launched in 2018 by SOI and very soon it will be mandatory for Programs to develop a Safeguarding Policy to be considered as an accredited Program. At SOAP, we have been proactively working with Programs to develop their Safeguarding Policy.

This year we conducted two sessions on Safeguarding policy. The first training was conducted online to inform Programs about basics of Safeguarding

with two Programs, SO Bhutan & SO Pilipinas sharing about their Policy to the wider audience.

The second session was conducted in person during the Regional Leadership Conference with Program and athlete leaders. The training entailed informing in detail about SOI guidelines on Safeguarding. SO Palau co-led the session, sharing their work in detail and the process involved in finalizing their policy. Additionally, we are working closely with Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation, a partner organization that offers legal evaluations of policies once Programs develop them.

Relationship Management Support

OD has run training and provided support for: census, accreditation, policy survey, program quality standards and more. It provides regular communication through the OD Digest publication and Coffee with NDs, as well as one-to-one catch ups.

Most importantly, ODs relationship management extends to supporting Programs on a range of diverse challenges and opportunities, from supporting visa applications, creating strategic partnerships, to lobbying governments.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Capacity Building

Strategic Meeting of 3 Programs

The Asia-Pacific region has a goal of reaching 1.2 million athletes by 2029. This is an ambitious target, from the post pandemic baseline of 400,000 athletes.

To support this goal, the three biggest Special Olympic Programs (based on athlete numbers), namely SO Bharat, SO Bangladesh and SO Indonesia, were convened in Singapore to discuss common strategies to reclaim the athletes lost due to the harsh realities of the pandemic.

This three-day workshop provided individualized support to develop a three-year operational plan and develop PERF bids. The collective efforts of our

biggest programs to bolster mass outreach is vital in reclaiming our reach. There was consensus on the value of robust data, activating encounters and professionalization of leadership to bring athletes back to the playing field.

Program Emergency Relief Fund (PERF)

The Program Emergency Relief Fund was established to support Programs recovering from the global pandemic in bringing athletes back and restarting trainings and competitions.

OD Supported SO Laos to secure a grant to train 40 teachers from 20 schools to eventually create 20 Unified Champion Schools.



ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Grant Management

Christmas Record Trust and Solidarity Grant

Over the last 30 years, Christmas Record Trust (CRT) grants have enabled Special Olympics Programs in Asia Pacific Region and globally to implement programming and activities. It is one of the largest grants disbursed and managed in the Region.

In 2023, a total of \$321,500 was disbursed to 24 eligible Programs. These grants play a critical role in Program's operational effectiveness, sustainability, and ability to create an impact at the Program, country, and global levels. Here are some of the highlights of CRT projects in our region.



SO New Zealand: Transition Project

One of the initiatives supported by CRT was the Transition Project by SO New Zealand.

The Transition Project was designed to trial a range of engagements with schools and family to support students transition from schools to clubs.

In New Zealand, students with an ID leave school between 18 to 21 years old, and the project targeted students aged 17 to 20 to facilitate engaging conversations early

in the transition discussion. The Project was successful in engaging two schools to focus on with the Transition project, one a Special School, and the second one, a mainstream school with a Special Needs Unit. The Transition Project initiated a Starting New At Golf (SNAG) program with one of the schools, which was well received by the students.

They enjoyed the chance to try a sport that most had only seen on TV.

Throughout the sessions, the hits got bigger, the misses were less frequent, and the smiles and laughter grew.

For a few of the older students SNAG was a life changing experience and since then they have been busy researching and learning more skills, regularly going out to driving ranges to practice, and are also excited to join up with the local Special Olympics Clubs Golf program as soon as they can.

SO Thailand: Junior Athletics Competitions

With the goal of strengthening the foundation of sports delivery, SO Thailand arranged the Junior Athletics Competition for the first time in each of the nation's four domestic regions.

These young athletes aged 8 to 11 have never had any opportunity to participate in any organized sporting events. SO Thailand organized competitions in four locations throughout the nation for certain Track & Field disciplines that competitors could reach in a half-day of travel. Through athletics (track and field), which is a formal sport, this event developed a transition sports program to introduce and develop formal sports to junior athletes.

One of the participants was Foasun Jongrak a 10-year-old boy studying at the Phuket Provincial Special Education Center. Faosun entered 3 competitive events. Faosun and his parents watched and cheered for other athletes with excitement all day.

Faosun got the chance to make new friends and his parents spoke to other families. He won two bronzes, one for a 50m walk and another one for softball throw.

His mother, Cataleeya (see pictured here cheering on her son), feels proud of her son and pointed out the shared humanity that unites people despite differences.

“

The children talk with one another. They talk about the same things. Mothers talk about the same things, too. I feel that we belong together. Thank you so much, Special Olympics.

- Cataleeya, mother of Foasun Jongrak, a Special Olympics Thailand athlete.



CRT grants help create opportunities for athletes to participate in sports



Cataleeya seen pictured here cheering on her son, Foasun (In Blue) at a junior athlete competition in Thailand

It was a crucial year for country programs to gear up for World Games preparation, participation and ensuring sufficient resources.

To this end, the Solidarity Grant (part of CRT) was crucial in supporting Programs with resources to ensure delegates were able to travel and participate at the World Summer Games in Berlin, Germany.

A total amount of \$80,000 (USD) was allocated to eight programs to support 65 delegates. Here are some highlights of Solidarity grant and how it contributed to supporting our athletes, coaches, families and volunteers.

SO Papua New Guinea : Growing From Shy To Sociable

A first-time athlete, Emmanuel Sevara, from Special Olympics Papua New Guinea, was excited to participate in the World Summer Games in Berlin.

Emmanuel was especially enthusiastic in the days preceding the trip and shared this with his family and friends. Aside from his coach John, other delegation staff members were pleased to see Emmanuel

talking to other athletes and participate in as many events as possible in Berlin.

This marked a significant change from his typically reserved nature. According to his coach John, Emmanuel was very excited about being there. “Emmanuel was very energetic. He wanted to see and do everything, and he was proud to represent his country!” His determination paid off when he and his fellow badminton athlete Martha Ah Wong won a silver medal in the mixed doubles.



Emmanuel Sevara was proud to represent his country at the World Games in Berlin 2023

SO Pakistan: Upskilling Athletes

Coach Imdad Ali embarked on a challenging journey with a team of amateur hockey athletes before the Special Olympics World Summer Games Berlin 2023. Limited training and resources for athletes posed obstacles, but Coach Imdad was determined to prepare the team for their global debut.

The team, representing different cities in Pakistan, faced challenges in building unity. Lack of exposure to competitive play was another hurdle, but Coach Imdad and his fellow coaches remained optimistic, patiently honing their athletic skills and instilling determination in them. Frequent camps to foster camaraderie also helped build team spirit.

During the Games, the team encountered setbacks, such as their goalkeeper's injury in the first practice match. Still, Coach Imdad's motivation inspired the team to give their best regardless of the circumstances.

An unforgettable moment was winning the Bronze Medal after a remarkable 3-2 victory in the match with Paraguay.

The achievement showcased the dedication and hard work of the team and Coach Imdad Ali in helping advance hockey for individuals with intellectual disabilities in Pakistan.



Coach Imdad Ali with the SO Pakistan delegation during the World Games

SO Palau: Voice for Peers

Wakako Dakota Sisior is an 18-year-old athlete from the Koror and Peleliu islands of Palau. When she was approached to join the SO Palau program, she was initially hesitant as there were no team sports available.

She finally agreed to try table tennis, one of SO Palau's active sports, after much persuasion. After she joined, she slowly became good at playing the game. Athletic and competitive in nature, her skills improved quickly.

Her hopes were to make friends and meet new people at the Summer World Games. When she was selected to compete at the World Games, she said that she wanted to be a voice for her peers

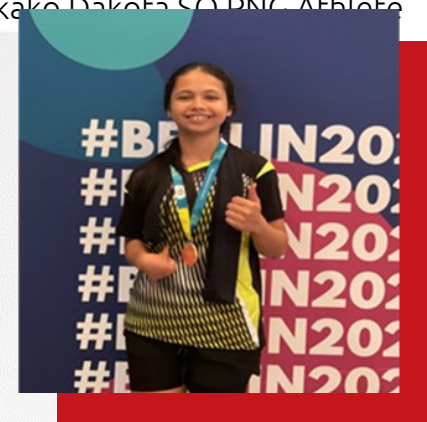
Wakako played well and made her way to the semifinals. She came third in her respective age and skills division. She

kept her poise and displayed an impressive performance from start to end. Not only did she bring a medal home, but her experience will also forever be etched in her memories.

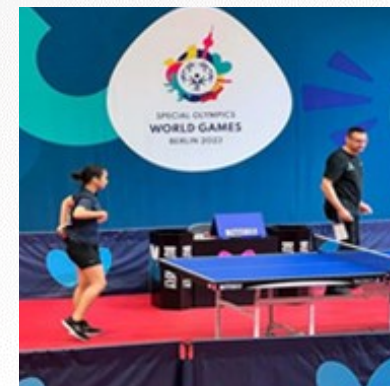
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I am grateful for this historic moment for myself and my family. I will continue to train and be an ambassador to others who want to keep going, chasing their dreams and doing what they love best.

- Wakako Dakota SO PNG Athlete



Wakako Dakota with her Bronze medal



Wakako Dakota flying the Palau flag proudly during the World Games

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Development



Regional Leadership Conference (RLC)

Centered around the theme of Reclaiming Our Reach, the Regional Leadership Conference (RLC) a 3-day event, saw 103 attendees gather together. This included regional and global staff, Special Olympics Asia Pacific board members, programs, and athlete and youth leaders.

The in-person conference which encompassed 21 plenaries and breakout sessions, discussing a wide range of programmatic areas from sport, health, families, communications, fundraising, finance and governance, with three overarching objectives in mind:

1. Assessing where we currently stand, and more importantly, where we need to move towards to
2. Effect change by acting upon the

areas we need to strengthen and improve on

3. Exchange best practices with the end goal of building program capacity.

The RLC saw the Asia Pacific Advisory Committee (APAC) come together with two new members. Frank Florig from Special Olympics Guam and Jeffrey Bong Koi Sin from Special Olympics Malaysia. The meeting focused on how the APAC serves as a strong link between the grassroots voice at the Program level and the International Advisory Committee.

There was alignment that the various input councils would feed into the APAC, which could then amplify the voice at a global level, offering a unique opportunity for the concerns and highlights of Asia Pacific's various Programs to be shared.

Virtual RLC

In February, a two-day regional leadership conference was organized since in-person meetings were not possible then.

The two-day conference was instrumental in bringing Program and athlete leaders together.

The event provided the necessary skills and knowledge for leading activities in the region.



Group photo taken at the Regional Leadership Conference held in Jakarta 2023



Participants getting hands-on during one of the sessions



Friendships were forged and commitments were made over the course of the conference

Development

PIPPA
WOODHEAD
SOAP BOARD
MEMBER AND HEAD
OF PODCASTS AT
TIGERHALL



SALIHIN
NAWI

SPECIAL OL
ATHLETE AN
YOUTH LEA
COUNCIL M



ON THIS PAGE

Panel Discussion during a fundraising film screening event

Development

Building Partnerships



The year 2023 was important for fundraising for Special Olympics Asia Pacific. We set out to establish and expand networks from the regional office in Singapore, through meaningful partnerships, campaigns and events with the view to broadening support across Asia Pacific in 2024 and beyond.

We officially launched a 3-year partnership with Macquarie Foundation, established a new partnership with The UPS Foundation, and received support from many organizations and individuals, including IPP, FWD, Illumina, Medtronic, Page Executive, Bolttech, Squarepoint Foundation, Zeiss, Google, Microsoft, Visa, Beyond Sports and Extreme Networks.

We're grateful to everyone who supported our work by raising awareness, funds or building networks with more individuals and organizations aligned with our mission.

Macquarie Group Foundation

This year Macquarie Group Foundation partnered with Special Olympics Asia Pacific to help us build inclusive pathways for people with intellectual disabilities.

This partnership supports Special Olympics Bharat (India), Special Olympics Singapore and Special Olympics Pilipinas (Philippines), to build inclusive pathways for people with intellectual disabilities.

The region-wide grant goes towards increasing quality sports training opportunities, Unified Sport competitions, inclusive youth engagements, the development and training of coaches, cultivating youth with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities in leadership roles and contributing to their personal development.

The three-year partnership supports rebuilding sports and competition across Singapore and the Philippines and funds are used to increase and deliver quality sport training opportunities on the ground, including access to sports venues and equipment, organizing sports competitions and Unified Sports programs, as well as coach development and training.

Development

Building Partnerships



Special Olympics Pilipinas

The Global Inclusion Day represented a pivotal moment in our quest for inclusivity, orchestrated by Macquarie Philippines in partnership with Special Olympics Pilipinas.

With the active participation of approximately 50 dedicated Macquarie employees, the event transcended mere sportsmanship, fostering genuine connections and camaraderie between volunteers and athletes.

Through unified games, musical collaborations, and a heartfelt manifesto for inclusion, the day served as a powerful testament to the transformative impact of collective action in breaking down barriers and championing diversity.

The collaboration underscored the unwavering commitment of Macquarie Philippines in promoting inclusion and showcased the potential of partnerships in driving positive societal change.

Special Olympics Singapore

In October 2023 Macquarie opened its doors for Special Olympics Singapore athletes to come in its office for a mini carnival. The engagement was full of fun, games and most importantly an opportunity to share and reflect.

A partner, Volunteer Switchboard (VSB) highlighted the power of volunteering through a book that collated the experiences of volunteering with persons with disabilities, with Special Olympics Singapore.

The event provided inspiration for future engagements where Macquarie

employees and Special Olympics Singapore could collaborate and potentially create awareness together with athletes. Such engagements, would involve partners really accessing and understanding the environments of individuals with ID.

Development

Raising Awareness Through Stories

“



Macquarie volunteers join SO Pilipinas at The Global Inclusion Day event in Manila

I'm a strong believer in always giving back to the community. One thing that motivated me to support Special Olympics is their stories.

Having a child who has down syndrome, I understand all their struggles, and pain by being different. I was inspired to support SO due to the fact that finally we have a voice in the society for children who have intellectual disabilities.

Every activity that we have be it Zumba, or outdoor sports has been enjoyable.

It was great to see the athletes enjoying the activities.

I was most inspired by the story of Camille. While she had down syndrome, this did not hinder her to be a world champion and Maurice who has been blessed with the gift of art.

-Joyce Bergado,
Special Olympics Pilipinas

Championing Acceptance Through Inclusive Play



“

Macquarie and SOSG have collaborated on many fronts in 2023, bringing about numerous opportunities for employee volunteering and fund raising, most notably at the Play Inclusive and Macquarie Sport Week events.

Being involved and interested in sports since young, SOSG’s mission to strive and create a better world by fostering the acceptance and inclusion of all people through sports, truly resonates with me.

The satisfaction of working alongside and volunteering with SOSG materializes when you see athletes enjoying themselves, while immersing in the sporting experience.

Last but not least, by

volunteering for SOSG, it does not only bring joy to the athletes, but also serves as a nurturing platform for the next generation to showcase compassion and respect.

By partnering with leading organizations like Macquarie Group, we can raise awareness of intellectual disabilities among employees and the wider community.

Staff champions from across Macquarie have worked closely with our Programs to organize activities, events and volunteering support throughout the year.

- U-Wei Khew,
Macquarie Group, Singapore



Volunteers from Macquarie at SOSG’s Play Inclusive at Singapore Sports Hub



Competing in games set up by Macquarie to celebrate and raise funds during Macquarie Foundation Week.



SOSG athletes and family members at Macquarie office.



Embracing Diversity Through Unified Sports

“



Macquarie team supporting SO Bharat's Sports Day

Every athlete is an inspiration. I consider myself privileged to be associated with SO Bharat over multiple events during 2023.

Whether it's playing unified sports with special athletes on National Sports Day, practicing with them and cheering at the Special Olympics World Games or having an interactive session with them on understanding Diversity and Inclusion during Macquarie's 10th annual Foundation Week, each engagement had a profound impact on me, and all the staff engaged.

I truly enjoyed the energy and enthusiasm of each and every athlete.

As I learned more about their (SO Bharat) cause and the positive impact it can have to make our society more diverse and inclusive, I was motivated to work closely with them and do my bit in spreading the word and creating awareness.

- Shashank Gupta,
Macquarie Group, India

Development

Building Partnerships

The UPS Foundation

We launched a new partnership with the UPS Foundation to support 4 Programs across Asia Pacific and East Asia, to establish and expand Young Athletes (YA) programming as part of their post-covid recovery strategy.

Special Olympics programs across Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Chinese Taipei plan to re-establish family networks, community partners and deliver quality programming by training coaches, providing family resources, as well as capturing impactful stories and case studies to amplify YA and broaden their reach.

We look forward to seeing this work roll out throughout 2024 as well as additional support and engagement from UPS employees for Special Olympics programs across Australia,

Japan, Singapore and Thailand.

IPP and FWD

IPP Financial Advisers and FWD Singapore donated about S\$35,000 to Special Olympics Asia Pacific. The funds will be a substantive help to rebuild sports and competitions, leadership development and health programs across the region.

Illumina

Illumina supported Healthy Athletes activities at Special Olympics in Australia, Japan and Singapore, and provided a grant for athlete and youth leaders to develop their own inspirational sessions at the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Regional Leadership Conference.



At a Young Athletes session supported by UPS

Development

Fundraising Events

As Far As They Can Run Fundraising Movie Screening

More than 200 people joined us for an evening of heart-felt inspiration and reflection at our sold-out screening of Oscar-shortlisted documentary, *As Far As They Can Run*.

The film screening was followed by a panel discussion, *Breaking Down Barriers: Building Inclusive Communities*, moderated by Pippa Woodhead, Head of Podcasts at Tigerhall and SOAP board member.

She was joined by panelists - Salihin Nawi, Special Olympics athlete and Global Youth Leadership Council member, Noraini Amin, mother of three and passionate advocate for inclusion, Yuchi Huang, a seasoned coach working closely with athletes with intellectual

disabilities, Joscelin Yeo, a four-time Olympian and Co-Founder of Into the Wild, which trains children in wilderness preparedness, Roman Matla, APAC Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Google.

Honored guests from the Diplomatic Corps attended including the US Ambassador, Pakistan's High Commissioner and representatives from Embassy of Lao to Singapore. Special thanks also goes to Money K, FWD, Hilton and Zeiss for their generous support for the event.

Dr Stan Isaacs, SOAP board member and founder of Isaacs Optometrists, and his team also separately hosted a screening of *As Far As They Can Run* for friends and professionals in the healthcare industry, to raise awareness and support for our work across the region.

Our sincere appreciation also goes to Bank of America, Medtronic, and Hilton for hosting film screenings across various venues to raise awareness and funds within their networks, teams and the wider community.



Reaching out to the wider community through our charity film screening and panel discussion

US Embassy 4th July Celebration

US Ambassador to Singapore, Jonathan Kaplan and his team at the US Embassy invited the regional office to be part of their 4th July event at Universal Studios and creating a unique opportunity for us to raise awareness and make new friends.

Thanksgiving with Special Olympics CEO Mary Davis

We celebrated Thanksgiving early on 7 Nov with Special Olympics CEO Mary Davis as our esteemed guest at the American Club.

We were joined by SOAP partners and supporters; Macquarie Group, The UPS Foundation, Bank of America, Illumina, Medtronic, AmCham Singapore, US Embassy and Irish Ambassador, Sarah McGrath.

Thanks to The American Club for generously hosting the event where

Mary shared stories about her 40-year Special Olympics journey alongside SOAP President and Managing Director Dipak Natali.

We also heard from Salihin Bin Nawi and Hay Qing Hui, Special Olympics athletes and advocates for the movement.

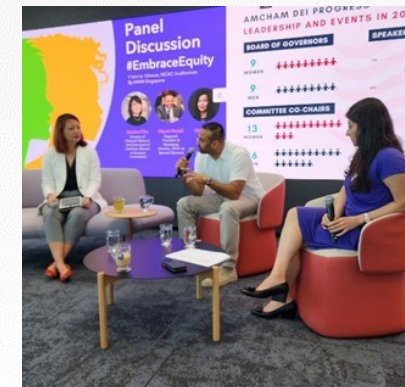
Corporate Events & Panel Discussions

Special thanks goes to Illumina, Avery Dennison and Edelman for inviting the Special Olympics Asia Pacific team and athlete leaders from across the region to join global webinars and events as speakers to share stories and discuss inclusion around various themes, during the giving season.

We appreciate everyone who supported our work in 2023, enabling us to better progress inclusion, change attitudes and drive meaningful opportunities for our athletes.



CEO Mary Davis with Athletes from SO Singapore Hay Qing Hui (Left) and Salihin Bin Nawi (Right).



SOAP President and Managing Director Dipak Natali at a Panel Discussion on Equality at the Workplace

Development

World Games Fundraising Campaign



ASIA
PACIFIC

With World Summer Games in June 2023, the year kicked off with Special Olympics Asia Pacific driving support to support athletes and delegations from some of our most remote programs to Berlin to compete.

We raised sufficient funds to send teams from Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Nauru in the Pacific Islands to The Games, where we witnessed the power and determination of these athletes, including Zinzael Agir from Special Olympics Nauru, who secured silver and bronze medals in Powerlifting.



Zinzael Agir (left) and his grandfather, Ruswell Engar (right).

Scan to read
about Zinzael and
Ruswell's Story on
HumanRace.asia

Regional Reach

Athletes
458,682

Youth Leaders
3,891

Volunteers
81,019

Athlete
Leaders
2,168

Competitions
4,265

Coaches
39,155

Unified
Schools
861

Unified
Partners
30,263

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