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1 The mission of Special Olympics and Unified Sports

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Unified Sports® programming

The concept behind Special Olympics Unified Sports® is that people with intellectual disability (called athletes) and without intellectual disability (called partners) playing together in the same Unified team which is a quick path to friendship and social inclusion.

2 Why Inclusive Healthy Lifestyle Groups in Schools (IHLGiS)?

There is a high demand for young people to learn how to stay physically and mentally fit and live a healthy life. Schools and universities as the perfect platform for introducing a healthy lifestyle to students with and without ID and encouraging healthy habits that can positively impact the students' quality of life. The Special Olympics IHLGiS projects, supported by the EU, empowers students with and without ID in an inclusive, peer-to-peer setting to take action, lead and learn about a healthy lifestyle, physical and social-emotional well-being.

3 What are Inclusive Healthy Lifestyle Groups in Schools (IHLGiS)

The Inclusive Healthy Lifestyle Groups in Schools (IHLGiS) was developed by Special Olympics Europe Eurasia as a 3-year project which aligns with the focus areas of the EU "HealthyLifestyle4All" initiative aiming to promote healthy lifestyle in the Union, in particular among children and students with an emphasis on vulnerable groups such as persons with intellectual disabilities (ID). From 2022 – 2025, Special Olympics Programs from Estonia, Berlin, Poland, and Hellas will work in their respective countries to reach 100 school, 200 Youth Leaders and 4.000 Students with and without ID through this project. We hope your school will be one of them.

The activities, funded by the European Union, will encourage, and support inclusive schools and other educational settings to adopt the concept of health - promoting schools led by youth pairs with and without ID. IHLGiS provide a fun, social environment that encourages year-round physical activity & healthy lifestyle education for young people and the with the involvement of the Community.

Inclusive Healthy Lifestyle Groups shall meet at least once per week for a minimum period of 8 weeks; preferably throughout the school year. The groups can gather during or after Special Olympics Unified Sports training or Sport Season, during or after schooling hours via virtual healthy lifestyle activities through social media or other virtual platforms.

4 Youth taking the lead of Inclusive Healthy Lifestyle Groups

As mentioned under point 3, Inclusive Youth Leader teams are youth with and without ID who collaboratively set up and implement Healthy Lifestyle groups for other students with and without ID in their school or university, face-to-face or virtually. These inclusive Youth Leader teams are supported

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by an adult mentor (e.g., teacher, coach or local SO Coordinator) and are responsible for the content and implementation of the regular Healthy Lifestyle sessions.

5 Training and evaluation from Special Olympics

Special Olympics will support your school in the implementation period by offering ongoing guidance as well as training for mentors and Youth Leaders (virtual or face-to-face). During these trainings participants will learn more about topics around Health and Fitness, Youth and Athlete Leadership as well as potentially working on measuring impact and outcomes of the group sessions. Resources and training materials are available in your local language. Please connect with your SO Program.

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