



Special Olympics

Middle East/North Africa

**Special Olympics Gulf Family Forum
Special Olympics Young Athletes Demonstration
In parallel with Special Olympics MENA Regional
Business Meeting / RAC Elections
May 4-6, 2012**



Special Olympics

youngathletes™



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4-6 May 2012 Previewed Activities:

Special Olympics MENA Regional Business Meeting / RAC Elections, May 4-5, 2012;

Special Olympics Gulf Families Forum, May 4-5, 2012;

Special Olympics Young Athletes Demo, May 6th, 2012, all.

14 family members gathered in Doha, Qatar for 2 consecutive days to:

Be introduced to the Family Support Network and Young Athletes program,
Discuss good strategies to engage families in Special Olympics,
Discuss challenges families face within the community and their success stories,
expand the young athletes program in the Gulf and define the challenges for its expansion,
Motivate family members to champion healthy life style choices and support athletes in achieving improved health and well being as well as sports skills development;
Define what is special about the Gulf culture, environment, education, social, economy to consider to succeed family recruitment process;
Define how family members can play an effective role in building partnerships;
Draft the most adequate job description for a family leader within Special Olympics local program:

Participants represented the gulf sub-region, with 7 SO programs: SO Bahrain, Kuwait, SO Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, SO Oman, SO United Arab Emirates, SO Yemen and SO Qatar the hosting program. SOMENA Global family Leader was among attendees.



Friday, 4th of May 2012:

Participants introduce themselves and express their motivations to join SO Gulf family Forum as in the following table:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>SO Bahrain Eman Abdel Saheb</p> | <p>Many non sports events are done and other are previewed in parallel with the Sports events. In May 2012, SO Bahrain is planning a Loretta Claiborne movie night, in addition to many recreational activities. Families will celebrate EKS day on the 22nd of September 2012 with new athletes, youth, friends, volunteers...</p> <p>Today, we are creating a family committee, active in recruiting families and new athletes.</p> <p>In term of awareness, Media People are our 1st target.</p> <p>We have to target schools and universities and bring youth to our cause.</p> <p>Governing bodies like different ministries have to be contacted; for integration, create a division at the Ministry of Education, in charge of the school integration project;</p> <p>Families have to activate the non sports initiatives, getting the “knowhow” from SOMENA regional office;</p> <p>Follow on families’ recommendations like setting in motion the rights of individuals with ID already listed under the UN convention;</p> <p>For community building, Work opportunities should be offered based on athletes’ abilities at McDonald, malls...</p> <p>Families should be more internet/facebook/e-connect knowledgeable. In term of funding, invite important organizations, enterprises, groups to our sports event to introduce them to our movement.</p> <p>Set metrics. Assess the number of families and young athletes registered;</p> |
| <p>SO Kuwait Mr. Mohammed Sharah, His wife Mrs. Khoulood</p> | <p>The family has 2 children with Intellectual Disabilities. The problem lies in the lack of the community support. Most of the support comes from the family members. In accordance, Louloua’s behavior improved. She does math, speaks 2 languages, excels at art work and is a happy child.</p> <p>SO Kuwait as a program is inexistent. All initiatives come from parents. As parents we become competent, we see the positive side of our kid’ story.</p> <p>Having children with Intellectual Disabilities in the family, Mohammed Sharah changed his educational course to cover Special Education;</p> |
| <p>SO Oman Khadija Naser Jawad Jaafar</p> | <p>Previously, non sports events were frequently organized. It stopped for a while due to Organizational Development issues. Today, a new committee is formed, willing to activate the non sports initiatives, with a goal to organize family gatherings and recruit young athletes.</p> <p>A Special Olympics Gulf ALPs Congress is previewed in October 2012 in parallel with Special Olympics MENA Regional Badminton Tournament.</p> |
| <p>SO Qatar Abdel Rahman Mohamed Mansour Hessa Hassan El Imadi Fatema Al Ishak Ahlam Abdel alil Sharaf Maha Abdel Aziz Al Sulaiteen Mohamed Moussa Ahmad Shaat Nadia Mustapha Saad <u>Samah Hamoudi El Mansouri</u></p> | <p>1st time ever an SO Family Forum is organized in Qatar.</p> <p>Early intervention is a real challenge. A lot of parents stayed uninformed about their kid’s medical condition for some time; what is annoying is not just lateness but the diagnostic error; parents request the right diagnosis. No training is available for parents to take good care of their children;</p> <p>Often, parents face behavioral problems to which they do not have the proper solution without the help of the community, more specifically specialists;</p> <p><i>Ahlam and Sara: a mother thriving story:</i></p> <p>Ahlam follows on her daughter development and educational path despite all odds; teachers complained about Sara’s disability and the mother worked on developing Sara’s ability till her daughter reached the university, graduated and find no job, a situation that left Sara vulnerable and in need of a psychological support. Joining SO made the big difference in her life. Work is what is left to look for at job fairs. When Sara is mistreated in the community, her sister is her number 1 Fan and defender;</p> <p>Mohamed Shaat has 1 son and 2 daughters with Intellectual Disability, the oldest is 21. The father is grateful for his wife who did an outstanding job raising their children.</p> <p>What was remarkable today is the presence of 3 family members in this forum: the father/the mother and the brother a big activist for integration and respect. He creates a sibling program to raise awareness and support for individual with Intellectual Disability.</p> <p>School Integration: Students need to be educated on the abilities of individuals with Intellectual Disability. Teachers and parents need to connect to improve the behavior of students with ID. Brief on School Integration In Qatar: no resources are available, no follow-ups are done, no evaluations are made on progress;</p> <p>A representative from the ministry of education and social affairs should be present here today to witness parents testimonials and be adequately involved;</p> |
| <p>SO Yemen AbdelRahman Hammoud</p> | <p>Abdel Rahman has an autistic child who was late diagnosed; as a father, I try to see abilities and not disabilities. Focus should be made on education and sports. His son is improving with age because of all the family members’ involvement; manage day to day activities. SO program is a great support for families in Yemen;</p> |
| <p>SO KSA Fahed Abdel Malak</p> | <p>Fahed has a son with autism. Abdelmalak has speaking problems and uses CD to learn new languages; at 6 years old, he was sent to an inclusive school. The dilemma here is that the teacher evaluates his son skills as he does for regular students with no specificity. Abdelmalak has a shadow teacher. He joined SO 2 months ago; he is a runner and is doing fine.</p> |

DEFINE GOOD STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE FAMILIES IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS:

to define metrics

1. Do awareness campaign. Invite media to be more involved;
2. Locate sports courts and facilities accessible to SO athletes;
3. Invite parents and SO supporters to spread awareness about SO in their own community;
4. Constantly increase (at least by 1) the number of SO sports available to athletes;
5. Give enough importance to the Healthy Athletes program, increase the number of screenings throughout the year;
6. Do an awareness campaign starting at the family level : involve the media; secure resources;

DISCUSS CHALLENGES FAMILIES FACE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS:

| Challenges | Recommendations |
|--|--|
| Young Athletes are not officially registered at the program level (in some SO programs); | |
| Absence of trained coaches trained on the Young Athletes program (In some SO programs); | |
| Absence of Family Network that bring parents together: e-mail, social media, forum; | |
| Gender differences: Sports training is not equally available among athletes from different gender; | |
| Early intervention and social shyness/shame | Organize health campaign |
| Define rules that protect the rights of people with Intellectual Disabilities | |
| Parents of Young Athletes did not get over their child medical diagnosis | These families need experienced family members to guide them and propose best practices; define a successful cycle to follow for this request; |
| Family Network: establish e-mail, social media, forums | |

EXPAND THE YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAM IN THE GULF AND DEFINE THE CHALLENGES FOR ITS EXPANSION:

- Parent with children with Intellectual Disabilities getting over their social shyness
- Identify place suitable for the Young Athletes Training
- Introduce doctors to the Healthy Athletes programs
- Distribute YAP brochures with newspapers, in the mosques, in schools, institutions taking care of children with Intellectual Disabilities. Prepare a short video about YAP and show it in schools, Media, universities
- Include athletes photos on SO websites; it is a good recognition tool to parents and their athletes;
- Acceptance process: one of the parent is reluctant to accept his child state (usually the father);



MOTIVATE FAMILY MEMBERS TO CHAMPION HEALTHY LIFE STYLE CHOICES AND SUPPORT ATHLETES IN ACHIEVING THEIR BEST HEALTH, PHYSICAL AND WELL BEING;

- Control the eating habits of the athletes and the family as a whole, adjust it to a healthy diet;
- Encourage athletes to eat fruits and vegetables;
- Define athlete eating schedule and help him/her to respect it. Do the same with whole the family;
- Avoid buying soft drinks;
- Do a 2-5 minutes documentary showing the undesired consequences of unhealthy diet;
- Encourage all family members to do sports together and frequently;
- Put off TV during meals time;
- Encourage athlete to assist when preparing healthy food;
- Educate families constantly on healthy diet. Send reminder and propose healthy tips;
- Approach schools and invite them to offer healthy packs on break time;

DEFINE WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE GULF CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, EDUCATION, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMY TO CONSIDER SUCCEEDING FAMILY RECRUITMENT PROCESS:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| CULTURE | To sign cultural agreements among gulf countries to spread awareness about individual with Intellectual Disabilities and Sports through Special Olympics; |
| ENVIRONMENT | |
| EDUCATION | School integration: successful when the whole school is ready to integrate students with ID; Encourage Scout among youth with and without Intellectual Disabilities; |
| SOCIAL | Make the most out of the experienced families. Connect them to new families not familiar yet with Intellectual Disabilities; |
| ECONOMY | Make the most out of the economic liberalization and encourage building partnerships with groups, institutions, governing bodies ready to support Special Olympics. Secure SO budget that promote the program activities and ultimately its success; |



Special Olympics
Middle East/North Africa

| Specification | Family Leader Task Description |
|-------------------------|--|
| Responsibilities | <p>Build a Family Network: form a family committee of 5 to 7 members ready to expand FSN and YA programs; assure constant communication among members;</p> <p>Nominate a family leader who will coordinate with the local SO, about the HA disciplines informing parents about the scheduled events, promote the HA disciplines and convey parents worries and concerns on health topics;</p> <p>Request from your local SO program a checklist with all the activities that parents can do;</p> <p>Secure a support group for the YA program;</p> |
| Organization | <p>Organize a monthly meeting with families of athletes;</p> <p>Allocate tasks to the family committee members and follow on their realizations;</p> |
| Required Skills | <p>Parent of a SO athletes</p> <p>Knowledgeable about Special Olympics: philosophy, mission, vision, programs;</p> <p>Committed;</p> <p>Good relational: know how to deal with people</p> <p>Have leadership capacities;</p> |



Special Olympics
Middle East/North Africa

BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE AND YOUR PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS, WHAT WILL BE THE MOST ADEQUATE WAYS TO CELEBRATE EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER LEGACY ON SATURDAY THE 22nd OF SEPTEMBER 2012?

- Prepare a resume on Mrs. Shriver life story and her achievements;
- Recruit a sponsor ready to fund EKS Activities Day;
- Choose a good location, define the 5 W of the event (why, what, whom, when, why)
- Inform the Media and invite them to cover EKS Activities Day;
- Try to invite (successfully) famous people, loved by athletes, to eventually become Fan of SO;
- Organize an open day in public Garden, inviting media. Request from restaurant to offer healthy meals, encourage sponsors to offers gifts to athletes; include recreational activities;
- Parents should receive an official letter from their local SO program authorizing them to organize properly the EKS day;
- March wearing a T-shirt with SO logo in addition to our message of inclusion and respect;



SUNDAY, THE 6TH OF MAY 2012: THE YOUNG ATHLETES DEMONSTRATION:

- The Young Athletes Demonstration was held at “El Sad indoors Club”, on Sunday the 6th of May 2012 at 10.30 am. Regional Advisory Committee Team, family forum members, volunteers and families of the Young Athletes watched the YA demonstrating.
- Around 40 young athletes assisted by 20 volunteers demonstrated on 8 different skills. 4 sports stations were available were YA demonstrated 2 skills on each, ending the show with the parachute game, YA going under it, teaming up and running in circle.
- YA smiling faces were impressive. They did the training happily. To new attendees, this demo. was like an opening eye to the abilities of children with Intellectual Disabilities, and the fun it brings to all parties involved. Training on YAP will enhance YA sport readiness to join SO at the age of 8. The skills developed during the demo. Varied between running, jumping, walking, balance throwing and striking. Each athlete received a ribbon with a goody bag for appreciation for his/her effort.
- When demonstrating, it is better to invite YA to go over all the stations. Consequently, YA are really trained for the time of the demonstration.



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young athletes



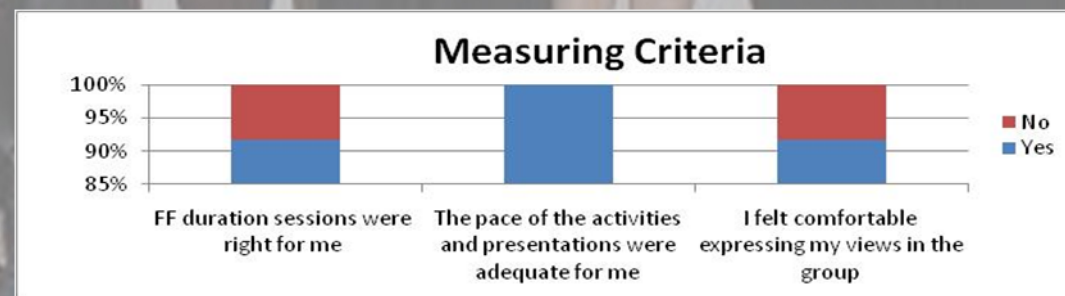
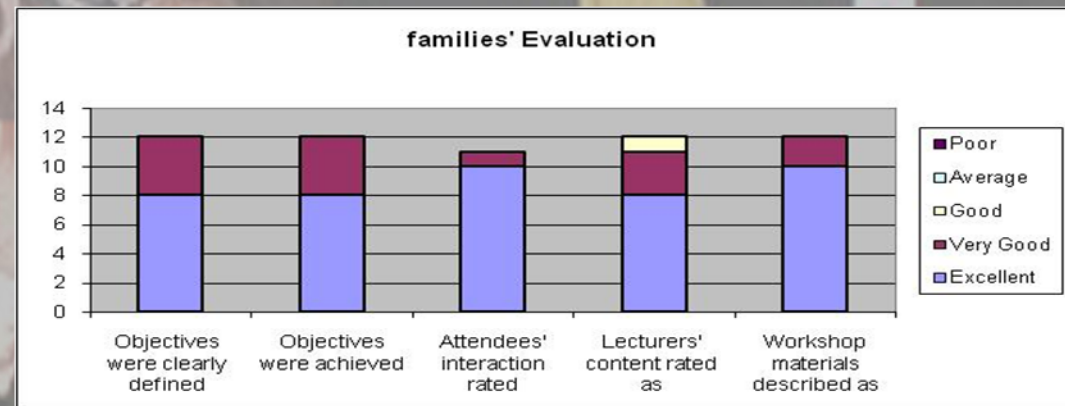
TO CONSIDER:



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Middle East/North Africa

| | |
|---|---|
| SUGGESTIONS | BEST RATED ACTIVITIES: |
| <p>Increase the frequency of families forums; (5) invite new lecturers; Choose participants profile adequately to conduct proposed action plan locally; Elect a SO Gulf Family Representative for the group; Invite representatives from the ministry of education and the ministry of social affairs to attend; Include in the agenda themes on: early Intervention, dealing with the adolescence critical age, how to deal with parent denial of the child medical diagnosis; Healthy Athletes program; sexual Behavior (2), religious concerns;</p> | <p>Interactive exercises; Speech Therapy lecture; Special Education lecture; Nutrition and healthy diet lecture; Families sharing best practices and experiences (3);</p> |
| THEMES NOT DISCUSSED: | MISCELLANEOUS: |
| <p>Dealing with different type of Autism;</p> | <p>Follow - up on families' recommendations (4)</p> |

PARTICIPANTS EVALUATION:





Special Olympics
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A special **THANK YOU** goes to all people, volunteers, groups:

- SO Qatar Organizing Committee
- Mr. Ameer Al Moula
- Mrs. Al Yazi Al Kuwari
- Volunteers
- Marriot Hotel
- YAP Training Team
- Fans of Special Olympics

And all those not listed and assisted in making this event a success.



2012 Special Olympics Gulf Family Forum Participants' list:

SO Bahrain: Iman Abed Al Saheb Hassan

SO Oman: Khadija Naser Jawad Jaafar

SO Saudi Arabia: Fahed Al Mohayfiz

SO Yemen: Abdulrahman Ghaleb Hamood Al Charif

SO UAE: Layla Mabrouk Saad

SO Kuwait: Mohammad Al Chirah

SOMENA Global Family Leader Miral Morsy

SO Qatar: Abdel Rahman Mohamed Mansour

Hessa Hassan El Imadi

Fatema Al Ishak

Ahlam Abdel alil Sharaf

Maha Abdel Aziz Al Sulaiteen

Mohamed Moussa Ahmad Shaat

Nadia Mustapha Saad

Samah Hamoudi El Mansour

Each delegate was offered resources pack in Arabic Version, including:

- TRAIN@home nutrition guide
- TRAIN@home exercise guide
- Family Support Network leaflet
- Young Athletes Program leaflet
- Presentations on: SO, Family Support Network, strategic plan 2011-2015, community building
- Brief on 2011 EKS day activities
- Families commitment cards, families action tips;
- Families and Young Athletes Action Plan 2012-2013
- Family Leader Task Description template;
- A CD with an Arabic subtitling for:
 - o T. Shriver thank you note to program on 2011 EKS day,
 - o thank you mum,
 - o the office,
 - o they look at you,
 - o the word is respect;