



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
VIRTUAL GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT

CALLED TO CONNECT

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS 2022 VIRTUAL GLOBAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT:
EVENT IMPACT REPORT**

TABLE OF

SPECIAL OLYMPIC
VIRTUAL GLOBAL

EDUCATE

ENABLE

ENGAGE



LANE GLOBAL YOUTH
LEADERSHIP



Samuel Family
Foundation

“The Global
Generation
makes a
true
difference
by bringing
together
the world’s
most
talented
young
people.”
—
KANTAR



PEACE
FIRST



GENERATION
HUMAN
RIGHTS



Educational
Foundation
Project
Management
Institute.



The VII
Foundation

VIIF

harmony
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

inspire
TEACHING | LEARNING



Unilever



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ANSWERING THE CALL TO CONNECT

SUMMIT OVERVIEW

On 20-21 May 2022, over 1,500 young people with and without intellectual disabilities (ID), adult mentors, Special Olympics staff, and many others, joined the Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit from their homes. Over the course of these two days, there were 10 sessions facilitated by 15 external speakers from more than 10 youth-focused organizations.

The theme of the Summit was **Called to Connect**. This theme highlighted the importance of social connection for overall well-being and how connection can create a better world by fostering the acceptance and inclusion of all people. The Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit connected young people through three strategies: educate, enable, and engage.

THESE STRATEGIES FOCUSED ON THE FOLLOWING:

EDUCATE



Participants learned about developing leadership skills and identified practices to share with other young people at local, national, regional, and global levels

ENABLE



Experts presented a wide range of workshops, offering hands-on, practical knowledge and ideas for young people to implement in their communities

ENGAGE



Youth Leaders, adult mentors, and others created a network to identify critical priorities for youth to champion as they move forward in a post-COVID-19 world



Since 2001, Special Olympics has hosted Global Youth Leadership Summits alongside World Games to build leadership skills and amplify youth voices on matters of inclusion and diversity for young people with and without intellectual disabilities.

During these Summits, youth are empowered to be proactive leaders in breaking down barriers to diversity and inclusion. They are connected to a youth network that inspires conversations of change, and are provided opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial and leadership skills. Using takeaways from these Summits, youth ultimately train other young people to be innovators, leaders, and change makers in their schools and communities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Special Olympics was unable to unite people at World Games and Global Youth Leadership Summits for the past two years. During this time, Special Olympics Youth Leaders faced many challenges caused by isolation and uncertainty due to the pandemic. To unite young people around the world once again, Special Olympics hosted the first ever Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit and reached the largest group of young people in Summit history.

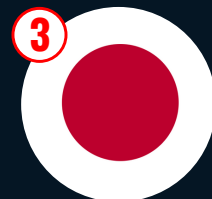
HISTORY OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMITS



1
2001
ANCHORAGE
32 Participants
10 Countries



2
2003
DUBLIN
38 Participants
17 Countries



3
2005
NAGANO
38 Participants
14 Countries



4
2007
SHANGHAI
60 Participants
18 Countries



5
2009
BOISE
70 Participants
17 Countries



6
2011
ATHENS
67 Participants
30 Countries



7
2013
PYEONGCHANG
158 Participants
22 Countries



8
2015
LOS ANGELES
120 Participants
30 Countries



9
2017
GRAZ
44 Participants
18 Countries



10
2019
ABU DHABI
159 Participants
39 Countries



11
2022
VIRTUAL
1,502 Participants
126 Countries



PARTICIPANTS REGISTERED

REGISTRANTS AT A GLANCE

**883**Youth Leaders with and
without intellectual disabilities**258**

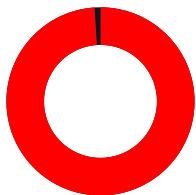
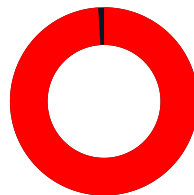
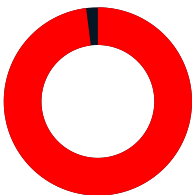
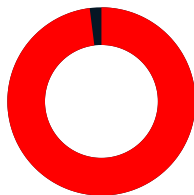
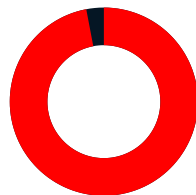
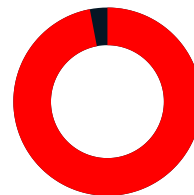
Special Olympics staff

**226**

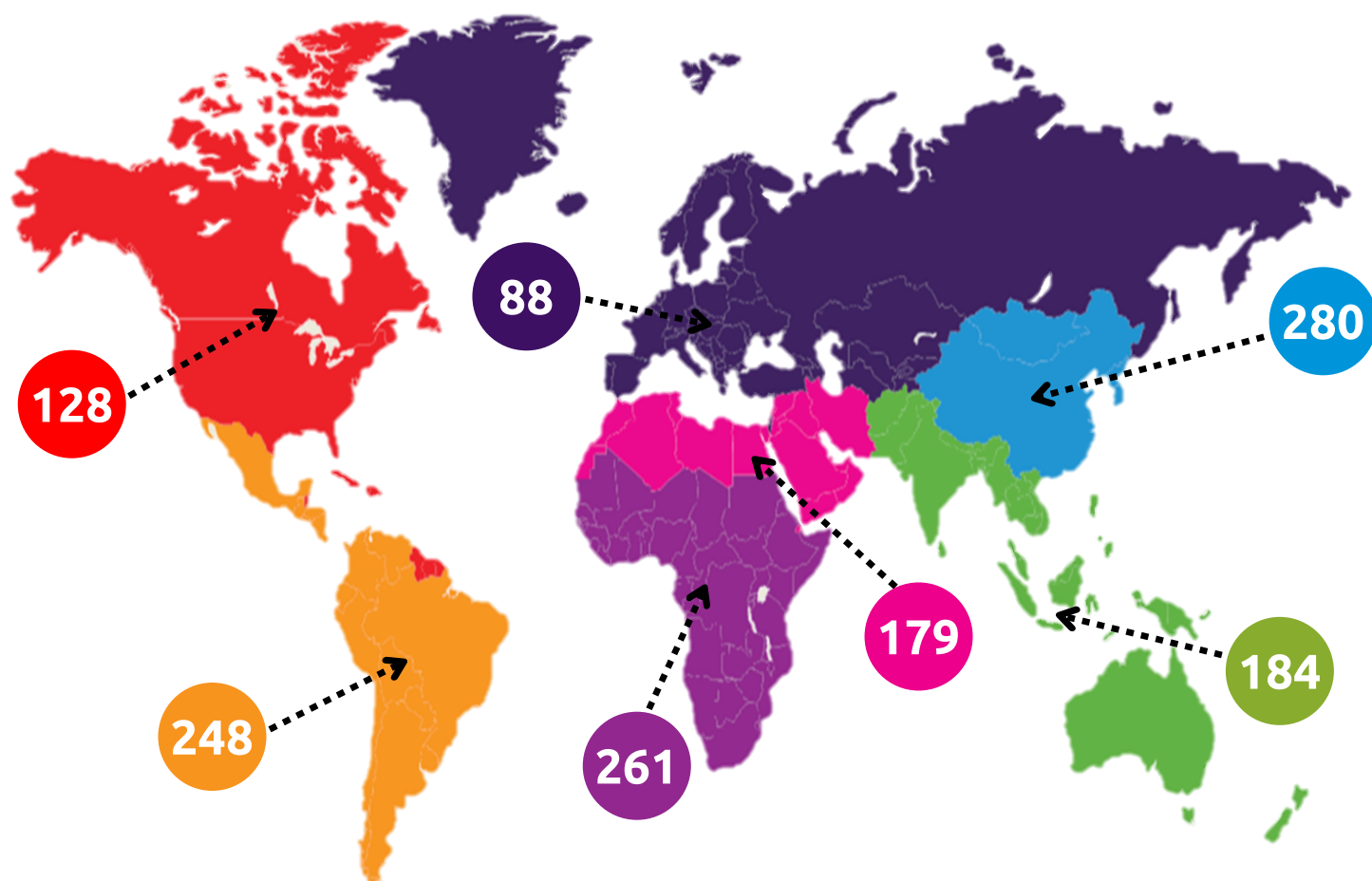
Adult mentors

**126**Special Olympics
Programs represented

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

**99%**of participants felt their
overall experience was good
or excellent**99%**of participants felt they got
better at knowing how they can
help their community**98%**of participants felt the
Summit platform, vFairs, was
good or excellent**98%**of participants felt they got
better at thinking of different
ways to solve problems**97%**of participants felt the
Summit sessions were good or
excellent**97%**of participants felt they got
better at learning from people
who are different from them

PARTICIPANTS BY REGION



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



"This was very useful and enjoyable. Most importantly, we got to know participants from different countries and cities."

- Participant from
Special Olympics Bahrain



"It was an honor to be at the Summit. Thank you so much for the amazing cooperation and inclusion!"

- Participant from
Special Olympics Slovakia



"This Summit deepened my understanding of Special Olympics. I hope there will be an opportunity to share and communicate with youth in the future."

- Participant from
Special Olympics China



"I wish there were more events like this because the topics discussed are really interesting and inspiring."

- Participant from
Special Olympics Senegal



"It is very rewarding to enter the Special Olympics community to learn, meet, discuss issues and engage with more people."

- Participant from
Special Olympics Ecuador



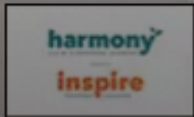
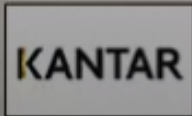
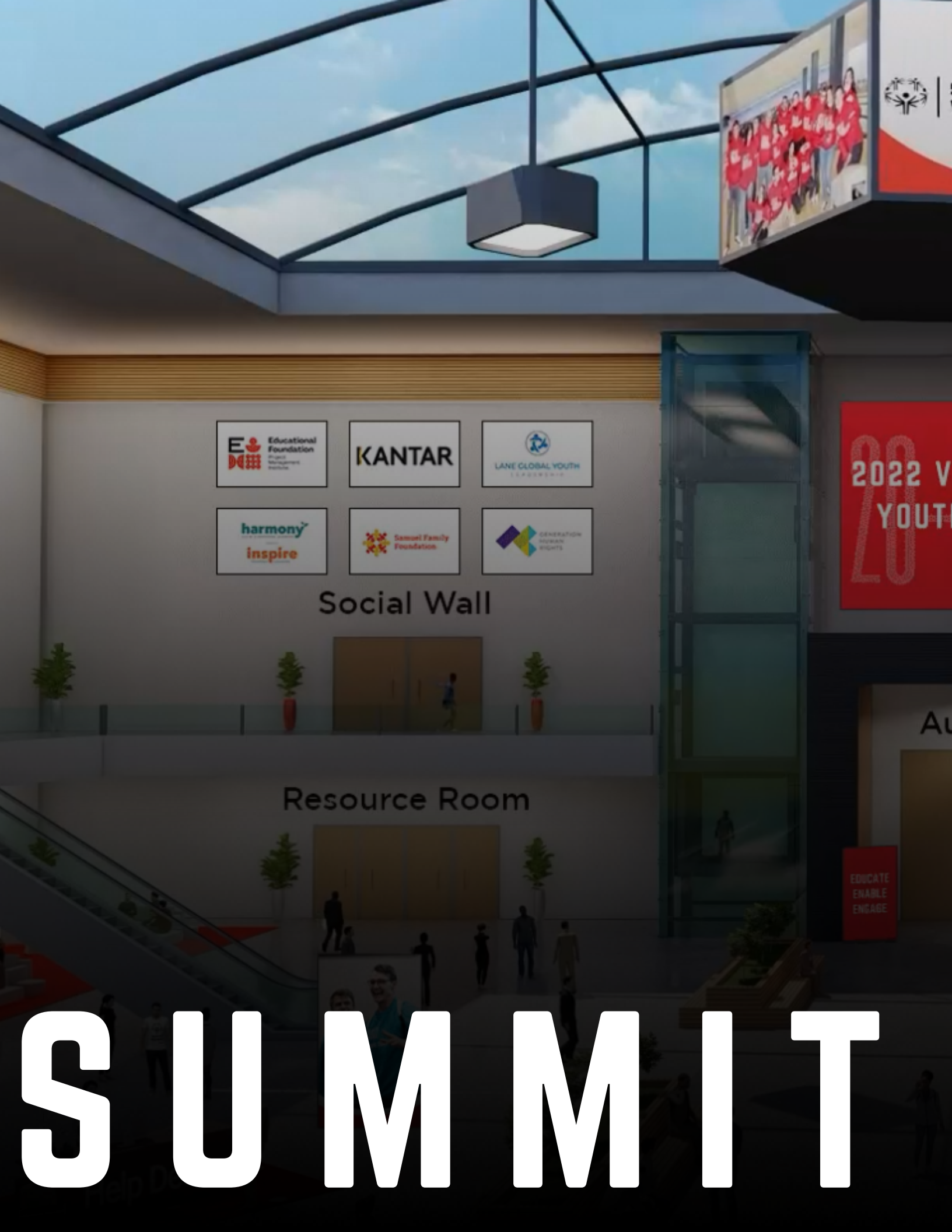
"With the skills and knowledge I've obtained, it will take me further in my work with Special Olympics."

- Participant from
Special Olympics Papua New Guinea



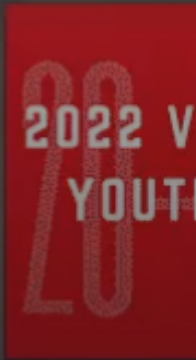
"Very well done -- engaging, informational and fun!"

- Participant from
Special Olympics Oregon



Social Wall

Resource Room



SUMMIT

SPECIAL OLYMPICS
VIRTUAL GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT

SPECIAL OLYMPICS
VIRTUAL GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP
SUMMIT
21 MAY

Auditorium

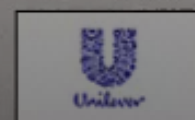
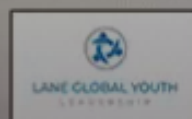


Photo Booth

Lounge

SESSIONS



SESSION SPOTLIGHTS

DAY 1

The first day of the Special Olympics Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit started with an opening ceremony welcoming participants from around the world to the event. Some of the main speakers included:

- **Kiera Byland and Shrey Kadian**
 - Members of the Special Olympics Global Athlete Leadership Council
- **Tim Shriver**
 - Chairman of Special Olympics International
- **Ray Lane**
 - Special Olympics Board Member
- **Caroline Frankum**
 - CEO of Profiles Division at Kantar
- **Rebecca Marmot**
 - Chief Sustainability Officer of Unilever
- **Effie Atieno**
 - Youth Leader from Special Olympics Kenya

Following the excitement of the opening ceremony, participants listened to a panel on building connections, especially during times of isolation. **Kim Samuel**, Director of the Samuel Family Foundation, talked about how COVID-19 disrupted education, employment, and mental health of young people with and without ID worldwide. **Faith Smith** and **Zoe Wisniewski**, U.S. Youth Ambassadors from Special Olympics New Hampshire, shared how COVID impacted their ability to connect with each other, but how they overcame challenges through technology.

During the **Educate** session, attendees heard from **Paula Camino** and **Yousra Mshms** from Peace First. They discussed how youth can use their leadership skills to develop inclusive opportunities around the world.

In the **Enable** session, young people learned about the skills needed to implement successful projects. **Aliki Courmanopoulos** from the Project Management Institute and Educational Foundation shared the basics of project management and provided youth with strategies to lead impactful projects in their countries and local communities.

Finally, during the **Engage** session, **Julia Govinden, Janice Lyn, and Stephan Fox** from United Through Sport shared how sports empower individuals and can support the development of leadership skills and confidence.

At the end of day one, participants came together to watch youth showcase their amazing skills and performances during **Youth Leaders Got Talent!** Judges for the talent festival included Emanuelle de Souza, a member of the Global Athlete Leadership Council, and Scott Page, Senior Vice President at National University. Talents -- from Special Olympics Programs all around the world -- included singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

THE CALL TO CONNECT

Opening Ceremony

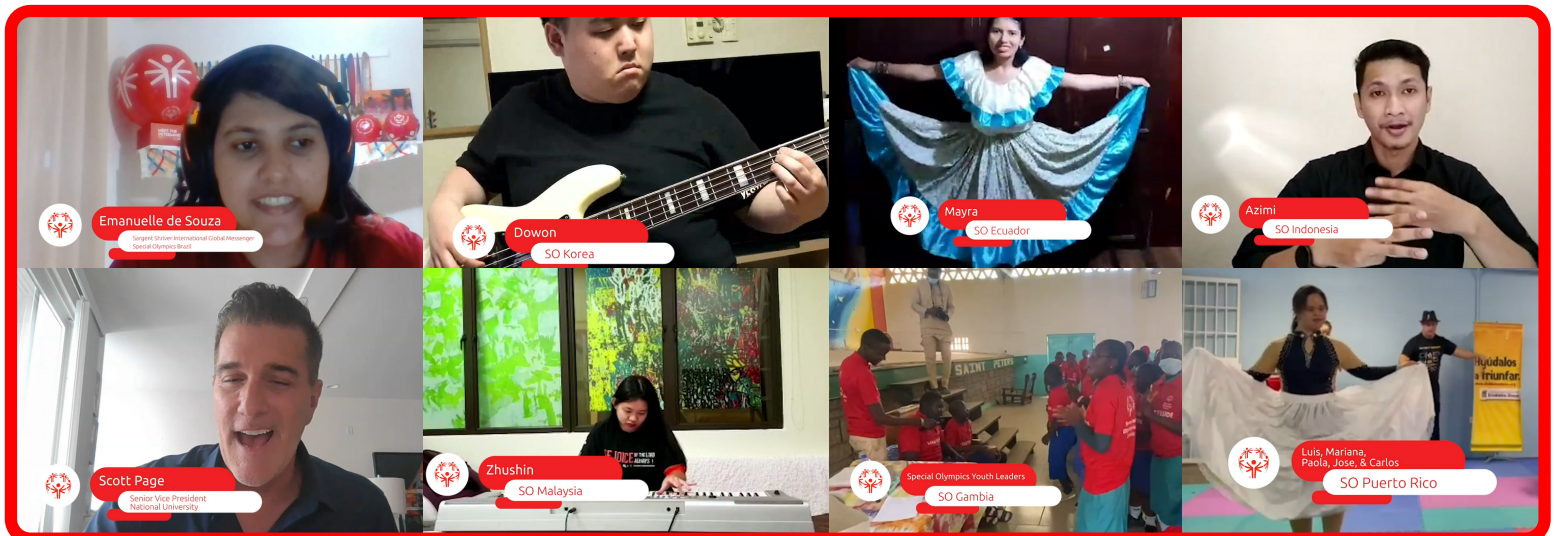


"This is the most **urgent work** on Planet Earth today: the work of challenging us to include those whom we may fear; to welcome those who may be different; to invite those whose gifts have been excluded; to leaven our culture, our society, our political structures, our schools with the voices of each and every person whose gifts are essential to the harmony and creation of a whole we haven't yet imagined."

-- Tim Shriver

YOUTH LEADERS GOT TALENT

Talent Festival



"Congratulations to everyone who performed throughout this talent show! It takes a lot of courage to perform in front of others and we appreciate you sharing your talents with us."

- Emanuelle de Souza



RAY AND STEPHANIE LANE AWARD IN GLOBAL INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP

PRESENTED TO GRACE PAYNE

The Ray and Stephanie Lane Award in Global Inclusive Youth Leadership is a new recognition. It is intended to honor an outstanding Special Olympics Youth Leader for their efforts to create more inclusive thoughts, share their learnings with others around the world, and change the future of inclusion. The recipient of this award demonstrates a commitment to being a pioneer of the Unified Generation and is an example for other young people as a leader for inclusion.

This award is based on five core values: commitment, connection, character, creativity, and community.

The recipient of this award demonstrates the five core values in the following ways:

COMMITMENT

Determined to create communities of respect and inclusion

CONNECTION

Seeks opportunities to bring individuals with and without ID together

CHARACTER

Serves as a resilient leader and advocate of inclusion

CREATIVITY

Encourages diverse thinking and implementation of plans

COMMUNITY

Implements inclusive projects and ideas into communities

The inaugural Ray and Stephanie Lane Award in Global Inclusive Youth Leadership was presented to **Grace Payne**, a Youth Leader from Special Olympics New Zealand.

Grace has progressed phenomenally as an athlete leader in the Special Olympics movement. In 2019, she was selected to become a member of Special Olympic Asia Pacific's Regional Athlete Input Council (RAIC). Soon after, she was elected to lead as co-chair.

With her skills and experience, she now serves as an advisor to the new RAIC (2022-24) and as a member of the Asia Pacific Advisory Council. At a time when there is little to no physical interaction among community members, Grace and her peers organized a series of virtual webinars aimed at building solidarity and promoting mental well-being.

Grace also serves as co-chair of Special Olympics New Zealand's Athlete Input Council and sits on their Board of Trustees as an Athlete Representative. She has demonstrated exemplary leadership skills at both regional and national levels—stepping up to lead, guide and motivate her peers, as well as to spread the word of inclusion as a powerful advocate and ambassador for Special Olympics.

Grace's first involvement with Special Olympics started at her school when she was just nine years old. She has competed in basketball for over ten years and power lifting for four years, and participated in a variety of other sports as well.

At the 2019 Special Olympics Summer Games in Abu Dhabi, her basketball team placed fourth during the competition. Later that year, she attended the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Regional Youth Leadership Summit: Youth for Inclusion. At the Summit, participants engaged in project management sessions and had the opportunity to apply for funding to support a Youth Innovation Project once they returned to their home countries.



Alongside her friend and fellow Special Olympics Youth Leader Jack Green, Grace created a plan to launch an app called SOGO that would connect Special Olympics athletes in New Zealand to transportation for sports trainings and competitions. Through their app, Grace and Jack hope to empower athletes to be self-reliant, stay engaged with their friends and teammates, and attend the practices and events that are most important to them.

“ AS YOUNG PEOPLE, WE ARE BEING CALLED TO CONNECT. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO ANSWER THE CALL BY LISTENING AND COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE YOU TO BE A BETTER YOU, AND ALSO PROMOTE INCLUSION IN YOUR COMMUNITY. ”

Grace will continue to advocate for those around her and will support them in finding their voice to create more inclusive communities. With her various leadership roles, and passion for forming connections, Grace Payne will continue to grow the Unified Generation as the first-ever recipient of the Ray and Stephanie Lane Award in Global Inclusive Youth Leadership.



SESSION SPOTLIGHTS

DAY 2

On the second and final day of the Special Olympics Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit, participants started the day with an Inclusion Talk led by **Loretta Claiborne**, Chief Inspiration Officer, and **Dr. Jacqueline Jodl**, Chief of the Global Youth and Education Department, both with Special Olympics International.

During this conversation, participants learned about Loretta's experience as a young person with intellectual disability. She shared challenges she faced and how Special Olympics helped her grow as an athlete and a leader. In this session, Loretta encouraged participants to be leaders and change makers and to use their voices to advocate for inclusion.

“ IF YOU ARE A YOUNG
PERSON AND YOU
HAVE THE ABILITY
TO STAND UP AND
SPEAK ON BEHALF
OF YOUR PEERS
- BE THAT
VOICE! ”



The Inclusion Talk was followed by the **Educate** session, in which participants were greeted by **Ke (Linka) Lin**, from United Nations Development Programme, and by **Monorom Tchaw**, founder of Compost City. They shared information on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Attendees learned about the history of the goals and how they can use the goals to inspire inclusive practices in their local schools and communities.

In the **Enable** session, **Elana Haviv**, from Generation Human Rights, and **Fiona Turner**, from the VII Foundation, shared the importance of connections in post-war countries. They highlighted stories of youth globally who have been living in conflict-ridden countries and the strategies they have implemented to create more peaceful communities in their home countries.

Finally, in the **Engage** session, participants learned about Special Olympics global Unified Schools programming and the impact it has on students worldwide. Attendees heard from Special Olympics Youth Leaders, educators, and practitioners about the benefits of this inclusive programming. Participants were given tools and resources to lead inclusive activities and establish Unified Schools in their local communities following the conclusion of the Summit.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

INCLUSION TALK

Advocating for Connection



ENGAGE

Changing Attitudes and Creating Connections Starts in Schools



[Click here](#) to watch recordings of all Summit sessions!



2022 VIRTUAL GLOBAL
YOUTH LEADERSHIP
SUMMIT

Special Olympics

YOUTH LEADERS



YOU LEAD highlights the stories and experiences of Special Olympics Youth Leaders who are taking an active role in leading the inclusive movement within their communities and beyond.

These stories showcase what young people are doing to amplify youth voices and how their actions will change the world.



Siblings Join the Summit to Change Attitudes

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ROMANIA

Mara, the other half of Anca's Unified pair, is more than just a Special Olympics partner, she is also Anca's sister. The two sisters, along with their adult mentor, make up the Unified team that represents Romania on the Special Olympics Europe Eurasia Athlete Leadership Council. The 2022 Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit was the first Global Summit the team has attended, though their family is passionate about promoting inclusion and has been involved with Special Olympics for the past 20 years.

Anca says it was "incredible" to hear all the session speakers, and says she and her sister are very thankful for everyone that shared their knowledge and experiences during the Summit.

The session presented by Special Olympics Unified Schools, *Changing Attitudes and Creating Connections Starts in Schools*, was Anca's favorite from the two-day event. She felt inspired by the session to think of ways that she can promote inclusion and create Unified Schools in Romania. Anca especially enjoyed the chat box that allowed her to connect with young people from all over the world. It was very important to both Anca and her sister to feel connected with the other Youth Leaders at the Virtual Summit.

Anca sees inclusion as acceptance of all people as equals, and "ensuring that they actually have the possibilities and the access to do the same as anyone else." Through Special Olympics, Anca has learned that people are so much more than the difficulties they face. She is passionate about promoting inclusion in every part of her life.

If more young people were leaders for inclusion, Anca believes we could create a better world where inclusion is the norm. She envisions a future where everyone is appreciated, supported, and respected for who they are. She wishes more people knew about Special Olympics and the joy and inclusion that it brings to not only the athletes, but to everyone involved. Anca's wish is that the world didn't underestimate the power of young people, but rather supported young people in their efforts to create a better, more inclusive, world.



Acceptance Brings Youth in Bahrain Together

SPECIAL OLYMPICS BAHRAIN

Mona is a Youth Leader and Unified partner with Special Olympics Bahrain. She first learned about Special Olympics from her sister, who was a volunteer. Recently, both Mona and her sister attended the 2022 Special Olympics Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit where they learned more about how to be leaders for inclusion in their community.

When Mona joined Special Olympics, she was unfamiliar with intellectual disabilities and lacked the courage to talk to people that had intellectual disabilities. Mona participated in a program that paired her with an athlete, someone who has intellectual disabilities. At first, Mona's partner did not want to talk to her, but throughout the program she formed a strong bond with her partner and was able to communicate and connect with her to become friends. Mona wishes that more people would see that people with intellectual disabilities are amazing, happy people who just need to be shown support and inclusion. She says that the smiling faces of Special Olympics athletes makes all her hard work as a Youth Leader worth it.

For Mona, the highlight of the Summit was the *Youth Leaders Got Talent* talent festival. She thought it was beautiful that each participant showed their skills, while also highlighting all of the many different cultures.

She also enjoyed the exercise challenges during the session called *Connecting through the Power of Special Olympics Unified Sports*. Mona says the Summit empowered her as a young person to go create and implement projects with Special Olympics Bahrain. She wishes one day to meet all the Special Olympics Youth Leaders from around the world in person.

Mona says that for her, inclusion is more than just a word. It is "a culture, a mindset, and an expectation that everyone can learn." She believes that when people feel included, they are empowered to contribute positively to their community. She feels that everyone deserves to be part of the community. Mona believes that accepting and loving other people starts from learning to accept and love yourself. She feels that Youth Leaders have a very important role in promoting inclusion, because if enough young people are passionate about inclusion more people will start to listen.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
VIRTUAL GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT

**I'm being #CalledToConnect
as a Special Olympics Youth Leader!**

Connecting through Projects in Mongolia

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MONGOLIA

Maral first heard about Special Olympics from her cousin, who was a volunteer with Special Olympics Mongolia. After learning about the organization, Maral started as an intern with Special Olympics Mongolia one year ago and is now a Youth Leader. Maral describes her time with Special Olympics so far as a “really grateful time” of her life.

Maral recently attended the 2022 Special Olympics Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit. She enjoyed being able to connect with others in the Special Olympics community, despite the restrictions that have been in place due to the pandemic. Maral feels grateful that she was able to come together with other Youth Leaders to connect about the future, learn more about current Special Olympics activities, and to share their stories.

Maral has started her own project in Mongolia focused on Unified Sports. She knows the information from the session *Youth as a Driving Force for Creating Connections through Project Management*, hosted by the Project Management Institute Educational Foundation (PMIEF), will be useful to her work as a project organizer and help her to implement stronger Youth Leader programs. This session was her favorite from the Virtual Summit, and she learned a lot about risk management and goal planning.

Maral believes that inclusion is very important in everyone’s life. People have different looks, personalities, backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, but Maral believes that we should all live on the earth as one big family. Maral hopes for a future where no one suffers because they are different, but rather, they are included and celebrated for each of their own unique characteristics.

After attending The Special Olympics Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit, Maral feels motivated to take action to make her own community more inclusive of others. She wants the world to know that people with intellectual disabilities are not that different from those without intellectual disabilities, and that these small differences are what make us truly special.





SPECIAL OLYMPICS
VIRTUAL GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT

LOOKING AHEAD



FUTURE CONNECTIONS

LOOKING AHEAD

Even though the first-ever **Virtual Global Youth Leadership Summit** has come to an end, Special Olympics Youth Leaders will continue to be called upon as the leaders of the inclusive movement. From this Virtual Summit, participants will take information they learned to lead their own Youth Leadership Summits, implement Youth Innovation Projects, and advocate for more inclusive practices in their home countries.

In June 2023, at the Global Youth Leadership Summit in Berlin, Germany, participants will be ***Called to Activate***, where they will call on policy makers to be proactive in breaking down barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their countries. Their voices will be amplified as they unite to lead a more accessible future.

The five-day Summit will bring together 150 young people from over 50 Special Olympics Programs around themes of unity, inclusion and empathy—topics that are particularly relevant from the global events and crises our world has been faced recently. The Summit will unite youth in a single global youth leadership platform for inclusion, connection and community—which many of our young people yearn for.

These Youth Leaders--on behalf of millions of young Special Olympics participants worldwide--will come together during the 2023 Summit to represent the youth voice in the ongoing movement for inclusion, to engage in cross-cultural exchange, and to receive valuable and practical leadership training.

“THE VIRTUAL GLOBAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT HAS SHOWN US THAT NO MATTER WHAT WE FACE, OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO FIND CERTAINTY IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY. LET US CELEBRATE ALL WE HAVE LEARNED AND CONTINUE TO ANSWER THE CALL TO CONNECT IN MANY YEARS TO COME.”

- **Mary Davis**
Chief Executive Officer
Special Olympics International

PARTNERS

THANK YOU TO ALL THE PARTNERS WHO MADE THE VIRTUAL GLOBAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT POSSIBLE AND CONTRIBUTED TO ITS SUCCESS ON BEHALF OF YOUNG PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER:



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