



Special Olympics Partnerships & School Recruitment

Partnerships

By collaborating with outside organizations, institutions, and governments, Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools/Unified Schools (SOUCS/SOUS) work can combine resources to have a greater impact on the community at hand. By broadening the reach, we grow resources, share expertise, and increase impact. The partnership examples below bring benefits to our SOUCS/SOUS work, the community, and ultimately the Program.

Types of organizations

- **Community Organizations**
Non-governmental organizations and interest groups
- **Educational Institutions**
Private and public schools, universities
- **Faith-based organizations**
Churches, Mosques, Temples, faith-affiliated community groups
- **Governments**
Ministries or agencies at the national, subnational, or local level

Types of partnerships

- **Collaborations**
Agreements to share resources and work together to accomplish a shared goal
- **Funding Alliances**
A contractual agreement to provide funding for SO to deliver the UCS/US programming
- **Value in Kind**
Sharing spaces, people, or equipment as a non-monetary contribution

Characteristics of a Good Partner Organization

- **Mission Alignment**
Both organizations have mission statements that align or complement each other
- **Financial Resources and Human Capacity**
- **Existing External Relations**
Current philanthropic causes or community outreach efforts
- **Existing Relationships with Staff or Board**



School Recruitment

By understanding the education system landscape, the types of involvement and the characteristics of a good partnership school, this can serve as a strategy towards recruiting schools.

Types of Schools

- **Segregated Education System**
A school system in which students with intellectual disabilities (ID) are educated in separate environments (physical buildings) than their peers without intellectual disabilities (ID).
- **Partially Inclusive Education System**
A school system in which students with ID are educated in the same environment (physical building), but in separate classes than their peers without ID.
- **Fully Inclusive Schools**
Students with and without intellectual disabilities educated in the same environment (classes and building).

Categories of School Involvement

- **Potential Unified Schools**
No current programming taking place
- **Unified School**
*An emerging Unified Champion School implementing one component, Unified Sports
E.g. Unified Sports*
- **Developing Unified Champion School**
Implementing sports and one other component
- **Unified Champion Schools**
All three components—Inclusive Youth Leadership, Unified Sports, and Whole School Engagement—are present

Characteristics of good school partners

- Connection to target population
- Existing community relationships
- Stable leadership and infrastructure
- Successful record of partnerships

Keep reaching out to potential partners and schools to expand your reach and further the impact of your hard work!

Best Practice: Special Olympics East Asia

Introduction

China has a segregated school system in which students with ID learn in different environments than students without ID. In Chinese Taipei, they have a partially inclusive education system. Below you will find best practices on how both Programs establish partnerships for Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools/Special Olympics Unified Schools (SOUCS/SOUS) programming.

Special Olympics China

- **Special Schools**
In China, special schools for students with disabilities are an easy choice for recruitment
- **Community Schools**
Schools in the same community who serve students without ID make great opportunities to recruit Unified Partners. Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) and Letters of Commitment help to solidify these partnerships
- **Elite Schools**
In China, reach out to elite schools with reputations for social impact. These schools radiate strength and power, and are therefore good leaders that can help convince other schools to follow their lead

Special Olympics Chinese Taipei

- **Partially Inclusive Schools**
Mainstream schools with special classes are targeted for SOUCS/SOUS programming. These integrated schools are much easier to engage students in Unified Sports since both students with and without ID are present. Can be reached through the Education Department in Chinese Taipei.
- **Strong School Culture**
Schools with a strong school culture and environment are great candidates for recruitment. This shows a willingness to try new initiatives to improve culture

SOEA Partnerships

SOEA has established strong partnerships over the past two decades. As part of these partnerships, SOEA has set up the following best practices:

- **Regular Meeting Cadence**
Including working plan meetings at the beginning and end of every year and a leadership meeting every 1-2 months.
- **Including Leadership**
Including vital leaders to the Special Olympics movement while in SOEA. Including Tim Shriver and other Global Leadership Team members.
- **Event Engagement**
Inviting partners to all Regional and local events and as a honored guest at World Games. Also including regular attendance from Special Olympics staff at all partnership events for further relationship building opportunities.



SOEA Advice to Programs

Identifying New Partner Organizations

- **Stakeholder Engagement**
Draw on school partners, universities, and family leaders to make recommendations on appropriate partners. These stakeholders often have existing relationships with these organizations, helping to make the partnership form quickly.
- **Mutual Benefits**
By approaching a partner with benefits of the program, and focusing on their needs.

School Recruitment

- **Establish Partnerships with the Ministry or Department of Education**
- **Existing Policies/Requirements**
Take advantage of existing policies/requirements for volunteer, recreational, or sport activity hours. All are great ways for new people to get involved and advocate for the benefits of SOUCS/SOUS.
- **Engage with High Quality Schools**
Capitalize on high quality schools as leaders and mentors to grow the number of schools engaged
- **Collaboration with other disability organizations**
Take advantage of existing policies/requirements for volunteer, recreational, or sport activity hours. All are great ways for new people to get involved and advocate for the benefits of SOUCS/SOUS.
- **Engage with Lower Income Schools**
Schools in economically underdeveloped areas are unable to allocate education resources as needed and therefore tend to welcome additional support.