



Boosting the participation in sports of youth and adults with intellectual disabilities: Insights from Special Olympics



Friday, 6th July, 2018: 14.00-15.30 hrs: Wicklow Meeting Room 1

Facilitator

Professor Roy McConkey, Ulster University with colleagues from Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia (<http://european-research.org/>)

Background

2018 marks the 50th Anniversary of Special Olympics. It is now present in 178 countries globally and 58 countries in Europe/Eurasia. It involves an estimated half million athletes and over 30,000 volunteer coaches in Europe/Eurasia. The UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), Article 30.5 promotes their rights to inclusion in mainstream sports. Likewise the UNESCO charter (2014) notes in Article 1 that *“Inclusive, adapted and safe opportunities to participate in physical education, physical activity and sport must be available to all human beings, notably ... persons with disabilities”*.

Workshop aims:

- To provide an overview of new initiatives from Special Olympics in Europe/Eurasia beyond their traditional training and competitions.
- To illustrate how their Unified Sports is used to promote the social inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities and the benefits for non-disabled partners.
- To examine the role of coaches and playing partners in making inclusive teams.
- To discuss the insights from Unified Sports in making mainstream sports more inclusive for persons with intellectual disabilities.

Workshop Outline

1. An overview of new Special Olympics Initiatives including Young Athletes, Athlete Leadership, Schools Programming and Unified Sports. (With video and handouts)
2. The concept of Unified Sports in football, basketball, volleyball.
 - a) Making Unified Sports work - recruiting partners; coaches, competition rules. (With examples of coach training materials).
 - b) Impact of Unified Sports – results from trans-national studies in Europe and USA. Ongoing research studies.
3. Inclusion in mainstream activities and sports – common barriers and solutions.

Workshop Format

Video examples, Powerpoint presentations and group discussion.