

SURVEY RESULTS: HOW ARE SPECIAL OLYMPICS FAMILIES EXPERIENCING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ADVOCACY?

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Before you read

— PART 0: A FEW THINGS
TO KEEP IN MIND



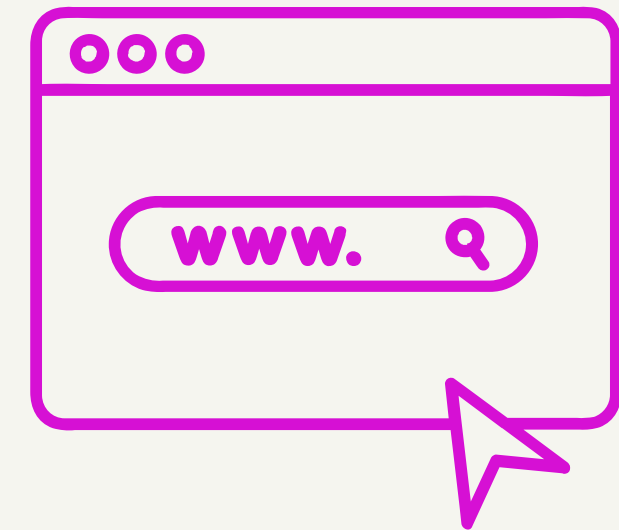
ABOUT THIS REPORT



This document is quite long.
You don't need to read it all at once.



This document has some
difficult words.
You can find the definitions at
the end, and on our website.



This document is one part of a
research project.
That means there are more
documents like this one that can
give you more information.
You can read them on our website
here.

TWO WORDS TO KEEP IN MIND



ADVOCACY

Advocacy is acting to support a specific person or cause. A person can advocate for something that affects them (self-advocacy) or that affects others (advocating for others).

There are many types of advocacy, like awareness campaigns, talking to politicians or starting legal cases.

In this research, we are focusing on advocacy at the school level; not at the government level



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A type of education that includes people with and without disabilities in the same schools.

People with disabilities can have access to learning support assistants - which are called different names in different countries - but they are in the same classrooms as other students.

WHY DO WE NEED ADVOCACY FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

CHILDREN WITH
DISABILITIES ARE

49%

MORE LIKELY TO
NEVER GO TO
SCHOOL



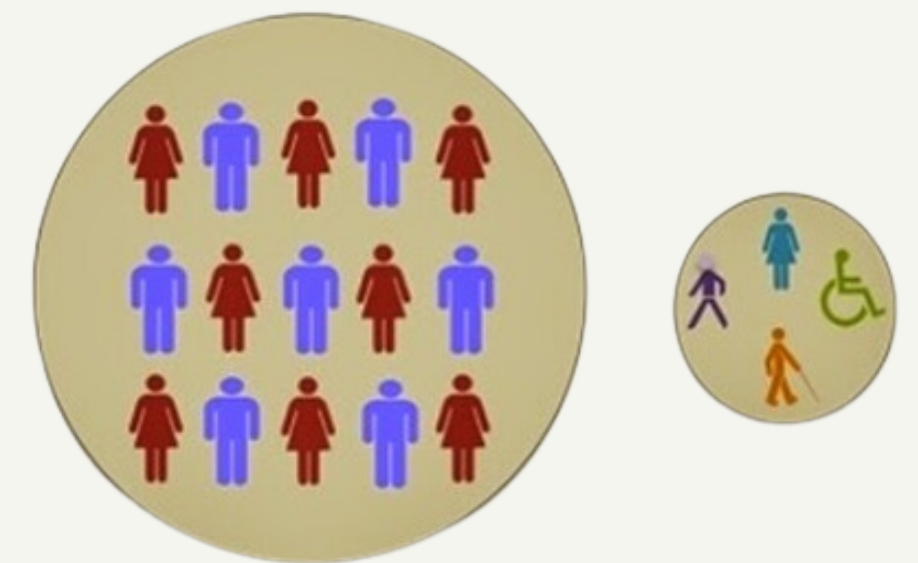
**ONLY
17%**

OF COUNTRIES HAVE
LAWS THAT ORDER
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



**WHILE
25%**

OF COUNTRIES HAVE
LAWS THAT ALLOW
SEPARATED EDUCATION



WHAT DID WE WANT TO LEARN?

We wanted to understand how Special Olympics families have experienced education, and when they have had to fight for it.

We also wanted to understand if Special Olympics know what advocacy is, and if they have done it before.

This would help us learn:

- If Special Olympics families are going through the same things that other organizations have reported
- How Special Olympics can be most helpful to families

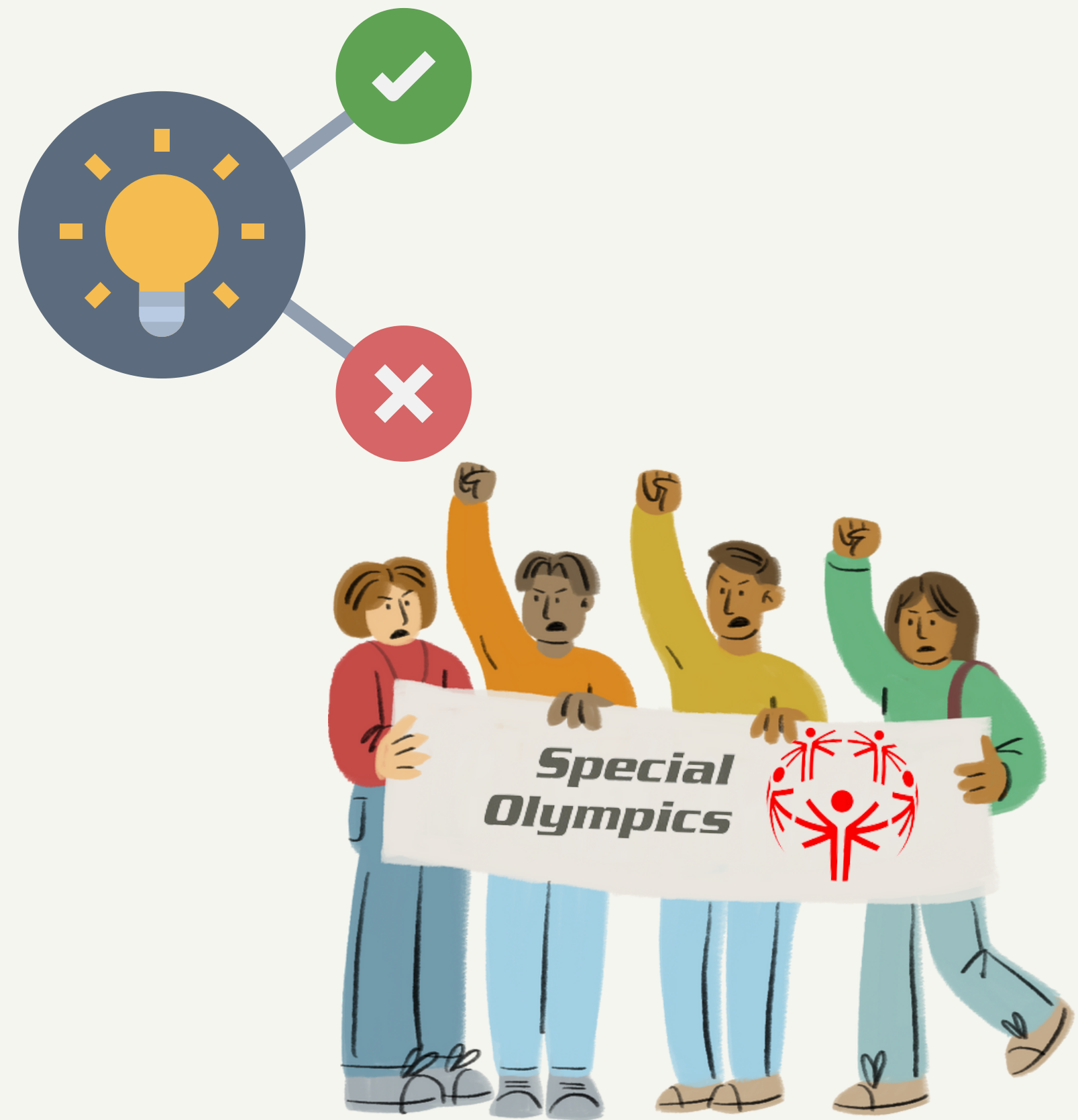


Hypothesis

WHAT WE THOUGHT WE WOULD FIND

Based on what we had already studied, we thought we would find that:

- Special Olympics families are already doing advocacy, but they do not know this word.
- Special Olympics families are advocating to get their children into inclusive schools.
- Special Olympics families are advocating for their children to get the best possible education in schools.
- Special Olympics families are not participating in systems advocacy.



HOW DID WE FIND OUR INFORMATION?

STEP 1

We created a survey with 18 questions.

The survey would show you different questions based on your answers.

For example, if you had never advocated, it would ask you why. If you had, it would ask you how.



STEP 2

We made two versions of the survey:

- 1 in Spanish for Latin America
- 1 in English for North America and Europe

The Special Olympics regional coordinators sent out the surveys by email.



STEP 3

Once we had the answers, we put them all together.

Then, we analyzed the results together. This means we looked at them carefully and compared them with what we already knew.



PEOPLE WHO ANSWERED OUR SURVEY

36 people answered our call to action.
30 were parents of people with disabilities, 1 was a niece.

25 people

only answered the survey



6 people

answered the
survey and wanted
to be interviewed



5

only wanted
to be
interviewed



WHAT WILL YOU FIND IN THESE SLIDES?

WHAT TYPES OF EDUCATION SPECIAL OLYMPICS FAMILY MEMBERS HAD ACCESS TO



THE PARTS THAT WERE DIFFICULT OR EASY ABOUT ACCESSING THAT EDUCATION,
AND WHAT THEY DID



HOW SPECIAL OLYMPICS FAMILY MEMBERS INTERACTED WITH SUPPORTS IN THEIR
SCHOOLS



HOW OUR FINDINGS COMPARE TO WHAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE SAID ABOUT
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY





What we learned

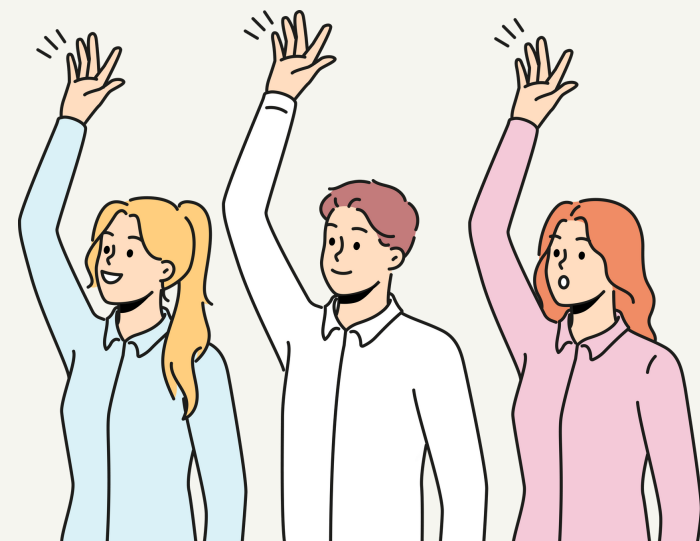
— PART 2: ADVOCACY IN
GENERAL



WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

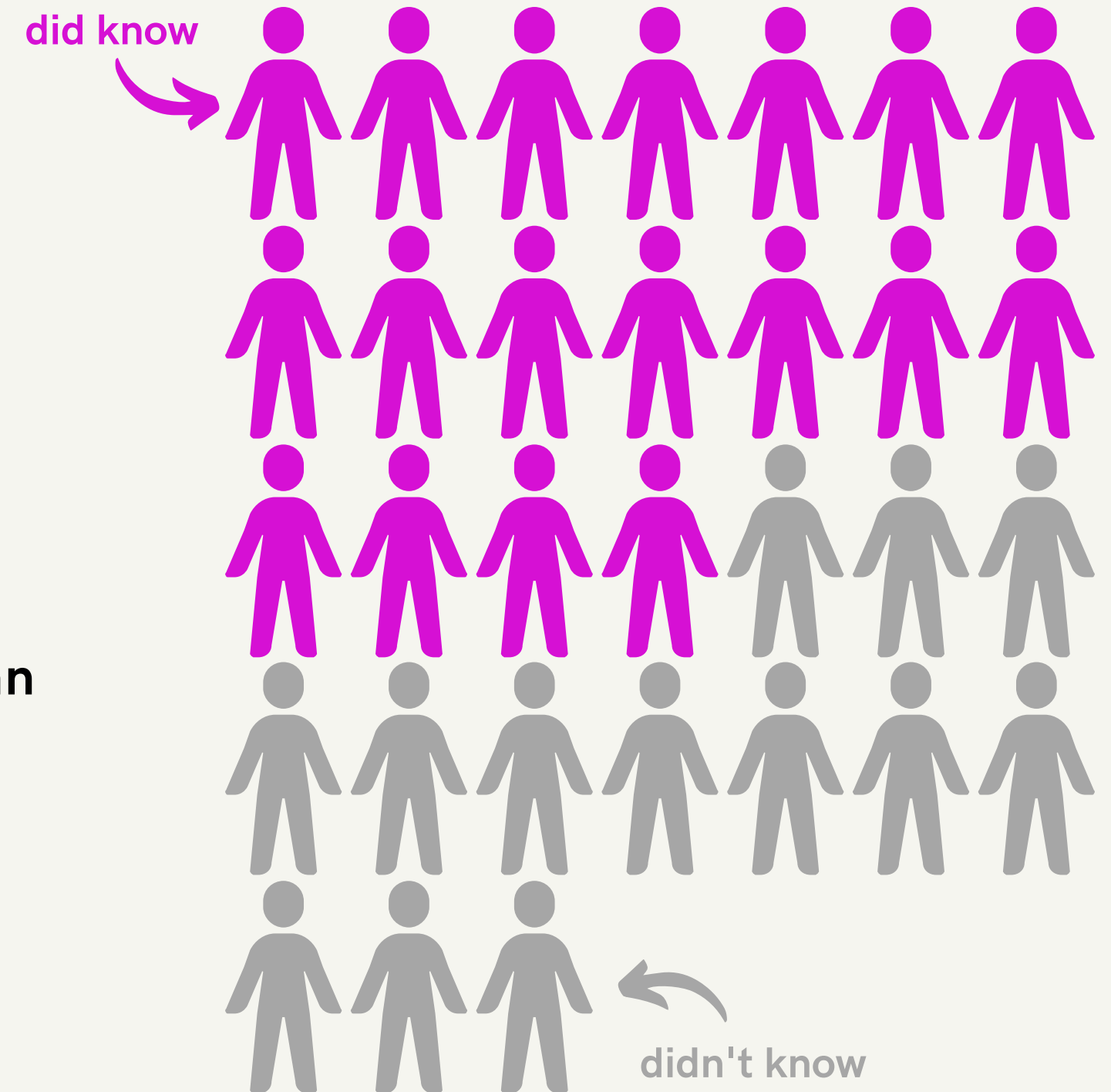


We asked family members if they knew what advocacy means. This is because **advocacy** is a very hard word, and not everyone knows what it means.



We were delighted to find that **more than half of family members actually know what advocacy means.**

This probably means that they are advocates!



We started this survey asking **31 people** if they knew what advocacy means.

47% of people who answered said they knew what advocacy is.

So we asked those people what advocacy means to them.



WHAT DOES ADVOCACY MEAN?

We asked family members to rate: "What does advocacy mean to you?"

People gave us a lot of responses based on their experiences. You can find them in our Annex (this is a document with all the extra information from our project).

We organized those responses in four categories based on how they describe advocacy. People explain advocacy as:

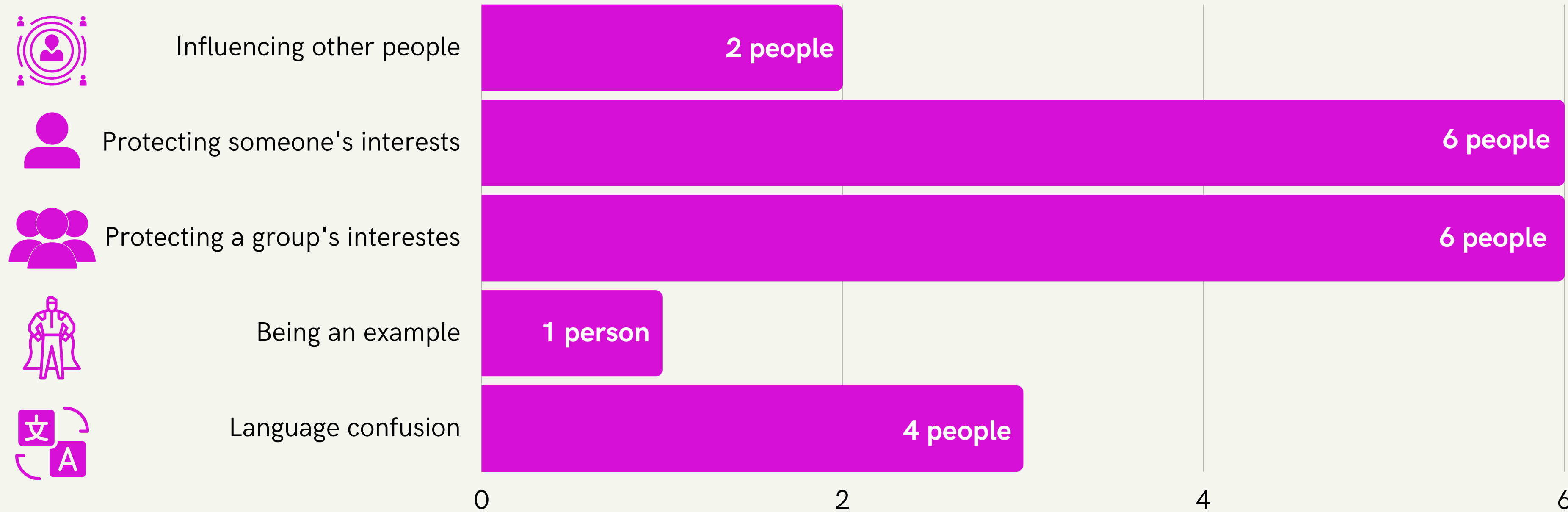
- Influencing other people
- Fighting for a person's interest
- Fighting for a group's interest
- Setting an example

Some answers did not fit into any of these categories because of confusions with language. We will explain this later.



WHAT DOES ADVOCACY MEAN?

We asked family members to rate: "What does advocacy mean to you?"



Advocacy as influencing other people



"To be a type of influence in some situation"

"Influence over a person or thing"

Advocacy as being an example



"What she managed to transform for other people"

Advocacy as fighting for someone's interests

"To me it means I can represent my daughter's views in respect of her educational needs"



"Having a voice for my son and making sure he is heard and receives what he needs and deserves"

"Making sure she gets what she is entitled to or working to make change if the available rights aren't enough"

"Support from others to achieve my wishes and opinions"

Advocacy as fighting for a group's interests



"Acting as an agent of change"

"Supporting and helping people (especially people with disabilities) to get what is rightfully theirs"

"In this specific case, I believe that it is the obligation of the families to sensitize the environment, educate it and show how enriching inclusion is for everyone"

"Everyone being included"

A note on language barriers

Three response were not grouped, as they seem to be the product of language confusion.

In the Spanish version of the survey, two people understood advocacy as a bad situation that you would report.

This is probably because the Spanish word for advocacy ("**incidencia**") also means "**incident**".



One person said that they can't explain advocacy in English:

"I can explain in Hebrew not in English"



We started this survey asking **31 people** if they knew what advocacy means.

47% of people who answered said they knew what advocacy is. So we asked those 17 people what advocacy means to them.

Then, we gave everyone a definition of advocacy and asked them if they had advocated before. **It turns out that 75% of people who answered our survey had advocated!**

We asked them some more questions.



WHAT DID YOU ADVOCATE FOR?

We asked family members "In what capacity did you advocate for them?" and gave them a list to chose from



ADVOCATING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

We asked: "Have you advocated for inclusive education for a Special Olympics athlete or family member?"

This graph shows that the majority of people say they **have advocated for inclusive education before.**



When we asked if it was easy or hard to access education, people shared stories of helping their children to get into school - that's advocacy!



They also shared that they have worked with the learning support assistant, communicating and giving opinions - that's also advocacy!



WHAT DOES THIS TELL US?

People need to recognize themselves as advocates!



This is will help them have more skills through training, and support each other because advocacy is emotionally tiring.



This is where organizations like SOI can be helpful.



We started this survey asking **31 people** if they knew what advocacy means.

17 people said they knew what advocacy is. So we asked those 17 people what advocacy means to them.

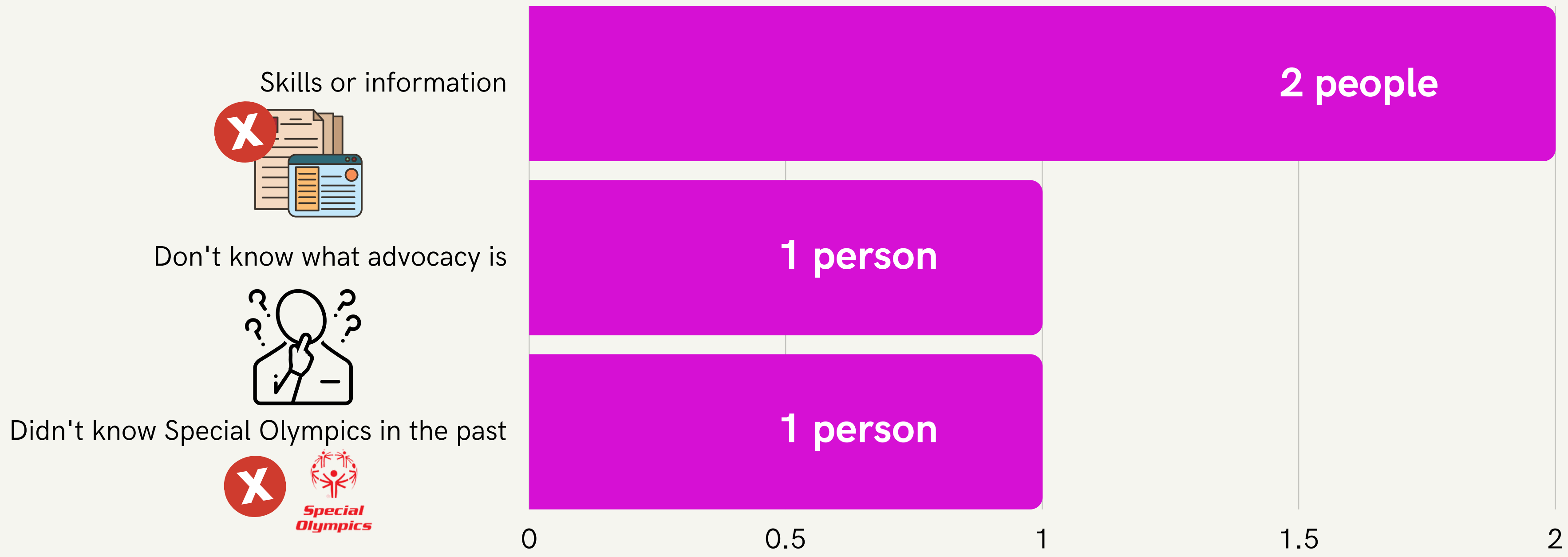
Then, we gave everyone a definition of advocacy and asked them if they had advocated before. **4 people said they had never advocated before.**

We asked them some more questions to understand why.



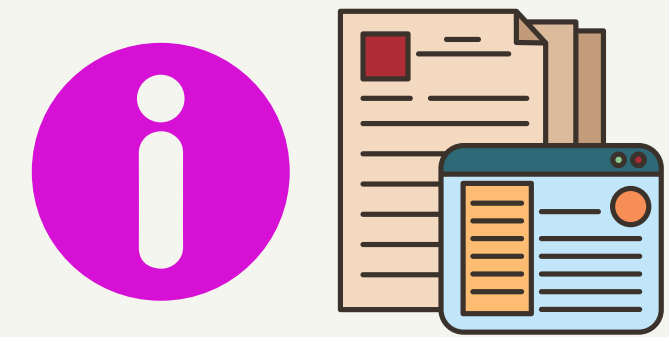
BARRIERS TO ADVOCACY

We asked family members: What has stopped you from advocating on behalf of a Special Olympics athlete or family member?"



WHAT DOES THIS TELL US?

This shows that there need to be more information on advocacy for family members.



They need to know the rights for people with disability.



They need to know that you can advocate without the support of a big organization like Special Olympics.





OUR CONCLUSIONS

WHAT WE THOUGHT	WHAT WE FOUND
Special Olympics families are already doing advocacy, but they do not know this word.	True! In the second part of this research, a lot of families (13 families) told us they don't know what advocacy means. But they also told stories of how they had worked to get their child into a school - that's advocacy already!
Special Olympics families are advocating to get their children into inclusive schools.	True! Family members shared with us that they had advocated to get their children into schools by working with school teachers and headmasters, as well as with the local government.
Special Olympics families are advocating for their children to get the best possible education in schools.	True! Most family members are communicating a lot with learning support assistants. That is also a type of advocacy. And in our interviews, we talked a lot about how you have to keep asking the school to make changes to make sure everyone gets a good education.
Special Olympics families are not participating in systems advocacy.	We're not sure! Nobody talked about this in our interviews or survey. But we also did not ask them directly. So we don't have enough information to conclude.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- We asked 31 Special Olympics families about their experiences with supports in inclusive education. You can read what we found [here](#).
- You can learn more about how we connected with the community [here](#).
- We studied the how families advocate and wrote our findings in an accessible way [here](#).

