



**SAMUEL CENTRE
FOR SOCIAL
CONNECTEDNESS**

**Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness
2024 Fellowship Program
Project Proposal**

PARTNER ORGANIZATION:

Special Olympics

PROJECT TITLE:

The Impact of Family Engagement on the Social Emotional
Well-Being of Special Olympics Parents

Partner Organization: Special Olympics

Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic type sports for over 4 million children and adults with intellectual disabilities around the world, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

Currently, Special Olympics has programming in 201 countries across the world representing seven global regions: North America, Latin America, Middle East/North Africa, Africa, Europe-Eurasia, East Asia, and Asia Pacific.

Special Olympics' work goes beyond sports events, aiming to drive social change, improve the health of our athletes and build inclusive communities that enable full social participation and life-long fitness for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) throughout the world. Through our 56 years of experience, we know that adults and children with intellectual disabilities are every society's most neglected population.

Learn more at: <https://www.specialolympics.org/>

PROJECT INFORMATION

Location of the Project: Remote

Special Olympics Headquarters is located in Washington, DC, but the fellowship will operate remotely. This Fellowship is open to applicants from anywhere in the world, successful applicants will need to maintain work hours that align with the Washington based team.

Section 1: Description of the Project

Special Olympics has expanded engagement opportunities to now include families. Over the next three years, Special Olympics plans to develop and implement a global family strategy that engages, educates, and empowers family members of Special Olympics athletes to be teachers of inclusion. Families are the essential link within our movement: The social inclusion and social emotional well-being of families often reflects the social inclusion and social emotional well-being of their athletes within the movement. Special Olympics ensures that these engagement opportunities for families are equitable and takes intersecting identities into consideration.

This project will help us towards this goal by providing Special Olympics with 1) An understanding of the current landscape of Special Olympics family engagement 2) How family engagement impacts the social emotional well-being of parents from low and middle income backgrounds 3) Best practices of family engagement that have resulted in social emotional well-being and 4) Recommendations for the future of family engagement.

Section 2: Goals of the Project

The goals of the family engagement strategy for Special include engaging family members so they become active participants in the Special Olympics movement and providing education to family members to improve and promote well-being. Overall, Special Olympics also aims to ensure social emotional well-being throughout all programming. Targeted areas for this work include Latin America, Middle East/North Africa, Asia Pacific, and Europe/Eurasia

Engaging and training families will also provide opportunities for families from diverse backgrounds to connect with each other, including parents from low to middle income backgrounds. With family engagement, families can understand shared experiences and use this community to sustain social inclusion and social emotional well-being over time.

In order to do this, Special Olympics must understand the current landscape of family engagement around the world to effectively utilize programming to include and ensure the social emotional well-being of parents from low and middle income backgrounds. **Therefore, the overarching goal of this project is to help Special Olympics understand the impact of family engagement on the social emotional well-being of Special Olympics parents from low and middle income countries.**

Importantly, this project will be inclusive as the fellow will work alongside a Special Olympics athlete leader on all phases of this project, in alignment with the “Nothing About Us Without Us” principle.

Section 3: Guiding Questions

1. Understanding Current Landscape:

- What does Special Olympic family engagement look like in various regions?
- How do parents from low and middle income backgrounds perceive the impact of family engagement on their social emotional well-being?

2. Impact Assessment:

- In what ways does Special Olympics family engagement impact the social emotional well-being of parents from low and middle income countries?

3. Identifying Barriers:

- What are the main barriers in family engagement programming hindering the social emotional well-being for Special Olympics parents from low and middle income countries?

4. Best Practices:

- Are there successful examples of family engagements that have increased social emotional well-being among parents from low and middle income countries in Special Olympics Programs? In general?

- What practices, if any, have specifically supported parents' sense of belonging? Do those practices differ in any way from practices that support their social emotional well-being?

5. Recommendations for Future of Family Engagement:

- Based on the findings, what are some recommendations for family engagement to promote social emotional well-being among Special Olympics parents from low and middle income countries?
- Are there any recommendations, specific to belonging, that can support well-being among Special Olympics parents?

Section 4: Key Deliverables

- **1 blog post** (500 – 1,000 word), posted to SCSC's website.
 - Including an easy read version of the blog co-created with the Special Olympics athlete leader.
- **A Community Engagement Initiative (CEI)** in support of the Final Output

The CEI will be led by the Fellow and designed with the support of SCSC's program manager and the SOI team. This could include interviews with families of Special Olympics athletes who have experience advocating for inclusion to understand in more detail their experiences, successes, and challenges. The CEI will inform the final output and will not stand as an independent product.
- **A Final Output(s)**
 - A 25 – 35-page research report supported by primary or secondary source data focused on analyzing the impact of family engagement on Special Olympics parents with low socioeconomic status
 - An easy read summary of the final report co-created with the Special Olympics athlete leader.
- **A Final Presentation** with the cohort

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Key Attributes and Skills in the Applicant

The selected candidate must be excited to, and invested in creating an inclusive research project. This project will be created alongside a co-researcher, a Special Olympics athlete.

- Academic background in social sciences, psychology, education, or a related field
- Knowledge and understanding of disability inclusion, social emotional well-being, intersectionality
- Exhibit cultural sensitivity; be mindful of challenges facing marginalized populations
- Exceptional communication and organizational skills
- Demonstrated writing and qualitative research skills

- Detail-oriented, flexible, excellent time management skills and the ability to work independently to complete projects in a timely fashion
- Basic computer skills, including proficiency in email, internet research, and Microsoft Office
- Creative thinker with a genuine curiosity and investigative sensibility

Additional Assets:

- Prior experience working with people with ID or Special Olympics a plus
- Experience interviewing and facilitating focus groups

About the Fellowship/What the Fellowship Offers

The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness (SCSC) Social Connectedness Fellowship empowers young people and people with a variety of different types of lived experience to partner with groundbreaking organizations from around the world to carry out innovative research on social isolation and belonging.

SCSC defines belonging as connection to the 4 Ps: people, place, power, and purpose. This is to say that belonging comes through our relationships with other people as well as through our rootedness in nature, our ability to influence social, political and economic decision-making, and our capacity to find shared meaning and purpose in our lives. The Fellowship offers a unique opportunity to apply the lens of Belonging, thinking intersectionally, and holistically about the problems of the 21st century.

These are paid positions, starting on **May 6, 2024**, and ending on **September 27, 2024**. From **May – August the position is full time, 35 hours per week** and in **September the hours are reduced to part time, 10-20 hours per week**.

SCSC Offers:

- Competitive wages, \$22-28 CAD per hour, adjusted according to each Fellow's geographic location and experience.
 - Purchasing power and location will be heavily considered.
- Opportunity to work with national & international community partners
- Capacity building, skills development, & mentorship
- Ability to network, and be part of an international cohort
- All Fellowship works are published on the SCSC website
- The Fellow's work will be supported by regular supervision meetings with both organizations, and a 1-week long orientation at SCSC.

Program Requirements:

- Be able to work at least 4 hours per day (in alignment with the 9-5 workday) in Eastern Standard Time to ensure overlap with the Toronto-based team.
- Be ready to engage in regular online meetings, check-ins, capacity building sessions, and work remotely.

- Ability to take initiative, manage their time effectively, work independently, and draw from different resources to support their work.
- Have a passion for research and building a more inclusive, belonging-oriented world.

EQUITY STATEMENT

The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness is an equal opportunity employer, and we encourage applicants to apply even if they do not meet all the criteria. We believe all candidates have something to bring to the organization and the role. If you have skills outside the job description that you think can benefit the project, let us know in your cover letter. We encourage all equity-seeking groups, such as immigrants, Black and Indigenous communities, people of color, women, young people, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, people with disabilities, and people who have been justice-impacted to apply.

Please tell us if you need accommodation throughout the application process and we are happy to support you.

You can email any accommodation requests to scfellowship@scscglobal.org