



# Male and Female Disability Gymnastics

## Overview of the project

Zenith Gymnastics Special Olympics Club sets out to give athletes with disabilities the opportunity to compete in a mainstream sport. As the club started in September 2012, it is steadily growing. The club is registered with Special Olympics and are part of Newry Olympics Gymnastics Club.

The club's motto is "**Reach for the stars**" which was echoed in the latest Regional Games, where 2 athletes took home 8 medals between them, 4 gold and 4 silver. The aim for the club is to;

1. Over the years, increase the number of gymnasts and volunteers
2. Be successful in the Disability Artistic British Championships 2013
3. Gain selection for qualification for the Ireland Games 2014 in Limerick, the World Games in 2015 in L.A and many more Regional, National and International competitions

## Project Objectives

- To train and retrain athletes and volunteers in gymnastics
- To train volunteers up to become coaches
- To have gymnasts qualify for Ireland and World Games
- To build the membership within the club to 20+ over the next 2 years
- To live out the club motto in all aspects of the sport
- To build a trusting relationship with gymnasts, volunteers and parents/carers
- To live out the Special Olympics oath in the club - "**Let me Win, but if I cannot win, let me brave in the attempt**"

## Summary of Success

- 2 gymnasts qualified for the Special Olympics Ireland Games and World Game selections
- Within the 1<sup>st</sup> 9 months the gymnasts achieved 4 gold and 4 silver medals at the Regional Special Olympics Artistic Games



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### Description of what happened/how the project was delivered

The club started was founded when Special Olympics Ireland contacted Cúshla Connor to see if she was interested in starting up a club. It was then echoed when she was completing her Disability Gymnastics module in 2012. This emphasised her love for Disability Gymnastics.

The club runs once a week, on a Saturday, for an hour. When there is a competition coming up then sessions run 2-3 times a week. The club operates from the local Sports Centre which has limited equipment. This is something the club is seeking to improve with the help of some fund-raising; with better equipment it will allow the gymnasts to progress to further levels.

### Impact/Outcomes

- To become a successful Special Olympics and Disability club
- To have a friendly and trustworthy relationship between athletes/gymnastics and volunteers
- To have successful athletes/gymnasts
- For the club/sessions to still be running in 10 years

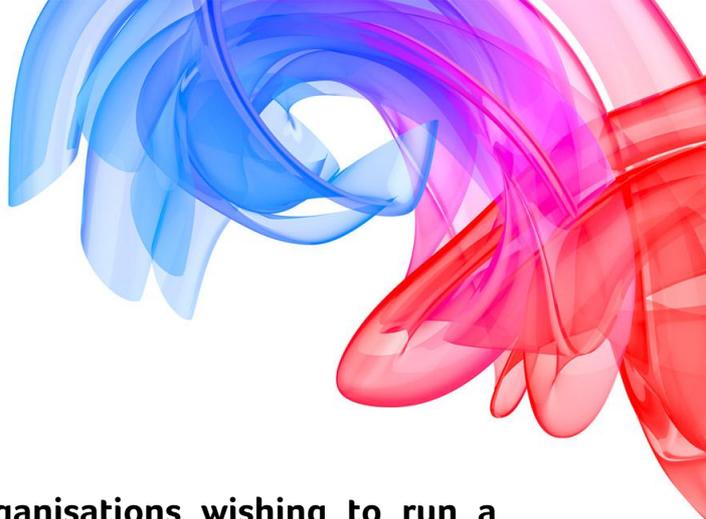
### Why did the project work? – Key success factors?

- Provided Disability gymnastics in Newry at a competition level
- Provided a successful and friendly environment for gymnastics
- It got more people involved in the Special Olympics
- Produced successful Gymnasts
- Raised awareness for inclusion
- Raised awareness of British Gymnastics

### Key Partners

- Special Olympics Ulster
- Special Olympics Ireland
- British Gymnastics
- Newry Olympics Gymnastics Club
- KMS Sports – Sponsorship





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**What is your advice to other clubs/organisations wishing to run a similar project?** *What are the key things that other clubs can implement to achieve success? & from your experience, what should be avoided?*

It is useful to have a strong team around you to support you in every situation. Other advice would be to develop a trusting relationship with the gymnasts' parents/carers; having this relationship is a great advantage as they will give you support when/if necessary and in turn they will be more trusting towards you.

In terms of where you are running your club/organisation/activities, make sure that staff are 100% supportive and understanding of your purpose. Finally keep your club/organisation/activities fun and don't be too afraid to make a fool of yourself when coaching and always make the gymnasts your number one priority.

### **Future Developments**

Hopefully get to Ireland Games in 2014 and the World Games in 2015. Also, to get some of the volunteers qualified as Level 1 General or Artistic Gymnastics Coaches. The club want to further develop the knowledge of their coaches.

### **Contact Details:**

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