

Empowering Persons with Disabilities to Live Better through Sport

In January 2015, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) convened an inter-agency Committee for Disability Sports to recommend ways to raise awareness of and participation in disability sports, as well as engender greater inclusiveness and understanding of PwDs through disability sports. The successful completion of the 8th Asean Para Games in December 2015 heralded the start of a new chapter for disability sports in Singapore.

To create a thriving disability sports ecosystem, the Committee for Disability Sports identified key areas for improvement and proposed recommendations to help foster more inclusive and accessible communities, and build on existing capabilities and networks to enable persons of all abilities to live better through sport.

Broad Outcomes for the Disability Sport Master Plan (DSMP)

1. Expand access and opportunities for sports participation by PwDs
2. Develop organisational and professional capabilities in disability sports
3. Build public awareness of disability sports and strengthen affinity with Team Singapore athletes

In 2016, SportCares began executing the recommendations of the DSMP under the guidance of MCCY. This effort continues till today via various initiatives and programmes such as:

- Play Inclusive, where persons with disabilities team up with students from mainstream schools to compete as unified teams.
- Play-Ability, initiated by Temasek Foundation Cares and SportCares, was introduced to encourage regular participation in recreational sports.
- Community engagement / sport tryouts featuring para and adaptive sports try-outs. This event sparks interest in sports participation among the PwD community.
- Working with ActiveSG to provide more inclusive public sport facilities. Currently, there are 8 inclusive gyms and 6 inclusive swimming pools. The aim is for all ActiveSG gyms to be inclusive by 2026.

Over 5 years, DSMP has:

- benefited **more than 18,000 PwDs** with its programmes
- trained **more than 2,700 pax** through various Disability Awareness, Coaching & Technical Courses
- engaged about **120,000 pax in its outreach & engagement programmes**

More Access & Opportunities for PwDs

The DSMP has helped to widen the base of disability sport participation, promote inclusion through shared sporting experiences, equip teachers and coaches with the skills to teach disability sport, and make sport facilities more accessible. This year it aims to make a greater impact in the lives of PwDs.

- Through its **Social Service (PWD) Corporate Membership Scheme**, a scheme that was introduced in 2021 targeting partnerships with Social Service Agencies (SSA) and SPED schools that serve PwDs, SportCares aims to facilitate membership sign-ups, and encourage access to sports centres by members of these SSAs. The increase in organised sports participation by PwDs through the SSAs will in turn lead to the eventual normalisation of a sporting lifestyle for these PwDs. The scheme will also be refined based on members' feedback and utilisation patterns.
- SportSG and SportCares have been invited to sit on the **Steering Committee of the Enabling Masterplan 2030** and will help to shape Singapore's direction and goals for the disability landscape in the area of sport and physical activity.

In addition, leveraging the progress on the DSMP made by SportCares, SportSG introduced the ActiveSG Para Sport Academy in 2022 to facilitate access to sport pathways for PwDs. The Para Sport Academy will drive the integration of disability and mainstream sports in ActiveSG Academies and Clubs, providing more meaningful opportunities for interaction. It will also provide aspiring para-athletes a clear pathway from recreational participation (through SportCares' programmes) to high-performance sport. The Para Sport Academy aims to benefit 500 participants across 10 sports. To date, there are about 130 participants in 6 different sport programmes.
