



Society No. 252 of 2007  
(Under Societies Registration Act of 2001)

## **Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide<sup>1</sup>**

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Tucson, Arizona 85741, USA  
[www.wheelchairathletesworldwide.org](http://www.wheelchairathletesworldwide.org)



**escip** Empowering Spinal Cord Injured Persons  
138 Vineyard Rd.  
Hamden, CT 06517, USA



### **National Trust**

(Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India)  
16B, Bada Bazar Road, Old Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi - 110060  
E- mail: [contactus@thenationaltrust.in](mailto:contactus@thenationaltrust.in), Website: [www.thenationaltrust.in](http://www.thenationaltrust.in) Tel: 011-43187878  
**Enabling Persons with Developmental Disabilities<sup>2</sup> to Lead Lives of Dignity**



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<sup>1</sup> Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals with physical disabilities through the donation of sport wheelchairs and demonstration of wheelchair basketball by accomplished disabled athletes. Our goal is to promote self-esteem, social and sport development, and "hope" through involvement in wheelchair basketball and other wheelchair sports. Donations are primarily distributed in countries where limited or no support is available for wheelchair sports.

<sup>2</sup> Autism, Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy and multiple disability. According to the 2001 census there are 21.9 million persons living with disability in India, but other estimates state that there may be as many as 40 – 80 million<sup>2</sup>. Childline India Foundation

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## **Visakhapatnam Project Proposal**

### **Introduction**

Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide, ESCIP (Empowering Spinal Cord Injured Persons), a project of IHF (International Humanitarian Foundation), and the National Trust, an autonomous body of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India are teaming up to highlight the abilities of Persons with Disabilities through demonstrations of wheelchair basketball and rugby throughout India. This will be implemented in collaboration with the successful National Trust [Badhte Kadam](#), discoverability awareness raising campaign which will take place during November 2011.

### **Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide:**

Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide originated from a desire to assist disabled people in developing countries in improving their mental, physical and social strength through active involvement in wheelchair sports by providing modern, competitive sports chairs for them to use in an organized adaptive sports program. Simply giving the wheelchairs, without personal interaction or demonstration, explanation and discussion with accomplished wheelchair athletes would not be enough. Rather than give people “a fish”, we would like to teach people “how to fish” so that they can do this on their own. That is why we decided that at least two of our members would always accompany the chairs, donate them personally, and hold a training/coaching clinic and demonstration, giving participants an opportunity to directly interact with us.

Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide was founded as an Arizona based non-profit corporation on July 21, 2009, and received Internal Revenue Service 501(c)3 tax exempt status on April 30, 2010.

The purpose of the organization is to provide sport wheelchairs (basketball, tennis, rugby) to secular, non-profit, non-governmental organizations in developing countries that have, or will start, an adaptive sports program to help physically disabled children and adults, and to put on a wheelchair basketball training/coaching clinic to assist in their development as a participant. It is our belief that through involvement in recreational and competitive sports, an individual will benefit not only physically, but also emotionally, mentally, and socially. People with paralysis, amputation, birth related illness, and other physical disabilities are encouraged and invited to participate. The goal is to go to a different country each year to donate 11 sport wheelchairs and provide coaching and demonstration clinics.

Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide was founded by four accomplished disabled athletes (Peter Hughes, Greg Hockensmith, Chuck Gill, and Dan Altan) who all have benefitted in many ways from their involvement in wheelchair sports, and who now want to assist in providing an

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opportunity for other disabled people in other countries. Each has achieved an above average degree of success in their sport and/or business lives that can be greatly credited to their involvement in disabled sports.

### **ESCIP (Empowering Spinal Cord Patients), a project of IHF (International Humanitarian Foundation):**

ESCIP was founded in 2007 by Jonathan and Vicky Sigworth (Jon's mother) for the purpose of empowering spinal cord patients in the developing world to live productive and independent lives. Jonathan had become a c5/6 complete quadriplegic in February '06 by falling off a cliff during a post-high-school study program in India. Six months after his injury he started studies away from home at a university. When he returned a year later to India, he discovered that the rehabilitation of Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) patients in India, even for paraplegics, was not leading to the independence he had experienced. ESCIP was founded to address that need.

In 2008 ESCIP became an official project of IHF, a non-profit agency that supports students starting social change projects in developing nations.

In 2007, as a project under a different NGO, ESCIP received a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation to bring eight donated wheelchair rugby chairs to the Indian Spinal Injuries Center in Delhi. This is the specialty hospital where Jon had received his initial surgery and rehabilitation. Since then, Jon and/or Vicky have returned twice a year to India to promote wheelchair rugby and other activities to promote "active rehabilitation" for people with SCI and other physical disabilities in India. In 2008-2009 Jon took a year off from college studies to direct and edit the 25-minute motivational movie, *More Than Walking*, which has won several "Best Documentary" awards in international film festivals, as well as the third place in the 2010 WECARE Film Festival, which is sponsored by the National Trust.

One effect of these activities was to expedite the inclusion of wheelchair sports as part of the therapy at the Indian Spinal Injury Center. ISIC now has the eight rugby chairs, as well as a few tennis and basketball chairs. However, its primary mission as an acute care and rehabilitation center leaves little time and resources to develop any of these sports for patients once they leave the hospital.

ESCIP has been collaborating already with the Visakhapatnam-based NGO, The Ability People, which has initiated the daily playing of wheelchair rugby in a local outpatient clinic. Both paras and quads are participating. The model they are beginning could easily be duplicated elsewhere. Many physical-therapy clinics or colleges we have visited to date in India have access to space for playing wheelchair sports. They simply need training and guidance, such as what Wheelchair Athletes is proposing.

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In the long run we hope to involve private or government high schools or colleges in our adaptive sports programs. The plan would be to use school facilities for equipment storage and practice of the sports, while including able-bodied students in the practice programs and providing the necessary support volunteers for team events. This would further increase ongoing awareness of disability issues among the student body and faculty, while also providing for logistical support in the development of the sports throughout the country.

Vicky Sigworth is also a member of the development committee of the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation, which is actively promoting rugby with steps towards international competition by developing nations. The IWRF was already instrumental in persuading the India Paralympics Committee to support the fledgling India wheelchair rugby team, with players from Pune and ISIC, to play against Brazil in the IWAS World Wheelchair Games in Bangalore in November 2009. IWRF is also looking for opportunities to promote rugby in India through clinics, etc.

### **National Trust**

The National Trust, an autonomous body of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, was created by Act of Parliament in 1999 in order to work in the field of developmental disabilities, i.e autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability and multiple disabilities. The National Trust is involved with empowering those with disabilities and their families to live full rights-based lives through partnering with 900 NGOs throughout India.

The mission of the National Trust is to work towards providing opportunities for capacity development of persons with disabilities and their families. The goal is to fulfill their rights, facilitate and promote the creation of an enabling environment, and work toward an inclusive society. Since 2009 the National Trust has been holding an India wide discoverability awareness raising campaign during the month of November. This program is called [Badhte Kadam](#). It is a campaign that is held throughout every State and is focused on raising awareness of National Trust programmes and schemes, awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and celebrating diversity<sup>3</sup>. The National Trust is endorsing this proposal and is interested in including the wheelchair sports demonstrations with Badhte Kadam 2011 in order to show the capabilities of Persons with Disabilities.

### **The Ability People**

The Ability People is a not-for-profit organization registered under the Societies Registration Act. It is a secular, apolitical and independent body founded to create a measurable and sustainable impact in the lives of under privileged communities in and around Visakhapatnam city in coastal Andhra Pradesh,

<sup>3</sup> Please see annexure 1 for goals, objectives and strategies for BK 2011,

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India. We leverage The Ability People (TAP), to provide quality support to transnational/ national/ local companies, not-for-profit organizations, individuals, volunteers and others interested in bringing sustainable change in the lives of the people with disability in our community needing support.

We maintain global standards defined by WHO in selecting and partnering with organizations to ensure ethical behavior, accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. The Ability People, Visakhapatnam is served by an active Board that consists of corporate representatives, eminent personalities, and executives from well known charitable organizations. We support initiatives under four verticals – Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), SCI Awareness-Prevention and Advocacy & Networking. We are committed to ensure that the resources deployed are utilized in the most efficient way to create maximum impact.

Our key focus area is to realize with equitable world the rights and dignity of persons with disability and where they participate fully and effectively in society leading to a good quality of life. We work with all persons with disabilities, their families, communities, organizations and institutions on empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities by facilitating disabled people's organizations to address the gaps that exist at various levels in Visakhapatnam and nearby villages.

TAP is started by a group of spinal cord injury persons headed by the founder president Mr. Dilip Patro, Software Engineer and a wheelchair user after SCI (Spinal Cord Injury)(in the year 1997). Our society is an association of Persons with Disability and a non govt. organisation whose main object is promotion of welfare of persons with disability - highlighting such issues as health, education and training, accessibility, rehabilitation and employment, accident prevention and disability awareness.

#### **Purpose & Goal of the India Project:**<sup>4</sup>

Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide will donate 11 used sport wheelchairs to one or more secular, non-profit, non-governmental organizations in India that has, or wants to start, an adaptive sports program, and put on training/coaching clinics for the participants. The number of participants involved in the coaching/demonstration clinics will vary, depending upon the NGOs and the available pool of interested physically and other disabled people in that community. In addition, wheelchair soccer and wheelchair rugby will be demonstrated. At least two of the founding Members will travel to India to coordinate the donations and conduct the clinics. A number of cities will be visited based on the Badhte Kadam campaign.

The major goal of the project is to improve and strengthen the mental, physical, and social outlook and level of Persons with Disabilities in India. This will be done by: 1) providing them with modern, competitive, newer sport wheelchairs to use in their adaptive sports programs, and 2) conducting an interactive clinic and demonstration. We will periodically request follow-up from

<sup>4</sup> Please see annexure 2 for key staff

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the NGOs regarding the use/maintenance of the wheelchairs and will always be accessible to answer and assist with any questions or concerns they may have.

Although India is one of the largest and most prominent countries in its geo-political region, disabled athletes and participants are often ostracized and face significantly more challenges than the general population. From some of the feedback we have received, it is apparent that the current wheelchairs and equipment available for the participants to use are severely outdated, and limited in number, with very limited budgets for them to acquire updated and new equipment. By providing modern, competitive, sport wheelchairs to an adaptive sports program, we feel there is a good chance of increasing the total number of participants, and to noticeably improve the physical, mental, emotional, and social strength and outlook of the participants.

It is our belief that with active and regular involvement in an adaptive sports program, participants should see increased physical fitness and strength, a more positive and hopeful outlook regarding their lives, possibly an increase in physical and mental independence, greater social interaction (not only within the disabled community but within the general population), improved physical skills and possibly a desire to compete at a National or International level, greater self-confidence, and of course more smiling and having FUN!

Through conducting interactive clinics and demonstrations, we hope to have a positive impact on the way staff and volunteers perceive/interact with the participants. Often, the attitude and perception of staff and volunteers towards the participants can have either a very positive or detrimental impact. Our own interaction with staff and volunteers, display of independence, and being out in the community during our stay may be of ancillary benefit and draw positive attention and discussion. It is also our goal to draw media attention to the project/event: wheelchair donation, and the demonstration/coaching clinics.

This project will not have a specific goal of targeting a particular segment of the disabled population. Rather, the project will try to ensure participation by any and all segments of the disabled population which may want to participate. This includes persons with accident injuries (car, motorcycle, falls, diving, etc...), injuries sustained in military service, cerebral palsy, birth related disabilities, and medical mishaps and other disabilities. Put another way, we will strive to include the physically and other disabled community with "all-embracing" arms.

Donating 11 sports wheelchairs should immediately increase the potential number of people that could participate in wheelchair sports. As well, it will greatly increase the possible participation of highly motivated, more competitive participants since the wheelchairs are relatively newer and have prior been used in top-level competition.

The selection of secular, non-governmental, non-profit organizations that either have, or will start, disabled wheelchair sports program is critical. The organization must have a court/gym/storage facility where the wheelchairs will be kept, and agree to maintain and upkeep

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the wheelchairs as needed. Further, the organizations must have, or be willing to implement, a regular, scheduled adaptive sports program (basketball, tennis, rugby, soccer, etc...) that will encourage as many people as possible to participate. The organizations must also commit to providing us with “follow-up” reports (written and pictorial) on the use and benefit received by the participants, and condition of the wheelchairs as requested – we will request reports at 4 month, 8 month, 1 year, and then yearly (from the date of the wheelchair donation) intervals.

We will conduct comprehensive and interactive demonstrations and teaching/coaching clinics, encouraging a vibrant “Question & Answer” session. We will share our experiences and the daily challenges we had to overcome in our lives, pointing out similar societal reactions towards disabled people and how best to deal/cope with it. Giving personal testimonials on how we overcame obstacles and achieved certain accomplishments may motivate and induce others to do likewise.

The proposed collaboration between National Trust, ESCIP and Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide is well-timed to build on past small efforts to promote wheelchair sports in India and to make it a powerful force behind the growing movement within the disability community of India for active rehabilitation and greater independence, respect and productivity for its members, and for community based rehabilitation beyond inpatient medical or military institutions.

To the best of our knowledge, no other organization is currently providing sports chairs and putting on a training/coaching clinic and demonstration in India.

### **Partner Benefits**

By partnering with us, you will join in breaking down barriers, create more opportunities for PwD's and help to build an inclusive society. You will help to show and create awareness that disabled athletes are just as capable as mainstream athletes and can compete to the best of their abilities. You will bring your brand and name to areas throughout India as the Badhte Kadam reaches the whole of India.

For further information regarding the budget for this project please see annexure 3.

## **Annexure 1 Badhte Kadam**

<b>BK 2011 Goals, Objectives and Major Strategies</b>
<b>Goal 1 Create more opportunities for participation in the community for PwD's; encourage more responsibility from the community for PwD's and their parents regarding their rights (including accessibility and barrier free environment)</b>
<b>Objective 1 Provide information on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) at all awareness raising activities</b>
<b>Strategy 1 Cross disability melas featuring traditional performing arts (puppet shows, shadow plays, music, song, street plays, convergence with drama and dance departments) multiple stalls (essay contests, games, poster contests, painting, drawing, counseling for parents, legal aid services, feature NT programmes and schemes, e.g. sign up for Niramaya)</b>
<b>Goal 2 Enable and empower PwDs to access NT and other governmental schemes; celebrate diversity</b>
<b>Objective 1 Provide understanding of National Trust (disabilities part of every scheme) and other Governmental programmes at all awareness raising activities</b>
<b>Strategy 1 Develop Room to Grow Resource Centres in every State and UT</b>
<b>Strategy 2 Cross disability melas featuring traditional performing arts (puppet shows, shadow plays, music, song, street plays, convergence with drama and dance departments) multiple stalls (essay contests, games, poster contests, painting, drawing, counseling for parents, legal aid services, feature NT programmes and schemes, e.g. sign up for Niramaya)</b>
<b>Strategy 3 Focus on Discoverabilities to showcase opportunities, e.g. wheelchair sport</b>
<b>Goal 3 Change attitudes in order to help people understand disability in a development context</b>
<b>Objective 1 Address and sensitize the four pillars of Indian democracy, i.e. the unconverted,</b>
<b>Strategy 1 Find ambassadors</b>
<b>Strategy 2 Convergence of Board members, (Ministries)</b>
<b>Strategy 3 Public hearings</b>



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## **Annexure 2 Key Personnel**

### **Peter Hughes**

President of Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide living in Tucson, Arizona, Head Coach of the University of Arizona Women's Wheelchair Basketball Team, and owner of his own business "Medical Equipment for Independence". Has a Masters of Education from the University of Western Australia and a Bachelor of Science from San Diego State University. Played basketball at University of Arizona, competed in International wheelchair basketball tournaments, and was part of the Wheelchair Football Championship team of 2005 & 2006. "I want to give back to wheelchair sports which I got involved in late, but still had a huge impact on me." [pete@wheelchairathletesworldwide.org](mailto:pete@wheelchairathletesworldwide.org).

### **Greg Hockensmith**

Secretary of Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide living in Tucson, Arizona, and owner of his own business "Arizona Lift and Care Specialists". Has a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Physiology from Temple University, and a Masters of Science in Neurophysiology from the University of Arizona. Hand cycling achievements: 2002 Time Trial World Champion, 2001 Gold Medal at European Time Trial and 2003 Road Race Open Championship, four-time National Champion, 2007 Fastest Arm Powered Ascent up Mt. Fuji, 2004 Paralympian, World Record Holder in Distance Arm Powered Bike (252 miles in 17 hours, 52 minutes). "The transfer of what you achieve in sport to your everyday life is the most important message I feel I can offer as a successful athlete." [greg@wheelchairathletesworldwide.org](mailto:greg@wheelchairathletesworldwide.org).

### **Chuck Gill**

Vice President of Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide living in Fremont, California. Wheelchair Basketball achievements: 12 time NBA/NWBA All Star, 2001 National Championship MVP, 1994 & 1998 & 2002 Gold Medalist in World Championships, Bronze Paralympic Medalist in 1996 & 2000, played professionally in France in 2006/2007, Team Captain of Golden State Road Warriors Wheelchair Basketball Team. "I've played or have been involved in wheelchair sports for over 20 years, and it has been a major role in so many aspects of my life. I'm proud and excited to be involved in this project to have this opportunity to give back, share, learn and experience this in a global level." [chuck@wheelchairathletesworldwide.org](mailto:chuck@wheelchairathletesworldwide.org).

### **Dan Altan**

Treasurer of Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide living in San Diego, California. And owner of his own real estate office "ALTA Properties". Has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Western Ontario. Played on several wheelchair basketball teams in the USA and Canada, 2009 & 2010

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Los Angeles 3-on-3 Champion. Traveled solo completely across Canada from East to West in 1982 in 82 days, and played non-stop in both a 24 hour and a 36 hour marathon wheelchair basketball event. "Involvement in wheelchair sports, basketball and otherwise, has had a tremendously positive effect on my physical, mental social development and health. Through Wheelchair Athletes Worldwide, I hope to assist and benefit other disabled athletes." [dan@wheelchairathletesworldwide.org](mailto:dan@wheelchairathletesworldwide.org).

### **Michael Rosenkrantz**

Michael from Los Angeles, California, an avid Lakers fan, has been working in India as a Voluntary Service Overseas ([VSO](#)) volunteer since March 2009 with the National Trust, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India as a Capacity Building/Fundraiser Advisor. Michael coaches basketball at the New Delhi YMCA and is constantly spreading the "basketball gospel" as he travels throughout India. Michael has also done consulting work with the American Embassy School, student organisations. Contact: [mike@thenationaltrust.in](mailto:mike@thenationaltrust.in),

### **Vicky Sigworth**

As International Director of ESCIP, Vicky Sigworth is a well-known advocate for active therapy and independence for SCI persons in India. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in German and Spanish from Occidental College, and in the 1970s was a teacher of English as a Second Language in inner-city Los Angeles. For 20 years she has provided extensive counseling of people recovering from personal trauma, and this work was excellent preparation for her entry into the world of the disabled when her youngest son became a C5/6 quadriplegic in 2006. From 2000-2005 she was Area Director of Youth for Christ in Connecticut. She was producer of the award-winning 2009 documentary *More than Walking* and is a member of the development committee of the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation. [vsigworth@gmail.com](mailto:vsigworth@gmail.com).

### **Dilip Patro**

Dilip Patro, Software Specialist by profession, met with a road accident in 1997 resulting spinal cord injury. Passed MCA & M. com and still working with my company. Passionate about providing other spinal cord injury persons with the training and rehabilitation in order to regain independence. Started an organisation "The Ability People", for the welfare of SCI (Spinal Cord Injury). Most of the spinal injuries are from road accidents & falls from tree/building. 70% of them are daily wage labourers. In India accept New Delhi & Vellore, we don't have a proper rehab center. We are trying to start in Vizag shortly. We are distributing appropriate wheelchair, artificial limbs and consulting spinal injury persons. First time starting a wheelchair clinic in Vizag. Awareness on Right to Emergency care- Motivating everybody to help the road side accident victim immediately after the accident. Contact: [dkpatro@gmail.com](mailto:dkpatro@gmail.com)

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