

## Special Olympics : a gold medal for the champions from CESEH

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### Champions of floorball at the *Special Olympics*

The *Special Olympics* are the [most important sports event](#) for people with mental disabilities. The disciplines are the same as in the Olympic Games but with tailored rules, in order to maximize the number of participating individuals with mental disabilities. Beyond the event, these games reaffirm the power of sport in transforming the life of athletes with mental disabilities and changing the way we see them. « *Help making the world a better place, more healthy and more jolly !* », this is their goal.

The Winter Games, which took place in Austria this year, gathered more than 3 000 young athletes coming from 110 countries to compete in 9 Olympic disciplines. Among them, 9 teenagers from Ivory Coast trained at CESEH by [DDE-CI](#), BICE partner, competed in floorball. Even though the young spokesman of the team promised it - « *Madam Director, you can count on us on coming back to Ivory Coast with medals* » - the performances exceeded all expectations : **gold medal for the boys team and a very honorable 4th place for the girls !**

### Sport as vector of recognition and integration

BICE extends all its congratulations to the young champions, to their coaches and to all the team of CESEH, which accompanied them on a daily basis and motivated them during this nice adventure.

Such achievements strengthen the importance of projects such as « [Malgré le handicap, nous sommes tous des enfants](#) ». They allow children to develop their self-esteem, to physically surpass themselves, and to live an unforgettable group experience.

They also change the gaze of the entire community on these children and their families, often rejected in Ivory Coast, which thereby become a source of inspiration and pride at a national level.

**The testimony of Marco's mother, a 17-year-old young man, affected by Down syndrome.**

*It's the first time Marco parted from us for more than a week. I was scared for him, especially because he had never been on a plane. How was he going to react during the flight ? But they told me he behaved... When his father and I welcomed him back with his gold medal, it was total joy ; we lifted him with cries of joy. It was incredible for us ! When Marco arrived in the neighborhood, his classmates started shouting « Marco champion, Marco champion... ». My son became a celebrity in the neighborhood.*