

Supporting Young Leaders to Pass It Back in their Communities

ChildFund Australia, in partnership with Women Win and the Asian Rugby Football Union (ARFU), is launching the Pass It Back partnership for eleven countries across South and South-East Asia, starting in Laos and Viet Nam. Harnessing the power of Sport for Development, Pass It Back will use rugby to build leadership and life-skills of young people, enabling them to overcome challenges in their lives and to 'pass it back' to others in their communities. Pass It Back will work to develop young coaches, qualified in rugby, leadership development, first aid and safeguarding children, to deliver rugby participation opportunities in their communities and to provide safe and organised sporting opportunities for boys, girls and young men and women.

"As a girl I was always very shy, now I am a brave and confident young woman. I want to help involve as many girls and women from rural and remote communities as possible in rugby so they, too, can feel brave and strong."

Youth Leader and Coach, Lao Rugby Federation

The Pass It Back Partnership will be officially launched on the 6th of April 2015, the second International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, celebrating the collaborative efforts of the program partners and supporters.

The partnership will build on three years of work undertaken in Laos between ChildFund Australia and the Lao Rugby Federation, under the Ministry of Education and Sports, under a Memorandum of Understanding between ChildFund Australia and the National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, supported closely by the Nonghet district and Xieng Khouang provincial authorities. This experience will be taken forward in Laos and also replicated in Viet Nam over the next two years, with the goal of eventually also covering Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines.

"Sport brings people together. It can build knowledge, skills and attitudes that are transferable into everyday life. We have seen in Nonghet the power of sport to support the development of future Lao leaders who are able to contribute to national development and support Laos' goal of graduation from Least Developed Country status by 2020. We are also very proud that this regional initiative started here in Laos, which will serve as an example for other countries around the region to develop their own Sport for Development projects, starting in Viet Nam."

Chris Mastaglio, Country Director ChildFund Laos

Women Win said they are delighted to be a part of this new and innovative partnership as they strongly believe that effective collaboration is essential to successfully tackling complex issues like gender inequity and economic empowerment. Meg Smith, Programs Director at Women Win, explained that *"globally, our work is positioned at the intersection of development, sport and women's rights and Pass it Back brings the three together generating significant potential for scale, efficiency and impact."*

Aga Hussein, Executive Committee Member of the Asian Rugby Football Union, also offered the regional governing body's firm support for the partnership saying that *"all eyes will be on Asia from 2015, moving towards the next Rugby World Cup in 2019 and Olympics in 2020, both events being held in Japan, along with the SEA games this year in Singapore and the Asian Games in 2018 in Indonesia, all events with rugby. It is critical that these international events inspire action at the grassroots level and ARFU believes that Pass It Back is a creative approach to ensuring this happens. We would like to congratulate the Lao Rugby Federation and the Lao Government for their pioneering efforts towards this important regional goal."*

Australian Ambassador John Williams expressed his pride to host the partnership launch, which builds on existing Sport for Development work in Laos, funded by the Australian Government. *"Australia is a country that loves its sport and along with our long-term commitment to supporting development in Laos,*

we are very excited to see sport used to build young people's capacities to contribute to development across the region. I am also very pleased to see that this regional initiative, covering up to 11 countries, began here in Laos and will be expanding first to our neighbours in Viet Nam. We look forward to following the partnership closely and to providing on-going support where we can."

This event will mark the beginning of this unique partnership between ChildFund Australia, Women Win and the Asian Rugby Football Union, as they work towards supporting activities across 11 Pass It Back countries to support the next generation of leaders in Asia.

#passitback

#IDSDP2015

Supported by:



Notes to Editor

Pass It Back Partner Information

ChildFund Australia

ChildFund Australia is an independent and non-religious international development organisation that works to reduce poverty for children in the developing world. We implement programs with a range of local partners in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam, and manage projects delivered by partner organisations throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas.

ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 12 organisations which assists more than 15 million children and families in 58 countries. ChildFund Australia is a registered charity and is fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Australian Government.

Women Win

Women Win is the global leader in girls' empowerment through sport. We leverage the power of play to help girls build leadership and become better equipped to exercise their rights. Sport is only our tool. Our end game is helping girls thrive as they face the most pressing issues of adolescence, including accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights, addressing gender-based violence and achieving economic empowerment.

Since 2007, we have impacted the lives of over 1.24 million adolescent girls in over 100 countries. This has been made possible by collaborations with a wide variety of grassroots women's organisations, corporates, development organisations, sport bodies and government agencies. Our work is strategically positioned at the intersection of development, sport and women's rights. We are positive, dynamic, playful, lean and forward looking.

Asian Rugby Football Union (ARFU)

In 1968, ARFU was founded with eight members: Sri Lanka, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. ARFU is the regional body for rugby union and works with World Rugby, the global governing body for rugby union, to support the growth and development of the game in Asia across 32 countries.

We have a strong commitment to growing the game in Asia, particularly for girls and young women, as outlined in our strategic plan to 2020 and a commitment to ensuring an enduring legacy for the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan, which will be the first time the event has been hosted in Asia.

Further Information

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Images are available upon request.