

Contributions to the report of the Secretary-General on “Sport as an enabler of sustainable development”

Organization: ChildFund Australia, a member of ChildFund Alliance

Program: ChildFund Pass It Back

Summary

In 2015, ChildFund Australia developed and led, ChildFund Pass It Back, an innovative Sport for Development program that in 2018 entered into a partnership program with World Rugby and Asia Rugby. Since then, ChildFund Pass It Back has been implemented in Laos, Vietnam, Philippines, Timor-Leste, Cambodia, and Japan and serves as a primary example of ChildFund’s belief in the power of sport to change the lives of children.

As the world is rapidly changing, in order to ensure the complete implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the commitment to leave no one behind, it is imperative that we equip our young people with vital life skills and experiences. ChildFund Pass It Back uses tag rugby to teach children and young people in Asia a range of valuable life skills, preparing them to overcome challenges, inspire positive social change and ‘pass it back’ to their communities.

Children have the right to play, as outlined in Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Through ChildFund Pass It Back, children from disadvantaged communities in Asia are able to fulfill this right as they learn the game of tag rugby, join organized teams, participate in tournaments and realize their right to play in communities where there are limited organized opportunities to play sport, especially for girls.

Children in the program are able to learn from a set of structured personal development and leadership curricula. The flexible delivery model consists of four content areas:

1. Gender
2. Planning for the future
3. Being healthy
4. Feeling safe

These key content areas provide knowledge, skills and attitudes to keep young people safe and healthy in a changing world. In each session, a life skills rugby based game is conducted by the Community Coach focused on play-based, experiential learning. The life skills game then transitions into a discussion, supported by the ChildFund Pass It Back curriculum and facilitated by the Coach. During discussion, teams work in same gender groups to ensure that discussions are open and safe for everyone to participate. ChildFund Pass It Back provides a safe environment for both play and learning, encouraging active and inclusive participation.

The following outlines the ways in which ChildFund Pass It Back would serve as a valuable contribution to the Secretary-General’s report on “Sport as an enabler of sustainable development.”

I. Ensuring no one is left behind

The international community's commitment to leave no one behind requires that the most vulnerable populations are included in the work towards and benefits from sustainable development. This includes children and young people, an often marginalized group.

Asia is home to 60% of the world's youth, with over 1.8 billion people aged between 10 and 24. ChildFund Pass It Back is a program for some of the most vulnerable children as participants in the program are from disadvantaged communities across Asia. Participation in ChildFund Pass It Back provides vulnerable children with an expanded support network as well as influential life skills.

ChildFund Pass It Back also commits a special focus to the active involvement of girls and young women, ensuring they are not left behind. Over half of all players and coaches are girls and young women.

The program also acknowledges that people become at risk of being left behind when disaster strikes, which is why ChildFund Pass It Back designated funds raised towards emergency relief efforts in disaster-affected areas in Japan.

II. Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world

ChildFund Pass It Back works with children and youth from disadvantaged communities to develop valuable life skills with the message that they will 'pass it back' to their communities. When youth are equipped with the skills they need to reach their potential, they are able to be active agents of positive change in their communities, contributing to end the cycle of poverty. The program's presence in various communities provides resources outside of sports as well, as children in ChildFund Pass It Back benefit from ChildFund's education, health, and child protection programs. ChildFund Pass It Back is looking to expand to other countries in the Asia and Pacific region and potentially Africa given the success it has had.

III. Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

ChildFund's child safeguarding expertise is spread throughout ChildFund Pass It Back communities, as child safeguarding measures are put into every Pass It Back session. ChildFund Pass It Back Community Coaches are trained in a variety of areas. Not only are they trained in rugby, but also safeguarding and life skills education, which provides communities with members who are trained and capable in creating and promoting more resilient societies. Asia is a region that is rapidly changing, and much of the young population living there lack the opportunities, knowledge, and skills to succeed in this changing environment. ChildFund Pass It Back ensures that these children and youth are receiving the skills they need to succeed in an ever-changing world. ChildFund Pass It Back is committed to building a new generation of leaders across Asia.

IV. Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Gender equality is a focal point of ChildFund Pass It Back. As previously stated, half of all players and coaches are girls and young women. Rugby is a sport with millions of fans around the world and is continuing to grow, especially in popularity among women and girls. The sport itself sends a message of strength and inclusivity and can provide children and youth, especially girls, with a sense of agency. When communities are able to see girls actively playing rugby and engaging in discussion groups, it begins to change harmful gender norms and stereotypes that may have previously dominated societal attitudes.

V. Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

ChildFund Pass It Back contributes in working towards many of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly 3, 5, and 16, and serves as a program accelerating action towards sustainable development in many communities across Asia. ChildFund Pass It Back engages in major partnerships with corporations in the private sector, acknowledging that in order to implement the SDGs by 2030, we must work together. Through its partnerships, the program secured record fundraising. For example, more than 2 million pounds were received or pledged for ChildFund Pass It Back and the Japan Emergency Response. ChildFund Pass It Back continues to spread ChildFund's child safeguarding expertise and as previously stated, looks forward to continuing to grow in this Decade of Action.