

# Developing Rugby in Asia

## The role of Pass It Back

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## 1. Background

Pass It Back is governed by a strategic partnership between World Rugby, Asia Rugby, Women Win, led by ChildFund Australia on behalf of the ChildFund Alliance.

In March 2017, an independent external evaluation of the Pass It Back program was completed. This evaluation revealed that Pass It Back is uniquely positioned to build on World Rugby and Asia Rugby's *Get Into Rugby*, first aid and safeguarding in sport commitments and fulfil an important rugby niche by:

1. Attracting and creating new communities of players, coaches, officials and administrators;
2. Developing rugby in low capacity countries where there is limited rugby exposure and;
3. Attracting diverse income sources.

There is a strong enabling environment for the growth of grassroots rugby in Asia. The sport will have the highest profile to date when two of the world's major sporting events take place in Asia over the next 4 years: the Rugby World Cup, which shall be held in Japan in 2019, and the Summer Olympics, which will feature Rugby Sevens, returning to Tokyo in 2020.

Asia Rugby, as a regional association of World Rugby, acknowledges the opportunity to capitalise on these events in their strategic plan (2017 – 2020). In this plan, two out of three of Asia Rugby's stated main roles contribute to grassroots development activities. These roles are:

1. Ensuring strong governance and domestic rugby structures across the region, with player welfare at the forefront and;
2. Inspiring and assisting unions in Asia to grow the game, with a particular focus on youth; health; welfare; and life success<sup>1</sup>.

Pass It Back contributes to these areas. There is an opportunity for the Pass It Back Secretariat and the strategic partners to leverage these compelling opportunities by revising and enhancing the partnership. In order to be in a position to contribute to the impact of Rugby World Cup 2017, decisions about the partnership structure, shared objectives, funding and other resource allocations need to be made before August 2017.

## 2. How Pass It Back Contributes to Rugby Development in Asia

The independent Pass It Back evaluation identified a number of evidence-based areas where Pass It Back contributes to rugby development objectives that are stated in Asia

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<sup>1</sup> Asia Rugby Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2020 accessed at URL: [www.asiarugby.com](http://www.asiarugby.com)

Rugby and/or World Rugby's strategic plans. These areas can be categorised into three topics:

1. Capacity development;
2. Participation;
3. Business development.

## 2.1. Capacity Development

### 2.1.1. Member Union Capacity Building

In countries with no national governing body, Pass It Back establishes a player and coach base. This **creates a demand for rugby and stimulates government interest in forming a national governing body**, as has been the case in Vietnam.

ChildFund offices help **build member unions' capacity to undertake core activities** including financial management, human resourcing, reporting and monitoring. In the evaluation, most respondents considered this one of the most valuable aspects of Pass It Back.

Pass It Back monitoring and evaluation procedures give coaches and staff a chance to learn more about the impact of their efforts and tell an accurate qualitative and quantitative story. This **strengthens the unions' capacity to demonstrate evidence-based impact and therefore attract public interest, government support and secure corporate funders**.

*"What we've seen so much is that ChildFund cannot access large groups of kids, and we cannot as a rugby federation fulfil our mission of offering rugby opportunities to everyone if we don't have safeguarding, gender inclusion, finance, and HR policies. [Having in place all of these policies] is what we have to do in order to access more kids, in order to offer opportunities to more young people. So if we don't work to develop those things then we cannot do our work."*

#### Lao Rugby Federation

Referencing the fact that the above-mentioned policies and systems were very weak before partnership with ChildFund, the respondent noted how crucial these operating systems are to being able to grow and be recognised. *"If we didn't have [these systems] in place, then we can't grow, we can't accept more funds, we can't access more funds, we can't be trusted by our corporate sponsors or donors to manage them, so [having] all of [these systems] is hugely influential."*

#### Lao Rugby Federation

**Contributes to World Rugby Strategic Plan 6.2, 6.4 and Asia Rugby Strategic Plan objectives 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.6, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.**

## 2.1.2. Leadership

When young people become Pass It Back coaches, they are supported to not just learn about leadership but to experience being leaders. Pass It Back coaches effectively promote rugby participation by interacting positively with players and their families. They also increase their personal profile when they apply their skills in many areas of community life. These activities all contribute to building the brand and profile of rugby in new markets.

As a regional organisation, Asia Rugby has the potential to demonstrate leadership to other regional sports bodies through partnering with diverse organisations to grow the sport by increasing its value in new markets.

*“Another part I like very much is the leadership skills. I have never trained and learned like that. The interesting part I learnt about leadership is anyone can be a leader. Forget your status. Forget your appearance. I used to think that I couldn’t be a leader but then I learnt I could become confident.”*

**Female coach, Kim Boi, ChildFund Vietnam**

**Contributes to World Rugby Strategic Plan objectives 6.4 and Asia Rugby Strategic Plan objective 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2, 4.1.**

## 2.2. Participation

### 2.2.1. Coach, Official and Administrator Development

**Pass It Back coaches are earning higher status and increasing the profile of the program in their communities.** Coaches have skills in coaching *Get Into Rugby*, facilitating life skills learning, event management, first aid as well as negotiation, communication, speaking to groups and problem solving.

**Coaches drive activities.** The coaches manage micro rugby hubs. When the coaches are well trained and mentored, the quality and sustainability of the activities increases<sup>2</sup>.

**A cascade model** allows coaches to progressively take on specialised responsibilities. In the future, these can include World Rugby training and education courses.

*“We say you learn the values by playing the sport. This puts life skills first and rugby is the game that holds it together.”*

**Respondent, Rugby National Governing body**

<sup>2</sup> Research commissioned by Oceania Rugby and undertaken by the University of the South Pacific (2016) into the barriers, motivations and opportunities to women’s participation in rugby in Fiji suggests the quality of the coaching as well as the level of the respect and trust the coach has in the community has the strongest correlation with whether or not a woman will take part in entry-level rugby activities and/or allow her daughter to play the game.

**Contributes to World Rugby Strategic Plan objectives 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 and Asia Rugby Strategic Plan objectives 2.2, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.9.**

### 2.2.2. Bringing Women and Girls into the Game

**Pass It Back has a requirement for 50 percent of the participants to be female.** The program has fulfilled this ambition as 52% of playing participants are female. Pass It Back's commitment to gender equity is one of the most authentic and far reaching in mixed gender sport for development activities.

**55 percent of Pass It Back coaches are female.** While Pass It Back players of both genders indicated that they did not have a preference for a male or female coach, a summary of research indicates the presence of female coaches provides positive role models and mentors, especially for teenage girls<sup>3</sup>.

Some respondents from a rugby national governing body indicated the governance and organisational culture of the rugby national governing body is more equal when it supports a gender equal cadre of participants and coaches.

*"Only in Laos is the girls' participation bigger than the boys."*

**Respondent, Asia Rugby**

*"It's opened up peoples eyes to give equal opportunities to men and women. It's been emphasised to us."*

**Respondent, Rugby National Governing Body**

**Contributes to World Rugby Strategic Plan objectives: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 and Asia Rugby Strategic Plan objectives: 4.1, 4.3.**

### 2.2.3. Participation and Pathways

**Pass It Back gives people a positive first rugby experience.** 3,505 players (2,082 in Laos and 1,423 in Vietnam) have regularly taken part in Pass It Back activities over an 18-month period. Inter province and international Pass It Back festivals give children a vision of what is possible. *Get Into Rugby* is a core component of every activity.

**Knowledge of rugby values has increased by 61 percent.** During the evaluation, every coach and player could describe 3 to 5 actions that demonstrate specific rugby values.

**Coaches create pathways between Pass it Back activities and rugby clubs.** Coaches also have their own pathways to become specialists in areas supported by World Rugby

<sup>3</sup> Women Win (2010) International Guide to Designing Sport Programmes for Girls accessed at URL: <http://guides.womenwin.org/ig>

training and education programs as well as other areas that support Pass It Back program development like monitoring and mentoring new coaches.

**Contributes to World Rugby Strategic Plan objectives: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 and Asia Rugby Strategic Plan objective 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1.**

## 2.2.4. Player Welfare

### FIRST AID

A games-based first aid component in coach training **increases individuals' skill sets and contributes to breaking down barriers around what young coaches believe it is possible to learn.** This first aid curriculum makes use of available resources and is appropriate for the environment in which it is used.

There is at least 1 **person qualified to administer first aid in attendance at all Pass It Back rugby games and training sessions.**

In communities where there is a low level of medical support, the **assistance of trained Pass It Back coaches at emergency scenes in the community is highly valued.**

### SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN SPORT

Pass It Back supports rugby national governing bodies to develop and implement child safeguarding policies that are in line with the International Safeguards for Children in Sport and the Convention on the Rights of the Child that World Rugby highlights as good practice for national governing bodies.

*"World Rugby's player welfare model is directed at tier 1 countries. If we are going to make truly a global game then there is a very big need to have a model that that works for other countries. Pass It Back is a bottom up approach."*

**Respondent, Asia Rugby**

*"This program made us credible" ... "Safeguarding is the most important part of what we do."*

**Respondent, Lao Rugby Federation**

**Contributes to World Rugby Strategic Plan objective 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 6.5 and Asia Rugby Strategic Plan objective 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.**

## 2.3. Business Development

### 2.3.1. Creating Value for Rugby in New Communities

Pass It Back **increases the value of Get Into Rugby** by connecting it with life skills activities that are highly valued by parents, teachers and other gatekeepers. This can

also encourage government departments to integrate *Get Into Rugby* into school, community, sport and health systems.

Individuals who play and coach Pass It Back also learn about rugby values and gain experience in organising groups, negotiating conflicts, public speaking, goal setting and leading people. **These skills are valued in all communities.**

**Pass It Back creates resilient rugby communities.** It provides the opportunity for young people to increase and strengthen both bonding connections (creating strong connections with peers) and bridging connections (creating connections with people outside of their usual peer, family and community networks).

*“We can tell to parents he will become a better citizen. This idea should be important to each union. This is the value of Pass It Back. If a child is choosing between football or whatever... Rugby is better because you learn the skill and also the social skills.”*

**Respondent, Asia Rugby**

**Contributes to World Rugby Strategic Plan objective 6.5 and Asia Rugby Strategic Plan objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2, 3.7, 4.1 and 4.2.**

### 2.3.2. Improved Profile and Branding

Rugby can **access new networks** by being connected to Pass It Back networks that are not usually accessed by rugby. For example, ChildFund Australia was able to access DFAT’s Asia Sports Partnerships grant to introduce Pass It Back in the Philippines.

By connecting *Get Into Rugby* with life skills, Pass It Back helps rugby become recognised as a sport that is committed to the wellbeing and development of the individuals who play it.

**Rugby’s values** are widely promoted as integral components of Pass It Back branding and activities. The life skills curriculum is based around these values, with all players and coaches in focus groups able to not just cite the values, but also provide tangible examples of their application.

**Pass It Back is visible, high profile and fulfils high priority community needs.** In the focus groups with gatekeepers, there was a high level of demand to introduce Pass It Back in nearby communities. This means growth is organic and fast compared to other sport and community development programs.

*“The biggest legacy of World Cup in Japan is so the children of Asia can benefit from rugby and say this is good for **all** children. We need an easily seen story and goal.”*

**Respondent, Asia Rugby**

*“Pass It Back’s goal is bigger than rugby. This is good for the World Cup organising committee because not everyone is interested in rugby but everyone is interested in education and health.”*

**Respondent, Asia Rugby**

**Contributes to World Rugby Strategic Plan objectives 2.1 and 2.2 and Asia Rugby Strategic Plan objectives 2.2, 2.5, 2.6 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 4.1 and 4.2.**

### 2.2.3. New Funding Sources

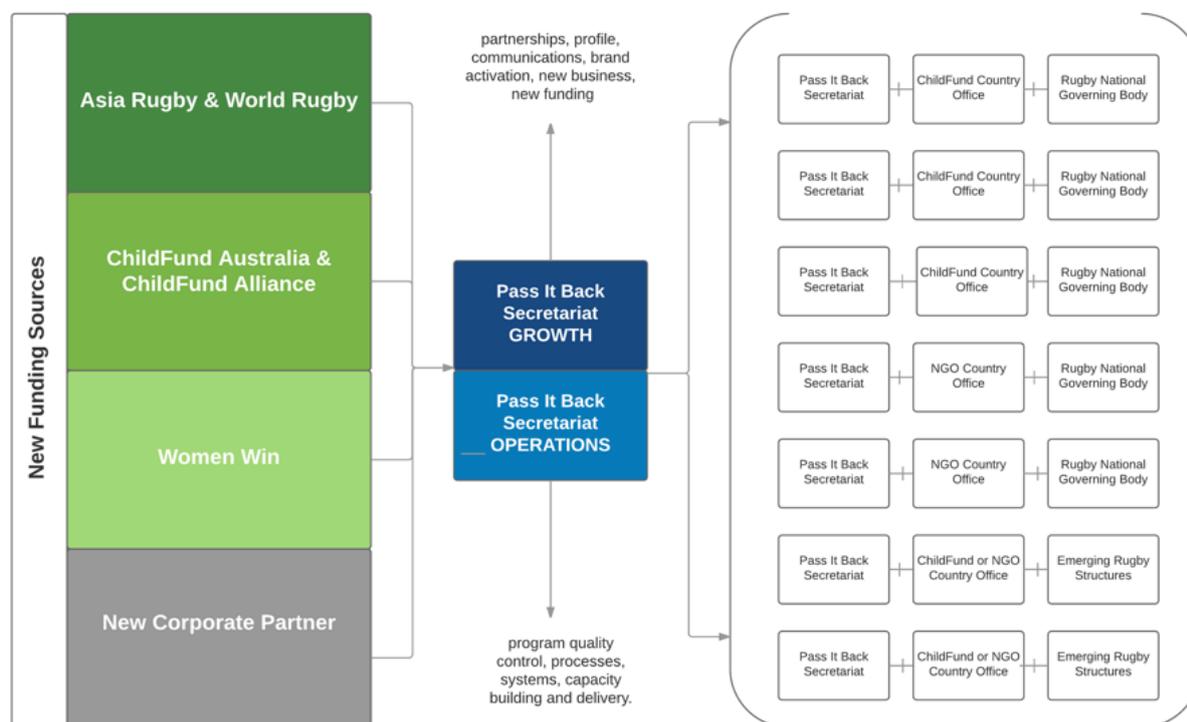
**Pass It Back can access funding sources for rugby development that are not available for rugby governing bodies.** Some of these funding sources include accessing bilateral funding, joint approaches to meet sponsors’ marketing and corporate social responsibility interests, access to government corporate partnership co-contributions, charity partner fundraising at major events, partnerships with non government organisation driven sport for development programs, interest from the global network of ChildFund Alliance members and their associates and Pass It Back licensing fees.

*We say they will learn the values...but we never measure it. I see the value is being able to approach a private sponsor and being able to say ‘this is the change you will get’.”*

**Respondent, Rugby National Governing Body**

**Contributes to Asia Rugby Strategic Plan objectives 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.**

**Figure 1. How a Partnerships Approach Contributes to Growing Rugby in Asia**



### 3. Next Steps

In order to capitalise on the shared interests and enabling environment, strategic partners should undertake a partnership development process that outlines shared objectives and distribution of resources and responsibilities. During this process the organisations would identify shared objectives and resources, and outline activities that will be undertaken together.

Partner organisations could consider operating in the following areas to attract new communities of players, develop rugby in low capacity countries that have had limited or no rugby exposure and attract diverse income sources.

The **Pass It Back Secretariat** could consider:

- Including a strategic priority to strengthen unions in areas of financial management, governance and human resourcing.
- Continuing to build on the *Get Into Rugby* product and provide positive entry-level experiences for players and coaches, encouraging progression along rugby pathways.
- Helping unions to adopt frameworks for gender inclusion and safeguarding across the sport for children.
- Refining the Pass It Back curriculum so it can be used in a range of settings while continuing to use *Get Into Rugby* as the entry-level resource.

**Asia Rugby and World Rugby** could consider:

- Strengthening the financial contribution from Impact Beyond 2019. This would contribute to expanding Pass It Back into new countries.

- Activating point of sale and other fundraising opportunities at major World Rugby events including the Rugby World Cup.
- Developing a joint approach to marketing and corporate social responsibility sections of major rugby sponsors.

**Together, the Pass It Back Secretariat and Asia Rugby and World Rugby** could consider:

- Joining together to seek new funding from specific sport for development sources.