

Media Release

LRF and Australian Embassy Celebrate Growth of ChildFund Pass It Back in Laos

Vientiane, Laos, 13 July, 2018: The Lao Rugby Federation (LRF) and the Australian Embassy in Vientiane are celebrating the completion of a 4th season of Champa Ban powered by ChildFund Pass It Back in the Lao PDR including 30 new Coaches trained, the expansion of the curriculum into new areas and a team of Lao boys and girls returning from the RKU ChildFund Pass It Back Cup in Japan.

June, 2018 marked the end of the 4th season of Champa Ban powered by ChildFund Pass It Back where more than 80 teams from 3 locations in Laos completed a year of weekly tag rugby and life skills trainings focusing on Gender and Planning for the Future content. “The ChildFund Pass It Back curriculum has ignited rugby in Laos with more than 3,000 registered players participating in regular tag rugby and life skills training and competitions,” announced LRF President Mr. Virayouth Rathikoun. “We are excited to see the curriculum engaging new participants with more than 50% female participation at the player and Coach level and we appreciate the support of our dedicated partners at ChildFund and the Australian Government who are powering the curriculum’s ongoing development and expansion in Laos and the region.”

ChildFund Pass It Back is an innovative sport for development curriculum that has partnered with World Rugby, Asia Rugby, and Women Win to provide integrated rugby and life skills learning opportunities to children and young people in disadvantaged communities across Asia. Pass It Back was developed in Laos with assistance from the LRF and now the LRF is an official implementing partner of ChildFund Pass It Back in Laos and remains a leader among other implementing countries in the region.

After four seasons, the LRF, with support from the Australian Government and ChildFund as well as community sponsors like Asia Rugby and the Pot Bellied Pigs RFC, is expanding with 6 new teams in Vientiane Province set to start ChildFund Pass It Back activities in the new school year alongside new teams in Vientiane Capital and in Paek and Kham Districts in Xieng Khouang Province. “The growth of the sport in Xieng Khouang is exciting since it started in Nonghet District and now many young players and Coaches are eager to get involved in the rugby and life skills work across the Province,” commented LRF’s Xieng Khouang Provincial Rugby Development Coordinator, Ms Lao Khang. “There are many enthusiastic new Coaches from new districts who were trained in June and are excited to get back to their villages and start recruiting new players for the upcoming 2018-2019 season.”

ChildFund Pass It Back Coach training in June, 2018 was the fifth installment of the training which offers intensive rugby and life skills Coach training as well as team management, safeguarding and first aid content for Coaches aged 16-25 years old. The trainings are designed to equip young Coaches with the skills they need to go back to their communities and train youth teams in content from one of four modules including Gender, Planning for the Future, Being Healthy and Feeling Safe. The Coach training saw 70 Coaches trained in ChildFund Pass It Back content where Ms. Viengsamai Souksavanh and Ms. Lao Khang served as educators for new tag rugby Coaches after earning their World Rugby Coach Educator accreditations in Hong Kong last month. Thanks to the support of Hong Kong Rugby Union, Sandy Bay U14s and DAC Management for making Souksavanh and Khang’s training and education opportunity possible as the two became the first two Lao women to earn such prestigious international accreditations from the global governing body for the sport of rugby union.

In addition to training new Coaches and expanding to new locations, the LRF was excited to send 6 players and 2 Coaches to the RKU ChildFund Pass It Back Cup in Ibaraki, Japan last month. The players joined forces with players from Vietnam and the Philippines to form the South-East Asian (SEA) Dragons. During the trip the Dragons competed in a tag rugby tournament against students from Japan and participated in leadership and gender life skills activities as well as visiting the sites of Tokyo.

For many Lao players, the trip was their first opportunity to travel beyond Laos. "I want them to know that Lao people have a lot of abilities," said player Minly. "I want them to see our strengths and that we are at the same level as them."

All of this was made possible by Australia's support for the growth of Rugby in Laos. "All kids should have the opportunity to play sports," says Australian Ambassador to Laos, Mr. Jean-Bernard Carrasco. "Not only does it teach them to be healthy, but sport also teaches them important life skills, teamwork and leadership."

The LRF thanks ChildFund Australia and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for making the ChildFund Pass It Back work in Laos possible. The LRF also thanks ChildFund Pass It Back partners, Asia Rugby, World Rugby, Women Win, チャイルド・ファンド・ジャパン (ChildFund Japan) for their ongoing support for the curriculum in Laos.

Thanks also goes to the LRF's Champa Ban Youth Rugby sponsors including DAC Management LLC, Vientiane College, Pot Bellied Pigs RFC, UK Embassy Vientiane, Irish Embassy in Hanoi, DFDL Legal & Tax, Cairnhill Structures, PROJECX, 1765 Gemini, and DHL for their ongoing contributions to youth rugby in Laos.

We would also like to thank the Friends of Lao Rugby in Hong Kong, led by Kowloon Rugby Football Club and ESF Kennedy School along with Escapade Sports and Streamline Sports, who have worked to raise awareness for rugby in Laos and provide significant support to Champa Ban powered by ChildFund Pass It Back youth players in the form of donated items. Finally, we would like to thank Shrewsbury House School who is running a shoe collection scheme in the United Kingdom which has donated over 700 pairs of shoes and other equipment to Champa Ban players in Laos over the past year.

ChildFund Pass It Back Partners:



Proudly Supported By:



Champa Ban Youth Rugby Community Partners:



Streamline Sports



www.streamlinesports.com.hk



NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

About the Lao Rugby Federation

The Lao Rugby Federation (LRF) was formed in 2001. Since then, the LRF has gone on to gain full membership of Asian Rugby, associate member status of World Rugby and most importantly, registration with the Elite Sports Department of the Lao Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES).

The LRF is the governing body for all rugby activities within the Lao PDR. LRF activities are focused on developing the sport through a school and community development programme, supporting domestic and elite teams to improve and developing a sound structure to provide transparent and accountable financial and administrative support to the sport.

The LRF mission is: To provide opportunities for men and women, boys and girls, social and elite players and those in urban and rural areas to participate in the sport of rugby, whilst ensuring that health benefits and personal development opportunities are realised to their fullest extent.

The LRF understands that this can only be achieved by ensuring that we have the necessary capacities to deliver high quality playing and participation opportunities; this involves engagement with the government, communities, businesses, schools and other institutions to provide sustainable access to participation (playing and non-playing) opportunities.

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Editors: Images are available upon request.