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## Executive summary

*Pass It Back* is an innovative Sport for Development program led by ChildFund in partnership with World Rugby and Asia Rugby. It provides children with structured sport and life skills learning opportunities in a safe, inclusive environment, that supports social and emotional learning and allows children to positively contribute to their communities. ChildFund commissioned an independent external evaluation of the second iteration of *Pass It Back* in Laos and Vietnam covering the period from July 2017 to June 2020.

The external evaluation, conducted by Louise Coventry and Quynh Nguyen, was desk-based. Its timing coincided with the global coronavirus pandemic which prevented fieldwork visits. Email exchanges and phone interviews were conducted with project staff and some online engagement with coaches in Laos and Vietnam was possible using Zoom (Laos), Facebook (Vietnam), and Poll Everywhere (Vietnam).

The evaluation addresses the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact and gives special attention to issues of female leadership and gender-transformative practices. In so doing, the evaluation introduces a new framework, Gender at Work, which is often used to make sense of gender-transformative programs and how they work. ChildFund's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework and Social and Emotional Learning Framework each intersect and overlay the Gender at Work framework.

This evaluation finds that *Pass It Back* is highly relevant. *Pass It Back* is relevant to young people's interests and priorities, and particularly to the interests and priorities of young women, relevant to the country contexts of Vietnam and Laos, and to the international rugby movement, strategically relevant to ChildFund and adaptively relevant to changing circumstances and contexts. The key opportunity to improve the relevance of *Pass It Back* is to increase its relevance to the priorities and interests of young people with a disability. To do this, more resources and strong organisational commitment will be required.

Regarding effectiveness, the evaluation finds that the overall quality of interventions conducted by *Pass It Back* is very high. This is evidenced through the receipt of awards (programmatically and individually) and international recognition and profile. *Pass It Back* has advanced the sport for development sector, both internationally and within ChildFund and contributes to gender-transformative practice. Key factors underpinning *Pass It Back's* success include investment in mutually beneficial partnerships, promotion of participatory processes, long-term investment in individuals, attention to learning, use of peer-support mechanisms and sophisticated systems of monitoring and evaluation. Challenges faced by *Pass It Back* seem generally well-managed.

The evaluation finds that *Pass It Back* is generally very efficient. Upfront investments are complete, which suggests a higher return on future investments, partners are well-chosen and appropriate investments are made in partnerships, and participatory, empowering processes are (appropriately) privileged by *Pass It Back*. Opportunities for learning and bridging divergent views could potentially be better leveraged. Finally, a social return on investment analysis is recommended as a next step, as it seems a good fit for *Pass It Back* given *Pass It Back's* existing commitment to participatory approaches.

The evaluation confirms that the work of *Pass It Back* is appropriately sustainable. Sustainability is supported by the establishment by coaches of new rugby clubs in both Laos and Vietnam, coach initiatives to generate funds, sponsorship and in-kind supports, and by peer support mechanisms for both coaches and players. To further boost sustainability, it will be useful to consider how better to leverage the skill, knowledge and lived experience of coaches towards gender-transformative practices in their communities, as well as increased licensing of curriculum akin to a social franchising model.

Within the program context of *Pass It Back*, achievements and impacts are well documented. These achievements include changes in knowledge, attitude and social and emotional skills (especially relating to gender, health, violence, and future planning), and increases in confidence: A sense of empowerment is associated with experiences of leadership. Documentation of program partnerships, their successes and the lessons learned from them, is also relatively strong. Less documentation is available about the extent of

transformation of gender relations in communities. Overall, ChildFund is not well-equipped to understand, influence and track change (social impacts) outside program contexts. Building on what is already documented, this evaluation provides some further examples of how *Pass It Back* has positively influenced deep, invisible gender norms, promoted better access to assets and positively influenced formal rules. These are important social impacts attributable to *Pass It Back*.

Over the past three years, *Pass It Back* has made very significant and wide-ranging achievements in Laos and Vietnam. There is likely value in growing the global footprint of *Pass It Back*. To facilitate the growth of *Pass It Back*, the evaluation team offers seven recommendations as follows:

1. ChildFund acknowledge and celebrate the very significant and wide-ranging achievements of *Pass It Back* in Laos and Vietnam over the past three years
2. ChildFund seek to leverage existing investments in coaches by developing a new program to engage experienced coaches in parallel to, or after completion of, the *Pass It Back* program. A new program may be characterised by the following elements:
  - Centralisation of gender-transformative practices, rather than sport for development (although inclusive of sport for development initiatives)
  - Prioritisation of collective efforts to transform informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices in Laos and Vietnam
  - Operationally premised on establishment of a community of practice, participatory action research or similar (formal) peer support mechanism for trained, experienced coaches
  - Appropriately resourced with skilled facilitators
  - Positioning trained and experienced coaches as community ambassadors capable of influencing deep cultural norms
  - Inclusive of small grants for coach-led initiatives towards transformation of gendered practices within communities
3. *Pass It Back* secretariat/ChildFund consider investing in its capacity to perform more consciously a mediative or brokering role between gender-transformative initiatives and sports for development initiatives.
4. *Pass It Back* secretariat/ChildFund consider to formalise and expand licensing arrangements of *Pass It Back* curricula, with a view to working in the same countries as licensees. This would not preclude having licensees operating in countries where *Pass It Back* is not currently active.
5. ChildFund/*Pass It Back* initiate a review of the governance arrangements for *Pass It Back*, with a view to repositioning *Pass It Back* outside the traditional country office structure of ChildFund
6. ChildFund consider commissioning a separate (participatory) 'Social Return on Investment' assessment of *Pass It Back*, recognising that direct cost comparisons are not possible with this methodology
7. ChildFund consider whether it has the human and financial resources and political commitment required to invest in sport for development initiatives in the disability sector e.g. wheelchair sports, Paralympic games, etc.

## Introduction

*Pass It Back* is an innovative Sport for Development program led by ChildFund in partnership with World Rugby and Asia Rugby. *Pass It Back* delivers an integrated life skills and rugby curriculum for children and young people in disadvantaged communities across Asia. Unlike many sports programs that focus on building mass participation in sport, *Pass It Back* works with coaches over a sustained three-year period, nurturing their leadership skills and supporting them not only to recruit and manage players and deliver curriculum, but also to role-model equitable gender relations in their communities; demonstrate rugby values of integrity, passion, solidarity, discipline and respect; and establish local sports clubs, among other things. Through these processes, the program seeks to provide children with structured sport and life skills learning opportunities in a safe, inclusive environment, that supports social and emotional learning and allows children to positively contribute to their communities.

ChildFund commissioned an independent external evaluation of the second iteration of *Pass It Back* in Laos and Vietnam. The period within the scope of the evaluation is July 2017 to June 2020. Ms Louise Coventry and Dr Quynh Nguyen completed the evaluation during May and June 2020. The terms of reference for the evaluation are attached as [Appendix 1](#).

The evaluation provides ChildFund with a deeper understanding of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of *Pass It Back* during the period from July 2017 to June 2020. The consultants acknowledge ChildFund's particular interest in matters of effectiveness, relevance, and efficiency (value for money).

Specifically, the evaluation:

- Examines project outcomes against ChildFund Australia's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework, and especially the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) sector framework, using a dual lens of gender and disability inclusion. It is noted that these two frameworks were developed after *Pass It Back* was designed.
- Addresses the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact
- Gives special attention to issues of female leadership and gender-transformative practices

Evaluation results are expected to be used to inform the design of subsequent projects, and to inform communications with various project stakeholders.

This report is organised as follows. First, the method is summarised and the strengths and limitations of the method are explained and explored. This first section highlights the unique challenges of undertaking an evaluation during a global pandemic. Second, the frameworks used by ChildFund, being the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework and the social and emotional learning (SEL) framework, are explained. A new framework, Gender at Work, is also presented because this framework is often used to make better sense of gender-transformative programs and how they work. This section shows how the MEL and SEL can overlay the Gender at Work framework. The next and third section, *Pass It Back* at a glance, shares headline (quantitative) statistics indicating the extent and breadth of *Pass It Back* activities. The fourth section systematically presents an analysis of the work of *Pass It Back* through the various lens of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. The fifth and final section offers concluding comments and proposes a series of recommendations for the consideration of ChildFund and the *Pass It Back* secretariat.

## Method

This evaluation report includes commentary on all relevant key data, both qualitative and quantitative, generated by the project throughout the project period, as well as the qualitative data generated remotely specifically for this evaluation using experimental techniques. The evaluation also engages reflectively on the overarching frameworks used by *Pass It Back* to understand how change is to be made and evaluated.

### Data generation strategies

#### A. Desk review

The desk review is the centrepiece of all data generation efforts. This is for two reasons. First, the global pandemic of coronavirus precluded the generation of data using traditional fieldwork techniques. Second, *Pass It Back* is the subject of several related evaluations and assessments, both directly focused on the program and focused on other aspects of good practice, such as gender mainstreaming, sport for development approaches (in-line with ChildFund's recently produced Sport for Development framework), and child safeguarding. Further, *Pass It Back* generated an extensive body of quantitative and qualitative data which was made available for the evaluation. Existing impact reports and associated data, quarterly and annual narrative and budget reports, case studies and change stories, as well as operational materials are used to inform and support the evaluation. **Appendix 2** is an inventory of documents provided by ChildFund to the evaluation team. Additional references accessed by the evaluation team are listed in the bibliography at the conclusion of this report.

#### B. Supplementary epistolary interviews

The evaluation team sought to conduct epistolary interviews with five influential staff /management team members. In practice, two staff requested phone interviews and one staff needed a longer time than was anticipated to translate responses into English, meaning that only one exchange occurred. Interviewees are listed in **Appendix 3**.

Epistolary interviews, first described by Debenham (2001; 2007<sup>1</sup>), are asynchronous, one-to-one interviews mediated by technology. The method allows both interviewer and respondent to respond in their own time with considered questions and responses: Interviewers and respondents do not need to be co-present in time. Instead, through an ongoing exchange, both interviewers and respondents have opportunities to reflect, clarify and expand their meaning. This method was chosen to allow the co-evaluators to conduct several interviews simultaneously, so data from one interview can be tested in or used to develop other interviews. In practice, because of interviewees' preference for phone interviews and challenges in communicating in English, limited cross-fertilisation of interviewees' responses occurred.

Epistolary interviews were nonetheless important for contextualising the desk review work, filling gaps and accessing high-level analysis. Interviews took account of the assessment, analysis, and learning questions contained in ChildFund's MEL Framework.

#### C. Supplementary app-based engagement with coaches in Vietnam

Recognising that many coaches in Vietnam were already accustomed to engaging with ChildFund using Whatsapp and Facebook and had access to the technologies that make this possible, the evaluation team, with support from ChildFund Vietnam staff, established a Facebook group for coaches to engage in the evaluation. Information about the purpose and process of the evaluation was posted and pinned to the top of the page. Questions requiring short form answers were then posted periodically on the Facebook page alongside links to polls (using Poll Everywhere <https://www.polleverywhere.com/>) and images for

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<sup>1</sup> Debenham, M. (2007). [Epistolary Interviews On-Line: A Novel Addition to the Researcher's Palette](#).

comment. The evaluation team monitored coach responses on a daily basis. Input and feedback from coaches was summarised and shared with coaches mostly within 24 hours of inputs being provided.

Close moderation of the Facebook page<sup>2</sup> upheld safeguarding standards in that the consultants were alert to children's rights and ready to report any incidents that may have occurred. High literacy skills were not a prerequisite for coach engagement on Facebook and Poll Everywhere.

Coach inputs were used to generate word clouds and add texture and colour to desktop reports of outcome and impact. Word clouds, such as presented on the cover page, are an image composed of words used in a particular text or subject, in which the size of each word indicates its frequency or importance. Raw data from app-based engagement of coaches in Vietnam was provided to ChildFund under separate cover.

#### D. Supplementary online focus groups with coaches in Laos

The evaluation team learned that coaches in Laos have reduced access to, and familiarity with technologies for online engagement. With respect for this, two focus groups were held using Zoom for coaches in Laos. A third focus group was abandoned after only one person joined within the first hour.

Focus group discussions were structured to yield information comparable to that produced by coaches in Vietnam i.e. short form responses and word clouds. Summaries of focus group discussions with coaches in Laos were provided to ChildFund under separate cover.

#### E. Briefing and debriefing meetings

Briefing and debriefing meetings with senior ChildFund staff were a valuable opportunity for collecting and confirming key information that frames the evaluation process and deliverables and receiving feedback on same.

In light of the mostly experimental nature of data generation methods B, C and D (explained above), further reflection on what the consultants learned from using these methods is included as [Appendix 4](#). The consultants understand that it is good practice to invest extra effort in documenting learning when trialling new approaches.

### Sample size and selection of key informants

#### Size

- Data generated incorporated perspectives and input from program staff and coaches across Laos and Vietnam.
- Five (5) program staff participated in interviews and 63 coaches from Vietnam (39 young women) participated in online discussions (either passively by clicking 'like' or actively by posting comments) and 9 coaches from Laos (3 young women) participated in online focus groups.
- No contact with government officials, players or parents was incorporated into the evaluation design at the request of the *Pass It Back* secretariat.

#### Sampling process

For epistolary interviews, participants were nominated by ChildFund, taking account of their role, seniority and personal history with *Pass It Back*. ChildFund additionally offered to assist the consultants make connections with any further persons within ChildFund with whom they may have wished to speak.

For Poll Everywhere, Facebook and Zoom meetings, ChildFund staff provided and moderated access to coaches. To the best of the consultants' knowledge, all coaches were invited and encouraged to participate.

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<sup>2</sup> The Facebook group has since been closed. There is no possibility of ongoing connection between consultants and participants.

Participation was voluntary, in which case actual participation was on the basis of self-selection. Participants decided if, and how much, they participated in polls and online conversations.

For briefing and debriefing meetings, participation was determined by ChildFund.

### Evaluation questions

The following evaluation questions guided data generation efforts. Evaluation questions were mostly drawn from ChildFund's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (from the domains of change, process and learning).

#### Relevance

1. What is the overall relevance of interventions conducted by *Pass It Back*?
2. How is *Pass It Back* relevant to ChildFund's strategic purposes and the specific country contexts where *Pass It Back* operates?
3. How is *Pass It Back* relevant to young people's priorities and interests, and especially the interests and priorities of young women?
4. How is leadership understood by the female participants in *Pass It Back*, and what leadership skills are female participants learning?
5. To what extent is *Pass It Back* relevant to the needs and priorities of people with disabilities?

#### Effectiveness

6. What is the overall quality of interventions conducted by *Pass It Back*?
7. To what knowledges, practices, systems and policy changes has the project contributed?
8. To what extent are these changes (knowledge, practice, systems, policies) resulting in changes in people's lives (boys, girls, men, women, gender diverse people, people with disability, minority ethnic groups), (access to assets, power, protection)?
9. What are the key successes and what factors underpin success?
10. What key challenges have been encountered and how effectively were they overcome?
11. What motivates and inspires stakeholders to act and make change (i.e. lead actions or drive systems change?)

#### Efficiency

12. To what extent are the strategies and approaches used the right ones needed to bring about the outcomes we are seeking?
13. Have the right partners and stakeholders been appropriately engaged by *Pass It Back* to bring about the outcomes sought?
14. To what extent does *Pass It Back* represent value for money? And what is the evidence base for this?

#### Sustainability

15. Overall, what is the likely sustainability of outcomes?
16. How best can the skills and knowledge of coaches best be retained, and further leveraged?
17. What opportunities exist for further embedding programmatic successes into ongoing, sustained and locally relevant practices and systems?

#### Impact

18. What are the unintended outcomes of the project, both positive and negative?
19. What can be learned about how ChildFund Australia should focus its activities, expertise and resources in this sector in order to have the greatest impact?
20. What specific recommendations can be made regarding the apportionment of resources focussing on breadth (more countries) as compared to depth (more locations within each country)?

## Strengths and limitations of the method

All efforts at evaluation have implicit strengths but are also necessarily limited in one way or another, and it is prudent to explain the strengths and limitations of the method in a reflective manner at an early stage. This evaluation experiences the following strengths and limitations:

- Measuring gender-transformative change is an inherently complex and holistic endeavour - gender-transformative measurement systems must be equipped to embrace complexity and context-specificity, as well as the halting and often unpredictable nature of social change (Hillenbrand et al 2015). To the extent that the evaluation team could not fully engage with the complexity and context-specificity of *Pass It Back*, the evaluation can be understood as constrained.
- The extent and quality of desktop resources specific to *Pass It Back* is very high. Information pertaining to monitoring and evaluation activities is thorough and far-reaching. Access to this information has strengthened the evaluation process. Nevertheless, the evaluation team has experienced challenges in getting the sense and feel of program without direct exposure to activities. While the consultants accept that the global pandemic of coronavirus necessitated the reliance on desktop resources, the loss of incidental conversations that can happen during fieldwork has nonetheless been felt keenly by consultants.
- Consultants note that the absence of inputs from government actors, *Pass It Back* players and their family members, and critical external voices constrains the evaluation. The evaluation team understands that a period of evaluation is often an especially opportune time to engage with and listen to critical voices. We encourage the *Pass It Back* secretariat to ensure that alternative opportunities to engage critical voices are actively pursued.
- The methodological innovations proposed by the consultants have enjoyed mixed success. Extra reflection and ongoing methodological review processes were more important than may otherwise be the case in the course of an evaluation project, precisely because innovative methodologies were trialled. Any experimental approach naturally contains risk. Consultant reflections are detailed in [Appendix 4](#).
- Different methods for engaging coaches were trialled in Vietnam and Laos. In Vietnam, coaches had more familiarity and experience with using online platforms for communication. This helped the consultants to engage with relatively more coaches. In Laos, coaches were apparently less familiar and comfortable using internet-based technologies for communication. Engagement was much lower in Laos. The use of different technologies in different countries also poses challenges for the direct comparison of responses by country.
- Reliance on internet-based technologies to engage with key informants meant that visual cues which help to build rapport and assist in understanding were largely absent. Because of this, it is possible that coach responses were not fully understood and appreciated.
- Further challenges arose because of the consultant's inability to converse in languages preferred by coaches; the first language of many coaches is a community language, not Vietnamese or Lao language. Language challenges were especially notable in Laos. The absence of a shared language with evaluation informants in Laos resulted in reliance on an interpreter (for a single language, being English-Lao only). Reliance on interpreters increases the risk of loss of information and misunderstanding. This risk is present notwithstanding the attitude of helpfulness, effort and skills of the interpreter.
- Time and budget restrictions necessarily constrain the evaluation team's choices and limit the comprehensiveness of data generation.

Readers should bear these strengths and limitations in mind when reflecting on findings. Readers should also note the evaluation team's informed view that it is unlikely that these limitations have seriously impacted the reliability of findings.

## Frameworks for evaluation

### ChildFund Australia's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework

ChildFund Australia's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework explains the theory of change used by ChildFund Australia and outlines how projects organised in different sectors can capture, analyse and document information that illustrates ChildFund Australia's contribution to change.

ChildFund Australia's theory of change outlines the drivers of poverty, which the organisation works to address. ChildFund Australia works across four 'themes', addressing poverty by:

- Access to assets: Building human, capital, natural and social assets around the child and their caregivers;
- Voice, Agency and Power: Building the confidence, sense of self-worth and resilience of children and youth (power within), the voice, agency and ability of people to bring about the changes they want in their lives (power to); and in some cases, promoting collective action (power with);
- Protection: Ensuring that people are protected from risks in their physical and social environment; and
- Formal systems: Strengthening the accessibility, quality and responsiveness of formal systems through which social services are delivered.

### Social and emotional learning outcomes

One of the sectors explained in the MEL is the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) sector. *Pass It Back* is nominated as part of the SEL sector. SEL programs focus on the processes through which children and young people develop and enhance the knowledge and skills necessary to understand, manage and communicate about their own emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain helpful relationships, set and work towards goals, draw on a repertoire of coping strategies, think critically about what influences their choices, and make responsible decisions.

*Pass It Back's* theory of change (see [Appendix 5](#)) outlines how exactly change is expected to occur. It fully aligns with the template for creating a theory of change that is included in the SEL framework, even though the SEL framework was created only after *Pass It Back's* theory of change was already in place. Consistent with the MEL and SEL frameworks, the outcomes expected from *Pass It Back* fall into three domains: social and emotional skills, leadership and action for community change, and an enabling environment.

The nature of social and emotional learning is explained more fully in MEL and SEL. Social and emotional skills of concern to ChildFund Australia are: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision-making and understanding human rights and gender. Each of these skills can be traced directly back to three of the four themes of ChildFund Australia's theory of change (voice, agency and power, protection, and access to assets). According to the MEL framework, social and emotional skills do not impact formal systems.

In light of the above, *Pass It Back* can be expected to result (in broad terms) in:

- improvements to young people's social and emotional skills such that young people can positively influence their lives and relationships (social and emotional skills)
- increased youth participation in communities and youth action to influence positive change (leadership and action for community change)
- duty bearer policies, systems, processes and practices being more inclusive of, and accountable to young people (enabling environment).

*Pass It Back* has adopted a sophisticated and thorough approach to monitoring and evaluation. This includes baseline and endline reports, attendance and registration data, stories of most significant change,

case studies, coach journal entries, interviews, coach observation activities, coach training activities, seasonal survey data, annual/season impact reports and occasional evaluations.

### *Pass It Back* as social and emotional learning

*Pass It Back's* activities can also be mapped according to the three domains of social and emotional skills, leadership/action for change, and enabling environment. The evaluation team understands that the major components of *Pass It Back* are as follows:

#### Social and emotional skill development

- Delivery of life skills curriculum (64 sessions) integrated with rugby skills/play. Coaches are supported by ChildFund to deliver curriculum to players directly. Curriculum addresses issues of gender, future planning, sexual and reproductive health and feeling safe (preventing violence).
- Formal and informal peer support mechanisms for both players and coaches.

#### Leadership, action for change

- Engagement and training of coaches amounts to sustained leadership development. Coaches are often but not always drawn from the pool of current players.
- Opportunities for skills exchanges, competitions, and “passing it back”. What it means to pass it back is not clearly defined. However, the evaluation team suspect it means the demonstration of rugby values (integrity, passion, solidarity, discipline and respect) to community members.

#### Enabling environment

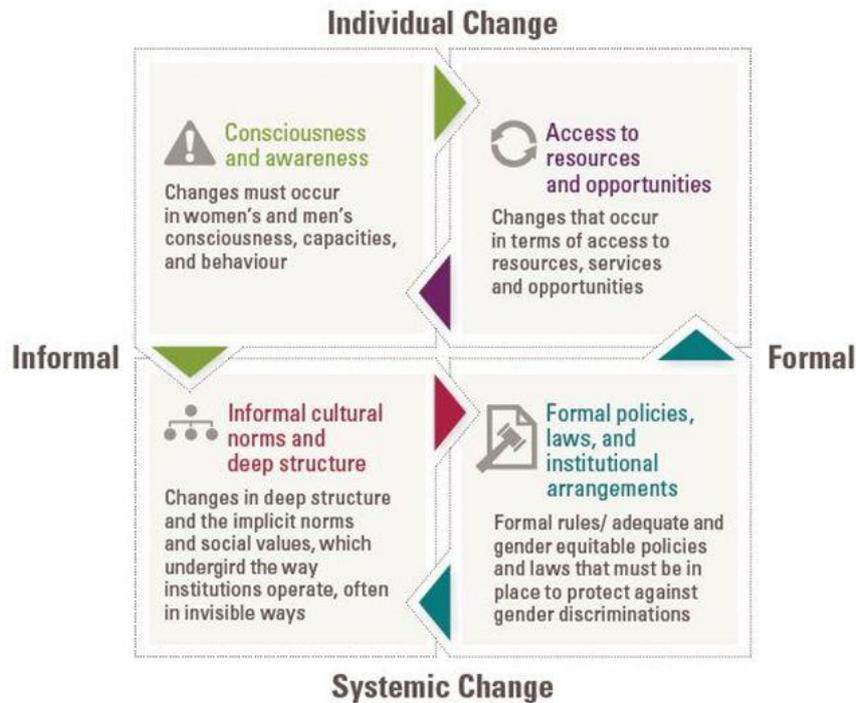
- Organisational strengthening of Lao Rugby Federation, a Lao government entity and key implementing partner for *Pass It Back*.
- Significant contributions to policy development and skill acquisition at country-level, with sport governing bodies (nationally, regionally and internationally), and within ChildFund.

### A new analytical framework: Gender at Work

Overall, ChildFund Australia and *Pass It Back* are not well-equipped to understand, influence and track change (social impacts) outside its program context. This is explicitly acknowledged in ChildFund's internal Learning Paper No. 3, February 2020, entitled 'ChildFund *Pass It Back*: Driving Change and New Ways of Working'.

To assist in reflecting on longer term or larger social impacts, the evaluation team finds the Gender at Work framework to be very useful (Roy et al 2016). The Gender at Work Framework, shown below, highlights the interrelationship between gender equality, change in communities and institutions, and the 'rules of the game' held in place by power dynamics within communities. This framework has been used by a wide range of organisations, from large NGOs like Oxfam International, to women's organisations and funds, such as the Global Fund for Women, and by women and community groups all over the world, precisely to promote and monitor gender-transformative practices.

# Analytical Frameworks: Gender@Work



ChildFund Australia’s Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MEL) and Social and Emotional Learning Framework (SEL) can map directly onto this framework.

For example, the four themes of ChildFund Australia’s theory of change are a close fit to the Gender at Work framework. Access to assets is comparable to access to resources and opportunities (top right quadrant), formal systems are represented in the bottom right quadrant, and voice, agency and power, and protection are each relevant to both quadrants on the left.

As another example, the elements of SEL being social and emotional skills, leadership/action for change, and enabling environment also fit well to the Gender at Work framework. Social and emotional skills are in the top left quadrant, leadership is in the top right quadrant, action for change can potentially fit the bottom left quadrant, and enabling environment fits well in the bottom right quadrant.

## Reflections

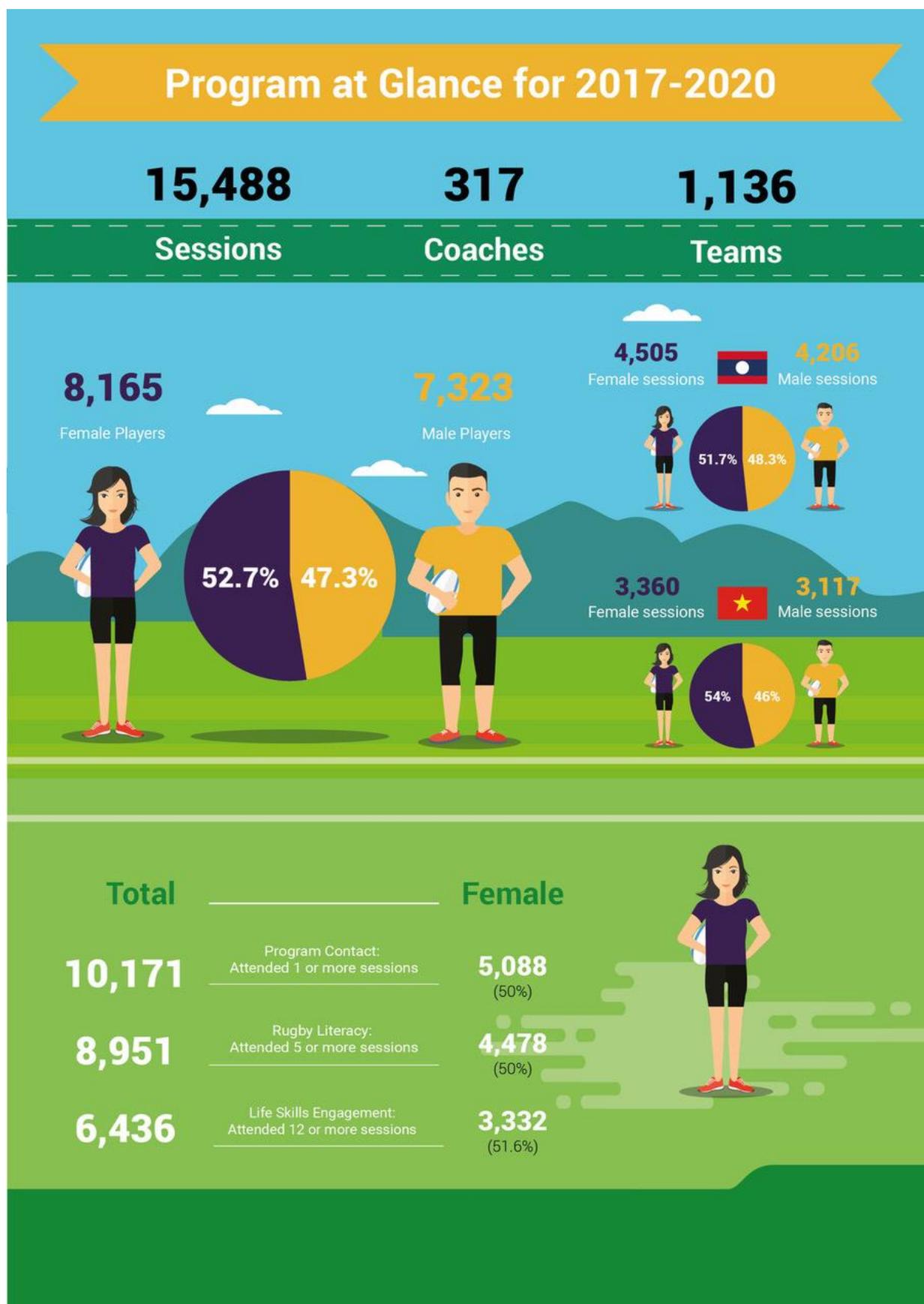
Comparing these different frameworks draws attention to the challenges of effecting – and documenting – change in informal cultural norms and deep structure (bottom left quadrant) and helps to shed light on how the monitoring and evaluation activities of *Pass It Back* are generally weighted towards providing information about consciousness and awareness (top left quadrant). While this is hardly surprising given the framing of SEL, this realisation has prompted the evaluation team to invest their energies in identifying and documenting changes to which *Pass It Back* has contributed which fall outside the top left quadrant. To be clear, changes in the remaining three quadrants are already documented by *Pass It Back*, most notably through stories of significant change, coach journal entries and case studies, but they are not documented as systematically as changes in the top left quadrant. As already noted, measuring gender-transformative change (bottom left quadrant) is, in particular, an inherently complex and holistic endeavour (Hillenbrand et al 2015).

In reflecting further on the frameworks for the evaluation, the evaluation team has mused on the question: Is *Pass It Back* best understood as a sport for development initiative that promotes gender-transformative practice, or a gender-transformative program that uses sport as the means of development? In other words, what comes first and what therefore determines the lens through which activities and outcomes are viewed? This seemingly simple question has profound implications. The evaluation team perceives that *Pass It Back* sees itself as the former and has worked hard to claim and define the sport for development space and affirm its validity and merits. Nonetheless, the evaluation team suggests that there may be value in considering if and when it may be advantageous to reframe *Pass It Back* (or potentially its offspring) as the latter i.e. as primarily a gender-transformative program which happens to use sport as the means of engagement and development. More questions come to mind about *Pass It Back*'s positioning within the broader development sphere. Is taking up the gender-transformative program space what should sensibly occur as a post-*Pass It Back* initiative, circling back to bring the impacts from *Pass It Back* more squarely into the realm of country-specific development and humanitarian work, as more traditionally understood and practised? Or are there other spin-off initiatives from *Pass It Back* that can more centrally positioned as gender-transformative and that can be even more mindful of nurturing the changes that are needed to transform gender norms (as per the bottom left quadrant)? And can the role of the *Pass It Back* secretariat usefully be more consciously mediative between gender-transformative initiatives and sports for development initiatives? These reflections have informed some of the perspectives that the evaluation team have developed, as coming pages of this report will show.

The presentation of various frameworks for evaluation in this section lays the foundation and is expected to be helpful for navigating the analysis subsequently presented in this report.

## Pass It Back at a glance – A review of the numbers

The below graphic gives an indication of the scope and scale of activities delivered by *Pass It Back* in Laos and Vietnam between July 2017 and June 2020. It sets the context for the assessment of the work of *Pass It Back* presented in the next sections. It uses a format already known and used by *Pass It Back*.



## Analysis of findings by theme

### Relevance

This evaluation finds *Pass It Back* to be highly relevant in five major ways. First, *Pass It Back* is relevant to young people's interests and priorities, and particularly to the interests and priorities of young women. Second and third, *Pass It Back* is relevant to the country contexts of Vietnam and Laos, and to the international rugby movement. Fourth and fifth, *Pass It Back* has strategic relevance for ChildFund and adaptive relevance in that it has evolved to take account of changing circumstances and contexts. In its current form, *Pass It Back* has limited relevance to the needs and priorities of young people with disabilities.

Relevance to young people's interests and priorities is established by providing integrated sport and life skills learning and opportunities for leadership. There are four modules in the *Pass It Back* curriculum, each consisting of 16 sessions.

- Gender
- Planning for My Future
- Being Healthy (sexual and reproductive health)
- Feeling Safe (preventing violence)

These topics are consistent with what young people want to learn/know. Young people in Laos want an end to violence, access to learning and better health systems<sup>3</sup>. Young people in Vietnam are interested in health, education, employment, migration and opportunities for volunteerism<sup>4</sup>

The needs and interests of young women are (appropriately) accorded priority. Young women in rural areas of Vietnam and Laos might reasonably be expected to be interested in having opportunities for leadership, economic empowerment, and increased status. Young people's (perhaps unacknowledged) interest in carving out a space in which they can experiment with transgressing ascribed gender roles is also catered for within *Pass It Back*.

Leadership is understood by young women who participate as coaches in *Pass It Back* as a way to inspire and help those who may have limited access to education, with a view to making change in others' lives. Based on this belief, young female coaches especially valued the acquisition of mentoring and listening skills, and skills in teamwork management (regarding both human and other resources).

The leadership skills that young female coaches are predominantly learning, according to the coaches themselves as revealed on Facebook, Poll Everywhere and in Zoom meetings, is confidence, problem-solving skills, courage and active listening. They learn how to become a role model so that others can learn and "become a good person".

Young female coaches can earn a living and generate income for themselves as well as their families. Female coaches advise that, in their own community context, the social norm whereby females take care of housework and males are responsible for generating income for families is becoming less pervasive; its validity is directly challenged by young women who are practising their professional roles as rugby coaches.

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*"I feel proud when I can transform from an ordinary person to a coach. I am able to provide some training to children and get respect from the public." Female coach in Vietnam*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/eap/stories/children-and-young-people-laos-share-their-vision-2030>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/youth-issues-in-vietnam.htm>



Wordcloud: How coaches in Laos (n=5) understand leadership

*Pass It Back* is relevant to the country contexts of Vietnam and Laos. In the case of Laos, *Pass It Back* is fully aligned to the mission and agenda of the Lao Rugby Federation, a national government entity. With support from ChildFund, the Lao Rugby Federation has transformed itself into arguably the preeminent sporting governing body in Laos. In the case of Vietnam, *Pass It Back* clearly contributes to the Vietnamese government’s priorities. For example, the government of Vietnam has adopted a Youth Development Strategy for the period 2012 to 2020 which sets as its goals, to “educate the youth on patriotism, ideology, revolutionary morality, national way of life and self-respect, awareness of the need for the rule of law, responsibilities to the society and respect of community codes of conduct” and to “incrementally improve the health, physical strength and physique for a young generation that is capable of self-learning, self-training, well equipped with sufficient life skills to adapt and thrive in variable living and working environments”<sup>5</sup>. One of the implementation strategies is to improve “life skills, sexual and reproductive health awareness for the youth” (p.19). The Vietnamese government, through its People’s Committees, has enabled new youth rugby clubs to form in provincial areas, under the leadership of coaches trained through *Pass It Back*.

Internationally, *Pass It Back* also has high relevance. *Pass It Back* is aligned to Asia Rugby and World Rugby interest in pursuing improved child safeguarding practices and increasing women’s participation in the

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Vietnam\\_2011\\_Youth\\_Development\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Vietnam_2011_Youth_Development_Strategy.pdf)

sport. Partnerships with Asia Rugby and World Rugby are mutually beneficial for ChildFund and the rugby governing bodies alike.

The strategic relevance of *Pass It Back* to ChildFund is that *Pass It Back* has enabled the positioning of ChildFund as an expert in the sport for development sector, opening up new sources of funding and support. *Pass It Back* has built ChildFund's reputation in the emerging Sport for Development space, created new opportunities for profile, revenue generation and partnership for the organisation. It has also seemingly precipitated new ways of thinking about multi-country development models, programming, partnerships and operational issues<sup>6</sup>.

Adaptive relevance refers to *Pass It Back's* ability to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. There are several examples of how *Pass It Back* has demonstrated adaptive relevance, for example, by engaging coaches from Nonghet in neighbouring districts following the suspension of the program in Nonghet, Laos; by establishing Reconnect, a new and short curriculum for supporting young people to re-engage in communities, with each other and in play following periods of lock-down associated with the coronavirus pandemic; moving coach training on-line in response to social distancing and quarantining requirements associated with the coronavirus pandemic; and customising approaches to the establishment of new rugby clubs to unique country contexts. The Lao Rugby Federation has processes and policies for supporting the creation of new rugby clubs. In Vietnam, which does not have its own rugby federation, clubs are established by coaches with the approval of People's Committees.

The evaluation finds that *Pass It Back* in Laos and Vietnam has limited relevance to young people with disabilities. While the importance of engaging with young people with disabilities is acknowledged by *Pass It Back* secretariat members, the priorities and interests of young people with disabilities are not meaningfully addressed due to a lack of resources. Engaging young people with disabilities in *Pass It Back* or an equivalent program will likely require a significant commitment of human and financial resources as well as sustained political will. It is recommended that ChildFund seriously consider whether it has the human and financial resources and political commitment required to invest in sport for development initiatives in the disability sector e.g. through wheelchair sports, in partnership with Paralympic games, or the like.

To summarise this section discussing relevance, the evaluation team reiterates that *Pass It Back* is highly relevant. Relevance is multi-faceted: *Pass It Back* is relevant to young people's interests and priorities, and particularly to the interests and priorities of young women, relevant to the country contexts of Vietnam and Laos, and to the international rugby movement, strategically relevant to ChildFund and adaptively relevant to changing circumstances and contexts. The key opportunity to improve the relevance of *Pass It Back* is to increase its relevance to the priorities and interests of young people with a disability. To do this, more resources and strong organisational commitment will be required.

## Effectiveness

*Pass It Back* is a highly sophisticated and well-resourced program which has proven effective. It has a high-profile and has attracted international awards and recognition. *Pass It Back* has made pioneering contributions to advancing the sport for development sector, both internationally and within ChildFund. Moreover, *Pass It Back* represents an example of gender transformative programming – which involves shifting power dynamics within and beyond *Pass It Back*. The overall effectiveness of *Pass It Back* is underscored by investment in mutually beneficial partnerships, promotion of participatory processes, long-term investment in individuals, attention to learning, peer-support mechanisms and sophisticated systems

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<sup>6</sup> Learning Paper No. 3, February 2020, ChildFund *Pass It Back*: Driving Change and New Ways of Working (internal document)

of monitoring and evaluation that enable course corrections to be made quickly if and as required. These issues are discussed further below.

*Pass It Back* represents ChildFund's most comprehensive sport for development intervention, both in terms of curricula contact time and monitoring and evaluation protocols. More importantly, in the view of the evaluation team, *Pass It Back* can potentially be understood as primarily a gender-transformative program (which happens to use sport as the vehicle for delivering curriculum).

A gender-transformative approach simply means that promoting gender equality—the shared control of resources and decision-making—and women's empowerment are central to an intervention. Hillenbrand et al (2015) explain that gender-transformative approaches actively strive to examine, question, and change rigid gender norms and imbalances of power. Gender-transformative approaches encourage critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms; promote the position of women; challenge the distribution of resources and allocation of duties between men and women; and/ or address the power relationships between women and others in the community. These approaches aim to go beyond individual self-improvement among women toward transforming power dynamics and structures that act to reinforce gendered inequalities.

In a systematic review of evaluations of programmes targeting gender inequality and restrictive gender norms for the health and wellbeing of children, adolescents, and young adults, Levy et al (2019) found that the highest quality programmes shared several characteristics, which suggest that they have potential to powerfully affect both gender equality and health. The highest quality programs can be differentiated from others because they:

- worked with sectors beyond health to create change;
- included the participation of multiple stakeholders;
- implemented diversified strategies; and
- fostered critical awareness and participation among affected community members, encouraging them to become active agents in shaping their own health.

These characteristics, as identified by Levy et al (2019), are also characteristics of *Pass It Back*.

Most sports development programs would seem to focus on promoting mass participation in sport. That noted, the evaluation team acknowledges that ChildFund Australia, in its Sport for Development Framework, accords priority only to those interventions that focus on organised, structured, curriculum-based programs that have clear development outcomes. ChildFund and specifically *Pass It Back's* orientation to producing clear development outcomes has seemingly inspired others to engage in the sport for development sector more intentionally and/or improve their sport for development practices. More broadly, *Pass It Back* has served to position ChildFund as a leader in the sport for development space.

*Pass It Back* has won international awards and accolades. World Rugby selected ChildFund as the principal charity partner for Rugby World Cup 2019. The Review of the ChildFund World Rugby Partnership for Rugby World Cup 2019 (December 2019) heralded this partnership as an "outstanding success with many landmark achievements, alignment of strategic purpose, strong cooperation, resonance with the global rugby family and a lasting legacy for children and communities across Asia" (p.2). Awards have also been secured by some of the individuals involved in *Pass It Back*. One female coach in Laos, Ms Lao Khang, has had her achievements honoured by being listed in the BBC's 100 women 2018 and Forbes 30 Under 30 in Asia<sup>7</sup>. One interviewee explained as follows:

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/profile/lao-khang/#5c13e92eb55d>

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*Ms Lao Khang did not graduate from high school. When she was 18, she applied for an internship with Lao Rugby Federation. At that time, she spoke only Hmong language, not Lao language and she could not use a computer. But she is a great leader. Coaches and players learn from her.*

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The factors underpinning *Pass It Back's* success may be identified as follows:

- Sustained investment in individuals of six or more years. Sustained investment has enabled solid relationships to be built and allowed individuals sufficient time to progress along a pathway from players to coaches and then to coach-leaders, and potentially also then trainers. Three-year program cycles which are common in international development and aid environments are patently insufficient for transforming entrenched gender norms.
- Peer-based delivery of curriculum and peer support systems. Players work together in teams and learn from coaches with whom they can identify. Coaches also work collaboratively with each other in small groups. Players then can train as coaches; they have clear role-models and ideas about what a successful coach says and does. They often seek to raise the bar for performance standards, bringing together the best of what they have seen as players into their work as a coach, and the best of what they see as coaches into their work as a trainer.
- Participatory processes. *Pass It Back* has prioritised and privileged participatory processes, for example, by supporting coaches to accept responsibility for data generation (surveys of players and journal writing), selecting the most significant stories of change, and otherwise contributing to monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Attention to learning. Learning models within *Pass It Back* follow good practices such as peer engagement, long-term engagement, opportunities to practice and apply new skills concurrently with the learning process, reflection and documentation (e.g. coaches journals, stories of change, case studies, etc), as well as effective monitoring e.g. impact reports, baseline and endline information.
- investment in mutually beneficial partnerships. Partnerships with the Lao Rugby Federation, Asia Rugby and World Rugby have proved critical to the success of *Pass It Back*.
- High levels of documentation; sophisticated monitoring and evaluation systems. Monitoring and evaluation information includes seasonal survey data, attendance data, registration data, qualitative data (case studies, change stories and journal entries), interviews, coach observation activities, coach training activities, and occasional evaluations. While quality monitoring and evaluation processes have underpinned program successes in the past three years, questions can reasonably be asked about the extent to which current monitoring and evaluation practices are sustainable into the future.

*Pass It Back* has encountered some key challenges in the past three years. Key challenges have included the withdrawal of government support for ongoing work in Nonghet district, and the global pandemic of coronavirus and COVID 19 which has also affected all other development projects globally.

A breakdown in relationships with government actors in Nonghet negatively impacted *Pass It Back* activities. The evaluation team is advised that every effort was made to strengthen relationships with government actors in Nonghet before ultimately, a decision was made to suspend all ChildFund activities, including *Pass It Back*, in that district. Many individual coaches from Nonghet have stayed engaged in *Pass It Back* by travelling outside the district to join activities.

Across the world, COVID 19 has also changed the way that work is undertaken. For *Pass It Back*, more activities have moved online and new curriculum has been developed (called Reconnect) specifically for supporting young people to reconnect with their friends in safe ways following a period of lockdown.

To summarise this section on effectiveness, the evaluation team finds that the overall quality of interventions conducted by *Pass It Back* is very high. This is evidenced through the receipt of awards (programmatically and individually) and international recognition and profile. *Pass It Back* has advanced the sport for development sector, both internationally and within ChildFund and contributes to gender-transformative practice. Key factors underpinning *Pass It Back's* success include investment in mutually beneficial partnerships, promotion of participatory processes, long-term investment in individuals, attention to learning, use of peer-support mechanisms and sophisticated systems of monitoring and evaluation. Challenges faced by *Pass It Back* seem generally well-managed.

### Efficiency

Efficiency is the ability to do things well, successfully, and without waste. It is often measured in three dimensions: money, time and effort, and processes. In line with this understanding, this section comments on the extent to which project activities and outputs were achieved with value for money, on time and using quality processes. Greatest attention is given to issues of value for money, as ChildFund have expressed heightened interest in this issue.

The evaluation team notes that upfront investments in *Pass It Back* are generally completed. In other words, curriculum is well-developed and documented, monitoring and evaluation protocols are well-developed and documented, and what it takes to engage and train coaches is well understood. Lessons learned are generally recorded. In short, *Pass It Back* operating practices have been fine-tuned over several years. This initial investment combined with adequate time for fine-tuning interventions suggests that a higher return on future investment will be possible. Customisation of program features for new country contexts would require further investment but at modest levels. The possibility of achieving higher returns on future investments, combined with the absence of evidence to suggest any financial inefficiencies in the delivery of *Pass It Back*, lead the evaluation team to conclude that delivering value of money is likely not challenging for *Pass It Back*.

Importantly, the consultants have determined that it would be counter-productive to attempt a formal cost-benefit analysis, or cost-effectiveness analysis of *Pass It Back* at the current time. A cost-benefit analysis is premised on being able to quantify and allocate a monetary value to the benefits of the program and being able to itemise and calculate the costs in a rational manner. The value of a cost-benefit analysis depends on the accuracy of the individual cost and benefit estimate. Yet benefits accrue differently to different individuals, as well as to communities, and are prone to accumulate over multiple seasons depending on individual participation rates. In this context, a simple equation like dividing the total program budget by the number of participants would be improper and misleading. Similar, a cost-effectiveness analysis, even though it does not require monetisation, is also not appropriate for *Pass It Back*. This is because a cost-effectiveness analysis assesses the relative costs and outcomes (effects) of different courses of action. An appropriate point of comparison (that is, an alternative course of action to *Pass It Back*) is not immediately apparent.

To determine the value for money generated by *Pass It Back*, previous evaluations have compared *Pass It Back* with other sport for development programs (see Bates 2017). The evaluation team suggest that a better point of comparison for *Pass It Back* is programs that aim towards gender transformation which incidentally are often expensive and longer term in their focus. While *Pass It Back* uses sport as the vehicle for delivering gender transformative experiences, most sport development programs seem to focus on mass participation which is generally not compatible with transformative experience. Hillenbrand et al (2015) explain that measuring gender-transformative change is an emerging field and privileging qualitative and participatory measurement techniques is a common feature of gender-transformative change measurement practice (p.6).

In the course of undertaking the evaluation, the evaluation team learned about a methodology known as Social Return on Investment (SROI) which has been used to establish the value of different sport programs

(Gosselin et al, 2020). While Social Return on Investment builds upon the logic of cost-benefit analysis, it is different in that it is a participatory and principles-based method for measuring extra-financial value, including social and environmental impacts.

An important feature of the Social Return on Investment methodology is that it is participatory. Social value is the quantification of the relative importance that people (that is, project stakeholders) place on the changes they experience in their own lives. Because fieldwork was not a possibility for this evaluation, the evaluation team was unable to consider using this methodology at this time. However, the evaluation team suggests that ChildFund consider commissioning a stand-alone (participatory) Social Return on Investment assessment of *Pass It Back*. For reference, an international register of accredited social value practitioners can be found here: <https://socialvalueint.org/assurance/accredited-practitioners/register-of-svi-practitioners/>.

Gosselin et al (2020), in their systematic review of the application of Social Return on Investment methods within sports programs, found a pronounced difference in SROI ratio between studies of sport interventions. It varied from 1.7:1 to 124:1. A ratio of 1.7:1 indicates that an investment of \$1 delivers \$1.7 of social value. The lowest reported ratios (1.7:1) were for a sport-based youth development program and a high-performance program. The highest (124:1) was for a sports program for disabled people. Gosselin et al (2020) calculated the SROI ratio average for each type of sport program. The highest (44:1) is associated with secondary and tertiary prevention, followed by sport for development (5.9:1), primary prevention (5.6:1) and high-performance sports programs (1.7:1).

As sport for development programs evaluated using SROI method (n=5) have an average value ratio of 5.9 to 1, this can be understood as a potential benchmark for *Pass It Back*. Despite the evaluation team's best efforts, no cost benchmarks for gender-transformative programs were identified through the course of the evaluation. A systematic review of programs that sought to decrease gender inequalities and transform restrictive gender norms to improve the health and wellbeing of 0–24 year olds (Levy et al 2019) is silent on the matter of program cost.

The evaluation team further notes that the Australian Social Value Bank (ASVB) launched in 2017 is the largest set of methodologically consistent social value metrics ever produced using Australian data. The ASVB social values cover a broad range of community interventions, including sport and health, but it does not include values related to gender-transformative practice<sup>8</sup>. This again suggests that cost benchmarks for gender-transformative practice are elusive.

Before finalising commentary on the matter of value for money, the evaluation team notes that *Pass It Back* already has a history of prioritising participatory approaches to evaluation, for example, by engaging coaches to conduct surveys of players, write journals and review and select significant stories of change. While recognising that participatory approaches to evaluation can be more costly than, for example, employing consultants (and have proven so in the case of surveying *Pass It Back* players), such approaches offer better value because of their alignment to broader principles of development. In effect, participatory approaches not only get the work done but are themselves 'the work'. *Pass It Back's* commitment to participatory approaches would seem a solid platform for investigating further the possibility of applying a Social Return on Investment analysis to *Pass It Back*, notwithstanding the challenges of finding direct cost comparisons for the purpose of benchmarking.

Turning now to matters of process and partnership, the evaluation team finds that external partners have been appropriately chosen and appropriate investments have been made in pursuing and developing

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<sup>8</sup> <https://socialvalueint.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Social-Value-Principles-and-Australian-Social-Value-Bank-1.pdf>

partnerships. Partners generally have high status which brings prestige to *Pass It Back*. The emphasis on partnership brings new and valuable learning both to ChildFund and the *Pass It Back* secretariat.

Relationships internal to ChildFund also merit attention. The evaluation team wonders how much attention is given to developing bonding (social) capital among *Pass It Back* staff relative to the attention given to building bridging (social) capital between *Pass It Back* and the various country offices of ChildFund or other stakeholders who may hold critical views. While the evaluation team did not explore this issue in detail, it seems possible that tensions could arise. Focussing on teamwork and finding and building relationships with like-minded individuals and organisations must necessarily be balanced with seeking out critical voices and building bridges to those who think differently. The extent to which this balance has been well-struck provides an opportunity for further reflection among the secretariat; we wish to suggest that there may be value in framing the secretariat's role in terms of meditating and brokering between divergent voices. We return to this point later in this report.

Finally, the evaluation team finds that the staffing configuration of the secretariat and in-country project teams is lean given the extent of work completed.

To summarise this section, the evaluation team finds that *Pass It Back* is generally very efficient. Upfront investments are complete, which suggests a higher return on future investments, partners are well-chosen and appropriate investments are made in partnerships, and participatory, empowering processes are (appropriately) privileged by *Pass It Back*. Opportunities for learning and bridging divergent views could potentially be better leveraged. Finally, a social return on investment analysis is recommended as a next step, as it seems a good fit for *Pass It Back* given *Pass It Back's* existing commitment to participatory approaches.

## Sustainability

The sustainability of *Pass It Back* can be understood on a continuum from modest to grand. Modest sustainability may involve the retention of program outcomes, for example, when new skills and knowledge learned through *Pass It Back* activities are retained by coaches and players. Grand sustainability can refer to momentum for continuing social impacts, for example, when coaches contribute to the transformation of gender norms in their communities on an ongoing and enduring basis. With this understanding, the evaluation team suggests that the sustainability of *Pass It Back* is mostly modest. Key (existing) elements underpinning improved sustainability are: establishing rugby clubs in both Laos and Vietnam; coach initiatives to generate funds, sponsorship and in-kind supports; and peer support mechanisms for both coaches and players. Future opportunities that may be explored to boost sustainability may focus on better leveraging the skill, knowledge and lived experience of coaches, as well as increased licensing of curriculum akin to a social franchising model – and potentially also licensing other aspects of ChildFund's/*Pass It Back's* intellectual property. These ideas are explained in this section.

Rugby clubs have been established by coaches in Laos and Vietnam. Club formation is initiated by coaches, but support for such initiatives may be provided by *Pass It Back* staff. Processes for establishing clubs vary considerably across jurisdictions. In Laos, the Lao Rugby Federation is responsible for sport governance and clubs must be registered with the federation. Registration processes are pre-determined. Once established, it seems likely that clubs in Laos will continue as the Lao Rugby Federation offers a measure of support for new clubs. In Vietnam, there is no rugby federation and clubs must secure approval from the People's Committee, which is the executive arm of government at provincial level. Role models for how to operate a rugby club successfully are hard to find in Vietnam which can serve to constrain club capacity and viability. It remains to be seen how enduring new clubs may be in Vietnam. Nine new clubs have been formed to date and steps towards a national federation of rugby clubs have been taken. If a federation is formed, this will likely have a positive impact on club viability, and by implication, the sustainability of *Pass It Back* outcomes.

The evaluation team heard of several instances where coaches and players worked together to raise money through sponsorships and grants and to generate in-kind contributions in order to achieve agreed plans. For example, newly formed rugby clubs in Vietnam and Laos are generally accessing additional monies not connected to ChildFund. Coaches are sometimes confident to prepare grant applications to embassies and local businesses, even though proposal writing is not a skill taught to coaches by ChildFund. Oftentimes, it seems that fundraising activities originate from pure passion. An interviewee shared the following story:

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*The Nonghet teams don't have money. The area is very poor and players (young people aged 14 to 16 years) are generally from subsistence farming families. The players used their own money to hire a car to bring the kids from another district three districts over so they could play together. They contributed from their own pockets. It is a very big deal in this community and shows their passion. The same club last year wanted to play in Vientiane (capital of Laos, located in another province). They asked businesspeople to donate in-kind goods so that they could save enough money to do this. And they were successful. Interviewee*

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*Pass It Back* relies heavily on peer support models both for players and coaches. Players train and play together in teams and see clearly how effective teamwork makes a difference to their success on the rugby pitch. Coaches also train and learn together in small groups and rely on each other to complete key tasks. Peer support models are generally very sustainable as they can be self-generating even after paid staff are no longer available to support players and coaches. However, this assumes that at least a modicum of coach recruitment, training and support processes are continued by the relevant sports federation or equivalent. It would be useful for future iterations of *Pass It Back* to give greater attention at the outset (at the program design stage) to how local institutions will be supported to do this work.

Another irritation that may compromise sustainability in terms of ongoing coach commitment is that the payment of coaches is not equitable across Laos and Vietnam. Instead, payments understandably follow the implementing partner's own practices. In Vietnam, ChildFund is itself the implementing agency. ChildFund Vietnam has high per diem rates and high rates for travel reimbursement compared to government standards. In Laos, the implementing partner is the Lao Rugby Federation which is a government body and has very low rates. ChildFund coaches are acculturated to accepting the high per diem rates of an international NGO, so it is hard for them to adjust to government and community standards. If the coach gets paid US\$20/day for an activity (through ChildFund), but the community-based club can only pay US\$10 for the same activity, it is easy for coaches to lose motivation.

Regarding the opportunities for further embedding programmatic successes into ongoing, sustained and locally relevant practices and systems, incentivising coaches is key. The evaluation team anticipates that most skills and new knowledge acquired by coaches will be retained but a broader concern is how to incentivise coaches towards community-level change (beyond rugby) towards transforming local gender norms. Using the framework of Gender at Work introduced at the beginning of this report, such work undertaken by coaches may be characterised as work in the informal, systemic realm where invisible norms have a strong hold over communities. The evaluation team suggests that there may be great value in developing a new program that would gear up to be fully functional after several years of *Pass It Back* being operational in any given country. The new program – which would be well-resourced but less intensive and less costly than *Pass It Back* – should seek to engage trained and experienced coaches in a community of practice, action learning process, or equivalent formal peer support mechanism. Engagement of coaches would have the aim of developing and supporting coaches' collective or individual efforts to transform informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices that constrain the lived experience of gender equity in coaches' own communities. Such a program would centralise gender-transformative practices, rather than sport for development (although it could be inclusive of sport for development initiatives) and it would

position trained and experienced coaches as community ambassadors capable of influencing deep cultural norms. The evaluation team suggests that a small grants program could be embedded in the broader program; this would enable coaches to access financial support to enact their ideas for change in their communities. Some early evidence of coach capacity for leadership initiatives delinked from *Pass It Back* is already emerging and could be intentionally nurtured, especially where coaches are already looking for new challenges. ChildFund country offices may be well-placed to manage any such program, whether in parallel to *Pass It Back* or after *Pass It Back's* exit (or both), assuming appropriate resources can be attracted for this purpose.

The licensing of curricula developed by *Pass It Back* is already underway. The Lao Rugby Federation have secured the rights to deliver curriculum to coaches. This arrangement has yet to be tested, but would seem to hold promise for shoring up the sustainability of outcomes and impacts achieved by *Pass It Back*. If successful, more opportunities may yet be available for licensing curriculum and potentially also other aspects of ChildFund's intellectual property (as developed by *Pass It Back*). The model of social franchising is increasingly used in international development contexts notably for the purpose of providing essential clinical health services in the developing world. Social franchising may also be an opportunity for *Pass It Back*. The *Pass It Back* secretariat/ChildFund could consider closely monitoring lessons arising from the current experience of licensing another party to deliver curriculum, with a view to potentially expanding licensing arrangements of *Pass It Back* curricula while still working in the same countries as licensees. Pursuing this opportunity could mean enriching the environment for competitive play and learning exchanges for players and coaches, as well as facilitating quality control and monitoring of licenses. Actively sourcing licensees would require careful consideration of the appropriate selection criteria for franchisees, processes for vetting applications especially in consideration of child safeguarding concerns, pricing options, etc. If moving towards a social enterprise model of operation, new governance arrangements may also open up for *Pass It Back*. ChildFund, for example, may agree that *Pass It Back* can be a separately managed social enterprise under the overarching legal framework offered by ChildFund – such separation can help to manage risk. Legal advice would be essential when considering such options.

To summarise this section on sustainability, the evaluation team confirms that the work of *Pass It Back* is appropriately sustainable. Sustainability is supported by the establishment by coaches of new rugby clubs in both Laos and Vietnam, coach initiatives to generate funds, sponsorship and in-kind supports, and by peer support mechanisms for both coaches and players. To further boost sustainability, it will be useful to consider how better to leverage the skill, knowledge and lived experience of coaches towards gender-transformative practices in their communities, as well as increased licensing of curriculum akin to a social franchising model.

## Impact

*Pass It Back* has a sophisticated monitoring and evaluation system that has enabled program impacts to be tracked very thoroughly using baseline and endline surveys, supported by case studies, journaling and stories of significant change. Impacts are especially well-documented in the area of social and emotional learning, consistent with the program's thematic positioning in this space for ChildFund's purposes. Nominated program outcomes are largely achieved. Notable achievements include changes in knowledge, attitude and social and emotional skills (especially relating to gender, health, violence, and future planning), and increases in confidence: A sense of empowerment is associated with experiences of leadership. Documentation of program partnerships, their successes and the lessons learned from them, is also relatively strong.

Outside the immediate program context of *Pass It Back*, achievements are much harder to track. Any tracking that occurs is generally (and understandably) opportunistic rather than planned. The tracking of impacts beyond the life of project investments is not widely practised largely because of resource constraints; this is a sector-wide issue, not limited to *Pass It Back*. The upshot of this situation is that less

documentation is available about the extent of transformation of gender relations in communities. Documentation that does exist is sourced from case studies, stories of change and coach journal entries which are relatively flexible, organic and unscripted/unstructured and thus have the capacity to identify emergent impacts. This points to the importance of maintaining data generation options that are flexible as part of the suite of program evaluation tools.

In the evaluation team's assessment, beyond securing improvements to social and emotional skills which are already well-documented and not repeated here, *Pass It Back* has:

- a. positively influenced deep, invisible gender norms,
- b. promoted better access to assets and
- c. positively influenced formal rules.

These three, expressed using a combination of the language of ChildFund's theory of change and the language of the Gender at Work framework, speak directly to matters of program impact. Accordingly, these matters are the focus of this section.

Change to deep and invisible gender norms in communities is significant and hard-won. Through long-term investment in individuals, *Pass It Back* has contributed to the creation of role-models who are capable of inspiring such change (social impact). For example, young female coaches who continue to work as coaches after marriage and while pregnant create a stir in their communities and inspire other young women to follow their lead. One interviewee explained as follows:

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A few female coaches in both Laos and Vietnam have married and had children since the program began. They have remained engaged with *Pass It Back*. It is a big change to the cultural practices in their communities. They may have to quit school but at least they can stay in *Pass It Back*. If the women insist really strongly, their husbands may allow it. The husband's relatives may still beg the women to quit and the pressure can be intense. When the first woman was married and stayed as a coach, other women wanted to follow her. She paved the way for other girls and young women to follow. This is leadership.

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There are numerous related examples of social impact. These include:

- a *Pass It Back* coach running as a candidate for local government,
- a father asking his daughter (a *Pass It Back* coach) to represent the family at community council meetings on account of her communication and representational skills - the delegation of such responsibilities to a female family member is unprecedented.
- young women discussing and explaining about menstruation, and debunking myths about menstruation with their parents and grandparents
- young men changing their behaviour towards their female schoolmates to accommodate their menstrual cycle and other changes during puberty
- players speaking up about their right to play in various contexts
- coaches and players supporting female leadership
- players developing positive behaviours around savings goal
- coaches and players changing their behaviours and attitudes around physical discipline
- players changing their behaviours around waste and recycling
- players developing peer support networks to stamp out bullying

The contribution of social impact in the form of access to assets includes pathways for progress, influencing safeguarding practices and policies beyond *Pass It Back*, and participating in international competition and exchanges.

There are clear pathways for players to progress within *Pass It Back*, first to train as coaches, and then to become coach leaders. The pathway involves manageable steps which is helpful. Coaches are often only marginally older than players<sup>9</sup> and it is relatively easy for players to imagine themselves as coaches. New coaches are sometimes very motivated to do more or be better than their own coaches. They are able to build progressively on what they have seen and experienced for themselves.

The evaluation team learned that the Lao Rugby Federation and ChildFund have used evidence generated by *Pass It Back* to advocate for more sophisticated and meaningful responses from local authorities to reports of child safeguarding concerns. *Pass It Back* team members have cause to submit reports of safeguarding concerns to local authorities from time to time through organisational reporting structures, and sometimes such reports do not receive an adequate response. Working with authorities to determine how responses can be improved is indicative of social impact beyond *Pass It Back* program activities.

Regarding international competition and exchanges, coaches and players represent their countries and communities nationally, regionally, and internationally in the sport of rugby, and through this, they accumulate highly valued experience that is respected by community members. A young female coach from a village in Nonghet visited Japan to train young people in Japan. Young female coaches from Vietnam visited Cambodia to train others there. These experiences are often transformative and at the very least, motivating; they expose young people to a raft of new ideas and reinforce the idea that change is within reach.

In terms of contributions to formal rules, *Pass It Back* has influenced child safeguarding policies in rugby governing bodies, influenced ChildFund's own Sports for Development framework and the strategic trajectories of ChildFund Australia, ChildFund Laos and ChildFund Vietnam, and established various partnership agreements and processes.

Child safeguarding is taken very seriously by the Lao Rugby Federation. ChildFund/*Pass It Back* has pursued opportunities to positively influence the development of a strong policy and culture around child safeguarding in the Lao Rugby Federation. This involved providing evidence for how strong safeguards could assist in attracting sponsorships and increase the Federation's reputation and credibility. The Lao Rugby Federation is now a leader in safeguarding practices within the rugby community. Asia Rugby is also encouraging its affiliates to improve safeguarding standards. ChildFund is seeking to positively influence these developments also.

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*It is highly unusual to be able to influence a government agency in Laos {Lao Rugby Federation} in the way that we have. Interviewee*

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The nature of the methodology for this evaluation meant that unintended impacts were especially difficult to identify. No unintended impacts are reported here.

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<sup>9</sup> The average age of coaches is 19-20 years. The average age of players is 12-12 years.

## Conclusion

Over the past three years, *Pass It Back* has made very significant and wide-ranging achievements in Laos and Vietnam. This evaluation concludes very favourably about the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of *Pass It Back*. Separately from this evaluation, *Pass It Back's* success is also externally validated through the receipt of awards and accolades that *Pass It Back* has won, programmatically, and the individuals associated with *Pass It Back* have also won personal awards and other recognition for their efforts.

Notwithstanding the clear successes of *Pass It Back*, the evaluation team has offered a range of suggestions for improvement. These are recapped here because some recommendations intersect with each other forming clusters, and some clear overarching themes arise.

First, the evaluation team has introduced a new framework for thinking about the gender-transformative dimension of *Pass It Back* (Gender at Work), and suggested that *Pass It Back* team members reflect more deeply about whether gender-transformative practice or sport for development is at the centre of *Pass It Back* and moreover, at what point that may – or should – change. The meaning and importance accorded to gender-transformative practice is a central motif of this evaluation and relates to two further recommendations. We have encouraged *Pass It Back* staff to consciously nurture the 'bi-cultural' skills of being able to represent the sport for development sector to gender-transformative practitioners, and represent gender transformation principles to sporting bodies and other sport for development advocates. It is clear that *Pass It Back* is uniquely placed to contribute to increased understanding and collaboration across these sectors. A second related recommendation is that a potential new program, spinning off from *Pass It Back* and capitalising on the skills, knowledge and experiences of coaches, has been suggested. The suggested program is essentially a facilitated peer support mechanism – it could take the form of a cooperative inquiry, community of practice, or participatory action research project, to name just three examples. If pursued, such programs would re-centre gender-transformative practice. In the event that such programs were managed by ChildFund country offices (which would be recommended), such a program may also be helpful in clarifying the pathways and synergies between *Pass It Back* and other locally driven development initiative, strengthen relationships and support ChildFund country offices in taking full advantage of the benefits that *Pass It Back's* presence in country can offer.

A second major theme that ties together multiple recommendations is around the growth of *Pass It Back* as a social enterprise. The evaluation team believes that there is likely significant value in growing the global footprint of *Pass It Back*. We have encouraged *Pass It Back* to consider extending licensing arrangements of programmatic intellectual property, along social franchising lines, with a view to expanding its reach both within and across countries in a cost-effective manner. Furthermore, the overall sophistication and sustained effectiveness of *Pass It Back*, its ongoing relevance to multiple country contexts, combined with its unique positioning as a sport for development/gender-transformative program, suggests that *Pass It Back* would benefit from reviewing its governance arrangements. We suggest that *Pass It Back* has reached critical mass (in terms of sophistication, influence and potential for growth) such that it could usefully be repositioned outside the traditional country office structure of ChildFund. *Pass It Back* benefits significantly from the institutional, legal and financial resources of ChildFund, borrowing its legitimacy, and this has been a key contributor to *Pass It Back's* success. However, the constraints of working within a traditional country office structure have also resulted in some inefficiencies, frictions and negative impacts on programming. As earlier flagged, legal advice will be important for determining how best to proceed with a review of governance arrangements.

Finally, we have encouraged ChildFund to consider the extent to which it can make available the human and financial resources and political commitment required to invest in sport for development initiatives in the disability sector. We have also recommended that *Pass It Back* commission a Social Return on Investment analysis. Recommendations are summarised below.

## Summary of recommendations

The evaluation team recommends that:

1. ChildFund acknowledge and celebrate the very significant and wide-ranging achievements of *Pass It Back* in Laos and Vietnam over the past three years
2. ChildFund seek to leverage existing investments in coaches by developing a new program to engage experienced coaches in parallel to, or after completion of, the *Pass It Back* program. A new program may be characterised by the following elements:
  - Centralisation of gender-transformative practices, rather than sport for development (although inclusive of sport for development initiatives)
  - Prioritisation of collective efforts to transform informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices in Laos and Vietnam
  - Operationally premised on establishment of a community of practice, participatory action research or similar (formal) peer support mechanism for trained, experienced coaches
  - Appropriately resourced with skilled facilitators
  - Positioning trained and experienced coaches as community ambassadors capable of influencing deep cultural norms
  - Inclusive of small grants for coach-led initiatives towards transformation of gendered practices within communities
3. *Pass It Back* secretariat/ChildFund consider investing in its capacity to perform more consciously a mediative or brokering role between gender-transformative initiatives and sports for development initiatives.
4. *Pass It Back* secretariat/ChildFund consider to formalise and expand licensing arrangements of *Pass It Back* curricula, with a view to working in the same countries as licensees. This would not preclude having licensees operating in countries where *Pass It Back* is not currently active.
5. ChildFund/*Pass It Back* initiate a review of the governance arrangements for *Pass It Back*, with a view to repositioning *Pass It Back* outside the traditional country office structure of ChildFund
6. ChildFund consider commissioning a separate (participatory) 'Social Return on Investment' assessment of *Pass It Back*, recognising that direct cost comparisons are not possible with this methodology
7. ChildFund consider whether it has the human and financial resources and political commitment required to invest in sport for development initiatives in the disability sector e.g. wheelchair sports, Paralympic games, etc.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Terms of reference

## **Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of ChildFund *Pass It Back* (Laos and Vietnam)**

### 1. Organisational Context

ChildFund Australia is an independent international development organisation that works to reduce poverty for children in developing communities. We work in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting change by supporting long-term community development, responding to humanitarian emergencies and promoting children's rights. We want every child to be able to say: "I am safe. I am educated. I am heard. I have a future."

ChildFund Australia implements programs with a range of partners in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, and other Pacific nations, and manages projects delivered by partner organisations throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas. Our work is funded through child and community sponsorship, government grants as well as donations from individuals, trusts and foundations, and corporate organisations.

ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 11 organisations which assists more than 14 million children and their families in over 60 countries. ChildFund Australia is a registered charity, a member of the Australian Council for International Development, and fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which manages the Australian Government's overseas aid program.

### 2. Program Background

ChildFund *Pass It Back* is an innovative Sport for Development program led by ChildFund in partnership with World Rugby and Asia Rugby that delivers an integrated life skills and rugby curriculum for children and young people in disadvantaged communities across Asia.

The program aims to provide children with structured sport and life skills learning opportunities in a safe, inclusive environment, that supports social and emotional learning and allows them to positively contribute to their communities.

The program's first project was implemented between 2015-2017 in Laos and Vietnam as a combined project. The second iteration of this project began in July 2017 and will conclude in June 2020. During this period, the program also began projects in the Philippines, Timor Leste, and Cambodia.

### 3. Purpose

This end-of-project evaluation will provide the organisation with an understanding of the intervention's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency (including value for money), sustainability, coherence, and impact for the period 2017-2020 (following the revised OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria, 2019). The evaluation will also examine the project outcomes against ChildFund Australia's organisational Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework, specifically the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) sector framework, and in terms of gender and disability inclusion.

The results of the evaluation will be used in the design of subsequent projects in Laos and Vietnam, as well as more broadly within the program. It will also be used in communications with various stakeholders, including local partners, sports governing bodies, donors, and other actors.

#### 4. Scope of Evaluation

The **focus** of the evaluation will be on effectiveness, relevance, and efficiency of the program, but will incorporate all criteria from the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria (2019).

Due to current government restrictions on traveling in the project locations – a result of on-going global public health concerns – the evaluation will take the form of a desk-based evaluation. However, access to project staff and stakeholders/beneficiaries via online platforms will be facilitated by the project team (e.g., such as for structured interviews or small numbers of surveys).

The program has had a number of evaluations and assessments, both directly focused on the program and on aspects of best practice, such as gender mainstreaming, sport for development approaches (in-line with the organisation’s Sport for Development approach), and safeguarding. Furthermore, the program has an extensive body of quantitative data and qualitative data which will be made available for the evaluation.

The evaluation will also evaluate and incorporate findings on project efforts around gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion.

#### 5. Methodology

As noted above, the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria is proposed as the framework with which to guide the evaluation.

It is expected that the consultants will utilise existing impact reports and associated data, quarterly and annual narrative and budget reports, case studies and change stories, as well as operational materials to conduct the evaluation. In addition, key informant interviews and small surveys may also make up the evaluation methodology (subject to availabilities). In addition, ChildFund’s assessment, analysis, and learning questions contained in its MEL Framework will also be incorporated into the approach.

#### 6. Deliverables and Indicative Timetable

Note that this is subject to negotiation with the Consultant(s)

Indicative Month	Outputs and Activities	Number of Days
April-May	Desk Review (Phase 1)	6
April-May	Data collection plan (List of prospective interviewees and times submitted to Regional Office)	1
May	Data collection (Key informant interviews)	3
May	Data analysis and desk review (Phase 2)	3
May	Production of summary report	1
May	Presentation of summary report (via online platform)	1
May-June	Production of final report with feedback from	2
Total number of days		17

*\* Costs will be negotiated based on consultant(s) location, and the schedule as planned in cooperation with the project team.*

The consultant(s) are expected to deliver:

1. A full report with executive summary for a development audience (English-language)
2. A summary report for a wide audience (English-language)
3. A presentation of key findings and recommendations
4. All raw data

## Key Responsibilities

- Desk review of project documents, reports, and existing quantitative and qualitative data •  
Manage (online) data collection activities with key staff in:
  - Laos ○ Vietnam ○ Regional Office
- Ensure all data collection activities follow good research practice.

## 7. Management and Reporting Arrangements

The Consultant will report to ChildFund *Pass It Back* Measuring Change Advisor. The consultant(s) will also be expected to work with ChildFund Project Officers and adhere to relevant policies and procedures. The consultant(s) will have no management authority.

## 8. Confidentiality

All discussions and documents relating to this ToR will be treated as confidential by the parties.

## 9. Child Safeguarding

The successful applicant will be required to comply with ChildFund Australia's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and to sign a Code of Conduct. The consultant will also have in place an Australian Federal Police Criminal Background Check and Working with Children Check (or equivalents in other countries).

## 10. Counter-Terrorism

ChildFund Australia acknowledges its obligation under the Australian laws relating to counterterrorism. In order to meet its obligation, the consultant's name will be reviewed against Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and National Security Australia lists at the onset of any financial relationship.

## 11. Insurance

The successful applicant will be required to have in place insurance arrangements appropriate to provision of the requirement in this ToR including (without limitation) travel insurance.

## 12. Acknowledgment and Disclaimer

ChildFund, its Board and staff make no express or implied representation or warranty as to the currency, reliability or completeness of the information contained in this ToR. Nothing in this ToR should be construed to give rise to any contractual obligations or rights, expressed or implied, by the issue of this ToR or the submission of Expression of Interest in response to it. No contract would be created until a formal written contract is executed between ChildFund and a selected consultant.

## 13. Selection Criteria

### Qualifications & Experience

- Minimum of a master's degree in relevant social science and five years research and evaluation experience;
- Experience in using mixed-method and interdisciplinary approaches in the evaluation of development programmes;
- Experience in research/evaluation of projects related to SEL and Sport for Development;
- Experience working in Southeast Asia;
- Experience working with youth and children;
- Strong analytical skills to synthesise data, develop and present findings, and make practical recommendations in timely and well-written reports;
- Excellent written and spoken English.

#### Desirable Skills

- Knowledge of relevant languages (Vietnamese, Lao, H'mong, and/or Muong) and community contexts;
- Expertise in using participatory approaches to research and evaluation;
- Able to work in rural and remote communities;
- Sensitive to ensuring child-friendly spaces and approaches in their work;
- Able to work with people who have diverse backgrounds and skill-sets; • Can respect and adhere to safeguarding and fraud policies and procedures.

The Expression of Interest should include resume, referees, proposal containing competence for the required work, professional fee, approaches/methodologies and timeline based on the Terms of Reference.

Submit CV and proposal by 9AM AEST, 06 April 2020 to **My Ha Nguyen** at [my@childfundpassitback.org](mailto:my@childfundpassitback.org)

## Appendix 2. Inventory of documents shared by ChildFund



Inventory of documents.pdf

## Appendix 3. List of interviewees

Caroline Pinney, Senior Advisor, Sports for Development Programs and Partnerships, ChildFund Australia

Megan Knight, Curriculum and Training Manager, Lao Rugby Federation, and consultant to ChildFund Laos

Viengsamai Souksavanh, Operations and Finance Director, Lao Rugby Federation

Huong Thi Thu Tran, Senior Project Officer, ChildFund Vietnam

Chris Mastaglio, Regional Director of *Pass It Back*, ChildFund Australia

## Appendix 4: Reflection on learning from use of innovative methodologies

Because of the global pandemic of COVID 19, the evaluation was necessarily conducted remotely. Remote work afforded the evaluation team the opportunity to develop an innovative methodology tailored for Laos and Vietnam, respectively. In Vietnam, Facebook and Poll Everywhere were used to engage coaches. In Laos, focus groups were conducted via Zoom. Supporting this engagement, epistolary interviews (by email) were conducted with senior staff in Australia, Laos and Vietnam.

Good practice suggests that all innovation should be accompanied by reflection in order to extract relevant lessons. Here then, the evaluation team reflects on what was learned from the trialing of an innovative methodology.

### Poll Everywhere (Vietnam)

- Building familiarity with Poll Everywhere was much more resource intensive than initially expected. Coaches came online together for several hours over multiple evenings to learn about how to use the tool. Questions can be asked about whether better use could have been made of the time that coaches made themselves available for learning.
- As words in Vietnamese language are generally of one syllable only, multiple words are strung together to generate concepts (as in Viet Nam, not Vietnam, as it is written in English). Poll Everywhere recognizes individual words only. This required inventiveness on the part of staff and coaches to string together words with hyphens and dashes such that concepts could be recognized by Poll Everywhere as words. However, the use of hyphens and dashes also increased the risk that words would be written slightly different by different coaches. Any inconsistency in the spelling or presentation of words reduces the accuracy and visual appeal of word clouds generated by Poll Everywhere.
- Consultants quickly learned that two tools were required for word clouds. One tool collected data in word cloud format, but a different tool was necessary to present the data in an attractive design. Moving data from one tool to another was likely inefficient.

- In light of the sophisticated monitoring and evaluation protocols followed by *Pass It Back*, it is not likely that genuinely new information was revealed using Poll Everywhere. However, engaging with coaches was very important to the evaluation team who were keen to develop a sense and feel for program activities.
- The evaluation team suggest that the outputs from coach engagement (e.g. word clouds) may prove useful for ChildFund’s marketing and communication purposes.

#### Facebook (Vietnam)

- A Facebook group was created for coaches to join. 44 group members, including staff, research team members and coaches read the introduction and purpose of the group. Each question remained online and open for about two days while coaches engaged with it. However, during these days, ChildFund staff were heavily and actively involved in encouraging coaches to engage. This intervention seemed important to generate a decent number of responses. In one instance, of 62 comments on one question, 49 were pushes from ChildFund staff.
- Data was collected in two waves. The first wave was for 10 days, then a 10 day break was announced. The second wave also lasted for 10 days. Fatigue affected the number and quality of responses over time. The number of responses in the second wave of data generation was considerably lower than in the first wave.
- The evaluation team posted the analysis of responses (e.g. word clouds) two or three days after questions were posted. This was intended to encourage ongoing engagement. However, no noticeable increase in engagement was observed in response to this strategy.

#### Focus group by Zoom (Laos)

- Nine coaches and one interpreter participated in the first focus group. The session started with 3 coaches with a further six coaches joining progressively. The interpreter had difficulty in finding the equivalent word in English for one question. For another question, the consultant noticed that when the interpreter summarised responses, some meaning/detail was lost.
- A second meeting was aborted after only one coach joined within the hour. (The interpreter joined after 45 minutes.)
- For a third meeting, there were 5 coaches and 1 interpreter. On this occasion, participants were familiar with the types of questions and therefore, they could respond quickly.
- Questions asked during focus group discussions mirrored questions asked on Facebook and through PollEverywhere. This enabled the evaluation team to create word clouds and soundbites.

#### Epistolary interviews

- Two interviewees requested to be interviewed by phone on account of time constraints. This meant that only three people were engaged via email as originally intended. For two interviewees, English was not a first language. One interviewee had their responses translated by a third party which proved time-consuming. In short, the vision of the evaluation team for cross-fertilising ideas from different interviewees did not come to fruition.

## Appendix 5: Theory of change for Pass It Back



Pass It Back Theory  
of Change.pdf

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