



GLOBAL IMPACT REPORT



Creating a global legacy from a record breaking Women's Rugby World Cup 2025

Women's Rugby World Cup England 2025 (RWC 2025) was **the biggest, best, and most successful women's rugby event of all time**. While the tournament set new standards on and off the pitch, its lasting impact will be defined by the bold and defining choices made by our sport to harness the momentum of the tournament and drive meaningful change.

This year, World Rugby is implementing an ambitious new strategy to secure a strong and sustainable global game. It is driven by a clear purpose - **to unite rugby and enrich lives** through

iconic events, impactful investment, and the leadership and support of our member unions.

The women's game sits at the very heart of this strategy, strengthening our foundations, building our fanbase and commercial appeal, and making rugby more relevant and accessible for generations to come.



Brett Robinson
World Rugby Chair

World Rugby committed to using RWC 2025 as a catalyst for lasting change. Our Global Impact Programme, Impact Beyond 2025, was developed to deliver this change by harnessing RWC 2025 to inspire and empower women and girls in rugby worldwide. This report highlights the early impact of the programme and the commitments made long in advance of RWC 2025. Working in partnership with Unions, we are already seeing tangible progress in participation and leadership opportunities for women and

girls, alongside stronger systems that support the development of women's rugby worldwide.

While RWC 2025's momentum remains powerful, our focus now is on sustaining that impact **to help shape a stronger, more inclusive future for the global rugby family**.



Sally Horrox
Chief of Women's Rugby,
World Rugby



The Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 has changed women's rugby forever



444,465
tickets sold

81,885
world record attendance

92%
attendance across
the tournament

1.1bn
tournament social
impressions

5.8m
watched the Final
on the BBC

[Click here for the RWC 2025 Tournament Report](#)

This report focuses on **Impact Beyond 2025**, World Rugby's Global Impact Programme, developed to harness RWC 2025 to **inspire and empower women and girls in rugby worldwide.**



[▶ PLAY VIDEO](#)

Impact Beyond 2025 is a commitment to inspire and empower women in rugby, delivering a lasting legacy from RWC 2025



Inspiring more women and girls to play rugby, stay in the game, and follow their heroes

35,500 teenage girls playing rugby through the Rugby Rising play grants across **42 Unions** and **6 Regions**

10 Content Creators embedded within teams driving visibility through **31m** impressions, **29m** views, **418** posts



Supporting women in rugby to thrive in their careers

56 countries represented across Impact Beyond Careers participants

440,340 posts and comments analysed to combat online abuse



Empowering Unions to build a stronger future for women's rugby

50+ Unions were upskilled at the **World Rugby Regional Summits**

400+ sporting leaders took part in the World Rugby Global Summit

350,000+ views on the **Blueprint for Growth**, the most comprehensive commercial guide for women's rugby published



Inspiring more women and girls to play rugby, stay in the game, and follow their heroes

[▶ PLAY VIDEO](#)

“ Rugby is a chance for girls to be part of a community that welcomes her and stays with her for the rest of her life. ”

Maria Roberta Godim
Rugby Rising Play Coach, Brazil



Rugby Rising Play grants are expanding access to rugby worldwide, empowering girls and inspiring them to stay in the game



World Rugby's flagship participation programme designed to help recruit and retain more teenage girls in rugby.



Programme feedback



- > Of Unions agreed the grants have expanded participation
- > And agreed the Union would continue the programme beyond 2025

Grants supported developing Unions to create new participation opportunities for women and girls globally



1 CAYMAN

1100 participants
2 x schools festivals enabling international competition
Introduced T1 Rugby to the wider region
U14s and U18s Miami tour



3 BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

500+ teenage participants
6 universities supporting women's rugby
4 cities with girls' team
2 national rugby camps



5 LAOS

120 girls from rural and vulnerable communities engaged
92% Parents saw positive experiences shared at home, influencing families and communities
85% of participants reported improved knowledge, attitudes, and skills



**RUGBY
RISING
PLAY**



2 BRAZIL

1452 participants
Produced a documentary following six trailblazing women whose leadership is shaping rugby: [See video here](#)



4 NIGERIA

1559 teenage participants
"Rugby gave me a voice. I feel confident, strong, and respected. I want to keep playing and teach others, especially girls who think they can't..."
Ladi Haruna, aged 15



6 COOK ISLANDS

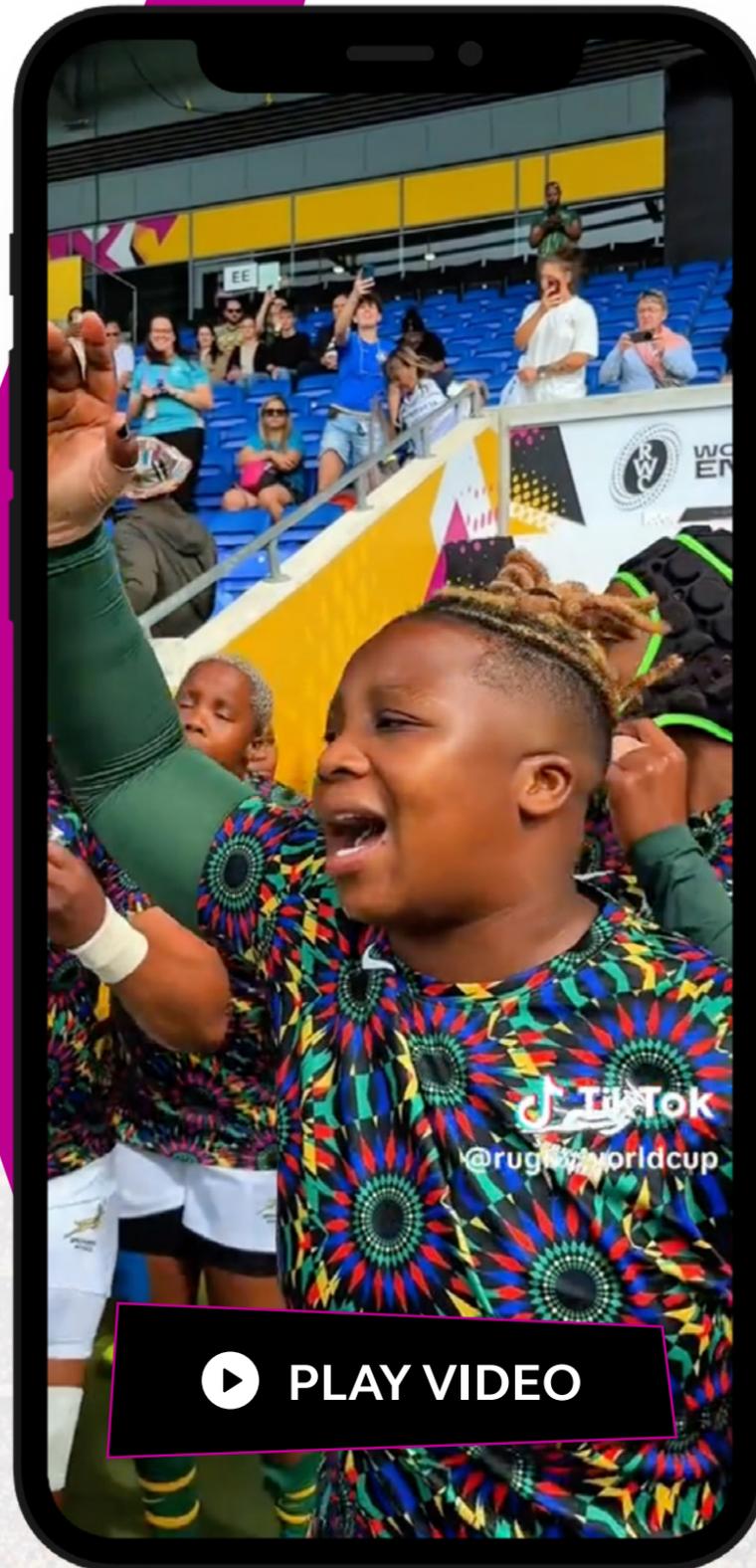
90 girls new to rugby
Rugby festivals connect Pa Enua communities through sport and shared experiences



Content creators elevated the global profile of women's rugby

A fourteenth accreditation and fully embedded content creator were provided to teams, enabling consistent, high-quality content delivery across the tournament. This created fan-first, entertainment-led content, placing authentic storytelling and players at the heart of the narrative.

#RWC BTS Content Creator Programme Summary



IN FOCUS

Genesis Cele

RWC 2025 Content Creator for Springbok Women's



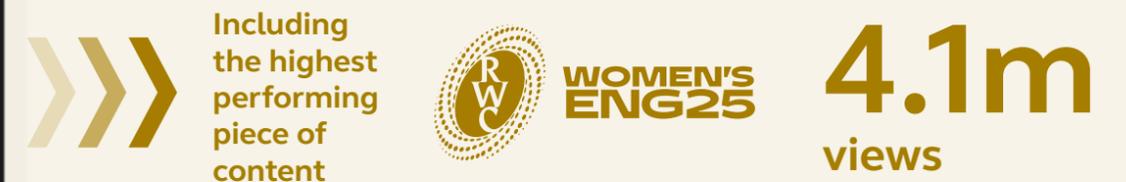
Inspiring through visibility

“ My favourite thing was seeing players get inspired by each other. When the videos went live, more players wanted in. They could see their voices being heard. ”

Showing the potential of women's rugby content

“ This World Cup had the biggest reach yet, but it's only the beginning. As more people take social media seriously and recognise its power, that's when we'll really see change. ”

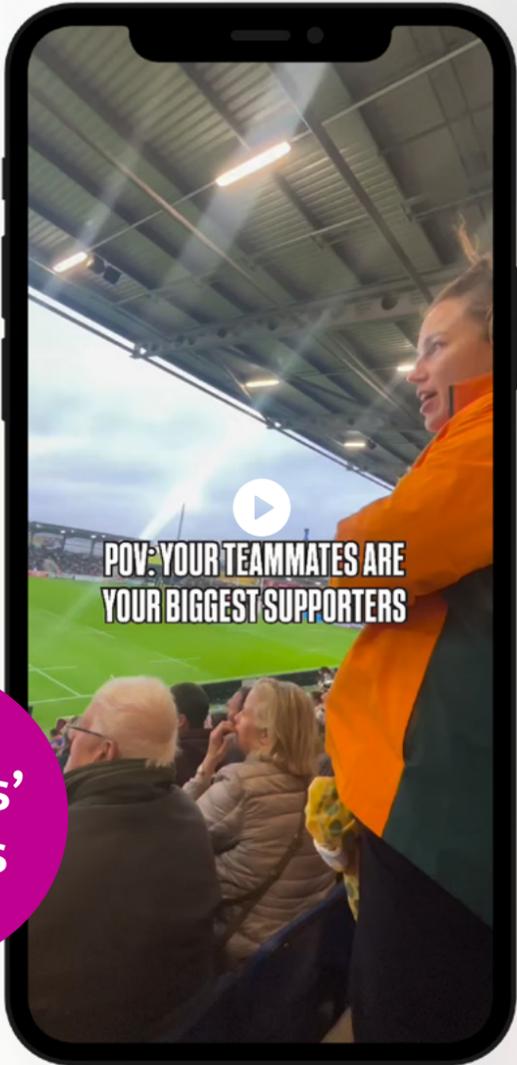
Genesis' Impact: @Womenboks at RWC 2025



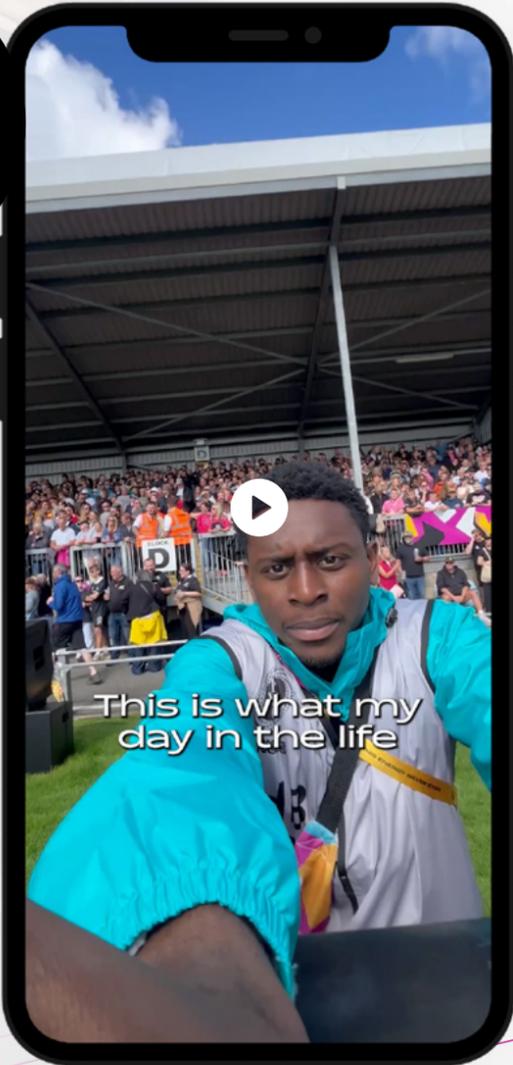
Capturing the stories of RWC 2025 and growing the global following of women's rugby

Content Creators focused as much on life off the pitch as on it, helping rugby feel more relevant, visible and part of wider popular culture.

Players' stories



Content Creators' stories



Raising awareness of women's health encouraging women to stay in rugby

Women's Health Resources were developed to share vital knowledge on key women's health topics within rugby - including webinars on the **menstrual cycle, pelvic health, breast health, and nutrition.**

20 Countries were represented among participants

100%

All Participants said the webinars were extremely or very useful

≈ 90%

Said they would share learning with colleagues and medical staff

From the Experts

“ This work has created a valuable pool of information that we'll continue to draw from, enabling us to generate even more insights and value for women's rugby in the future.



Its impact will extend well beyond this project. ”

Dr. Lindsay Starling

World Rugby, Science and Medical Manager.

From the Participants

Promoting knowledge sharing

“ In my country, discussing women's health remains a taboo - which is why resources like these are so important to promote open conversation. ”

Promoting women's health

“ Thank you for the opportunity to learn and understand the menstrual cycle and my performance

Please continue to provide these great topics on woman's health - I appreciate you! ”





Supporting women in rugby to thrive in their careers

“ The programme helped me gain practical skills to communicate more effectively, build stronger relationships, and navigate challenging situations with confidence. I am now better equipped to contribute to my team and influence positive outcomes within my work environment. ”

Career Development Programme Participant



Empowering more women to build meaningful networks and pursue long-term careers in rugby

»»» **100+**
women across
56 countries

took part in **Impact Beyond: Careers**. A year-long career boosting programme delivering training and networking to support women advancing their careers within rugby.

“ I gained valuable feedback that changed how I see myself and my career journey. I learnt the importance of speaking up, building connections and backing yourself. ”

Palak Poddar, India

“ Being part of the Impact Beyond Program has been a once in a lifetime experience. The women we’ve learned from - their journeys, their strengths, their powerful honesty - have changed forever how I see myself and what is possible. ”

Louise Wilson, Australia



Programme outcomes

- ✓ Connecting participants with leading women and experts in rugby
- ✓ Showcasing the full range of careers across the game
- ✓ Inspiring women to see rugby as a long-term career path
- ✓ Building connections and professional networks
- ✓ Ensuring women know how to stay in the game

35%
increase in participants’ awareness of rugby career pathways

40%
increase in participants’ confidence in their ability to build relationships

55%
increase in participants’ confidence in their ability to negotiate tough relationships

Developing the next generation of international match officials

A team of emerging match officials completed the Match Official legacy programme, including a **10-day placement in England during the RWC 2025:**

- ✓ Opportunity to experience the elite environment by shadowing the RWC 2025 squad
- ✓ 13 development sessions
- ✓ Refereed at local fixtures in London
- ✓ Attended RWC 2025 matches



World Rugby's match official legacy programme supported by Emirates



Emma Gallagher

Rugby Canada

Teamwork and support

“ Rugby refereeing is usually an individual sport, but this programme allowed us to train and grow as a team. ”

Professional development

Through this experience, I can now see myself as a peer among top officials. It feels incredible to have built genuine relationships and mutual respect. The support I have received gives me real confidence for the future. ”





 **PLAY VIDEO**

Hollie Davidson
RWC 2025 referee

Protecting our elite players and match officials from online abuse at RWC 2025

Individuals at the Women’s Rugby World Cup 2025 were 69% more likely to be targeted with online abuse than individuals in the Men’s Rugby World Cup 2023.

World Rugby took a powerful stand against online abuse towards players and match officials, with the launch of the social media protection service for RWC 2025.



World Rugby’s Commitment

World Rugby’s Social Media Protection Service creates a safer online environment through a proactive, action-led approach to athlete protection. By educating stakeholders on the scale of online abuse and generating insights to drive change, the initiative stimulates ongoing discussion and awareness while placing athlete welfare at its core. Safer online spaces enable authentic athlete storytelling, stronger audience connections, and increased brand value.

[Click here for full report on the social media protection service](#)



Supporting players and match officials to prepare for and thrive at RWC 2025

World Rugby worked with Dr. Araba “Roo” Chintoh, a Consultant Psychiatrist and chair of the Women’s Player Welfare Working Group, to provide the most comprehensive mental health support to date for players and match officials involved in a Rugby World Cup.

Before the Tournament Mental Health Support



- ✓ **A mental health module on the Women’s Rugby Players Hub** with core concepts of mental wellbeing, stigma reduction, trauma-informed care, and sport-specific signs of distress.
- ✓ **An in-person workshop for each team and the RWC 2025 match officials on mental health** within the team environment to:
 - 1 Create space for honest conversation and vulnerability
 - 2 Provide practical support strategies.
 - 3 Normalise mental health conversations

Programme feedback

99%

enjoyed the mental health course, found it **useful** and would **recommend to peers**

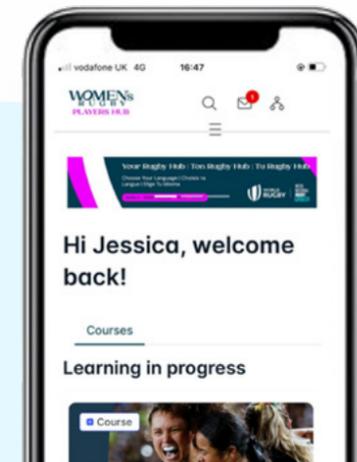
77%

felt confident their team will now create a **process to address mental health concerns**



“ It was very helpful and I know our team really needed this to help us to succeed - feeling vulnerable is a great way to build connections on the team. ”

RWC 2025 team

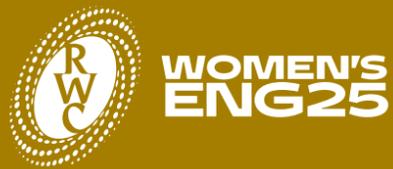


The Women’s Rugby Players Hub also provided player-centric personal development support for elite rugby players and match officials. All RWC 2025 teams were enrolled and had access to courses across wellbeing, performance, and off-field development.

The platform supported players and match officials through practical learning on areas such as mental health, contracts, health, and social media.

Supporting players and match officials to prepare for and thrive at RWC 2025

At the Tournament Player Peer Support Group



A landmark initiative trained **37** former internationals in peer-support skills and assigned them in groups to Unions participating at RWC 2025.

- ✓ Team managers distributed flyers with a QR code that enabled direct communication with peer mentors.
- ✓ Provided trusted, confidential support that helped individuals at RWC 2025 feel safe to share concerns.
- ✓ Upskilled past players and reintegrated them into the rugby environment, encouraging continued engagement.

»» 84%

of players rated the service good or excellent



“ Post RWC 2025 impact

There were some great conversations and support provided during RWC 2025 and we're starting to see real momentum and engagement post-world cup. As the players become more comfortable with the peer support, it's something we expect to grow.

Past players support group

The peer supporters have found a new sense of community and purpose. They're using the skills and insight they gained as players to make a meaningful contribution beyond the pitch. ”

Dr. Araba “Roo” Chintoh

A photograph of three women sitting in a row on a stage, engaged in a panel discussion. The woman in the center is speaking and gesturing with her hands. The woman on the left is listening, and the woman on the right is also listening. The background is dark with some stage lighting.

Empowering Unions to build a stronger future for women's rugby

“ Women's rugby is moving forward and the support of women leaders worldwide is right there with us. ”

Attendee, Global Summit



World Rugby's Women's Rugby Global Summit: An event that united, inspired and celebrated the rise of women's rugby

Held in London on the day before the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 Final, the Women's Rugby Global Summit brought together **400+ leaders from across global sport**, including representatives from the International Olympic Committee and UN Women.

At the Global Summit, we heard from powerful leaders who are shaping the future of women's sport and business globally. We shared learnings across rugby and set the agenda for the women's game in this new era.

From the Global Summit Survey:

 **92%** of attendees now feel inspired to continue to grow the women's and girls' game

 **3x** increase in the number of attendees feeling extremely confident about the potential for growth within women's rugby

 **94%** of attendees found it beneficial to hear from experts outside of rugby, from across wider sport or industries

“ My biggest takeaway from the Global Summit was the power of intentional networking - investing in genuine relationships drives new ideas, collaboration, and lasting impact. ”

Member Union attendee

Regional Summits: Bringing Unions together to drive progress through focused training and powerful collaboration

 **50+**

unions upskilled

Regional Summits increased the confidence and capability of unions to lead, grow and deliver women's rugby.



1 AFRICA SUMMIT

50% increase in respondents feeling extremely confident around growing the women's game

Impact Champions Programme emerged from this regional collaboration at the Africa Summit

For more information: [click here](#)



3 EUROPE SUMMIT

96% increased their knowledge on how World Rugby events can grow engagement

93% had increased confidence in delivering successful female participation programmes



2 ASIA SUMMIT

94% of attendees are now very likely to collaborate with other unions

94% of attendees enhanced their knowledge on growing the game

For more information: [click here](#)

Future Summits

- ✓ South America Summit
- ✓ Oceania Summit
- ✓ Rugby Americas North Summit



Empowering regional changemakers to shape the future of their unions

Programme support partners



The Africa Regional Summit inspired the Impact Champions Programme, designed to empower female leaders in African rugby and create lasting positive change. The programme brought together **12** participants from **6** unions to undertake a range of bespoke projects which addressed key challenges such as representation of women in the sport to navigating pregnancy and rugby.

Participating Unions



The Impact Champion project for Madagascar focused on enhancing the visibility of Malagasy women's rugby.

This project significantly boosted the visibility of Malagasy women's rugby by sharing powerful, authentic stories of the Makis Ladies Sevens on social media. In just four months, the campaign had:

5,000 followers on their Facebook page **500,000** views

The campaign helped to shift perceptions, inspire more girls to play, and attract stronger Union and partner support.



World Rugby's Blueprint for Growth empowers unions and stakeholders across the game to accelerate the global growth of women's rugby

Blueprint for Growth is the most comprehensive fan data and commercial analysis ever published in the women's game.

The report has been shared across **World Rugby channels** and has received strong engagement.

Access the Blueprint for Growth publication here.

350,000+
views across social media channels

8,000+
Interactions
(likes, comments, reposts)

1,200+
Report Sessions

and that saw coverage across wider media channels:



Digital Publication available in **English, French, Spanish and Italian.**



A BLUEPRINT FOR GROWTH

WOMEN'S RUGBY FAN, DATA AND COMMERCIAL INSIGHTS

Supporting Unions to access new funds and achieve sustainable growth

World Rugby's first ever fundraising training for Unions is supporting them to unlock new sources of funding, broadening their income streams to become more financially sustainable.

»»» Bespoke fundraising toolkit for rugby unions, covering:

- ✓ Getting ready to fundraise
- ✓ Grant proposals
- ✓ Funding strategies

»»» Bespoke online group training with fundraising specialists - designed to give Unions confidence to apply for new sources of funding

»»» One on one intensive support with three individual Unions to apply for specific funding opportunities

1st fundraising toolkit for Unions **90+** Unions engaged in training **50+** training hours with experts

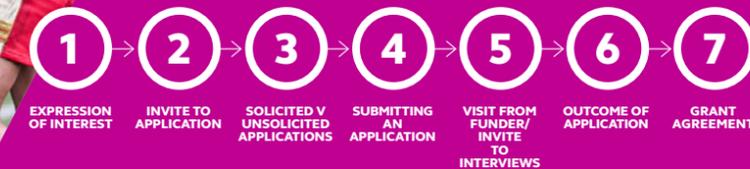
“Remedy supported us every step of the way. The webinars were excellent and the ongoing support meant we never felt left on our own. This was particularly valuable given our boards limited capacity for fundraising.”

Participating Union



APPLICATION PROCESSES

As helpful as it would be, there is no universal format when it comes to applying for grant funding. Although there are some overlaps and similarities, every funder has a slightly different application process. However, the following key aspects are very commonly seen in the application process for grant funding, so it is a good idea to familiarise yourself with what different application processes can look like.



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR PROSPECT RESEARCH AND DONOR MAPPING

STEP FOUR ENGAGING PROSPECTIVE FUNDERS

It is important to identify the following key details as they will make prospect research a lot more straightforward, saving time and resources:

- > **Building relationships:** Leverage insights from your donor mapping to identify the most effective ways to approach prospective funders, ideally through shared connections or mutual contacts. Personalised introductions can make a significant impact.
- Use the donor communication template to assist in reaching out to potential funders and refer to the relationship management and stewardship guide to help you nurture and strengthen relationships with potential funders over time.
- > **Strategising asks:** Develop a clear action plan for engaging prospective funders. This plan should outline specific steps and tailored strategies for each funder, considering their unique priorities and interests.

You can use the templates on the next two pages to:

- ✓ Map out your current connections and stakeholder network
- ✓ Identify how to expand your network



Uniting community leaders worldwide to strengthen the global game, in partnership with ChildFund Rugby

The Grassroots to Global Series, delivered by Unions in partnership with ChildFund Rugby, unites women leaders in community rugby through national forums and supports them to develop plans to grow women and girls' participation and leadership.

The Series culminated in a Connect event in Sunderland during Women's Rugby World Cup 2025, bringing together participating Unions and community leaders to share insights, align on practical solutions, and strengthen the global women's rugby community.

Programme Reach

1000+

participants attended over 32 forums in 29 countries

Programme Feedback

80%

agreed with the statement **"I know how to be a leader in my rugby community"**

90%

agree that the forum was relevant and valuable for their personal development

Hong Kong China Rugby Union

The Union held a 2-day Grassroots to Global forum that brought female leaders together to accelerate awareness of key issues within the union and ideate solutions. The forum will inform the Union's future strategy on female representation in governance, including targeted investment and female talent programmes.

"There were frustrations around the gender balance in governance positions throughout the domestic game in Hong Kong China, so it provided an opportunity talk about it...There was a confidence that came through at the end of the forum, women were feeling empowered to step into, and pursue, these leadership roles."

Jamie Farndale, Hong Kong China Rugby



ChildFund
Rugby



PROGRAMME INSIGHTS

Impact Beyond 2025 demonstrated...

The power of a bespoke global programme

- ✓ Brings all initiatives under a single brand ensuring clear messaging and alignment
- ✓ Prioritises impact and legacy planning at every stage
- ✓ Demonstrates powerful impact through tracking and reporting of all activity

The gamechangers that make the difference

- ✓ Building local and global communities of change makers who will drive the women's game
- ✓ Ongoing focus on mental health as part of player welfare and a key priority for future Rugby World Cups
- ✓ Driving audience growth through social media content strategies and unlocking the power of player personalities

How major global tournaments can drive meaningful change

- ✓ Provides platform for flagship programmes and campaigns
- ✓ Gives players a unique opportunity to reach a global audience and showcase their personalities and talent
- ✓ Demonstrates the growing commercial appeal of women's rugby to global partners

OUR FUTURE

World Rugby has a new strategic plan for 2026 – 2031, driving forward the whole game

VISION

POWERING RUGBY. UNITING THE GAME. ENRICHING LIVES.

PURPOSE

WE BRING PEOPLE AND RUGBY TOGETHER:

- ✓ Iconic events
- ✓ Impactful Investment
- ✓ Leadership and support of our members

OUR AMBITION FOR WOMEN'S RUGBY

“ Maximising the opportunity that the women’s game presents is central to this strategy; by 2031, we will have established a globally competitive and sustainable women’s game that contributes towards rugby’s future growth ”

Sally Horrox, Chief of Women’s Rugby, World Rugby