



October 28, 2015

Contact: Tracy Evans
Tracy@kidsplayintl.org

Kids Play International receives two-year International Sports Programming Initiative (ISPI) award from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Rwanda has worked hard to promote gender equity throughout the country and **Kids Play International (KPI)** is supporting the goal of eliminating gender imbalances that may prevent girls from achieving their highest potential, engaging equally in society, or participating in sports activities.

With a shared commitment to using sport for social change, KPI was recently awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). KPI and ECA are partnering to implement a two-year project aimed at improving gender equality and leadership skills among Rwandan youth, enhancing cross-cultural understanding between Americans and Rwandans, and inspiring Rwanda's Olympic aspirations.

The U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda, Erica J. Barks-Ruggles, launched the partnership on October 28, 2015 by visiting the KPI program in Gatagara, Rwanda. Her visit included participation in KPI's gender equality programming, conversations with KPI Coaches and youth program participants and special remarks to the entire community.

Working in the rural community of Gatagara, Rwanda (90 minutes from the capital of Kigali), KPI provides a safe place for girls and boys aged 7-18 to participate in educational sports activities side-by-side, with support and encouragement from a caring adult. ECA funding supports the following:

- **Year-round implementation of Let's Play Fair (LPF)**, KPI's flagship gender equity program, which combines sport and interactive discussions to shift attitudes, behaviors and gender norms between girls and boys.
- **Weekly LPF Community Day events** held every Sunday will engage LPF youth participants, their families and the wider community in gender equity activities, and provide access to physical and mental health education and services.
- **Two, 10-day Olympic Day educational and cultural exchange programs** held in June 2016 (In Park City, Utah) & June 2017 (in Rwanda). A diverse group of Rwandans and Americans, including several current and former Olympic Athletes, will participate in these two-way exchanges, which will facilitate mutual understanding, respect, and cross cultural learning between countries.
- **Large scale Olympic Day events** held in Park City, Utah (2016) and Rwanda (2016 & 2017). Olympic Day, held on or around June 23, is an opportunity to encourage citizens across the globe, regardless of their abilities and background, to get moving, learn the benefits of physical activity, discover new sports and most importantly, embrace the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect.

###

Founded by 3-time Olympian Tracy Evans in 2008, Kids Play International (KPI) uses sport to promote gender equity in communities impacted by genocide. Built on the Olympic value of Fair Play, KPI builds the capacity of individuals from the rural community of Gatagara, Rwanda to deliver activities that help youth participants and community members build a better community with a bigger purpose. KPI's gender equity program, Let's Play Fair (LPF), combines sport and interactive discussions to shift attitudes, behaviors and gender norms between girls and boys aged 7-18, and encourage the entire community to find better ways to live, work and play together.

More details on KPI's gender equality work can be found at www.kidsplayintl.org

Contact the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at eca-press@state.gov