



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Spirit of Soccer empowers women to protect children from landmines and bombs**

*Ground-breaking workshop brings together female coaches from Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Iraq and Colombia to learn how soccer can keep children safe*

This week 35 female soccer coaches learned how to keep boys and girls safe from weapons of war using the power of sport. The coaches are part of a training workshop led by Spirit of Soccer, the award-winning non-profit organization that uses soccer – the world’s favorite sport - to bring vital education messages to children living in conflict zones. The workshop is supported by the US Department of State’s Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement.

According to the United Nations, 11 children are killed every day by landmines and unexploded bombs from past and current wars. Founded in Bosnia in 1996, Spirit of Soccer uses a unique curriculum that incorporates soccer games and drills with education on how to recognize and avoid landmines, unexploded bombs and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

"This workshop has been good for me. I learnt new skills, like understanding how to work with landmine victims and met people from many countries. This will help me with my work with Spirit of Soccer because I now have new skills to teach my children" said Kunthea, 23, who is employed by Spirit of Soccer as a full-time soccer and Mine Risk Education coach in Cambodia.

This was the third edition of the workshop, which places a special emphasis on empowering female soccer coaches so they can reach more girls and young women with the Spirit of Soccer message. This year the workshop was expanded to include female coaches from Iraq and Colombia.

"This workshop has given me more experience in coaching and Mine Risk Education. I've learned from people how they tackle the same issue in Vietnam and Laos. It feels like one big family here" said Payman, a 43-year-old coach from Spirit of Soccer's program in Kirkuk, Iraq where she teaches children displaced by ISIL about the dangers they will face when they finally return home.

"It's important to place a special focus on female coaches" said Spirit of Soccer Founder and CEO Scott Lee. "We know that many times it's the women in a household who have the most influence on the behavior of their kids. By empowering women like this we want to make sure that as many children as possible hear the message that could be the difference between life and death."

For more information go to [www.spiritofsoccer.org](http://www.spiritofsoccer.org) or email [info@spiritofsoccer.org](mailto:info@spiritofsoccer.org).

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## EDITORS NOTES:

Spirit of Soccer is an international non-profit organization that uses the world's most popular sport to empower and educate young people about the dangers of landmines and unexploded bombs in places that have experienced either past or ongoing conflict.

Since it was created the organization has reached over 350,000 children in conflict and post-conflict zones including Bosnia, Moldova, Cambodia, Laos, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. The organization receives support from the US State Department Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, Find a Better Way Foundation, the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, FIFA's Football for Hope initiative and the Dorothea Haus Ross Foundation.