



Diary notice: 31.3.2023

## FOOTBALL'S 'OLYMPIC TORCH' ARRIVES IN THAILAND

"The Ball" – football's equivalent to the Olympic Torch – is traveling through Thailand from March 29th through to April 16th. The Ball is traveling the world from the site of the world's first official game of football in 1864 in Battersea Park, London to Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand, the site of the kick-off game of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup on July 20th 2023.



As The Ball travels around the world, it gathers signatures of individuals who pledge support to advance gender equality and climate action. Since 2002, more than 56,000 people in 56 countries have signed The Ball. From 2022 to 2023, 57 partner organizations have organized more than 30 events and workshops that have encouraged action on climate change and gender equality amongst football enthusiasts.

### The Ball in Thailand - Schedule

**March 31st and April 1st:** Spirit of Football is running a two-day workshop with students and lecturers of **Thammasat University at Puey Park for People and Sustainability**, the home of the largest green roof urban farm in Asia on March 31st and April 1st 2023. The **Friedrich Ebert Foundation** Thailand Office and **SDG Move** are hosting The Ball. Spirit of Football will share its educational methods on sustainability and gender equality.

**April 2nd to 5th:** The Ball then travels to **Mae Sot** near the Myanmar border to connect to the football for good organization **PlayOnside**. PlayOnside promotes girls' confidence, self-esteem, and respect challenging gender-based stereotypes and prejudice to promote equality in the communities they work in.

**March 11th:** Together with our partner the **ASA Foundation** we are organizing a beach clean-up at **Jomtien Beach in Pattaya**, followed by a fair play beach football session with local youth.

**March 12th:** Workshop with girls at the **Father Ray Children's Village** in **central Pattaya**, which offers a safe place for street children who had run away from home, from poverty, abuse and neglect and they have found a place where they are safe, free from the risk of harm and with The Ball they will also be free to play football.

## Prominent Supporters

The first person to sign The Ball on its 12-month global climate action and advocacy mission was **Katie Rood**, the professional footballer who plays for Hearts FC and the New Zealand National Team had this to say: *"Everyone loves the World Cup, but if we are to be able to continue playing it in the future, we need collective and urgent climate action. The journey of The Ball across land and sea from London to New Zealand is an opportunity for football to get its environmental act in order. I am going to take action. Are you?"*

Spirit of Football's Ambassador and Liverpool F.C. manager **Jürgen Klopp** is also supporting The Ball: *"It is a ball for us all. Be part of our team. Everyone can play. Respect your teammates, your opponents and the environment. One Ball, One World."*

Do you want to be involved in the project? Follow The Ball's journey and [make your own pledge](#). To find out more about the non-profit organization Spirit of Football: <https://linktr.ee/spiritoffootball>

## Background Information

Supported by the **FIFA Foundation** and the **Swedish Postcode Foundation**, Spirit of Football developed and tested educational resources with our partners **Pledgeball** and **Football for Future** focusing on sustainability and football from March to December 2022. We have been using these resources running workshops in several countries and are rolling them out on a **gender equality, sustainability and climate action** tour with The Ball in 2023.

The Ball is being carried (and kicked) by a team of educators from Spirit of Football and our non-profit gender equality partner **Equal Playing Field** in collaboration with our football for good network partner **Common Goal**. Together we will deliver workshops and run an advocacy campaign that begins in Vietnam (March), makes its way across South East Asia (March to May) and into the Pacific (June), eventually reaching New Zealand (July) and Australia (August) in time for the 2023 FIFA World Cup. We are the official sustainability partner of **Festival 23** - the youth festival being organised by **Football United** (and Common Goal) in Sydney in August 2023.

People we meet are being asked to make personal **pledges in terms of gender equality and also for our planet** (sustainability). We are connecting to like-minded partners around the world and en route through Asia and into the Pacific to learn from them and to highlight their work at the same time.

The Ball was presented in cooperation with the United Nations **UNFCCC at COP 27** in Egypt last November: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRHtxL5wzjl>

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