



- Fundación Espartanos is the first international project funded by England Rugby in partnership with Sport Relief
- It is part of the wider Try for Change Fund that uses the power of rugby as a force for good to improve the lives of disadvantaged people in England and across the world

During their June Test series in Argentina, several England players visited one of Buenos Aires' maximum-security prisons to meet Fundación Espartanos, a charity running a rugby project with a difference.

England players, including Captain Dylan Hartley as well as Danny Care and Chris Robshaw, saw first-hand how funding through the Try for Change Fund, is helping the great work Fundación Espartanos is doing.

>> Click [here](#) to watch a video of the England team's visit <<

In Argentina, the reoffending rate is as high as 60% due to lack of opportunities for prisoners to gain vocational skills to equip themselves for the outside world whilst in prison. Fundación Espartanos has launched a programme called 'Second Chance' which uses rugby as a platform for social change.

Second Chance offers inmates up to two practical training sessions per week where they learn basic rugby skills and also develop key skills such as respect, commitment, humility, teamwork and responsibility - all values at the very heart of rugby.

The programme helps prisoners understand the values of the game and how these can be used across all aspects of their life both on and off the pitch. These sessions are designed to improve behaviour, help them continue their education through practical training and eventually enable them to find jobs after they leave prison. By taking part in the rugby sessions, participants also enjoy better health and wellbeing and are less at risk of violence in prison. As a result of the work the project does, the reoffending rate has reduced to 5% among participants.

Second Chance participant and team captain Gabriel, 23, has dreams to become a physical education teacher so he can teach rugby to vulnerable children and young people.

He said, "This programme has changed my life and has made me a better person. Rugby is a game which teaches many beautiful things, values that will help us become gentlemen in the future. Once a month we play outside the prison at different clubs. This gives us a chance to see what clubs on the outside are like and the most special part of it for us is that our families come and watch us and see what we're doing."

England captain, Dylan Hartley said "It's great to see that rugby is such a positive driving force at the prison. Every day they get the chance to be outdoors, be active, and practice all those values that rugby teaches us. They pick a team at the end of the month based on who's performed and lived those values. It's amazing to see."

Dominic Proctor, RFU Chair of Try for Change and RFU Board Member, said "Fundación Espartanos encapsulates all that is great about rugby and the importance of using our sport as a vehicle for social change. It's encouraging to see how rugby is truly benefitting the players, both on and off the pitch, and our hope is that the participants supported by Try for Change will leave the prison fully equipped for the outside world, with the sport's values at their core."