
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Sport against poverty



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

Sam

And I'm Sam.

Neil

We all know that sport is great for our health - and if you're talented it can make you rich.

Sam

Many great champions have found a way out of poverty through their sporting ability – think of someone like footballer Maradona.

Neil

But in today's programme we're not looking at the superstars. Instead we'll discuss how sport can change the lives of young people from some of the poorest, toughest backgrounds on earth.

Sam

And of course, we'll be learning some new vocabulary on the way.

Neil

Many projects around the world use sports to change children's' lives - improving mental health, challenging stereotypes and giving hope. Among them is the Ebony Club in Brixton which uses sport to help young people in London's most disadvantaged communities – but which sport? That's my quiz question. Is it:

- a) golf,
- b) tennis, or
- c) horse riding?

Sam

Well, I can't imagine there's enough space for golf and horse riding in the city, so I'll say b) tennis.

Neil

OK, we'll find out the answer later. Just now we were talking about London but sporting projects like the Ebony Club are happening all over the world.

Sam

In Cape Town, South Africa, British surfer Tim Conibear noticed how kids from poor townships hardly ever went to the beach. So he started giving them free surfing lessons.

Neil

Tim founded the 'Waves for Changes' project and now hundreds of kids go along each week to get "surfing therapy". Not only is surfing giving them a buzz, it's helping to improve their life chances.

Sam

Here he is talking to the BBC World Service programme *People Fixing the World*:

Tim Conibear

Surfing also is quite difficult so you're learning a very **challenging** skill which takes a lot of confidence. Very small successes which children have when they go into the water elicit a really big emotional response. If you come from a background of **trauma** quite often you'll have a negative **self-image** and being able to try something new, achieve something new, be recognised by a coach or a **mentor** is very good for your confidence as well.

Neil

Most of the surfers have experienced **trauma** – emotional pain and shock caused by very distressing experiences.

Sam

This has given them a negative **self-image** – the way a person feels about themselves, their ability, personality and value.

Neil

Surfing helps kids improve their **self-image** because it's **challenging** - difficult in a way that tests your ability and determination.

Sam

So challenging, in fact, that the children have a **mentor** – a trusted advisor who gives help and support to a younger or less experienced person.

Neil

Tim believes that the concentration needed to surf makes the children's other problems disappear - at least for a short time.

Sam

And the results so far have been optimistic, with a significant reduction in violent behaviour reported among Cape Town's young surfers.

Neil

Surfing is quite well-known in South Africa. But what happens when you take a completely unknown sport into one of the least developed countries on earth?

Sam

In 2007, Australian Oliver Percovich was travelling in Afghanistan with his skateboard. The children there were fascinated so he started showing them how to skate.

Neil

The idea grew and a few years later he founded the organisation 'Skateistan' giving free skateboard lessons to children aged five to seventeen, with a focus on those with disabilities, from low-income backgrounds and especially, girls.

Sam

Here's 'Skateistan' volunteer, Jessica Faulkner, explaining how skateboarding reinforces positive educational messages which Afghan kids don't always get at home.

Jessica Faulkner

There's a few things that skateboarding does as a kind of function. It is really quite **challenging** – it's not an easy sport for anyone whether you're young or old. And that means that it also teaches quite a lot of **life skills**. You have to fall off a skateboard quite a lot of times before you get better and it really helps children with things like **goal setting** and resilience and determination. Also, and really importantly, we do believe that children should have fun.

Neil

Like surfing, skateboarding is challenging and difficult. It requires effort and Jessica believes this teaches children important **life skills** – the basic skills needed to solve problems commonly encountered in everyday life.

Sam

One important life skill is **goal setting** – deciding what things you want to achieve and how you plan to achieve them.

Neil

Along with other skills like determination and resilience, this helps kids improve their outlook on life.

Sam

And to experience one of the most important things – having fun!

Neil

Which reminds me about the kids at the Ebony Club and my quiz question. Remember that I asked you which sport the club uses to support disadvantaged children in London.

Sam

Yes, and I said, b) tennis

Neil

But in fact, it's c) horse riding - a sport normally associated with the elite.

Sam

In this episode we've been discussing how sport can help improve the life chances of young people from tough backgrounds, many of whom have suffered **trauma** – severe emotional pain and distress.

Neil

Such pain damages a child's **self-image** – how they see and value themselves in the world.

Sam

This can be improved by taking part in sports, like surfing, skating and horse riding, which are **challenging** – demanding and testing of your abilities.

Neil

Often kids are supported by a **mentor** – a trusted, more experienced friend who can offer help and advice.

Sam

And with this support they learn **life skills** – basic skills everyone needs to cope with everyday problems.

Neil

One important skill is **goal setting** – deciding what you want to accomplish and planning how to do it.

Sam

And of course, sometimes the most important goal is just to have fun!

Neil

That's all we have time for today. Join us again soon as we discuss more topical issues. Bye for now!

Sam

Bye!

VOCABULARY

trauma

severe emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience

self-image

how a person feels about themselves, their personality, achievements and value

challenging

difficult or demanding in a way that tests your ability or determination

mentor

experienced and trusted advisor who helps a younger, less experienced person

life skills

important skills everyone needs to solve everyday problems and issues

goal setting

identifying the things you want to achieve and planning how to accomplish them