

Cities as a lens to the world

"As entry points to and from the global community, cities are the spaces where the country meets the rest of the world..."

[SACN, 2006]

The majority of the world's population today lives in an urban setting, and increasingly this means living in cities or city regions. It is odd then that, with the majority of young people growing up in cities, the learning opportunities cities offer us as a profession are often overlooked.

The opportunities of the city

Because of their pivotal role in globalisation, their disproportionate national influence, and their increasingly local autonomy, many cities have come to represent a microcosm of broader society - a metaphorical 'window on the world'. **A focus on cities can provide tangible access points for teachers and learners to engage with global issues.** In addition, the commonality and familiarity that cities provide [beginning with what we know], can help to avoid some of the pitfalls of global learning and enhance the development of the skills and confidence necessary to become active global citizens.

In response to this, Tide~ is launching a new initiative for teachers focussing on cities. The initiative will support teachers and learners to explore complex global issues such as sustainability, citizenship, democracy and cohesion by using cities as a lens to global learning.

Tide~ is proposing that this work is important in both a real-life and educational context:

Real life contexts...

- More than 50% of humanity now lives in an urban setting.
- The majority of young people are growing up in cities.
- Cities are fast becoming autonomous regions, competing with states for power.
- The majority of development now takes place in cities.
- Cities have a disproportionate influence on the economy, society and environments.
- Cities are the most socially diverse places on Earth.
- Cities act as hubs in our interdependent and globalised world.
- Cities are centres of innovation and creativity.
- The future of humanity is tied to what happens in our cities.



...Educational contexts

- Cities can help to unlock global citizenship.
- Cities can be a basis for scaling up learning - local to global.
- Cities provide many opportunities for holistic learning.
- A need for greater understanding of cities and urbanisation.
- Cities are now the dominant learning environment for young people.
- Exploring complex issues at a city level can make them more accessible to learners.
- Cities help us to explore the global in the local.
- Cities are dealing with many of 'the issues' themselves.
- 'Starting with what we know' helps to develop skills and build confidence.

Engaging with complexity

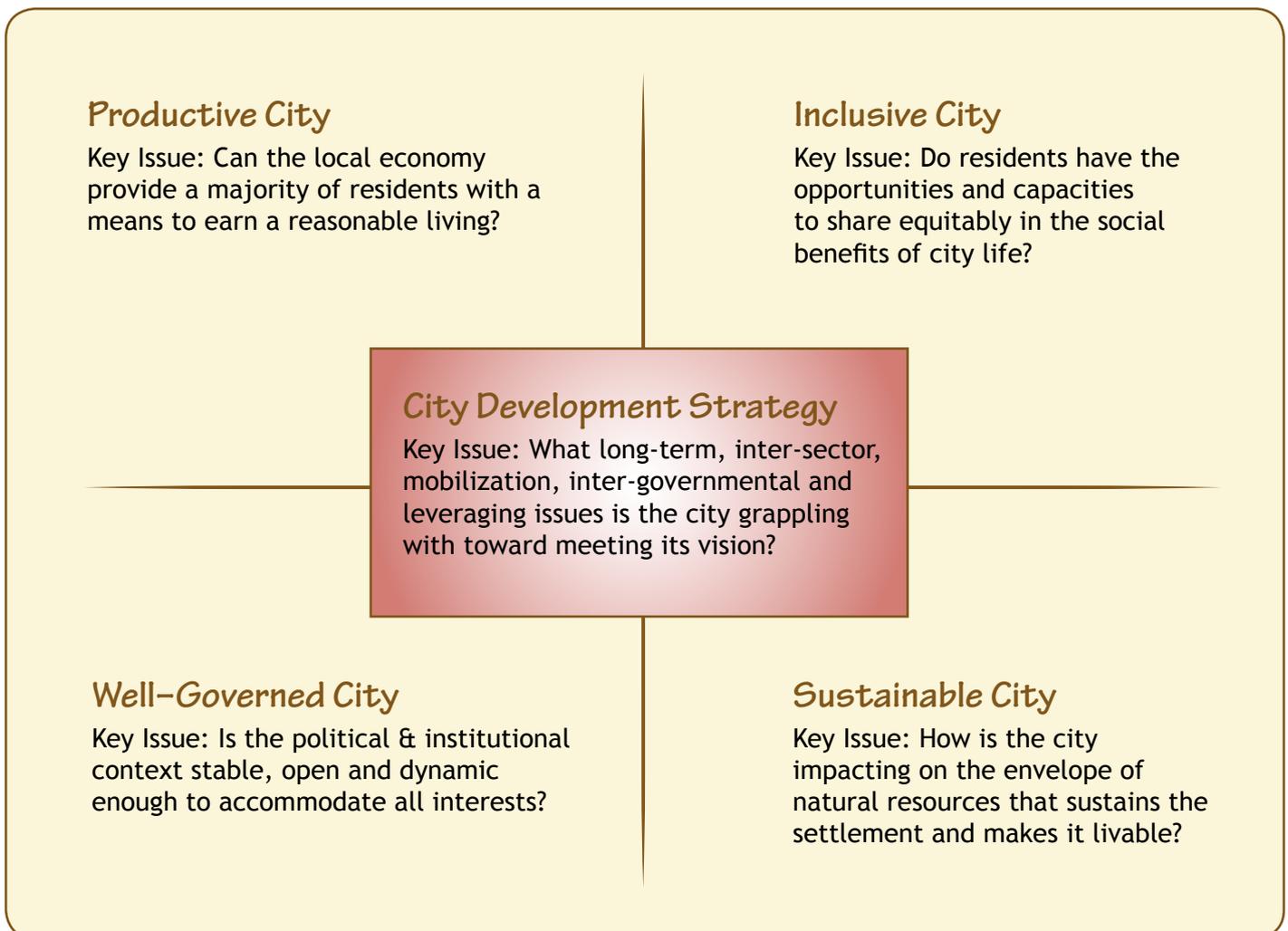
"In 1976, one-third of the world's people lived in cities. Just 30 years later, this rose to one half and will continue to grow to two-thirds, or 6 billion people, by 2050."

[UN HABITAT, 2006]

Cities are highly complex structures with tentacles that stretch far beyond their boundaries. A central aim of Tide-’s city initiative is to develop frameworks that enable learners to unlock this complexity and engage with the issues. Other organisations, including the World Bank and the UN are also looking to frameworks as a means of better understanding cities. One framework that Tide- has found particularly interesting comes from the South African Cities Network [SACN]. A collective of 9 cities in South Africa committed to sharing information, experience and best practice, the SACN developed a city analysis framework to help them in this work:

"The city analysis framework has received overwhelming support from public, social, and private sector stakeholders in member cities. It is regarded as an essential instrument of analysis that, in allowing all stakeholders to participate in a critical analysis process, draws on the distributed knowledge within society to develop a city strategy while enhancing networking between city stakeholders."

SACN, 2004

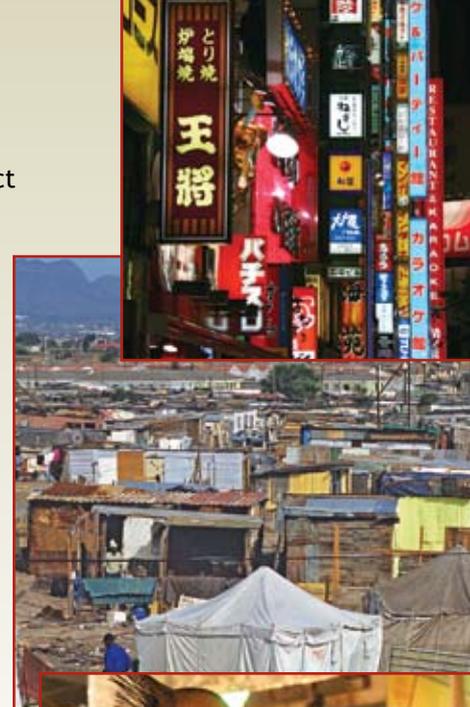


What do you think of this framework? → How could it be used in an educational context?

What is the purpose of this initiative?

This initiative is designed to bring together secondary teachers from across the subject spectrum and demonstrate the possibility of using cities as a stimulus and focus for simultaneously unlocking global learning, and the opportunities of the new secondary curriculum. The initiative will do this by:

- considering the possibilities of the new curriculum for supporting holistic learning;
- engaging with young people's voices in relation to cities and the issues;
- providing opportunities for inter-sector dialogue with other city stakeholders;
- sharing key concepts and ideas relating to cities and global learning;
- exploring and developing frameworks that help us better understand cities [see SACN framework for example];
- identifying opportunities for resource development to support work on cities.



Who is this for?

The cities initiative seeks to actively engage a broad cross section of secondary teachers or those with an educational role at secondary level. We seek the involvement of individuals with a range of different responsibilities and levels of experience, including advisors and NQTs for example. In particular this initiative may be of interest to:

- those interested in creative curriculum planning [especially in the context of new curriculum];
- those responsible for suspended timetable learning;
- Geography and Citizenship subject groups [where cities or the issues raised are part of core curriculum];
- Media studies, English, History, Sociology, Politics, Design and Technology subject groups [where cities and the issues raised can help to address areas of core curriculum];
- those interested in work around cohesion or sustainable schools.



What will you gain?

As educators we all seek new ways to invigorate teaching and learning - not least for ourselves. This initiative utilises the excitement of exploring cities to unlock creative responses to global learning, citizenship education, and the possibilities of the new curriculum. Those involved will benefit from:

- a supportive environment in which to engage in dialogue and debate;
- the opportunity to develop skills, approaches and techniques;
- creativity about developing new resources;
- a deeper knowledge and understanding of cities.



*Images courtesy of
easi-images*

How to get involved

If you are interested in this new initiative, there are several ways in which you can get involved ...

WEBSITE

www.tidegloballearning.net

Visit our website for more information about cities including:

- a background paper sharing ideas about why cities might benefit global learning;
- links to useful websites;
- resources we have found useful.

NETWORK CONFERENCE

Thursday 26 June 2008

The Tide- network conference will this summer focus on global learning in the context of the new secondary curriculum.

Cities present an ideal opportunity for issue/ theme based learning across the curriculum that is both relevant and engaging to young people.

The conference will share some of this work.

OPEN SESSIONS

A series of open sessions will share particular aspects of the cities initiative and extend the opportunity for involvement.

These sessions will focus on the real-life and educational contexts of cities and the opportunities these offer for learning. [See page 1]

Sign up for:

Tuesday 26th February, 4.30-6.30pm

Wednesday 16th April, 4.30-6.30pm

Email wmc@tidec.org about future sessions

CORE GROUP

Tide- is seeking a core group for more in-depth involvement in the cities initiative. This is a professional development opportunity for teachers to think about the design and delivery of holistic curriculum programmes. See website for details.

To register your interest or book a place at one of these events contact Tide-

TIDE~
global learning

Tide- global learning

Tide- Centre,
Millennium Point,
Curzon Street,
Birmingham, B4 7XG

Tel 0121 202 3290

wmc@tidec.org

For further information about our work on cities contact Rob Bowden at Tide-.

DFID Department for
International
Development

 **Oxfam**