

# Teachers Are Doing It For Themselves

What happens when teachers work together to reflect on the educational needs of learners growing up in an increasingly globalised society?

Tide~ Global Learning is a West Midlands based network of teachers and other educators which has been working for over 30 years.

## What does Tide~ want to achieve?

Tide~ has a small centre, with resources, meeting room space and eight staff members. It is a charity, with trustees elected from its network. Two key ideas are at the core of the work of Tide~. First, that teachers support each other in thinking, questioning and learning about the role of education in building a positive future and sharing concerns about educational challenges in a global context. Secondly, that meeting the needs of learners in an increasingly globalised context is an issue for the education system itself – and that not to address this is to fail those learners.

Some of the long term aims of the network are:

- to help shape and establish a recognised entitlement for young people to global learning;
- that there should be opportunities for teachers to be involved in a network which engages their values and beliefs, stimulates professional creativity and promotes their own understanding of development;
- that there should be opportunities to enable young people and teachers to contribute to national debate about the curriculum ... and about global learning.

## How did they set about doing this?

Over 30 years, Tide~ has built up a strong network of teachers, headteachers and other educators. One of the main ways they have worked is to collaboratively create publications and teaching resources looking at the educational value and challenges of global dimensions and development perspectives. Publications range from *Citizenship and Muslim Perspectives* to *What do we mean by development?*

Perhaps the most significant thing about these publications is the way they are created – through the discussions of groups of teachers working together to share ideas and to respond to the challenges of exploring their own understandings of key issues. This process also helps thinking about ways to enable young people to engage in similar learning. This dynamic is at the core of how Tide~ works, and is based on the belief that if we want to promote critical and creative global learners, teachers must also have the spaces to critically

and creatively engage with global issues.

### How well have they achieved their aims?

Tide~ has a strong credibility with teachers in the West Midlands and beyond, and has provided professional development and engagement opportunities for thousands of them. Evaluations suggest that these opportunities have a long term impact as those involved build the experience into their own work as a teacher, or as they take on greater responsibility.

Tide~ has made some headway with young people's entitlement to global learning through changing teacher practice. They have also taken this aim forward through influencing policy, which links to another of their aims to create opportunities for young people and teachers to contribute to the national debate about curriculum. They have fed into thinking at policy level on a number of issues, including QCA thinking about the secondary curriculum. QCA's publication *The Global Dimension in Action* has taken up the notion of "global learning".

Tide~ has been successful in challenging the idea that "global" is seen as if it is some other place. They put forward the notion that a key aspect of global learning is that "the global is here too" and that if we seek to build better understanding we need to appreciate the commonality of the human experience at a local scale here and elsewhere in the world.

### What do they plan to do next?

The DFID Enabling Effective Support (EES) initiative has become central to Tide~'s current work. DFID's core aim is to establish the global agenda as a core element of educational practice and for it to be valued by schools in their own terms. This challenge to build capacity fits with Tide's view of the task.

Tide~ is responding to the need to use its approaches with those in leadership roles and advisers as well as continuing to bring teacher groups together. Current projects include, for example: study visits for teachers taking lead curriculum roles to Kerala in India and The Gambia; a project on science and global learning, *Cities as a lens to the world* that seeks to generate new approaches to making complex global concepts more accessible; and the development of two key planning resources respectively focused on primary and secondary. Work on the educational implications of climate change also provides the focus for a number of projects.

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“Put teachers together, give them a task and some space and they will fire on it. The same for kids.”

Ray Peacock, King Charles I School,  
Kidderminster

### Reflections:

- In order for pupils to develop critical and creative thinking, teachers must also have the space to develop and use theirs.
- The process of developing teaching resources for others is a valuable Continuing Professional Development activity in itself.
- The EES networks, supported by the Department for International Development (DFID), have developed differently in different regions, providing a range of innovative models of statutory and voluntary sector collaboration.

More information:

The Tide~ website contains many resources, a list of publications and reflective articles by practitioners: [www.tidegloballearning.net](http://www.tidegloballearning.net)

