



### **WHY TEACH ABOUT THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES?**

David Beckham is ecstatic about it!

*"I come from the east end of London where the main Olympic Park will be, so I am really excited by the plans for the development of the area."*

Orphee Tshiyamba isn't. The 10-year-old lives on a local housing estate, but cannot walk to school the way she used to. The road has been closed to build a new through-road connecting Stratford old town to the future Olympic site.

*(Annie Kelly, Guardian, Wednesday August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007.)*

The London 2012 Olympics is a theme with relevance to young peoples' lives, and is likely to create a legacy that will impact on all of our futures. The project has become a defining flagship for Britishness, with media fascination guaranteed for the foreseeable future. Surely we'd be mad, as geographers, not to help young learners make sense of it?

At a time when the world's population is becoming predominantly urban, urban regeneration and urban sustainability are two themes perfectly explored using the largest and arguably the most sustainable regeneration project in Europe - the 2012 London Paralympic and Olympic Games. What might the future hold for this deprived part of the capital, and who will make the key decisions? Will East London become the new West London?

The knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes young learners develop in this unit will be invaluable for them in new learning contexts: in their local area, nationally and internationally, throughout their geography education, and the rest of their lives. Through the process of enquiry (using map skills, photograph interpretation and ICT skills) learners begin to understand the physical and human characteristics of the East London site and develop a good spatial knowledge and understanding of the area. Learners analyse a diverse range of *real* peoples' opinions about the changes to the area, helping to form their own opinions in the process. Finally, learners assess the sustainability of the regeneration and develop their own preferred vision of the future.

Will the Paralympic and Olympic motto, 'citius, altius, fortius' (faster, higher, stronger) shape the process of 21<sup>st</sup> Century urban regeneration? Will the Games' legacy leave East London with FASTER transport links, or just make a fast buck? With HIGHER buildings, or higher council taxes? A STRONGER economy, or strong-arm developers? Read on!

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