PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE, PLANNING FOR ALL: MEXICO CITY, TORONTO, AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL #11
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

POSSIBLE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
- Why should cities be sustainable?
- Who should be involved in city sustainability projects?
- Why are cities a main focus in efforts towards sustainability?
- How is sustainability generational?

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

- Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland & The Brundtland Commission

BACKGROUND
Over half of the people on earth live in cities. Cities are places of remarkable beauty and culture, but also face unique challenges and responsibilities when it comes to their high populations, resource use, and locations. The concept of "sustainability" can be hard to nail down. The United Nations has a goal, SDG #11, for world development that identifies 4 major pillars of sustainability; sustainability, safety, inclusivity and resiliency.

This case study focuses on two major American cities that are global leaders in these sustainability pillars. In a mountain lakebed in central Mexico lies Mexico City, one of the world's most populous "megacities" where over 25 million people live. About 2,500 miles north of Mexico City is a much smaller city that sits in the middle of the Great Lakes. More specifically, the city is located on Lake Ontario, is home to 2.7 million residents, and is called Toronto. While these two major cities have their own unique and specific experiences and challenges, they're both making their cities sustainable for the many communities they serve. These cities are working on creative projects to make sure their cities meet the current needs of their communities without taking away the abilities of future generations to do the same.

Resiliency is the idea that a city must be adaptable to environmental damage now and later and changes in the city population. Toronto may be a rich city, but city leaders recognize that wealth and prosperity is not distributed equally, and certain communities and neighborhoods are at a higher risk of destruction from natural disasters. With this in mind, Toronto has recently developed and begun implementing the *Resilient Toronto* plan in an effort to address rent issues across the city. By focusing on lower income neighborhoods and buildings, the city hopes events like flooding will harm less people now and later. They also hope they can build communication between communities, businesses and government officials. Meanwhile Mexico City is preserving ancient canals that were once used by the Aztecs for sustainable farming, fishing and transportation.

Both Toronto and Mexico City are home to efforts to increase environmental sustainability around issues of water, air, waste and more. *Plan Verde* is Mexico City's answer to issues like smog and mobility. With Plan Verde, Mexico City was able to fund bike docking stations through its EcoBici program in 2010, making Mexico City one of the earliest adopters of popular bike sharing programs. They hope that easier access to bikes will decrease pollution from cars. Sustainability touches on many aspects that communities grapple with. Torontonians, for example, are addressing healthy food shortages and waste by expanding community gardens, often right in their neighborhood's front yard. Cities and communities are more sustainable when they address current issues, plan for the future and take into account history of the land and people that live there.

While discussions around sustainability often center around issues like waste and energy, cities also need to ensure safety for all. Safety ensures that all individuals and communities can benefit from living in the city without worrying about physical and mental health for themselves and their families. For example, in attempts to make sure all Chilangxs are safe through increasingly violent and more frequent storms, Mexico City has been reshaping their streets to adapt to flooding issues. Similarly, Toronto is implementing *Mission Zero* as a broad public safety campaign to reduce vehicle injuries and deaths within the city.

City plans are also complemented by community and business leaders to make cities and communities more inclusive. Inclusive city planning brings together all communities regardless of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, age, religion, sexual orientation among many other identities. Like safety measures, inclusive planning makes sure that everyone can feel empowered and respected in the place they live. Toronto's first indigenous peoples and first nations fashion week highlighted fashion designers and models from these communities as a way to bring communities together. And while corporate involvement in Pride celebrations is controversial in some communities, in Mexico City, HSBC's contributions to Pride has provided a sense of inclusiveness to the LGBT+ community in Mexico City. Beyond these two specifics examples, cities can be inclusive by increasing wheelchair

ramps on sidewalks, offering women's only bus routes and many other innovations.

Mexico City and Toronto show us the many challenges and possible solutions cities may face in the coming decades. Mexico City, while leading in many areas addressed above, is currently trying to get ahead of a major water crisis. Toronto, situated within a vast network of rivers, is looking for ways to navigate sea level rise, flooding, and storm surges. The issues these cities are facing are seen in other cities across the globe. Without focuses on sustainability, cities will fall behind and communities will suffer the worst effects of climate change. Thankfully, with leadership from cities like Mexico City and Toronto, the global community can build a sustainability network that relies on best practices and forward thinking.

RESOURCES

City Stories
- Inclusivity
  - Designers behind Toronto's first Indigenous Fashion Week (5:44) (CBC News)
  - West Toronto KEYS To Inclusion: Hélène's Story (6:39) (Black Lane Studios)
  - What it Means to March in Mexico City Pride (1:52) (HSBC NOW)
- Sustainability
  - Community farming project in Toronto's Brockton Village grows food in front yards (1:16) (The Star)
  - Turning Gas Guzzlers Into Clean Cars in Mexico City (2:46) (Great Big Story)
  - Mexico City Gets a Green Makeover (The Wall Street Journal)
  - How Mexico City is fighting climate change and creating bankable opportunities (World Bank Blogs)
- Resiliency
  - Fighting to Keep Mexico's Floating Farms Alive (3:22) (Great Big Story)
  - Is Toronto doing enough to fight climate change? (3:17) (City News)
- Safety
  - Mexico City| Safe, empowering and sustainable for all (4:15) (UN Women)
  - Unsanctioned safe-injection site opens in Toronto (2:00) (The National)

Articles
- What is resilience? - Resilient Toronto
- The City of Toronto Releases its First Resilience Strategy (Perkins&Will)
- New online resource allows Canadians to compare retailers' seafood sustainability practices (The Star)
- Mexico and Mexico City Introduce Energy Efficiency Standards for Buildings (WRI)
- Mexico Regulation (Global Sustainable Buildings Index)
- Agent of change: U of T moves forward with plan to be a sustainability leader (U Toronto)
- Mexico City Gets a Huge Environmental Makeover (The Index Project)
- Resilient Toronto
- Resilience Strategy - Toronto
- Mexico City Statement on Sustainable Learning Cities (UNESCO)
- Mexico City: Transportation Overhaul Guides Urban Development (Global Opportunity Explorer)
- Mexico City's Plan Verde (Ciudad de Mèxico)
- From Floating Islands to Abandoned Lots: Urban Gardening in Mexico (Mexico News Daily)

Art & Images
- Future Forest in Mexico City (2:06) (Showcase)
- Giant animal faces take over Mexico City's forest for environmental awareness (Inhabitat)
- The STEPS Initiative (University of Toronto)
- GREEN EMPOWERMENT: MEXICO (Joel Artista)
- A plastic pavilion dazzles in Mexico City through innovation and discourse (Archinect)
- Mexican designer Alejandro Curi breathes new life into old tires (Mexico News Daily)
- Goal #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (World Largest Lesson)

Data & Maps
- Inclusive Cities (The World Bank)
- Toronto Solid Waste Infographic (City of Toronto)
- Toronto Cycling Map (City of Toronto)
- Cyclists and Walkers Lead Mexico City on the Road to Sustainability (The City Fix)
- Vision Zero Plan Overview (Toronto)
- A Student's Guide to Global Climate Change (USA EPA)

Videos
- What is Sustainability? (2:53) (Mocomi)
- Mexico City's Highway Pillars Become Vertical Gardens (1:06) (Mashable)
- Huerto Romita: Experiments in small space gardening in Mexico City (7:25) (Fair Companies)
  - More about Huerto Romita:
    - El Huerto Romita: Promueven en la Roma agricultura urbana (3:49) (Grupo Reforma) (disponible en Español)
- Mexico City hit hard by water shortages (2:18) (Al Jazeera)

Websites
- UN Sustainable Development Goal #11
- Mexico City Website
- City of Toronto Website
- Isla Urbana (disponible en Español)
- Global Registry of Voluntary Commitments & Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships
- Seafoodwatch.org
- Global Footprint Network