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Readings in Sustainable Tropical Forest Management

ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR LABODE POPOOLA

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URBAN FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND: LESSONS FOR NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

The numerous environmental and social problems confronting urban centres all over the globe and especially developing countries, such as Nigeria, underscores the incorporation of trees into the social and physical fabric of the overall planning process of towns and cities. Trees and woodland play important roles in the environmental conservation and climate change mitigation of urban areas. They are natural and cost-effective means of alleviating environmental, social and economic problems prevalent in many urban centres of developing countries.

Sustainable urban forestry aims at achieving and maintaining a balanced forest structure within and around each urban locality, to ensure continuous tree cover and attainment of diverse benefits for current and future generations. For a country like Nigeria (which is at the outset of greening its cities) to achieve sustainable urban greening, it must learn from the development trends of urban forestry in other parts of the world.

Urban Forestry Development in Britain

According to Johnston (1997a), direct efforts at promoting urban forestry in Britain were virtually spearheaded by Dr Tom Hall (former editor of *Arboricultural Journal*). He was instrumental to the first

significant success in the promotion of urban forestry development in Britain, which was recorded in 1981, when *Arboricultural Journal* was subtitled "The International Journal of Urban Forestry". This was a major breakthrough because the inclusion of the term in the title of a highly regarded professional journal, conferred a considerable degree of recognition on this emerging discipline. It was also the first time that many British professionals were introduced to the term *urban forestry*. His efforts to promote the concepts through the Arboricultural Association, particularly his editorship of its *Journal*, led to the professional recognition accorded urban forestry in Britain.

Dr Hall also established valuable contacts in North America and became a source of information for the other British professionals who were interested in learning more about the concept. Though many arboriculturists and foresters did not immediately embrace the concept of urban forestry, it began to attract interest among other professions, such as planning and landscape architecture, during the early 1980's. In particular, its emphasis on developing a long-term strategic plan for all urban trees and green spaces was an attractive concept to urban planners (Johnston, op-cit).

This initial success was reinforced by the first UK conference on urban forestry and the development of a few urban forestry projects. According to Johnston (op-cit), prominent among these projects were the Motherwell Project, the Tower Hamlets Urban Forestry Project, the Hyndburn Urban Forestry Project, the Forests of London (FoL) project, and the Black Country Urban Forestry Initiative. The Motherwell project was an environmental improvement project for Motherwell, a large town adjacent to Glasgow (Scotland). It aimed at improving the poor overall image of the area, which was largely due to its steelworks, manufacturing industry and extensive derelict land. The project which proposed to plant trees on a forest scale, concentrated on three major urban zones. The challenge was to transform Motherwell to the point where it could compete with the nearby "new towns" of East Kilbride and Cumbernauld. However, the Motherwell Project failed to realize its original vision, because of: (i) lack of consultation with the local residents, (ii) failure to maintain adjacent amenity landscape areas; and (iii) failure to carry out the work according to full specifications.

As regards the Tower Hamlets Urban Forestry Project, the objective was to produce a detailed study of the potential for urban forestry in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH). This would also involve the establishment of five demonstration sites. Even though, the Tower Hamlets Urban Forestry project was a pioneering initiative, its long-term impact was limited. None of the management recommendations was ever implemented. This was due to the election of a Liberal Council, immediately after the report was submitted, which favoured decentralisation of the local authority's services. Despite the disappointments of both Motherwell and Tower Hamlets, these projects played a significant role in encouraging early professional interest in urban forestry, particularly among planners and landscape architects.

The launch of the Hyndburn Urban Forestry Project in the Borough of Hyndburn, Lancashire, in 1987, was another significant landmark in the early development of urban forestry in Britain. Unlike the Motherwell and Tower Hamlets projects, it began on a more secure basis, largely due to long-term commitment to the project by the Borough's councillors. It developed into a very successful initiative with a steady annual increase in woodland planting to a total of almost 44 hectares by 1995/96. In 1993, this work received the forestry authority's centre of excellence award.

Another major influence on the early development of urban forestry in Britain was the Forests of London (FoL) project. FoL aimed at;

- (i) Getting Londoners to work together to plant trees where they were most needed;
- (ii) Increasing Londoners' awareness, appreciation and sense of responsibility for the capital's trees, and
- (iii) Encouraging community involvement in the planting and care of trees on publicly owned land. These aims were planned to be achieved through a partnership of local authorities, business concerns, the media, and a wide range of voluntary groups working together in an intensive and prolonged effort focused on the London area. Some of the achievements of FoL project include:

- i. Creation of effective partnership of many public, private, and voluntary sector organizations. This achieved remarkable results and quite unexpected impact. The central unit organized the planting and distribution of over 50,000 trees and many thousands more were planted by the Borough support teams at the local authorities' FoL events, and through the voluntary efforts of the many smaller organizations involved in the project. Tens of thousands of Londoners participated directly in the projects' numerous events and activities.
- ii. The FoL also broke new ground through its exciting and imaginative campaign styles, which was why it attracted wide media attention. The huge volume of television, radio, and press coverage at national and regional levels strongly suggests that the project's message must have reached millions of people.
- iii. The FoL was also the first British urban forestry project to raise substantial amounts of sponsorship. All the central units' events and activities were funded by over 30 organizations.
- iv. The FoL had a major impact on many public and voluntary organizations concerned with urban trees both in London and across the nation. Prior to the FoL, professional interest in urban forestry in Britain had been quite limited. It was a huge awareness exercise that helped in planting the seed of urban forestry among individuals that became involved, many of whom were introduced to the concept for the first time.
- v. Other underlying principles of urban forestry, which the FoL promoted, such as the needs for a long-term strategy and an integrated approach to the management of London's urban forest, have now been recognised.

The third major influence of the early development of urban forestry in Britain originated in the Black Country. This is an area close to Birmingham and consisting of the metropolitan districts of Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton, and Dudley.

The Black Country urban forestry initiative had as objectives:

- i. the identification of areas where urban forestry might contribute most to environmental improvement and regeneration,
- ii. assessment of the conditions and suitability of sites for afforestation, and
- iii. the outlining of approaches to afforestation suited to the Black Country. Incidentally, while a strong partnership of organizations had been created in the form of urban forestry working party, and a major report had been produced recommending various courses of action, practical action was slow to emerge.

Thus, a far more significant proposal to create interest in the initiative was developed. In this regard, towards the end of 1986, a small working party was formed to organise a major conference on urban forestry. While progress on developing practical planting schemes had been slow, the conference was to prove by far the most significant achievement of the early work of the Black Country urban forestry initiative. The conference succeeded in making the following significant contributions to early development of urban forestry in Britain:

- i. The conference brought together a large number of delegates from an extremely wide range of public, private, and voluntary sector organizations concerned with urban trees. Although many of the delegates and some of the speakers were clearly unfamiliar with urban forestry, by the end of the conference, they had a much better understanding of its scope and potential.
- ii. The presence of delegates from thirteen, mainly European countries, helped in emphasising that urban forestry was not just a concept that had emerged in Britain, but was already capturing the imagination of professionals in other countries. The attendance of a few delegates from North America where there was a well-established urban forestry movement was invaluable in underlining the potential of the concept.

- iii. The broad appeal of the conference undoubtedly impressed the many delegates from government agencies, such as the Forestry Commission, Countryside Commission, and the Department of Environment (DoE). Although this did not become apparent immediately after the conference, subsequent initiatives by some of these agencies, such as the Community Forests projects, were undoubtedly influenced by some of the ideas discussed at the event, and the obvious interest in urban forestry among a wide range of professionals.
- iv. The publication of the conference proceedings was an important milestone in British Urban Forestry literature, and these immediately became essential reading materials for anyone interested in the subject.

The level of attendance ensured that the conference was a financial success, thereby justifying the Borough's decision to underwrite the venture. The profit made by the conference was to later help fund two initiatives that were to have a major influence on the future development of urban forestry in Britain; the launch of Urban Forest magazines and the establishment of the Black Country Urban Forestry Unit.

The Stourbridge Seminar and the Urban Forests Magazine

The success of the first urban forestry conference firmly established the concept of urban forestry with many of the relevant organizations in the public, private and voluntary sectors (Johnston, 1997a; 1997b). The conference also saw the emergence of a national urban forestry movement, comprising a network of organizations and individuals committed to the concept and keen on promoting urban forestry nationally. In order to sustain the momentum of this conference, and with the consciousness that much of the conference had been concerned with the theoretical aspects of urban forestry and its potential in Britain, the working party decided to organize a one-day seminar to highlight the current success of urban forestry projects in action. To be effective in maintaining the momentum of the urban forestry movement, subsequent seminar should be held as soon as possible, and should try to attract many of the people who had

attended the first conference and demonstrate that there is still a thriving urban forestry movement in Britain.

However, of more lasting significance than the seminar itself in maintaining the momentum of the movement was the launch of urban forests magazine, which took place at the event. The Urban Forestry Magazine was conceptualised to be similar in form and content to the American Forestry Association's Urban Forest Forum, a publication that played an important role in maintaining the urban forestry network in the United States. It was unique in being the only British publication concerned solely with urban forestry. It succeeded in consolidating the network of organizations and professionals involved in the field through its news items, features and comments. It became the recognized "voice" of the urban forestry movement in Britain with a national and international readership (Johnston, 1997b).

According to Johnston (2000), the Urban Forests Magazine has consistently experienced financial difficulties since its launch in September 1989. While it had steadily expanded its readership and established itself as the only British publication concerned solely with urban forestry, it had never reached a point where its income from subscriptions and advertising covered its production costs. It had only succeeded in continuing to publish through a number of one-off grants from sources such as the Countryside Commission and from profits of the first and second conferences. The eventual demise of Urban Forests Magazine came in April 1996 when the chairman of Seed in Time Ltd informed the editor that it was now officially dead and that these was a decision to wind-up the company.

While the Urban Forests Magazine had tried to be financially viable, given its specialist focus in an emerging subject area, this was never likely to be realistic in the short term. It might have eventually become self-financing, but this was not most unlikely in its early years while it was building its circulation and generating interest in urban forestry.

Government Interest in Urban Forestry

The involvement of both the Forestry Commission and the then Countryside Commission in the first conference signalled increased recognition, by these agencies, of their potential role in urban forestry. As a result of the conferences, the two commissions decided to have a joint initiative. The scale of the project signalled an unprecedented level of cooperation between two government agencies in the field of urban fringe forestry. As it were, the Forestry Commission was an agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, while the Countryside Commission was an agency of the Department of Environment (DoE).

Thus, in January 1988, the Forestry Commission and Countryside Commission formed a joint study team to explore both general and specific possibilities of a future action on urban forestry. Having decided to launch a major initiative in the urban fringe, the commissions now had to decide what it should be called. After series of debates, "Forests for the Community" was taken as the official title of the initiative, even though the initiative eventually became popularly known as the Community Forests Initiative. The main aim of these forests was to help restore derelict areas of the urban fringe and provide new employment and recreation opportunities. It is pertinent to say that the Community Forests Initiative emerged partly from the growing interest in urban forestry by the Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission and partly from a desire by both agencies to create new recreational forests in the urban fringe.

Some of the major gains of this initiative included the publication by Forestry Commission of a book entitled *Urban Forestry Practice* which had the distinction of being the first textbook on the subject published in Britain and a small booklet entitled *The Forestry Commission and Urban Forestry*. Countryside Commission also produced a technical publication entitled *Advice Manual on the Preparation of a Community Forest Plan*. Furthermore, the rapid expansion of the Community Forests Initiative led to a large number of new posts being created to form the task forces that would plan and implement the forest projects. Apart from the posts of Director for each forest project, there were numerous other supporting posts

for a wide variety of specialists, including foresters, planners, conservationists and landscape architects, which were advertised.

This buttresses the multidisciplinary nature of sustainable forestry development. By 1991, urban forestry had gained more attention, to the extent that ministers were asking questions about these new initiatives and wondering whether an extensive study of the existing urban tree resource should not be undertaken, as well as committing substantial resources to proposals for new planting. The need for an accurate idea of the state of the nation's existing urban trees became apparent, in view of the large amount of government money that was being channelled into these initiatives. In view of this, the Department of Environment (DoE) embarked on a major study to provide some of this information. Hence, in October 1991, it commissioned LAND USE CONSULTANTS to conduct an eighteen month study to investigate the character and distribution of trees in towns in England. The LAND USE CONSULTANTS' report was published in May 1993, and was a landmark in the development of urban forestry in Britain.

One of the report's most significant findings had an immediate impact on central and local governments' stance on urban tree management. It found that 80 percent of trees, on the average, in the existing urban forests were on lands in private ownership. This statistic alone prompted many local authorities to re-examine their role in the management of the entire urban forest and not just the trees and woodlands they owned or managed directly. It emphasized the need to work more collaboratively with the other major organizations and groups that had a significant role to play in urban forestry and over which they had no direct control. The logical conclusion was to develop a long-term strategic plan that would embrace a partnership of organizations working together on common objectives throughout the entire urban forest. The emphasis on the production of urban tree strategies that became apparent among the increasing number of local authorities in the mid-1990s was undoubtedly due to the initial impetus provided by this report. Government interest in greening the cities was further evidence by its continuous and increase effort in the development of community

forests initiative. Twelve community forest projects, which concentrated on greening the urban fringe around major cities in England, were now "up and running".

Another major interest of government in greening the cities concerned the regeneration of urban parks. In 1993, the DoE commissioned a major survey into the use of public parks, the report of which gave birth to another initiative in 1995, called "Greening the City". Its aim was to promote discussion about the creation and management of landscapes in cities, to draw together examples of good practices and to encourage new approaches to landscape design. Incidentally, this initiative ended with the change of government in May 1997. The DoE also used the "Urban Forest Forum" in 1994 to promote the publication of a report entitled "Urban Tree Strategies", commissioned by Land Use Consultants. This report included detailed case studies of ten local authorities that had developed urban tree or woodland strategies. The examples were chosen to illustrate different methods and techniques that would identify possible constraints and opportunities in a way that might assist other local authorities in planning their own tree strategies. Since this was the first time that any study had been made of urban tree strategies in Britain, the publication of the report was a major contribution to promoting this important aspect of urban tree management.

The DoE continued in its effort to develop urban forestry, by forming the National Urban Forestry Unit (NUFU) out of the Black Country Urban Forestry Unit (BCUFU) in 1995. The formation of NUFU was predicated upon the success of BCUFU. The aims and activities of NUFU would be similar to those of BCUFU, but with a clear national remit. NUFU has eventually become one of the main driving forces behind the development of urban forestry in Britain. As an organization, it has grown rapidly and continues to attract substantial government support. Apart from its own series of imaginative projects, it has established a database of projects by many other organizations that are advising projects and initiatives throughout Britain.

The Conflict between Urban Forestry and Utility Services

An interesting aspect of urban forestry development in Britain was the controversy generated by the threat to urban trees by utility services providers, a situation that has become apparent in almost every town and city throughout Britain. This has given urban trees a much higher profile, as reflected in the amount of publicity given to the subject. The source of the threat was new development, mainly street works to lay utility services, and also through the construction of new roads.

Competition for space between trees and services in the built environment has always been intense, while the widespread lack of adequate protection for trees when installing new underground services or repairing existing ones has long been a subject of concern among those responsible for the management of the urban forest. Nevertheless, the introduction of cable television in Britain in the early 1990s took the problem to an entirely new dimension. This required a vast programme of civil engineering that would involve excavating service trenches along the length of almost every street in the country. And unless adequate safeguards were established and implemented, the work could result in the wholesale destruction of much of the nation's heritage of street trees.

The BCUFU was one of the first organizations to highlight the damage being inflicted on street trees, and the potential for the situation to become extremely serious unless action was taken immediately. In view of this situation, the BCUFU, supported by Wolverhampton Borough Council, organized the Trenching and Street Trees National Seminar. During this seminar, a video produced by the BCUFU on trenching and street trees was premiered. The video, together with an information sheet featuring six cartoons, detailed the measures that could be taken to protect trees. These have subsequently become widely used by the utility companies in training manual workers involved in trenching. In a related development, the National Joint Utilities Group – an association of the main utility companies, formed in 1977 to explore ways in which cooperation between its members and the country and local governments could overcome the difficulties encountered during street works produced –“NJUG 10: Guidelines for the

planning, installation and maintenance of utility services in proximity to trees." This was prepared in 1995, following several years of consultation with the arboriculture profession and the DoE. Furthermore, in the early 1990s, the threat to the nation's street trees from the utility companies had attracted considerable interest in the media. Hence, on 27 November 1996, BBC2 broadcast a 45-minute documentary entitled, 'City Trees; under the Axe...?' as part of its Nature Special Series. This was the first time that a major documentary on the subject of urban trees had been broadcast on network television. The BBC TV Programme also highlighted the other major threats to urban trees, which had caught the attention of the public and the media. This was the destruction of woodland that had taken place at several locations throughout the country to facilitate the building of new roads. While not exclusively affecting urban areas, many of the woodlands being destroyed or under threat were located in and around major towns and cities. The opposition to this was led by "new age" environmental campaigners, most of who were young people working closely with local conservation and residents' groups.

Though not directly relevant to the development of urban forestry, the anti-roads protest movement over the past years has had an enormous impact on public attitudes towards urban trees, as the public has been more aware of their value and the need to protect them in the face of development. Scenes of protesters being forcibly removed from the trees to enable contractors to move in with their bulldozers and chain saws have become frequent features on the nation's television news.

Urban Forestry Development in the Republic of Ireland

The concept of urban forestry began to be recognized by many relevant professionals in the Republic of Ireland in the early 1990s. Forestry in the Republic has always been concerned almost exclusively with commercial timber production in rural areas, often with a public that was not entirely sympathetic to environmental considerations. Hence urban trees and woodlands in the Republic have been the overall responsibility of local authorities, which employ a wide range of professionals, such as horticulturists, landscape architects and engineers, to undertake their management

(Johnston, 1997c). According to Johnston (op-cit), the publication of the first Irish textbook on urban trees, entitled "Manual on Urban Trees" written by McCullen and Webb in 1982, represented an important contribution to the dissemination of knowledge on the subject. Although it had little mention of the overall management of the urban trees and the term urban forestry was not used.

However, a major advancement in promoting discussion and action about trees and forests at a national level came with the formation of the Tree Council of Ireland in September 1984. Although concerned with trees in both urban and rural situations, the tree council immediately began to play a major role in promoting urban tree planting and management. The month that the Tree Council was founded, the first public lecture on urban forestry in the Republic was delivered by Andy Lipkis of the Tree People Projects in Los Angeles. A few years later, Alexander and Ciaran McGunley formed a new voluntary organisation called "Crann" to promote tree planting throughout Ireland. Crann eventually had a significant impact in the initial development of urban forestry in the Republic.

In early 1987, Crann began to consider developing a community-based urban forestry project in Dublin. By September of the same year, it produced a proposal for a major tree-planting project in Dublin entitled "Crann sa chathair" (tree in the city). This was a community-based project that aimed to plant 10,000 trees, divided equally between ten districts throughout the city. The trees would be planted by local community groups, mainly on publicly owned lands in their area. The Crann sa chathair, project which is significant in being the first project in the Republic to be promoted as an urban forestry initiative, eventually succeeded in its aim of planting 10,000 trees. It also organized some educational and arts events designed to raise awareness and appreciation of trees among community groups. Some of the achievements of Crann sa chathair included:

- i. The promotion of the concept of urban forestry in its project proposal and literature
- ii. The widespread coverage it received. This certainly raised the awareness of urban trees in the minds of many Dubliners,

thousands of whom were involved directly in tree planting and educational events.

- iii. The project was able to respond to the increased environmental awareness needs of the city's population at that time and to demonstrate the potential for a practical expression of this through community tree planting.

However, the project did not have overall success, in that most of the 10,000 trees planted died within six months of being planted (Johnston 1997c). This was largely due to the project's organisational difficulties, particularly its poor relationship with the local authorities on whose lands many of the trees were planted. Crann also failed to establish successful networking with its potential partners, something that could have encouraged them to respond more positively. Lastly, Crann failed to mobilize its Dublin membership to provide financial support for the community groups. Thus, although *Crann sa chathair* was conceived as an urban forestry initiative, its organisational difficulties made it more of a limited community tree planting and educational project. While many professionals were disappointed with its failure, there was some feeling that the experience gained from it could be usefully applied in future initiatives (Johnston 1997c).

The Role of Environmental Conservation Organization (ECO) in the early development of Urban Forestry in Ireland

In April 1990, the Environment Conservation Organization (ECO), a national voluntary organization for young people, launched its community Tree Nursery in Finglas district in northwest Dublin. The project besides propagating trees for use in the Finglas area, aimed to work with local schools in environment education programmes and to involve community groups in the planting and care of trees. Supported by Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FAS), a government-training agency, the trainees would undertake the practical work of developing the nursery and would also receive regular, practical and theoretical instructions as part of a structured course.

As the first community tree nursery to be established in the Republic, it soon gained widespread publicity for its work. Apart from distributing trees to local schools, it began to attract requests for trees from schools throughout the country. Every effort was made to

include an environmental education programme for each school, in addition to simply providing it with trees. In the project's second year, contracts were gained from local community groups, and with the agreement of Dublin Corporation Parks Department, it began to involve groups of residents in the planting and initial maintenance of trees on publicly owned lands. This was very successful, due largely to the good working relationship the project had established with the Parks Department, unlike Crann's strained relationship with the local authorities. From residential gardens and small groups of trees in nearby open spaces, the work expanded to establishing small community woodlots on local authority lands. Even though the project did not appear to be a comprehensive urban forestry initiative, it made a significant contribution to promoting the concept in the Republic. And most importantly, the project was an outstanding success, which impressed and inspired many professionals.

Following the success of its Finglas Community Tree Nursery project, ECO, in January 1992, produced a document entitled "Growing in the City", which outlined its urban forestry policy and its intention to promote the concept throughout Ireland. Later that year, ECO approached the Forest Services with a proposal to initiate a postgraduate study of urban forestry in Ireland at the University College, Dublin (UCD). The Forest Service agreed to fund the research with support from EU under the 1989-1993 forestry operational programmes. The fact that research on urban forestry was now being conducted at UCD and funded by the Forest Services helped to give credibility to the project. The research thesis submitted in 1994 was the first major review of urban forestry in the Republic of Ireland. In addition to a detailed review of the concept of urban forestry, the thesis included a case study of the potential for urban woodland creation in the form of an urban woodland proposal for Finglas. Based on a series of detailed site and community surveys, the proposed Finglas Wood project was intended to demonstrate how the principles of community involvement and urban woodland design and management could be applied in practice.

In September 1994, ECO launched its Urban Forestry Programme to promote the concept's application in the Republic among local authorities, relevant organizations, community groups, young people and the general public. The programme would provide support to local authorities and other organizations wishing to develop urban forestry projects under the forthcoming grant, and for urban woodland contained in the Operational Programme for Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry, 1994-1999. As part of this programme, ECO appointed a community Forestry Officer, later retitled Urban Forester, to lead the initiative. This was the first post to be specifically created to promote urban forestry in the Republic. In March 1995, ECO launched a report, entitled "A Strategy for urban forestry in Ireland", based on the aforementioned research thesis. Nearly 200 copies of this report were distributed to relevant organizations and individuals. The report played an invaluable role in promoting urban forestry throughout the Republic and establishing ECO as a leading organization in the field. It also included an account of the Finglas Wood project as a model for urban woodland creation and community involvement for organizations wishing to develop their own initiatives.

Following the launch of the report, ECO undertook a series of talks on urban forestry to a wide range of organizations and community groups. As a national youth organization, ECO was particularly keen on involving young people in urban tree planting and management, and a special effort was made to promote practical projects among ECO's associated clubs and schools. In May 1995, ECO launched its Community Forestry Resource Pack, aimed at post-primary level students and members of the public interested in becoming involved with trees and urban forestry in their locality. Sponsored by the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), some 2,000 copies of the pack were distributed to ECO members, affiliated schools and interested community groups. Through its Urban Forestry Programme from September 1994 to December 1996, ECO was able to play a leadership role in the development of urban forestry throughout the Republic. With the support of other national bodies, such as the Tree Council and the Forest Services, it kept interest in urban forestry alive, by developing its own initiatives, advising other organizations and

community groups, and initiating and maintaining a national urban forestry network of interested organizations and individuals.

The Forest of Limerick Project

The early interest in urban forestry in the Republic came to the attention of two individuals in the Department of Energy's Forest Services, John Fearon and Fergal Mully. Both played an important role in the development of urban forestry in the Republic. Fearon, a senior civil servant, tried to promote a more positive environment image for the forest industry, which was being criticised in the media for some of its commercial plantations in rural areas. He believed urban forestry was a way of promoting urban residents' understanding and appreciation of forestry practice in rural areas. As Fearon researched the subject, he immediately recognised its role in improving the quality of urban environment through the development of a strategic approach to the management of all urban trees and woodland. Fergal Mully shared Fearon's interest in urban forestry and the two began to discuss how the concept could be developed practically in towns and cities in the Republic.

Fearon decided that the best way to promote urban forestry and to pioneer the new grant scheme administered by Forest Services was to find a major urban centre where the local authority and other relevant agencies could be sufficiently enthused to develop a practical project. He then met with Daniel Deighan of Shannon Development who was also enthusiastic about the concept. Shannon Development then approached Limerick Corporation with which it worked closely, with a proposal to develop a partnership urban forestry project for the city.

This was welcomed by the local authority, which had considered ways to utilise its substantial areas of vacant lands in and around the city. The full proposal, which emphasised large scale tree planting, seemed to offer a solution for much of this land. Following initial discussion among interested parties, it was agreed that a project entitled the Forest of Limerick should be launched. The Forest of Limerick Advisory Group (FLAG) was then established to develop the project with representatives from the Forest Services, Limerick Corporation (local authority), Shannon Development and local

community and business groups. To provide the staff necessary to implement the project, Mully suggested that it should incorporate a training programme for unemployed people. Thus an agreement was made with a local training agency, People Action against Unemployment in Limerick (PAUL), to engage 10 trainees each year to work on the project during which they would receive instructions in forestry and horticultural skills.

The Forest of Limerick was launched in March 1991 by Minister Molloy, to coincide with the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Limerick. Tree planting began on four separate sites, totalling approximately 15 ha. Several community-planting activities were organised, including an imagination scheme to dedicate the trees on one of the sites to local children born during the city's tercentenary year.

The Forest of Limerick gave the Forest Services encouragement to continue its promotion of urban forestry, and to develop new grant schemes for urban woodland. It also achieved its objective of demonstrating the potential of urban forestry in a major urban area, particularly the value of an effective partnership of organizations working together and involving local community and business groups. The early success of the Forest of Limerick did more to promote urban forestry in the Republic than any previous initiative, and it clearly defined a model for urban forestry practice that could be replicated in other towns and cities. One of the most successful aspects of the project was the PAUL training course, which resulted in 17 of the 20 trainees obtaining permanent employment. The course also helped to create a positive image for the project, as it was seen to address the problem of high unemployment, a major concern among members of the local community.

Lessons for Nigeria

The story of urban forestry development in Britain and Ireland is a story of success, setbacks, and public-private partnership. The pioneering impact of the subtitling of "Arboricultural Journal", a highly regarded professional journal, as the "International Journal of Urban Forestry" cannot be over estimated. It introduced many British professionals to the field of urban forestry and also brought

professional recognition to urban forestry in Britain. Other similar progressive activities in urban forestry in Britain include the launching of urban forestry magazine and publication of urban forestry books, such as *Urban Forestry Practice* and *The Forestry Commission and Urban Forestry* both published by the Forestry Commission as well as *Advice Manual on the Preparation of a Community Forest Plan*, published by Countryside Commission.

The Forestry Association of Nigeria (FAN), which already has a highly rated professional and academic journal – *Nigerian Journal of Forestry* (NJF) – can initiate the publication of a special journal that will be dedicated to the promotion of urban forestry in Nigeria and possibly in Africa. There is no better time for such a journal than now, when the concern for the contributions of anthropogenic activities in urban environment to climate change and the campaign for massive tree planting for mitigation of climate change especially, in the urban area, are in a crescendo.

The setbacks experienced by the Motherwell and the Tower Hamlets Urban Forestry projects and the success recorded by the Black Country and Forests of London projects exemplify the need to enlist community and political support for urban forestry projects. In order to achieve sustainable urban forestry development, promoters of urban forestry projects will have to consult and seek the support/partnership of environmental NGOs, donor agencies, business organisations, local groups of residents, individuals, politicians, the media, etc., right from the planning, to the implementation and maintenance stages of the project (Ajewole 2008).

The important lessons to learn from urban forestry development in Ireland focus mainly on the laudable roles of environmental non government organisations in sustainable urban forestry development, as well as the link between well planned urban forestry projects and employment creation. In this regard, the pioneering roles in the promotion of urban forestry in Ireland and the successes recorded by the “Cran sa chathair” (Trees for the City) and the Environment Conservation Organization (ECO) are quite remarkable.

Furthermore, the partnerships between Environment Conservation Organization (ECO) and Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FAS), a government-training agency, as well as the one between the Forest of Limerick Advisory Group (FLAG) and People Action against Unemployment Limerick (PAUL), a local training agency, are germane pointers to the roles urban forestry development can play in generating employment. The National Directorate of Employment in Nigeria can liaise with any voluntary/ non governmental organisation that is involved in environmental conservation activities to jointly initiate training in production and management techniques for the establishment of urban trees, establish facilities to be used by the trainees for practical demonstration and also facilitate funding of the trainees in the production of appropriate planting materials for urban forest development

The success of Forests of London (FoL) project demonstrated the laudable impacts exciting and imaginative campaign can have in attracting media attention and raising the awareness of people on urban forestry. Lagos state government under the leadership of Mr Raji Fashola has effectively embarked on this kind of exciting and imaginative campaign for urban forestry development in Lagos State. The state's annual urban tree planting campaign since 2007 has been an impressive activity filled with pomp and pagentry, and complemented with wide media coverage. This has raised the awareness and stimulated the interest of Lagos residents and visitors in urban greening.

The Forests of London (FoL) project also promoted integrated approach to urban forestry development which was among other things responsible for its success. Integrated approach to urban forestry development demands that all agencies or organisations that are involved in urban management to be part and parcel of the planning of urban forestry project. This is very important in order to avoid conflicts between the activities or facilities of these agencies and the urban trees.

Another important lesson to learn from urban forestry development in Britain is the role that well timed and well organised conferences

can play in urban forestry development. Conference boosted the Black Country urban forestry initiative even when the practical planting scheme was slow. Conferences are needed to raise awareness about urban forestry, precipitate and sustain urban forestry movement. The Forestry Association of Nigeria, which is the apex body for forestry profession in Nigeria, and other prominent environmental non-governmental organisations, such as the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) can take up the responsibility for the development of an urban forestry movement in Nigeria. The activities of such a movement will, to a large extent, be political, as it would serve as pressure/lobby group to push for the formulation of concrete policy and legislation on urban greening, establishment of suitable administrative mechanism and networking with other organisations as well as the development of programmes for urban forestry. Such a movement will also serve as the propaganda machinery for creating awareness, and soliciting support for an urban forestry project (Ajewole 2005).

Conclusion

It is apparent from the experience of Britain and Ireland that sustainable urban forestry development requires the commitment and concerted efforts of strategically placed individuals of substance and non-government organisations to initiate and sustain an urban forestry movement. This is similar to the conclusion of Ajewole (2006), which called for the immediate formation of an urban forestry working group that will, among other things, serve as a think tank for urban forestry movement in Nigeria. The charge by Ajewole (op-cit) to the Forestry Association of Nigeria (FAN) to take up the challenge and the responsibility of starting urban forestry movement in Nigeria is still germane to sustainable urban forestry development in the country.

The Forestry Association of Nigeria, being the apex body for forestry profession in the country is strategically placed, as it possesses the requisite wherewithal to put in place an urban forestry working group, organise special conferences and seminars on urban forestry, launch an urban forestry journal, network with other relevant stakeholders and serve as a lobby and pressure group for sustainable urban forestry development in Nigeria.

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