



INTRODUCTION

The Directors of Just Forests are delighted to present this Annual Report on the work of the organisation from September 2007 to August 2008.

As a very small NGO, Just Forests is very limited in what impact the organisation can have on the overall problems associated with global deforestation. However, Just Forests does have a role to play in advancing public support for sustainable forestry as part of its overall efforts to deal with poverty and climate change.

OUR ACTIVITIES

T4-Technology Subjects Support Service:

We are delighted to report that after many years of working with and canvassing Construction Studies Teachers, work commenced in April 2008 on a joint 3 YEAR project. T4 represents 1200 technology teachers in Ireland, including Construction Studies and Woodwork. We have established formal links with the teachers through their Support Service. This is a major target group for Just Forests as we get to influence the thousands of students who will possibly become our next generation of engineers, architects, builders, etc. We also get to influence a large group of teachers through working with them. Just Forests will spend approximately 20,000 Euros on this project in year 1. To date we have established a plan of action with T4 and attach a copy of that progress for your attention. This is a very valid endorsement of the development education content of the exhibition.

Wood of Life Exhibition:

The Wood of Life, travelling, hands-on exhibition is Just Forests main activity. The exhibition is currently on display in the new public library in Clones, Co Monaghan, until 31st August 2008. It was officially opened there on Monday last, 11th August 2008, by the Lord Mayor of Clones, Cllr. Matt Carthy. The exhibition visited 16 other venues since July 2007 and includes, Edenderry Public Library; The Education Centre, Tralee; The Education Centre, Dunmanway; The Education Centre, Galway; Concern HQ, Dublin (for Council meeting); Cork City Public Library; NUI- Maynooth; Thurles Public Library; Clarion Hotel, Limerick for the UBUNTU Network Dialogue Day; Athlone Education Centre in association with T4 Technology Subjects Support in-Service; De Valera Public Library Ennis; Shannon Public Library; The Education Centre Navan; Kilkee Public Library; Mullingar Public Library; Blanchardstown Public Library.

The exhibition is booked out until November 2009. The schedule of venues is available on our website at the following link: http://www.justforests.org/wood_of_life/schedule/

The interaction of students and teachers with the exhibition by means of our 'activity sheets' is very heartening. Teachers are also given a follow-on classroom project sheet where they can do the suggested activities with the pupils based on the information/learning during their visit to the exhibition.

***Retired Teachers and the exhibition;***

We try to engage the services of retired teachers to conduct workshops at each venue. This has proved very useful and gives our coordinator a break from the exhibition to pursue our other activities. Formal contact with the TUI-RMA (**Teaches Union of Ireland – Retired Members Association**) has also commenced. Our coordinator made a presentation at their request at their February 2008 A.G.M., in Sligo. The purpose of which is to employ retired teachers to give workshops at Wood of Life venues to pupils using their teaching experience and Just Forests activity sheets. The response was very favourable. A number of retired teachers have already indicated they will participate. (see attached Secretary's Report to AGM in Sligo which mentions RMU contact with Wood of Life)

Transition Unit (TU): Last year, on a suggestion from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Just Forests discussed the possibility of piloting a Transition Unit (TU) on 'sustainability' with teachers in Tullamore College. The initiative was favourably received, unfortunately lack of funds and other obstacles (capacity issues) prevented follow-up. In a recent communiqué from our contact in the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) we were informed that this 'pilot' can still go ahead. Further phone calls and emails with the new transition year coordinator in Tullamore College before the summer holidays proved very positive. She is willing to re-negotiate this project with the view to piloting the TU in September of this year, 2008. If the TU meets all the criteria of NCCA it can then be used as a template in all schools nationwide where transition units/modules are undertaken. Like our friends in T4, this too is a major target group for Just Forests.

The Sound of Wood Project revival:

Some of you may remember that in the Bridge House, Tullamore, in 1995 Just Forests held a *Sound of Wood Concert* as part of our Rain Forest Week 1995 activities, which made a link between declining wood species, musical instrument-making and music, in both the Irish and the developing world context. The event was over-subscribed so we had to turn people away. It was a most enjoyable night and a great success in relation to our mission. The event received great local publicity.

In March 2008, our coordinator met with one of our board members, Brendan Morgan, (Hamco Industries Ltd) to discuss the revival of the Sound of Wood Project. Brendan very kindly donated €1000.00 to kick-start the initiative.

This initiative has huge ramifications for developing countries as the major sources of wood used for musical instrument making comes mainly from tropical/sub-tropical regions-particularly East Africa, where Irish Aid have a very high profile. We applied to Irish Aid in the June 2007 Funding Round for support for this initiative which impacts, livelihoods, biodiversity, forest management and culture, but unfortunately failed to receive funding. However, in recent discussions, Concern has already expressed great interest, and indicated they would be prepared to support a 3-YEAR programme of The Sound of Wood Concert Tour. The Irish Times wrote an article about it recently (see article below) and the RTE Arts Show aired an interview on April 9th 2008, with our coordinator and two musicians who happen to be musical instrument makers.



While this project has great possibility to engage a totally new target group (music lovers and musical instrument makers from all musical disciplines), there is a lot of work to be done on this project to make it professional and workable. Paul Brady has indicated his intention to support the project.

Advocacy/Campaigning/Lobbying/Educating:

Government White Paper on Irish Aid 2006.

The Government intends that every person in Ireland will have access to educational opportunities to understand their rights and responsibilities as global citizens as well as their potential to effect change for a more just and equal world.

Just Forests background identifies us as being primarily a development education (DE) organisation. However, we also recognise and embrace other educational approaches, in particular, education for sustainable development (ESD)

1. We understand development education (DE) to be:

Development education is an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship and participation. It is about supporting people in understanding, and in acting to transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives and the lives of others at personal, community, national and international levels.' (Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2007-2011 'Promoting Public Engagement for Development')

2. We understand education for sustainable development (ESD) to be:

Education for Sustainable Development develops and strengthens the capacity of individuals, groups, communities and organisations to make judgements and choices in favour of sustainable development². The four main thrusts of ESD were defined by Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit³:

- promotion and improvement of basic education
- reorientation of existing education programs
- developing public understanding and awareness of sustainability
- training.

Key themes in ESD include: poverty alleviation, citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility in local and global contexts, democracy and governance, justice, security, human rights, health, gender equity, cultural diversity, production and consumption patterns, corporate responsibility, environmental protection, natural resource management and biological and landscape diversity.

Just Forests have identified the following groups/public bodies as appropriate and legitimate target groups for our focus as set out in our aims and objectives, i.e.

**Extract from Just Forests aims and objectives:**

Contribute to increased public awareness and critical understanding of the link between sustainable forest management and poverty reduction by advancing public support for sustainable forestry and the importance of Irish society sourcing its timber needs from responsibly-managed forests worldwide:

Target Groups:

- *Teachers and schools;*
See ACTIVITIES
- *Architects;*
We maintain an on-going liaison with the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI) through their education director. Please see attached email and refer to our 3 YEAR Plan.
- *Timber Traders;*
Our coordinator met privately with 5 timber traders (separately) to answer their questions about responsible timber sourcing and independent forest certification and what they need to do to comply with the objectives of a RESPONSIBLE TIMBER POLICY.
Please see attached email sent to all timber trade representative bodies on 13 August 2008. Also refer to our 3 YEAR Plan
- *Local Authorities;*
In June 2008, Just Forests coordinator protested outside Offaly Co Council's headquarters in Tullamore for four days to highlight the Council's failure to implement its own 'timber procurement policy'.
In 2001 Offaly Co Council became the first Local Authority in Ireland to formally adopt Just Forests timber policy to much fanfare.
Please see attached email sent to Offaly Co Council on 13 August 2008. Also refer to our 3 YEAR Plan.
In June 2008, Westmeath Co Council was contacted re the use of illegally-logged plywood in their work in Mullingar. A copy of our Good Wood Policy Guide was also sent to the Director of Services inviting him to get in touch with Just Forests to avoid similar situation happening in the future. The issue received much media cover in Westmeath press. Please see 3 YEAR Plan.
- *Government departments*
In January 2008 Just Forests coordinator went on a one day fast outside the new Irish Aid Education Centre in O'Connell St, Dublin, in response to the use of illegally-logged plywood in the fitting out of the centre. The protest coincided with the official opening of the Centre by The Taoiseach at the time, Mr. Bertie Ahern. (full report is available on our website at: <http://www.justforests.org/iacentre.php>)



In February 2008, documents were sent to the Taoiseach, Mr. Ahern, outlining what needs to be done to ensure Ireland does not participate in the ***illegal logging** issue. As a result Just Forests was invited by the Chairman of the Dail Committee on Environment, Deputy Sean Fleming, T.D., to make a presentation. A date has yet to be fixed.

Proposals to Government for funding to influence policy on Public Procurement (timber):

In August 2008 Just Forests submitted two Concept Notes to, a) Department of the Environment and b) The Taoiseach's office.

A. *To coincide with the Department of the Environment's [CHANGE.IE](#) Programme*

(Government) Timber Procurement Policy –now recognised internationally as a significant policy tool for better forest management, natural resource security, greenhouse gas abatement and livelihood support.

B. *In October 2008, the Taoiseach will inform the UN how Ireland is meeting its obligations to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). GOAL 7 of the MDGs deals with Environmental Sustainability/Resource Security/Biodiversity.*

(Government) Timber Procurement Policy –now recognised internationally as a significant policy tool for better forest management, natural resource security, greenhouse gas abatement and livelihood support.

- *Construction Industry Federation (CIF)*

There have been numerous attempts/efforts made by Just Forests to engage with the CIF on timber issues since 1989 (records available).

In 2002 the present Director General of the CIF, Mr. Tom Parlon, then Minister of State at the Department of Finance with responsibility for the Office of Public Works (OPW), personally ordered 30 copies of our Good Wood Policy Guide for all architects in the OPW.

In December 2007, after a number of phone calls and emails to Mr. Aiden Burke, Education Officer in the CIF, it was agreed by both parties that a meeting would take place 'after 8th January 2008 to discuss in more depth a possible development education (DE) and education for sustainable development (ESD) project between Just Forests and the Construction Industry Federation (CIF).' Unfortunately, this meeting has not taken place yet due to time constraints on the coordinator of Just Forests. Please see 3 YEAR Plan.

- *General public;*

We try to engage the public in our education for sustainable development and development education projects by means of presentations to groups, our website, articles in local and national press/radio and the Wood of Life exhibition. The public have also been very supportive of our public displays of advocacy on the street.

- *Media;*

Articles are sent to local and national media relating to our aims and objectives. We also cooperate with local and national radio/television when requested to do so.



Networking with other groups:

- *Irish Development Education Association (IDEA)*; Just Forests are paid up members of IDEA.
- *FOREST Connect*; This is an initiative of the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), the highly respected UK-based international NGO. IIED works to enhance prospects for small and medium forest enterprises – in particular those that are community based, democratically owned and responsibly run. Our coordinator attended *'The First International Workshop to Develop a Toolkit for the Facilitation of Support for Small Forest Enterprises'* held in Edinburgh, Scotland, 2-4 July 2008. Report is available on our website at: <http://www.justforests.org/deforestation.php> and it's the first report on the top right hand side of the webpage.
- *Irish Environmental Network (IEN)*; Just Forests are one of a number of Irish NGOs linked to IEN.
- *Stop Climate Chaos*; We are members of [Stop Climate Chaos](#), a coalition of Irish environment and development organisations with a common goal.
- *UBUNTU Network*; Just Forests is one of three NGO's representing IEN on this [steering committee](#). The UBUNTU Network supports the integration of Development Education (DE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into Post Primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Ireland.
- *Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) of Offaly Co Council*; Offaly Community Forum representative on this SPC. It was through this SPC we managed to get Offaly Co Council to adopt our 'timber policy' in 2001.
- *The Wheel*; Paid up member of this 'Organisational Capacity Building' body.
- *Central Point of Expertise on Timber Procurement (CPET)*; CPET aims to provide information related to the implementation of the UK Government's timber procurement policy, which has now become an internationally recognized policy tool. Just Forests liaises with CPET in an on-going effort to get the Irish Government to adopt the very successful UK model. See 3 YEAR Plan for more on this timely initiative. In October 2008, TR will participate in a CPET workshop to be held in Oxford, UK.
- *The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)*; Just Forests was the FSC-endorsed Contact in the Republic of Ireland for seven years. Through this body we initiated forest standards development discussion at a meeting in Navan in November 1993. We hosted a meeting in An Taisce, Dublin, on Friday 22 January, 1999, that established an Irish steering committee. FSC is now represented by IFCI in Ireland. Just Forests are paid up members of FSC International as of January 2008.
- *Tropical Forest Trust (TFT)*; Please see 3 YEAR Plan.
- *Irish Forestry Certification Initiative (IFCI)*; Just Forests will attend the AGM of IFCI in September 2008. We are paid up members of IFCI. Just Forests will engage with IFCI in some capacity on the development of an FSC-Forest Standard for the Republic of Ireland.
- *FERN- a Brussels'-based Forest Campaigning NGO*. We cooperate with FERN on forest policy at EU level, such as FLEGT
- *World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-UK)*; We cooperate with WWF on timber procurement issues for Local Authorities
- *Greenpeace-UK*; Greenpeace-UK have been very helpful to us in providing sensitive data. We carry some of their press releases on our website relating to timber procurement and illegal logging.



- *Concern Worldwide;*
Our coordinator has visited a number of Concern's re-forestation projects in Tanzania and Cambodia. Over the past three years Concern has been our largest funder.
- *Irish Aid (Department of Foreign Affairs);*
We have attended numerous seminars/workshops organised and hosted by Irish Aid. Irish Aid is our second largest funder.

OUR FINANCES

Just Forests funding application in January 2008, to Irish Aid was successful. It is our largest allocation ever from Irish Aid, at €52,000. A copy of the letter received from Irish Aid on Friday last 28th March was posted to all board members on 30 March 2008. Concern's financial support for Just Forests programme for 2008-09 would be €50,000.

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

At our board meeting on Friday 28th April 2008 in Tom Farrell's office, O'Connor Square, Tullamore, we discussed organisational capacity building within Just Forests based on the booklet '*Solid Foundations*' which has been produced by The Wheel-an umbrella organisation for non-profit/voluntary organisations of which we are a member. This booklet is the starting point to 'capacity building' within Just Forests, which was a component of our funding application to Irish Aid in January 2008. The new '*Charities Bill*' may impact on us. It is important therefore that we discuss the '*Charities Bill*' and '*capacity building*' initiatives applicable to Just Forests in more detail at our next Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Saturday 13th September 2008.

On 30 March 2008, copies of The Wheel's booklet '*Solid Foundations*' were posted to all board members of Just Forests.

Website(s):

We place great emphasis on the web as a means of disseminating information on our work. All our activity sheets, brochures and follow-on classroom project sheets, press releases, etc, can be downloaded by teachers and pupils anywhere in Ireland (or the world) with a few clicks of a mouse. We also provide access to appropriate/supportive reports by our associates from our site(s). Just Forests now have two website domains registered- www.justforests.org which is our main website. This website contains reference to our main work and is up-dated weekly by the coordinator. We also have a site registered www.thesoundofwood.com which is dedicated to our Sound of Wood Project. This site is presently being up-graded by a professional web designer and when completed will be up-dated weekly by our coordinator.

Now-a-days the printed message can have a very limited life span. Therefore, we find that the website(s) can be a very effective means of transmitting a message that is fresh and current and appropriate to the target group in question. Both sites are linked.

Staff training/matters:

Our long-time bookkeeper and one time office assistant Gloria Telford retired in February 2008. Gloria was renowned for her meticulous accountancy skills and dedication to her work. Just Forests will make a presentation to Gloria for her years of dedication at our 2008 AGM in September.

Just Forests coordinator undertook a number of training days with a web designer in September 2007 and January 2008. Further training will be received as the www.thesoundofwood.com website becomes more active/professional.



Irish Times article re The Sound of Wood Project:

'An estimated 200 different species of trees are used to make musical instruments. Ebonies, rosewoods and mahoganies have been valued for centuries for their resonance and beauty. But now, according Irish non-governmental organisation Just Forests, at least 70 of these species are in serious decline and are threatened with extinction in the wild. "Timber species decline is not just a third world issue," says Tom Roche of Just Forests. "The fear that the majestic Sitka Spruce of Alaska-the main species for numerous musical instrument soundboards- could be gone in six years has prompted Gibson Guitars, Martin Guitars and Baldwin Pianos to join forces with Greenpeace to act." To draw attention to these issues, Just Forests is organising a Sound of Wood concert tour for 2008-2009. "We want musical artists to reflect this present-day tragedy in their music and inspire Irish music-lovers into action to address this problem of global importance," says Roche. More information on 046-9737545, www.thesoundofwood.com.' © The Irish Times. Saturday, March 8, 2008.

***illegal -logging**

Illegal logging and the international trade in illegally logged timber is a major problem for many timber-producing countries in the developing world. It causes environmental damage, costs governments billions of dollars in lost revenue, promotes corruption, undermines the rule of law and good governance and funds armed conflict. It retards sustainable development in some of the poorest countries of the world. Consumer countries contribute to these problems by importing timber and wood products without ensuring that they are legally sourced. In recent years, however, producer and consumer countries alike have paid increasing attention to illegal logging. Consumer countries like Ireland contribute to these problems by importing timber and wood products without ensuring that they are legally sourced through credible third-party verification. Around the world, illegal logging, criminal exploitation and trade in forest resources are destroying forest ecosystems, undermining the livelihoods of local communities and depriving governments in transition of much-needed revenue.

It is estimated that *60% of all tropical timber entering the EU is coming from un-managed forests around the world and is illegally logged (*[Stern Review](#)).