

Review

Educational Planning in Nigeria: Strategies for improvement

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This paper traces the origin of planning Education in Nigeria. The paper shows that planning education in Nigeria follows her colonial history in the sense that most of the earlier planners in the country were trained abroad until University of Ibadan was established as a college of University of London in 1948. Earlier planners were trained as geographers before their training in planning. Many Universities and Polytechnics are now involved in Planning Education up to PhD level. The paper also shows that there are professional training opportunities as administered by The Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria [TOPREC] and the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners [NITP]. The paper concludes by making recommendations on how to move Planning Education forward in contemporary Nigeria.

Key words: Planning, education, colonial, institute, professional.

INTRODUCTION

There are as many definitions of Planning as there are Planners. This is because planning is a multi-faceted discipline which is so diverse in nature. In a nutshell, and according to Amokaye (2004), "Planning as a concept is a terminology that is very difficult to define but it has been agreed to involve a very complex management activity that requires integrating the physical and biological resources in compatible use, and coordinating social, cultural, economic, legal and political demands and constraints. It is effectively the operation of land use policy that reflects the value system of any society at any given time. As observed earlier by Allison (1975) "planning consideration reflects the political, social and economic interest of the government".

Planning is the orderly arrangement of physical structures in order to make the environment aesthetically pleasing. Olayemi (2000) sees planning as the preparation and construction of plans in accordance with which growth and extension of a town, is to be regulated so as to make the most of the natural advantages of the site, and to secure the most advantageous conditions of housing and traffic etc.

The import of planning can be better understood when we look at what Planners do and in this direction, we shall rely on the submissions of the Planning Institute of Australia (2006).

Planners are involved in the following activities.

- i.) Compilation and analyzing data on legal, political, cultural, demographic, sociological, physical and environmental factors affecting land-use.
- ii.) Conferring or liaising with a wide range of government bodies, interested stakeholders and the community.
- iii.) Recommends measures to address land-use, environmental, community, transport, housing and infrastructure issues.
- iv.) Advises government and other interested parties on urban, regional, environmental and resource management issues.

Whichever way we view planning, it is about people, it is by the people and it is for the people. Consequently, it is futuristic; it is an act of formulating a programme for a definite course of action.

Planning Education (PE) must be addressed by all the stakeholders in the field of environmental management. This paper is designed to bring into bear, the level of PE in Nigeria (a rapidly urbanizing country in the world).

Planning education (PE) in Nigeria

Planning Education (PE) in Nigeria is of three types.

- i.) Educational Training

ii.) Professional Training iii.)
NITP/TOPREC Training

PE in Nigeria is discussed under two main phases. Phase I: PE before independence
Phase II: PE after independence

Phase I: Planning Education (PE before independence)

PE in Nigeria before independence follows the colonial history of the country when we depended virtually on Britain. During this period, the few trained Planners were trained overseas except for the few Geographers that were trained at the University of Ibadan (a college of University of London) The first Professor of Geography in Nigeria Prof. Akin Mabogunje (a graduate of this Institute) contributed immensely to the field of planning globally. Today, Professor Akin Mabogunje is being celebrated as one of the great Planners of Abuja (the Federal capital of Nigeria) which was created in 1976. His role in Planning and Planning Education (PE) has earned him a honorary Fellow of Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP).

Earlier professionals were first trained as Geographers before they finally moved into Planning. Several of them were trained in University of Nottingham, England and the University of Australia, Melbourne among others.

Phase II: Planning Education (PE) after independence (1960 to Date)

With the arrival of some of these foreign trained Geographers/Planners, series of efforts were mounted on government and spirited individuals on the need for Planning Education (PE) in Nigeria. Series of meetings were held at the instance of Tpl. Pa. Solomon Tokun (Doyen of Planning in Nigeria) in Ibadan and Lagos on the need to establish a functional Institute for town planners in Nigeria. By September, 1966, the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) was established with thirty members from different parts of Nigeria. Late Chief M. O. Onafowokan was elected as the first President of the Institute in 1968. He served in that capacity till 1974.

The foregoing laid a solid foundation for Planning Education (PE) in Nigeria.

Planning institutions in Nigeria

The first planning school in Nigeria is the Polytechnic, Ibadan (then Technical College). It was established in 1961 (a year after the country's independence). At inception, the school offered a three year course leading to the award of Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in

Town Planning. This was on till 1977 when the Higher National Diploma (HND) programme (equivalent to a first degree) was introduced. Prior to this time, that is, in 1974, the Full Professional Diploma (FTP) in Town Planning was introduced with the assistance of the United National Development Programme (UNDP) under Professor Vagale (an Indian).

The student population in the 1960s ranges between ten and twelve. There was an upsurge in the population in 1999/2000 session to one hundred and eighty-nine students including the Saki campus. The staffing position at inception was very impressive with seventeen core academic staff members.

The second Planning School, Yaba College of Technology took off in 1972 with a two year full time Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Town Planning. By 1978, the Higher National Diploma (HND) programme was introduced and in 1989, the Post Graduate Diploma in Town Planning was introduced to take care of training requirements of Professionals. The first Planning School in Northern Nigeria was established in 1973 at the Kaduna Polytechnic as Department of Town Planning and Estate Management. It started with the Ordinary National Diploma (HND) in Town Planning and Estate Management. Sixteen years after, the Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) programme was introduced for the manpower requirements of Northern Nigeria. Today, the Institute has produced about five hundred and three graduates. With the recent Federal Government directive, Kaduna Polytechnic and Yaba College of Technology have been converted to Universities. The implication of this conversion is that their Planning programmes are expected to be overhauled to meet global trends in Planning Education (PE).

Today, several universities and polytechnics are involved in Planning Education (PE) in Nigeria, A comprehensive list of these schools and their status are contained in (Table 1).

NITP/TOPREC qualifying examinations for those that are not directly registrable as professionals

The Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) and the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC) have developed a curriculum in Planning Education (PE) in Nigeria. For others and graduates in allied disciplines such as Geography, Sociology, Law, Architecture, Estate Management, Civil Engineering, Surveying and among others, there is a qualifying examination in three parts. Each of the parts has three stages, that is;

- i.) Preliminary stage has three parts
- ii.) Intermediate stage has three parts
- iii.) Final stage also has three parts

Candidates with the Ordinary School Certificate must

Table 1. Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC)

Accreditation status of professional urban and regional planning programmes in Nigeria's tertiary institutions

S/NO.	Planning institutions and programmes	Date(s) accreditation conducted	Sessions/accreditation coverage	REMARKS
01	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (B.U.R.P)	28 th – 29 th Oct. 1992 16 th – 17 th June, 1997 14 th – 17 th Nov. 2001 13 th – 16 th Feb. 2006	1991/92 and 1992/93 Sessions 1993/94, 1995/97, 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000 2001/2002, 2002/2003-2004 2004-2005/, 2005/2006, 2006/2007, 2007/2008 and 2008/2009	Provisional Accreditation (2 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Provision (2 years) Full Accreditation (5 years)
02	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (M.Sc. URP)	1973/74, 1980, 1985 (NITP) 26 th -27 th June 1991 16 th -17 th June 1997 14 th -17 th Nov. 2001 13 th -16 th Feb. 2006	1873 to 1989/90 1990/91 – 1994/95 1992/93, 1996/97, 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003-2004 respectively 2004/2005, 2005/2006, 2006/2007, 2007, 2008 and 2008/2009	Full Accreditation of 5 years each Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (3 years) Provisional Accreditation (3 years) Full accreditation (5 years)
03	Abia State University, Uturu (B.U.R.P)	14 th -15 th Feb. 1990 9 th -10 th Feb. 1994 17 th -20 th Nov. 1998 26 th -29 th April, 2004	1989/90, 1990/91 1991/92, 1992/93, 1993/95 and 1995/96 1996/97, 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000, 2000/2001 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 respectively	Provisional (2 years) Provision (4 years) Full accreditation (5 years) Provisional (4 years)
04.	Enugu State University, Enugu (B.U.R.P.)	25 th -26 th May, 1995 5 th -8 th August, 1998 1 st -3 rd Nov., 2004	1993/95, 1995/96, 1996/97 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 respectively 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 sessions	Provisional (3 years) Full accreditation (5 years) Full accreditation (5 years)
05	Enugu State University (MURP)	25 th -26 th May, 1995	1993/95 – 1996/97 sessions	Provisional (3 years)
06	Federal University of Technology, Akure (B. Tech.)	23 rd -24 th April, 1997 14 th -16 th Dec. 1999 14 th -15 th June, 2004	1995/96, 1996/97, 1997/98 sessions 1998/99, 1999/2000, 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003 sessions 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2005/2006 and 2006/2007	Provisional (3 years) Full accreditation (5 years) Provisional (4 years)
06b	(i) Post Graduate Diploma FUTA	14 th -16 th Dec. 1999 7 th -10 th Oct. 2002	1999/2000 and 2000/2001 sessions 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2005/2006 sessions 2003/2004, 2004/2005 sessions	Provisional (2 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Provisional (2 years)

Table 1. Contd.

07	University of Nigeria, Nsuka (BURP) ii) MURP UNN (BURP) UNN (MURP)	1986 1987/88 23 rd and 24 th May, 1995 1 st and 3 rd Sept. 199 29 th May–1 st June, 2005	1986/87 1987/88, 1988/89 and 1990/91 sessions 1991/92 and 1992/93, 1993/94, 1995/96, 1996/97 and 1997/98 sessions 1998/99, 1999/2000, 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 sessions. 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 sessions 2003/2004, 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 sessions.	Provisional (1 year) Provisional (4 years) 1 year waiver and Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Provisional (3 years)
08	Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife (B.Sc., URP) Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife M.Sc. (U.R.P.)	12 th -13 th Feb. 1990 27 th – 28 th May, 1997 2 nd -4 th Dec. 2003 May, 1985 12 th -13 th Feb. 1997 27 th -28 th May, 1997 2 nd – 4 th Dec. 2003	1989/90, 1990/91, 1991/92, 1992/93, 1993/95 1995/96 – 1999/2000 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 sessions 1984/90, 1990/91, 1991/92, 1992/93, 1993/1994 1995/96, 1996/97, 1997/98 1998/99, 1999/2000 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 20004/2005 2004/2005, 2005/2006 sessions	Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Provisional (1 year) Full accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years)
09	University of Benin, Benin (M.U.R.P)	1986 and 1988 (NITP) 29 th – 30 th May, 1990	1/5/85 – 30/4/87 and 30/4/87 – 29/4/98 sessions 1889/90 and 1990/91 sessions	Provisional Accred. (2 years each) Provisional Accrd. (2 years) had lapses and no feedback from them: some sets have graduated without accreditation, no recognition granted for such sets.
10.	University of Ibadan, Ibadan (M.U.R.P)	1983 (NITP) April 1985 (NITP) 16 th -17 th July, 90 23 rd – 24 th August, 1995 30-11-02 3 rd – 5 th Feb. 2004	1982/83 – 1983/84 1985/86, 1986/87, 1987/88 1988/89, 1989/90 1990/91, 1991/92, 1992/93 1993/95, 1995/96 1996/97 and 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005	Provisional (2 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Provisional (2 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Provisional by Council Full Accreditation (5 years)

Table 1. Contd.

11	River State University of Science and Technology, P/Harcourt (B. Tech.)	10 th – 11 th Dec. 90 8 th – 9 th Oct. 1998 3 rd – 6 th November, 2004 and 22 nd April 2005	1990/91 and 1991/92 sessions 1997/1998 session only 2004/2005, 2005/2006, 2006/2007 2007/2008 and 2008/2009	Provisional (2 years) Provisional (1 year) Full Accreditation (5 years)
12	Kaduna Polytechnic (OND/HND)	25 th – 26 th June, 91 7 th – 8 th May, 1996 16 th – 17 th Nov. 1998 22 nd – 24 th Oct. 2002	1990/91 and 1991/92 sessions 1992/93, 1993/94, 1994/95, 1995/96 and 1996/97 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 sessions 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005 and^ 2005/2006 sessions.	Provisional Accreditation (2 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Provisional Accreditation (4 years) Full Accreditation (5 years)
13.	Yaba College of Technology, Yaba (Postgraduate Diploma)	13 th -14 th Dec. 1989 17 th and 18 th Feb. 1994 28 th – 29 th June, 1999 12 th – 14 th June, 2004	1990/91, 1991/92 sessions 1992/93 – 1996/97 sessions 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000, 2000/2001, 2001/2002 sessions. 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2005/2006, 2006/2007 sessions.	Provisional Accreditation (2 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years)
14.	The Polytechnic, Ibadan i) Post-HND ii) Part-Time Post-HND	1974 1984 1991 17 th – 18 th June, 97 17 th – 19 th Feb. 02 17 th – 19 th Feb. 02	1975/76 – 1979/80 1980/81 – 1984/85 1985/86 – 1989/90 1990/91 – 1994/95 1995/96 – 1999/2000. 2000/2001 – 2001/2002 2001/2002 – 2002/2003 sessions	Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) Provision (2 years) Provisional (2 years) Provisional (3 years)
15.	Federal University of Technology, Yola (i) (B. Tech. (ii) (M. Tech.)	10 th – 12 th April, 1996 10 th – 13 th Sept. 2000 27 th – 28 th July, 2004 28 th – 29 th July, 2004 10 th – 15 th April, 2006	1992/93 – 1994/95 1998/99, 1999/2000, 2000/2001, 2001/2002 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 INCONCLUSIVE 2005/2006, 2006/2007 sessions	Provisional (3 years) Provisional (4 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) NO ACCREDITATION GRANTED Provisional (2 years)
16.	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho (B. Tech.) P.G.D. M. Tech.	8 th – 10 th July, 1997 19 th – 21 st Feb. 2002 NOT YET	1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2005/2006 PRESENTED FOR	Provisional (3 years) Full Accreditation (5 years) TOPREC ACCREDITATION

Table 1. Contd.

17.	Federal University of Technology Minna (B.Tech.)	18 th – 21 st Oct. 1998 8 th – 11 th Dec. 2001	1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003 and 2003/2004	Provisional Accreditation (3 years) Provisional Accreditation (4 years)
18.	Lagos State University (MURP)	27 th – 29 th Nov. 1999 10 th – 13 th June, 2004	1998/1999, 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 2003/2004, 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 (No 2002/2003 session in the institution)	Provisional Accreditation (1 year) Provisional Accreditation (3 year)
19.	Federal Polytechnic, Auchi	9 th – 10 th Nov. 1999 10 th – 13 th Sept. 2000 23 rd – 26 th Aug. 2004	1997/98 session. 1998/99, 1999/200, 2000/2001 2001/2002 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 sessions	Provisional Accreditation (1 year) Provisional Accreditation (4 years) Full Accreditation (5 years)
20.	Imo State University	21 st – 24 th Oct. 2001 12 th – 14 th May, 2004	1999/2000 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005, and 2005/2006 sessions	Provisional (1 year) Provisional Accreditation (4 years)
21.	University of Uyo BURP and (MURP)	1 th – 13 th March, 1999 25 th May, 2002 9 th – 11 th May, 2004	Advisory Accreditation 1999/2000, 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 sessions	NIL Provisional (3 years) Provisional Accreditation (4 years)
22.	Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	31 st Jan. 2 nd Feb. 2001	Advisory Accreditation	NIL ACCREDITATION
23.	University of Lagos	13 th – 15 th Feb. 2001 26 th – 29 th Nov. 2002 22 nd – 23 rd Sept. 2003	Advisory visitation 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 respectively 2004/2005, 2005/2006, 2006/2007, 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 sessions. No. 2003/2004 session.	NIL Provisional Accreditation (2 years) Full Accreditation (5 years)
24.	University of Jos	16 th – 19 th Jan. 2006	Advisory Accreditation visitation	NIL ACCREDITATION
25.	Benue State University	5 th – 7 th Oct. 2005	Advisory Accreditation visitation	NIL ACCREDITATION
26.	Cross River University	1 st – 2 nd June, 2006	Advisory Accreditation visitation	NIL ACCREDITATION

Dated 14th November, 2005 by the Registrar of Town Planners Registration Council (TOPREC)

Source: NITP 40th Anniversary celebrations, (2006)

have credits in at least five subjects including English and Mathematics, Geography and two other subjects are admitted to the stage 1 of the preliminary stage. With this arrangement it takes a minimum of nine years to get qualified as a graduate member of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners.

Graduates in allied fields are admitted into stage two of the final part. On the other hand, graduates with Masters Degree or Ph.D. are admitted into

stage three of the final part (professional stage). After qualifying, they are then admitted into Graduate Membership cadre. Two years after, they move on to Corporate Membership of the Nigeria Institute of Town Planners (MNITP). Such a member now qualifies for the Town Planners Registration Council Examination to be certified fully as a Chartered Town Planner or Registered Town Planner (RTP).

In Nigeria today, there are 1,528 Registered

Town Planners (RTP), of these 1,304 are Corporate Members; 167 Fellows (FNITP).

In terms of contributions to Planning Education (PE) in Nigeria, the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) has organized a series of Conferences between January, 1969 and November, 2006. Details are shown in Table 2 below.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Institute of Towns Planners (NITP) has organized series of workshops aimed at educating the populace on the

Table 2. Annual conference from 1969 – 2006. Planning Education through Annual Conferences since 1969 to date. Papers were presented on different themes each year.

No.	Date	Theme	Venue
1.	January 1969	Town Planning in National reconstruction	Lagos
2.	April 1971	Role of Traffic and Transportation in the Industrialization on Nigerian	Lagos
3.	April 1972	Housing in National Development	Lagos
4.	September 1973	Planning Machinery in Nigeria	Benin City
5.	November 1974	Physical planning and the Human Environment	Kano
6.	October, 1976	Toward a Better Human Environment	Enugu
7.	November 1976	Planning and Development of Capital Cities	Ibadan
8.	October 1977	The Integration of Economic and Physical Planning	Lagos
9.	October 1978	Planning Adequately for the Needs of Nigerians	Kaduna
10.	January 1979	Strategies for physical planning in the 80's	Benin
11.	October 1980	Environmental Management in Nigeria	Jon
12.	November 1981	Physical planning under a presidential system of government	Abeokuta
13.	October 1982	Town Planning Education and practice in Nigeria	Owerri
14.	October 1983	Physical planning in a Depressed Economy	Ibadan
15.	October 1984	Physical planning in Disaster Areas	Sokoto
16.	October 1985	Harnessing the Nation's Resources Through planning	Ilorin
17.	October 1986	Rural planning and Development: A Strategy in National Economic Recovery	Lagos
18.	October 1987	Physical planning at a cross road in Nigeria	Kaduna
19.	October 1988	Planning legislation in Nigeria: Closing the gaps	Abuja
20.	October 1989	The challenges of physical planning in the 90s	Enugu
21.	October 1990	Physical planning and environmental protection	Kano
22.	November 1991	A quarter of a century of physical planning in Nigeria the way ahead	Lagos
23.	September 1992	Urban Management in Nigeria in the Nineties: Problems and Prospects	Maiduguri
24.	October 1993	The 1992 Urban and Regional Planning Law and sharing a new course for physical development in Nigeria	Yola
25.	November 1994	The Implementation of the National physical planning policies and laws: Problems and prospects	Calabar
26.	October 1995	Towards effective physical planning of oil and solid mineral resources areas in Nigeria: problems and prospects	Jos
27.	October 1996	Physical planning and Nigeria's socio-economic Development in the 21 st century	Benin City
28.	1997	Sustainable cities for Nigeria in the 21 st century: the way forward	Abuja, FCT
29.	1998	Urban Management as a strategy for moving Nigeria forward into the next Millennium	Makurdi
30.	1999	Urban and Rural planning in a democratic setting	Akure
31.	2000	The Role of physical planning and Development in poverty alleviation	Minna
32.	2001	Delivering Democracy Dividend: The Role of Town Planning and the Town Planner	Uyo
33.	2002	Urban Governance in Nigeria	Ilorin
34.	2003	The Nigerian Urban Development Policy	Abeokuta
35.	2004	Physical planning standards and environmental management	Bauchi
36.	2005	Physical planning and the petroleum industry in Nigeria	Enugu
37.	November 2006	Four decades of Town Planning profession in Nigeria: The challenges ahead	Abuja, FCT

Source: NITP 40th Anniversary celebrations (2006 pp 87 – 88)

Table 3. NITP workshops (1995 – 1999).

S/No.	Themes	Date	Venue
1.	Development Control within the context of the new Urban and Regional Planning law Decree No. 88 of 1992.	March 1995	Abeokuta, Ogun
2.	Implementing Physical Planning Programems under the 1992 Urban and Regional planning Law-Decree no. 88 of 1992	July 1995	Ilorin, Kwara
3.	Acquisition of Land for Public use in Nigeria	March 1996	Sokoto, Sokoto
4.	Managing Nigerian Urban settlements for National Development in the 21 st Century: A challenge to Physical Planning Practice	April 1997	Ibadan, Oyo
5.	The future of Planning Practice within the context of the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Law	May 1998	Port Harcourt, Rivers

* The workshop sessions have now been replaced with the Mandatory Continuing Professional Development Programme (MCPDP).

Source: NITP 40th Anniversary Celebration (2006).

following themes as presented in Table 3.

The town planners registration council of Nigeria (TOPREC)

The TOPREC was established by Decree No. 3 of 1988 (now CAP 431 Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria). Specifically, it was signed into law on 30th November, 1988. The Council is charged with the following responsibilities:

- i.) Regulating the practice of planning in Nigeria.
- ii.) Determining who are Town Planners
- iii.) Setting of minimum standard of knowledge required by persons seeking to become members of the profession and reviewing from time to time, such standards
- iv.) Maintenance of a register of professionals in the planning profession.
- v.) Review and publication of syllabus for training of town planners in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

It has a forty- member Governing Council headed by the President. As a way of ensuring proper and continuous development of Professional Planners, the Nigeria institute of Town Planners (NITP) and Town Planers Registration Council of Nigeria (TO PRE C) started a mandatory training programme tagged Mandatory Continuing Professional Development Programme [MCPDP]. The maiden edition was held in 1999 in three centres namely: Kaduna, Owerri and Ibadan.

The MCPDP is primarily aimed at

- i.) Improving on a continuous basis the knowledge and skills of Urban and Regional Planners and allied professional in the practice of their profession.
- ii.) Exploring participants to emerging concepts, trends

and techniques in the practice worldwide
 iii.) Improving the professional competence of urban planners and allied professionals in facing the challenges of future planning practice.

The programme is compulsory for all Registered Town Planners and all Corporate Members of the Institute but essential for all other professionals in Nigeria. Table 4 shows the themes and venues of MCPDP from 1999 to date.

Problems of planning education (PE) in Nigeria

Planning Education in Nigeria (even though recent) is beset with myriads of problems but as observed by Agwu (2006), "the falling standard of education in Nigeria has been discussed privately at homes and work places and in public both in churches and mosques. With the recent Post-Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) screening examinations for university admission, the evidence is becoming clearer even to the doubting Thomas." He concluded that it is impossible to dissociate the crises in planning education (PE) from the collapse of the Nigeria employment sector".

Some of the very apparent problems facing planning education (PE) in Nigeria include but not limited to the following:

- i.) The learning environment is ill-equipped for modern Planning. Several institutes of planning operate below standard in their design and studio work.
- ii.) The teaching environment has also greatly affected effective teaching of planning education (PE) in Nigeria. Most of the teachers are not exposed to the impacts of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in their teaching and Research. They are those regarded as Analogue Planners. The importance of the use of Geo Information System (GIS) in Planning Education (PE) cannot be overemphasized here yet; many are not ready

Table 4. MCTPD themes and venues (1999 – 2006).

S/No.	Theme/topics	Year	Centres
1.	The changing nature of cities and the challenges of planning practice: A global perspective: settlement development over the years in Nigeria and the challenges of their Management. Scope of Professional services of the Urban and Regional Development	1999 (Maiden edition)	Kaduna, Owerri and Ibadan
2.	Computer Appreciation and Applications in Planning	2000	Kano, Enugu and Abeokuta
3.	Planning Projects, Consultancies: Ethics/code and Ever changing standard of behaviour and Ethics for Urban and Regional Planners (URP)	2001	Umahia, Benin-City and Jos
4.	Management of Planning Projects Communication and writing skills	2001	Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt
5.	The Urban and Regional Planning Process, Development control and Financing Planning Projects	2003	Calabar, Asaba and Kaduna
6.	Geographic Information System and Land Information: System and Urban and Regional Planning	2004	Lokoja, Owerri and Aba
7.	Public Relations Management, Financial Management, Current trends in Information gathering, Interpretation and Utilization, in URP, Project Management as a Process	2005	Port-Harcourt Kano and Akure
8.	Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); Urban and Regional Planning Practice in Achieving MDGs; NEEDS as a Tool for Ensuring Sustainability	2006	Uyo, Ibadan and Jos

Source: NITP 40th Anniversary Celebrations (2006)

to move to the digital phase in both research and teaching.

iii.) Funding is another very serious problem affecting planning education (PE) in Nigeria. Some planning departments in our tertiary institutions rely on a monthly imprest of N4, 000.00 (four thousand naira only) about \$26 (twenty six U.S. Dollars) Research grants are not forthcoming, attendance at conferences, workshops/seminars are not being supported by government. In a situation like this, the much needed cross- fertilization of ideas among professionals will be a missing link.

iv.) Shortage of professionals in the planning education arena is another vital issue. The recently concluded accreditation exercise into the various programmes in Nigerian universities reveals a disappointing result of ratio 1:50 as against the National Universities Commission standards of 1:15. This calls for serious worry in a growing nation like Nigeria.

v.) The non-implementation of the 1992 urban and regional planning laws of Nigeria is another impediment to planning education (PE). By law, all local government areas in Nigeria are expected to employ at least three registered town planners but this is not so. With the non-employment of professionals, students are not encouraged at pursuing planning courses because they will become unemployed professionals in future.

Strategies for improving planning education (PE in Nigeria)

There is an urgent need to provide an enabling environment for both teaching and learning of planning

education (PE) in Nigeria. These can be done through;

- i.) Improved funding of the system
- ii.) Provision of modem ICT facilities and immediate training and re-training of old professionals in the analogue arena.
- iii.) The Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC) should redesign its accreditation strategies for professionals to be a player in the global market.
- iv.) Planning education (PE) should be introduced into schools curriculum at an early stage i.e. from primary to tertiary levels. With this, everybody will be environmentally literate and therefore planning conscious.
- v.) Series of awareness programmes on the essence of planning education (PE) should be vigorously pursued by all stakeholders in the planning environment. In this direction, the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) in conjunction with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) of the federal government of Nigeria can enter into collaborative efforts at making Nigeria a safe country.

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