

Barbets' Duet

SABBATICAL REPORT SUMMARY

*Report of conclusions after travels in East Africa, India & Sweden, April-July 2007
to test the thinking behind the Barbets' Duet.*

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Preamble & acknowledgements

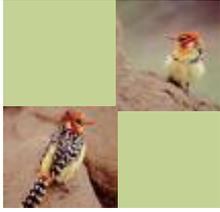
For the past ten years ago, Barbara Heinzen has been working with SID, the Society for International Development, to create national scenarios of the futures of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and East Africa as a whole. The scenario meetings have drawn people together from all sectors of East African society. Among other topics, the teams began discussing the role of environmental markets in East Africa's future. These markets have been hard to imagine as they are barely invented and rarely operate in the region. There have also been discussions of how such markets might be created and whether the emerging carbon markets could generate payments to people who maintain tropical biodiversity.

The Barbets' Duet proposal moves beyond these discussions to create an experiment in the invention of new institutions and markets. In order to test the viability of this proposal, Barbara Heinzen took a sabbatical trip between late April and early July 2007. She wanted to discover if there were enough people interested in participating in the Barbets' Duet experiment and if the ideas in the proposal were sound.

Given this purpose, the Sabbatical Report is not an academic survey of all the experiments in biodiversity markets taking place anywhere in the world. Rather, it is a conversation with people interested in the Barbet ideas and an invitation to them to join this new experimental space. It has been written with two audiences in mind. One is the audience of people who are familiar with the Barbets' Duet proposal and are expecting to participate in it. It is a record of our conversations. The other audience is people who are interested in the project, but have not followed its development in great detail.

During her sabbatical, Barbara Heinzen travelled to East Africa, India, Nepal and Sweden. In each country and city she worked with people who were interested in the Barbets' Duet and joined her in the interviews and visits she made. In Tanzania, she was also joined by Eileen Burke, her colleague in London, for two weeks. Elsewhere, Magode Ikuya in Uganda, Aidan Eyakuze and Mwajuma Masaiganah in Tanzania, Oby Obyerodhyambo in Kenya and Mahmoud Kombo in Zanzibar, were all invaluable colleagues in talking through the issues recorded here. In India, the Vanarase family in Pune, and Aditi Nath Sarkar in Ahmedabad and Calcutta provided insight and introductions to a vast country Barbara Heinzen had not visited before. In Nepal, Thupten Gyalpo Lama acted as host and guide, providing another perspective on the Barbets' Duet from a very different situation. In the Tallberg Forum in Sweden, the members of the 'Missing Markets' discussion group were extremely helpful in testing the thinking. A full list of people met during these travels appears at the back of the report. Thanks are due to all of them for their assistance.

Because of the lessons we all learned, this report has been written as a shared document. However, Barbara Heinzen takes full responsibility for any glaring errors in the report and welcomes any corrections.



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Goals of the Barbets' Duet & Sabbatical

The Barbets' Duet is an experiment with three objectives: (1) to create new institutional forms which integrate ecological principles in everyday social, political and economic affairs; (2) to use these new institutions to generate incomes for people whose knowledge serves to maintain and increase environmental resources, especially biodiversity; (3) to test whether this income can be derived from greenhouse gases emissions trading or similar environmental trading schemes.

This experiment is currently focused on East Africa, but will include people and learning sites from any society. It seeks to integrate older traditions of ecological management with modern market mechanisms in ways that benefit rural people, biodiversity as well as potential investors and customers. Multiple experiments will be organised around people with access to land that is, or can be, managed to support biodiversity. As part of the experiments, these sites will be connected to markets able to generate incomes.

This sabbatical sought 1) to test the conceptual framework of the Barbets' Duet¹; 2) to identify possible Barbet Learning Sites in East Africa; 3) to learn from comparable projects in India; 4) to look at business models and financing; and 5) to test whether the focus on East Africa is justified.

Working Conclusions

1. Barbet learning sites in East Africa are available.

During discussions, many of the people met in East Africa had ideas for starting a Barbets' Duet experiment on sites they know. They are keen to find new sources of income that are socially and environmentally sound, reflect a new model of modernisation, and build on African knowledge.

2. Multiple markets exist, but are hard to reach, hard to persuade & can be unfair.

Many different markets could support high biodiversity. Some exist already, others need to be invented. There is already a market for tangible goods, such as charcoal, timber, edible and medicinal plants, etc., and potential markets for environmental benefits such as clean water, clean air or habitat protection. These markets have different potential buyers. Some will be in the **utility market**, buying the things they use every day – such as food or building materials or even clean water and air. In the **insurance market**, people will pay to maintain habitats and high biodiversity that reduce risks from climate change, flooding or loss of food species to diseases. There is also the **aesthetics market**. This is the market of eco-tourism and fashion. Finally, there is the market for **intellectual property** which is already of considerable interest to pharmaceutical companies and agricultural seed companies looking to extend the range of products they offer. All these markets are hard to reach, can currently be unfair to small holders, and will require creative branding and marketing that can be trusted.

¹ See *Conceptual Framework*, dated 16 October 2006, www.barbaraheinzen.com → Barbets

3. Carbon markets are growing fast, and should be used in Barbet experiments.

There are two types of carbon markets relevant in East Africa, a compliance, or CDM², market, established under the Kyoto Protocol, and a voluntary market. As one person said, “There are a lot of tricksters in the voluntary market and a lot of bureaucracy in the CDM market”. The voluntary market will be of most interest to participants in the Barbets’ Duet and is also where the fastest innovations are taking place. We need to understand the carbon markets and learn to use them effectively.

4. We need to invent the whole chain, from capital markets to retail sale.

It is not enough to invent ‘retail markets’ that will pay people to maintain or increase biodiversity. We also need capital market tools to provide the investment funds for building up ‘environmental products’ to be sold. These tools are currently absent, but could be invented. Their absence raises an interesting issue: to what extent can or should the start-up costs of the Barbets’ Duet be met through charities or capital markets or through participants’ self-financing?

5. The question of property rights is central and unpredictable.

The development of new markets to support biodiversity will require new financial tools and these in turn will require new property rights, some of which could be modelled on older African customs. Identifying and agreeing on new property rights is a huge challenge. Without clear property rights, no markets can function. Without rights that encourage healthy environments, however, there may be very little for any market to sell.

6. Equitable cultural engagement is necessary and hard.

The ideal of equitable cultural engagement is at the heart of the Barbets’ Duet experiment – and is reflected in the duet of our name. However, it remains to be seen whether it can be achieved in practice, either at the local level or internationally.

7. New markets carry old risks.

As biodiversity markets develop, they will face a variety of risks, which are already visible and well known: they could encourage further concentration of wealth, loss of intellectual property, and over-killing or over-harvesting of wild products. These risks will need to be managed.

8. India’s development is a warning, not a model.

India may be a success in industrial terms, but the price for this success is looking very, very high. Rapid industrialisation and growth, regardless of the cost, is causing serious environmental damage and social distress. This policy is backed by a strong state with a clear commitment to the paradigm of industrial modernisation. There seems to be little effective opposition to this thinking or any discussion of alternatives. There are, however, two organisations from which we can learn: Navdanya is committed to organic farming and biodiversity; SRISTI gathers grassroots innovations.

9. The focus on East Africa is justified

The benefits of starting the Barbets’ Duet in East Africa were highlighted after the visit to India. Four aspects of East Africa were important. First, necessity is the mother of invention. East Africa cannot compete with India and China, and therefore needs another model of prosperous modernity. Second, East Africa’s greatest wealth is biological, as shown by the international reputation of its landscapes and wild populations. Third, weak states are forced to be flexible states that rely on inventive populations. Fourth, small societies and social networks accelerate the process of invention. By comparison with India, East Africa is a small society, capable of rapid invention and evolution.

² CDM stands for ‘Clean Development Mechanism’, one of the tools of the Kyoto Protocol.

10. ‘I warn you, it will take 20 years.’

During this sabbatical, B Heinzen noticed that the most impressive projects in East Africa and India are all roughly 20 years old. They also share another feature: the people who founded these projects are still working on them. Commitment, continuity and time are all essential.

11. Next steps: the Invention Convention

During each discussion, it was agreed that all those who would like to participate in the Barbets’ Duet are invited to send to B. Heinzen a short description of the experiment to be tried. As learning sites are proposed, they will be posted on the Barbets’ Duet website space. Once a sufficient number of proposed sites are put on the website, we will hold an “Invention Convention,” somewhere in East Africa, for about three days. During this time, we will present and critique each proposed experiments. In addition, in order to test new rules for generating high biodiversity, social equity and good incomes, we will invent and play a game. This might be a board game like Monopoly, or role-playing game of some kind, or something else entirely.

12. Proposed deadline

In the interests of maintaining momentum, it is proposed that we hold the “Invention Convention” by the end of February 2008.