



Barbets Duet

Report of Proceedings

BARBETS DUET INVENTION CONVENTION

*Mlingotini, Tanzania
16-19 October 2009*

*Hosted by
Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative
& Mwajuma Masaiganah*

*Attended by
Founding Partners of the Barbets Duet:
Barbara Heinzen
James Magode Ikuya
Mwajuma Masaiganah
Oby Obyerodhyambo
Rose Lyimo
Sammy Muvelah
&
Members of the Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative*



*Report written by Barbara Heinzen, October 2009,
outline agreed with founding partners*

Thanks & acknowledgements

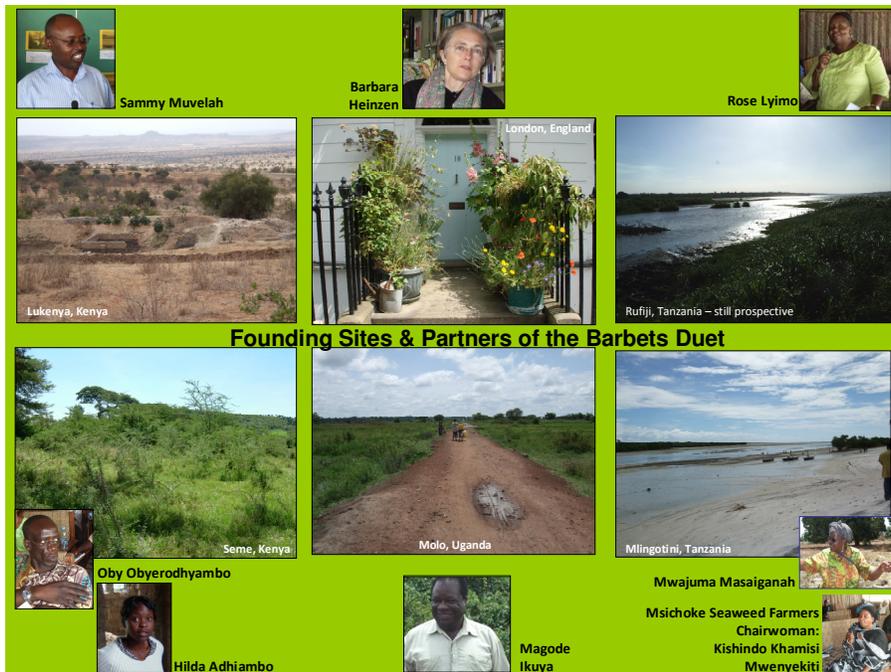
On 18/19 October 2009, the six founding partners of the Barbets Duet met with members of Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative in Mlingotini, Tanzania for the Barbets Duet Invention Convention. A number of people contributed to the success of this meeting. First thanks must go to our hosts in Mlingotini: Mwajuma Masaiganah and the members of Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative. Mwajuma Masaiganah made local arrangements for the Convention, gave lodgings to several of her partners and provided the provisions for our meals. Members of Msichoke did all the cooking for participants over two days and offered their site as a visible example of what is and might be done. In addition, the owner of the Bomani Beach Bungalows in Mlingotini, Mrs Solfrid Gjengset generously donated us the use of her meeting room as well as lodgings for one person.

In England, Eileen Burke paid for a video camera which was used to record the meeting's proceedings and film all five founding Barbet sites in East Africa. After the Convention, an anonymous English benefactor contributed £2200 towards the costs of travel to Mlingotini by the more distant partners and by Barbara Heinzen who stayed in the region for three weeks, visiting each partner and most of the sites.

Thanks are also due to Arthur Muliro and the Society for International Development in Rome. SID introduced the founding partners to each other during the SID national and regional scenario processes. This work, which took place over ten years from 1998-2008, helped all of us discover why the Barbets Duet is necessary and how we could work together to make it happen.

The Invention Convention has been a testament to the commitment of everyone involved. Without the good will and generosity of all, this meeting would not have taken place. As Magode Ikuya said, "There is no turning back."

This is a report of that meeting.

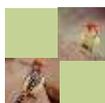


Barbet Learning Sites & founding partners represented at the Invention Convention

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SUMMARY OF INVENTION CONVENTION REPORT



Barbets Duet

Founding Partners

Barbara Heinzen

James Magode Ikuya

Rose Lyimo

Mwajuma Masaiganah

Sammy Muvelah

Oby & Hilda Obyerodhyambo

Website: www.barbaraheinzen.com → BARBETS

BARBETS DUET INVENTION CONVENTION

Mlingotini, Tanzania

17-18 October 2009

Hosted by

Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative
& Mwajuma Masaiganah

The Barbets Duet Invention Convention

The Barbets Duet is a business idea, not a charity. Its goal is to create new economic systems that reward people who support the health and diversity of the natural world. In 2008, the six founding partners of the Barbets Duet offered their own land and communities as learning sites where the principles of the Barbets Duet could be tested in the context of specific societies, nations and ecologies. There are now five Barbet Learning sites in East Africa, and two in the United Kingdom.

In October 2009, the founding partners were hosted for two days by the Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative in Mlingotini, Tanzania, one of the founding Barbet Learning sites. This Invention Convention was the first time everyone had met and marked the formal inauguration of the Barbets Duet.

Achievements of the Invention Convention

There were a number of important achievements of the Invention Convention. Simply getting together allowed the partners to develop a shared understanding of what is being done and how Barbet principles might apply. The sites represent six different ecologies, societies, economies and governments. As each site was presented to the others, everyone saw the value of learning from each other and the potential for developing shared business opportunities. There was huge benefit from engaging with each other across all boundaries, including those of culture, education, wealth, language and skill; everyone had something to offer and something to learn. Importantly, the reports from the Barbet learning sites illustrated the value of a mosaic rights approach to environmental management and markets. Mosaic rights had been discussed conceptually, but the utility of the concept became clear during the site reports.¹ The Barbets Duet has been slow and self-financed, but progress has been persistent and sustainable. Ideas have been tested in practical ways, based on what each site can afford. However, two critical issues came out strongly. First, today's hard economics militate against healthy environments. Second, governments have failed to protect the environment. Both make the Barbets Duet more difficult and more significant.

In the evenings, after dinner, the founding partners discussed the future structure and governance of the Barbets Duet. Among a number of complex questions, three simple conclusions stood out: 1) each Barbet site evolves in its own way to its own conditions and, 2) there is value in coming together and 3) our discussions of structure and governance need to focus on how we come together.

¹ Traditional African property rights have used a 'mosaic rights' system in which no one owns the land, but different groups have rights to different goods at specified times under specified conditions. By comparison, industrial society often aims for a 'column' rights system where one owner controls all land rights from air rights to mineral rights and everything in between. While column rights have created today's successful markets, mosaic rights are better at supporting high social equity and high biodiversity; and should be able to support successful markets.

Next Steps

During the coming year, each Barbet Learning Site will continue to evolve, with all sites meeting again at another Barbet Learning Site in East Africa in a year or two. Before that gathering, the founding partners will continue their discussions on constitutional issues and set up some type of trust or corporate structure to facilitate long term financing and recognition. Barbara Heinzen will continue to coordinate activities and all partners will work to make our thinking familiar. To help publicise this work, a DVD will be produced using videos of the Invention Convention and the East African Barbet Learning Sites.

Concluding Comments

Some readers may find the achievements recorded here to be very small, especially given the record of rapid environmental degradation in East Africa, a catalogue of destruction which too often creates a sense of futility. However, there was no futility at the Invention Convention. Instead, the elation of discovering we are not helpless, but powerful in our ability to act together, is what will remain with all those who met in Mlingotini, Tanzania in October 2009.

Barbet Learning Sites Presented at the Invention Convention²

Seme, Kenya

Oby & Hilda Obyerodhyambo are working with family land on the shores of Lake Victoria in Seme, near Kisumu, Kenya. They are experimenting with tissue culture bananas, agro-forestry and the restoration of land that has been over-cropped and over-grazed. They are also investing in indigenous trees and medicinal plants.

Lukenya, Kenya

Sammy Muvelah has land in Lukenya, about 50 km outside of Nairobi, on a small rocky hillside in dry rangeland. He is creating a woodland plantation of moringa to provide food and fuel, while also planting trees indigenous to the area. He is investing in water harvesting and is selling excursions to Nairobi residents interested in the environment.

Molo, Uganda

James Magode Ikuya is working with twelve families along 21km of the Kanginima stream. This is a badly deforested part of the Mt Elgon watershed in eastern Uganda. He is introducing high value cash crops (fish farming, bee keeping, fruit growing) and will also be replanting indigenous trees to restore lost watershed services and biodiversity.

Rufji, Tanzania

Rose Lyimo is hoping to acquire land in Rufiji, Tanzania which can be used for eco-tourism and carbon sequestration.

Mlingotini, Tanzania

Mwajuma Masaiganah is working with the Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative. Msichoke are looking for ways to improve their income from seaweed farming and hope to develop environmental incomes from the protection of mangroves and the provision of other environmental products, such as tree seedlings grown in indigenous tree nurseries.

London, UK

Barbara Heinzen is responsible for coordinating the activities of the Barbets Duet and ensuring that this work becomes better known. She also has a 'micro-site' of potted plants on the front step of her flat in a Central London garden square. Her work has inspired a neighbourhood group to increase the biodiversity and drought tolerance in the square.

² A seventh site, in Cornwall, England, joined the Barbets Duet just before the Invention Convention in Tanzania.

BACKGROUND OF BARBETS DUET

Evolution of the Barbets Duet

Between 1998-2008, SID, the Society for International Development, brought together groups of East Africans from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda to create scenario stories of possible futures for each nation and the East African region as a whole. Each process lasted 18 months to three years and drew people together from all sectors of East African society. This experience gave participants a shared conceptual framework, habits of working together on intricate issues, and a willingness to engage with people from very different backgrounds.

The East African scenarios were published in 2008, under the title, *What Do We Want, What Might We Become?*³ These regional scenarios highlighted two important facts. First: the fact of accelerating environmental damage in East Africa and the need to restore and maintain healthy habitats and ecosystem services. Second: the fact of ‘duality’ in East African societies. Duality refers to the daily experience of negotiating two strong cultural legacies: that of European cultures, brought in through colonisation and development, and that of local African cultures rooted in East Africa’s history, society and ecology. Although these two cultural legacies are very different, each culture has distinctive insights into – and experience with – ecological knowledge, social and institutional structures, and economic systems.

As societies in East Africa begin to restore damaged environments and maintain healthy ones, there is much to be learned from both African and Western traditions. The Barbets Duet is designed to maximise such learning.⁴ It is an experiment that draws on the knowledge of both cultures – African and European – in order to create new rules, institutions, skills and business organisations and market opportunities that can support people who restore and manage healthy, diverse habitats and ecosystems.

The Barbets Duet has evolved very slowly⁵. Members of the SID scenario teams began discussing the idea of the Barbets Duet in 2002/3, however it only took shape in 2006 when Oby Obyerodhyambo and Barbara Heinzen were able to meet in London several times. In January 2006, they gave a joint lecture at the Royal Society of Arts on the need to learn from both cultures in order to address environmental challenges. Five months later, in May, they outlined the working design of the experiment itself, leading to the first Concept Note, dated October 2006.

In 2007, Barbara Heinzen took a two-month sabbatical from her freelance practice in order to test the Concept Note with people in East Africa, India, Nepal and various parts of Europe. The Sabbatical Report that followed came to the following conclusions:

- Barbet learning sites in East Africa are available.
- Multiple markets exist, but are hard to reach, hard to persuade & can be unfair.
- Carbon markets are growing fast, and should be used in Barbet experiments.
- We need to invent the whole chain, from capital markets to retail sale.
- The question of property rights is central and unpredictable.
- Equitable cultural engagement is necessary and hard.
- New markets carry old risks.
- India’s development is a warning, not a model.
- The focus on East Africa is justified.
- This process will require commitment, continuity and time.

In 2008, while attending SID meetings to discuss the Kenyan election crisis and the draft East African scenarios, the founding partners of the Barbets Duet decided to ‘just begin.’ As Oby Obyerodhyambo said

³ The East African scenarios can be found at the SID website:

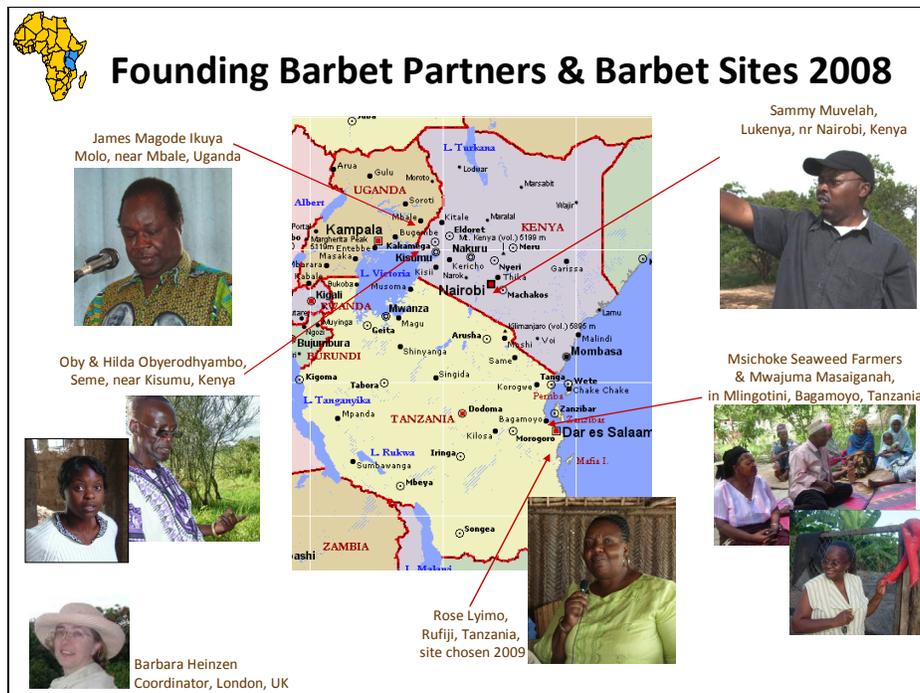
<http://www.sidint.org/Content.aspx?IdArea=15&IdCat=60&Type=C> along with other publications from SID’s scenarios work .

⁴ It is called the Barbets Duet because barbets are tropical birds which sing in duet, creating the sound of one voice.

⁵ The key documents tracking the evolution of the Barbets Duet can be found on the Barbets website:

<http://www.barbaraheinzen.com/site/barbara.php?catId=37>.

at the time, “The Kenyan crisis shows that this project is more needed now than ever.” By June 2008, all five East African partners had agreed to contribute a learning site to the experiment and Barbara Heinzen had agreed to coordinate efforts and ‘to make our thinking familiar’ to outsiders. In December, when several partners met again, they agreed to hold the Invention Convention in May 2009 in Mlingotini, Tanzania. The date was later changed to 16-19 October 2009.



Founding Partners of the Barbets Duet

The founding partners of the Barbets Duet had all participated in the SID scenarios work, at either the national or East African level or both. Each partner brings a distinctive set of skills, experience and knowledge to the Barbets Duet.

Oby Obyerodhyambo is an actor, writer and theatre producer who currently works on HIV prevention in the Rift Valley of Kenya. He was a principal contributor to the Kenyan scenarios process, active both in creating the scenario stories and using them to generate public discussions throughout Kenya. He co-authored the first Concept Note for the Barbets Duet and was the first to offer his family’s land in Seme, near Kisumu in western Kenya, as a Barbet Learning Site. He is especially interested in indigenous trees, medicinal plants and indigenous knowledge. He and his wife, Hilda Adhiambo, were the first to say, ‘Just begin’ in early 2008.

Sammy Muvelah helped found Zimele Asset Management Company, a pension fund based in Nairobi and trading on the Nairobi Stock Exchange. He participated in the East African scenarios work and brought to that process, as he does to the Barbets Duet, a strong sense of business and business opportunities. He is also committed to ensuring that whatever he does the community around his site also benefits and learns. He bought his site in Lukenya, about 50 km outside Nairobi, in 2006 and has been experimenting with both environmental restoration and new business ideas. He works closely with his five brothers, each of whom brings another dimension to the Lukenya project.

Mwajuma Masaiganah grew up in Serengeti, Tanzania, but has spent much of her working life with coastal communities in Tanzania. She now lives in Mlingotini, where she met the members of the

Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative and proposed that they become one of the first Barbet Learning Sites. Mwajuma Masaiganah has also founded two primary schools, Mwasama in Bagamoyo, and another school in Serengeti. She is active in civil society in Bagamoyo and brings a strong appreciation of the requirements of grassroots processes to the team.

Rose Lyimo is based in Dar es Salaam where she is an active member of the business community. She and a dozen others started the Akiba Commercial Bank about ten years ago to bring micro-lending to the poor of Dar es Salaam. She served on the Akiba board until very recently. She understands the financial needs of both rural and urban people with limited incomes and is hoping to start a new banking venture. Her experience in micro-finance, as well as the travel business, is invaluable. She had originally intended to start a Barbet Learning site near Morogoro, but is now looking to have her site along a lake in Rufiji.

Magode Ikuya has been active in party politics in Uganda, working with the Movement in rural mobilisation. He is a writer, businessman and leader of his clan in Molo, Eastern Uganda, part of the Mount Elgon watershed feeding the Nile River basin. His knowledge of the local ecosystem in Molo and the very recent dramatic changes to that local ecology is outstanding, based on watching the landscape change dramatically since he grew up there. He also has a strong idea of what can be learned from the legacies of African culture and a keen appreciation of the need to intensify agricultural practices. His experience, political acumen, and thoughtfulness are critical assets to the team.

Barbara Heinzen is based in London where she has a freelance practice working with corporations and civil society in long range scenario planning and strategy. In the late 1990s she was invited by Arthur Muliro to help design and facilitate the Kenya Scenarios project, the first of the four exercises organised by SID over a ten-year period. In 2003, she finished a book titled *Feeling for Stones, learning & invention when facing the unknown*. It was written in order to understand how we might invent ecological societies when there is no model to follow. Many ideas from the book have contributed to the Barbets Duet.

Key Principles of the Barbets Duet

The Barbets Duet is a business idea, not a charity. Its goal is to create new economic systems that reward people who support the health and diversity of the natural world so that the natural world will continue to support mankind. Today's globalised, industrial economic system does not do that. It is said, for example, that a mature oak tree can support 284 species of insect, provide food and nests for birds, acorns for mice and squirrels, and habitat for fungi. The 'life' value of a mature oak tree is therefore very high, but its economic value is only realised when the tree is dead and the wood can be sold for timber or fuel.

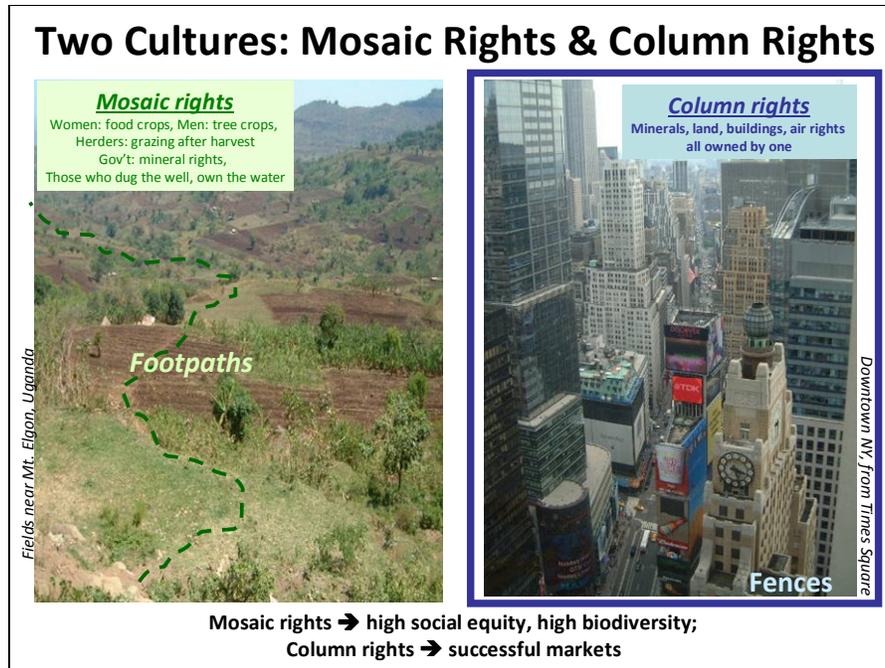
To create an economic system that pays people for the abundant life of a mature oak tree requires a process of systemic invention: new agreements, new property rights, new skills and knowledge, new markets, new distribution, new infrastructure and the financing that supports all these activities.

The carbon markets, and a few other environmental markets (e.g. wetland banking) are learning to do just that. However, the partners of the Barbets Duet believe that a broader approach to the process of systemic invention is needed. At present, their approach reflects the following principles:

- 1) Multiple experiments: Multiple experiments, in multiple learning sites in different ecological and social settings will stimulate rapid learning.
- 2) Equity & engagement: By engaging equitably with people across boundaries of knowledge, power, skill and culture, everyone will learn more rapidly what can and cannot be achieved.
- 3) Give & gain⁶: This principle recognises that everyone has something to offer and something to learn.

⁶ "Give & Gain" is a principle and technique used by Project Phakama, a theatre group which works with groups of young people from different cultural settings. See <http://www.projectphakama.org/> for more details.

- 4) Mosaic rights: Property rights need to reflect the needs of ecological economies which are quite different from the needs of industrial economies. A key principle of the Barbets Duet is that the African legacy of ‘mosaic rights’ will better support environmental markets than the column rights of industrial society.



The term “Mosaic Rights” is one developed by Barbet partners. Traditional African property rights have used a ‘mosaic rights’ system in which no one owns the land, but different groups have rights to different goods at specified times under specified conditions. By comparison, industrial society uses a ‘column’ rights system. In a pure column rights system, one land owner controls all rights from air rights to mineral rights and everything in between. Landscapes governed by mosaic rights are marked by footpaths. Landscapes governed by column rights are marked by fences. Mosaic rights systems are ‘inclusive’ while column rights systems are ‘exclusive’. While column rights have created today’s successful markets, it is our belief that mosaic rights are better at supporting high social equity and high biodiversity and can also be the basis for successful markets. Most societies today, including those in East Africa, have a mixture of mosaic and column rights. In East Africa, the relative strength of these two systems is finely balanced.

The experience of the Invention Convention, with all the intense conversations about each learning site, has largely confirmed the value of these principles.

INVENTION CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS

Agenda

The agenda listed below was followed during the two days of the Invention Convention. The bulk of the time was spent on presentations from each site followed by questions. Most of the conversation was in Kiswahili, as only Barbara Heinzen did not understand the language. Sammy Muvelah and Magode Ikuya spoke in English, but understood Kiswahili well enough to follow the presentations and discussions without the need for translation. The entire proceedings were filmed for editing into a DVD.

Saturday - 17 October 2009

- Welcome & introductions
- Presentation & discussion of the Barbets Duet idea
 - Presentations from three Barbet Learning sites
 - Mwinyi Gogo of Msichoke Seaweed Farmers, Mlingotini, Tanzania
 - Rose Lyimo, Rufiji, Tanzania
 - Magode Ikuya, Molo, Uganda
- Evening discussion of governance & structure, among the founding partners

Sunday - 18 October 2009

- Presentations from three other Barbet Learning sites,
(before & after site visit to seaweed farms)
 - Sammy Muvelah, Lukenya, Kenya
 - Oby Obyerodhyambo, Seme, Kenya
 - Barbara Heinzen, Wilmington Square & Grays Inn, London, UK
- Site visit to seaweed farms at low tide
- Two new tools for planning
 - Give and gain wheel to discover knowledge gaps
 - Developing new business ideas for Msichoke
- Closing meal & formal thanks
- Continued discussion among founding partners of governance and structure

Presentation of Barbet sites

What follows are photographs of each site, plus transcripts of the site presentations during the Invention Convention over Saturday and Sunday. In addition to the opening remarks from each site, there was a long conversation of questions and answers, which was extremely valuable. These longer conversations have not been transcribed, but will be reflected in the DVD of the proceedings.

Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative Mlingotini, Tanzania Presented by Abdallah Mwinyi Gogo (translated from KiSwahili)

Barbet Learning Site
Confirmed Feb08

Mlingotini, Bagamoyo

Tanzania

Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative



Chairwoman:
Kishindo Khamisi Mwenyekiti



Mwajuma Masaiganah
Founder, Mwasama School, Bagamoyo
Coastal rural developmentm Resident of Mlingotini village



Coastal waters at Mlingotini village



Mwinyi Gogo, Secretary of Msichoke

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Abdallah Mwinyi Gogo, Secretary of the Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative, gave the first presentation, using a series of photographs to describe the work and major challenges of the Msichoke Seaweed Farmers Cooperative. His remarks, which appear below, are simple statements about the business they are doing. This is a tiny fraction of what was learned from the members of Msichoke who were consistently asking some of the most penetrating questions. Their experience – made more vivid by a walk to the seaweed farms – was a constant point of reference throughout the weekend.

This is a translation of the presentation given by Mwinyi Gogo, the first of the presentations to the Convention.

- 1. Msichoke cultivate seaweeds. When seaweeds become brown and ready to be harvested, members pick and dry them direct in the sun and sell the dried seaweed to business people. Members also sell fresh seaweed purposely for seeds and trainings, e.g. to the Ministry and different exhibitions.*
- 2. There are two kinds of seaweeds, which are: Cottoni and Spinossun [Euchema Cottoni and Euchema Spinossun]*
- 3. Members grow seaweeds which they have planted and do not gather natural seaweeds available along the coast, which are not human-planted.*

4. Most customers are Indian companies from Zanzibar; – ZASCO, BIR Seaweed Co, ZANEA etc.
5. Msichoke's problems are not finished. We need to find good markets for our products; a good market is not running a business at a loss. We bought Cottoni for Tshs 280 /kg and Spinossium for Tshs 160/kg).
6. In the past (2003/4) we were selling at a loss. In 2003/04 we earned Tshs 150-160; in 2005 we got 200TShs; in 2006 we earned 250 Tshs while in 2008/9, we were paid 280 Tshs for Cottoni. We started selling Spinossium in 2008 140 Tshs/kg. In 2009, payments were not late, giving us profits.
7. This kind [not shown here] was not cultivated, because Cottoni does not grow well.
8. Our business needs to be sustainable. To do that we want to:
- purchase seaweed seedlings ourselves;
 - be a centre for production and purchasing;
 - have permanent Project Coordinator;
 - start production of seaweed products (food, soap).
9. The problem of market: The seaweed commodity that can satisfy the market will be obtained by mobilizing villages near Bagamoyo such as Dunda, Kaole – Pemba (Macemp). If the market is reliable they will also produce more. Seaweeds should not wait a long time without been sold. This causes people, seaweed farmers, to be disappointed; though if someone needs some money he or she can sell and earn money for immediate needs.

MAPINGA CHANGWAHELA

10. There are a number of important relationships between Msichoke and others.

Seaweed farmers of Zanzibar:-

- Share experience and learn (Exchange)
- Pemba
- JKT Mbweni

Training relationship

- Mbegani, Nyegezi, SUA, UDSM, MZUMBE,

Administratiive relationships

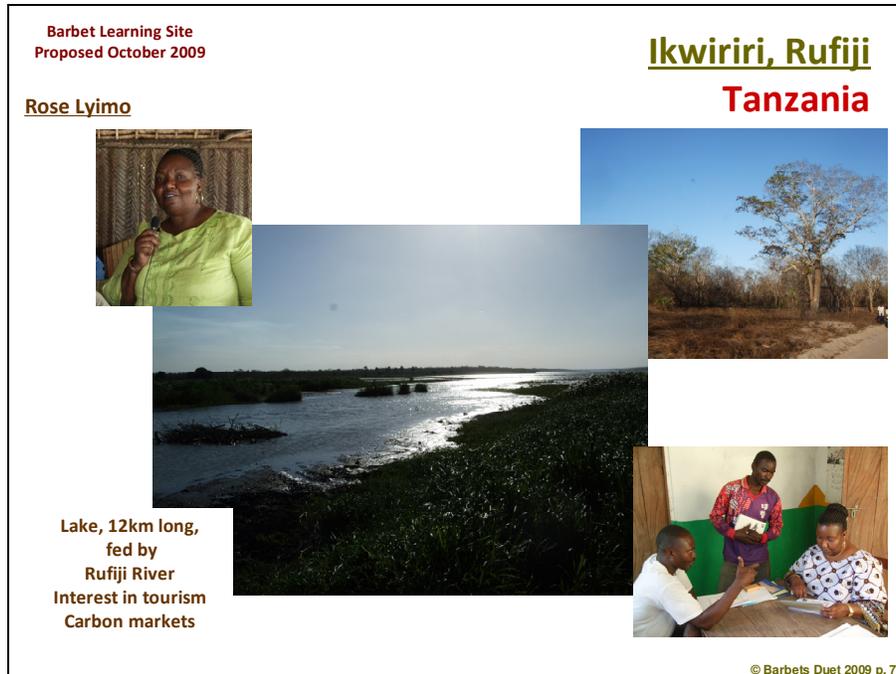
- Zanzibar, Ministry,
- Institution/NGOs: Action Aid, TCMP, Success Zanzibar
- Researchers
- Pwani villages.

11. Steps for production

- Enough people (workers)
- Tools: manila rope (4mm),
- Transport (mainland, in the sea) sacks, holder (Vichanja).
- A place for storage (store), tent, beam balance.
- Tying seeds, planting in the sea, to wait for 60 days, to harvest, drying for 3 days or a week.

12. Msichoke are ready to work with anybody to benefit from the project.

Prospective site in Ikwiriri, Rufiji, Tanzania
Presented by Rose Lyimo
(translated from KiSwahili)



In front of you is Rose Lyimo, a business woman. I began to doing business in 1983 after resigning from employment. My decision to resign from a very good job with UNFAO was not difficult as business has always been in my blood. My thoughts, ambitions, dreams, passion evolve around doing business . So I discovered that I was unfit in the employment sector and decided to leave and got myself into business.

In business I have done different kinds of businesses and one of them has been fishing and exports of sea food (prawns and lobsters) at Nyamisati, Coast Region. This has made me part of the people and places of Bagamoyo.

In the 1980s I diversified and went into Agri-business in Morogoro where I had first proposed to have a Barbet Site. On second thought I decided that we move the Barbet site to Rufiji for very good reasons. I took into consideration the distance from the Tanzania business centre that is Dar es Salaam, access to land with water for irrigation purposes, access to an area suitable for eco/cultural tourism.

This is the site I visited with Barbara who had an opportunity to visit it before we came here and it is a good one. Firstly, its distance from Dar is about 130 km and it is surrounded by water - there is a lake which is a 12X12 km and it never dries throughout the year. It is located in area called Mbunju Mvuleni.

We met the village leadership who promised to allocate us the land required. However as you know there are local government elections in the process and we have to wait until the elections are over. As soon as the elections are over I shall begin the processing of acquiring the land for the project.

The objectives of the project are for Tourism. Cultural tourism and Eco tourism are the main objectives. Eco tourism is the type of tourism which does not have much impact on the environment as it is environmentally friendly. In that, instead of people using cars, people will walk through the trails/routes

that will be created. We envisage seeing tourists coming to study different types of trees and plants, then listen to birds' songs, etc. that will give them entertainment

From the forest they are met with cultural tourism depicting the different tribes of Tanzania, such as music, show plays, food, history etc.

My vision of the type of tourism is that it will cover forestry, game viewing and water sport, such as "environmental" fishing for leisure. So there are different types of activities in this type of tourism which of course will create employment, develop our economy and it will protect the environment. In addition, I want to have farming of local products such as traditional trees, spices which tourists will love to buy so that these may also be used to cook their food. Once they enjoy such type of tourism they will definitely come back again...

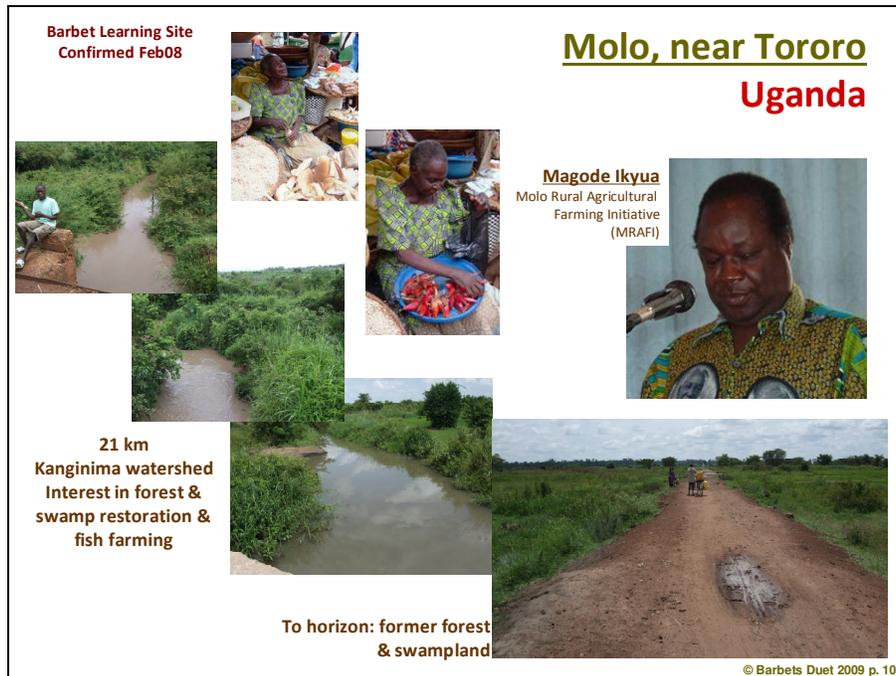
Now on the second stage I would like to explain what is currently going on in the site. I have visited the site four times and right now there is not any type of agricultural activities going on over there despite the large amount of water it is surrounded with. There is big forest over there which is a natural forest with indigenous trees with very old trees. Unfortunately the locals are cutting the trees in that area to make wood boards/planks and charcoal for commercial purposes.

We asked them how much they fetch for a big bag of charcoal. They said Tshs. 5,000/= of which the same is Tshs. 30,000 in Dar es Salaam. It takes them one month to burn trees enough to give them Tshs. 100,000/=, so one makes a 100,000 in a month work of cutting trees and destroying the environment. They do realize the consequences of cutting the trees as they told us it has brought them drought but they have no alternative for survival. The 100,000 Tshs. so earned does not guarantee the person good food, health and shelter let alone education for the children. One statement we got from one of the young locals "What else can I do? I have no other means of income, but if I had other means of income I would not cut trees, neither would I sell charcoal again."

This is when I saw that there is a need to educate, but also when you educate them, you give them another option for income generation for survival.

So I am looking at this project with a hope that it will be able to build, teach people to love and preserve the environment. So the projects in essence will bring in education through the Barbet Site and will create employment through which will ultimately develop the district and region so that people will start to see the potential of the site with the lake and protect the natural forest that is so valuable now with so much carbon emissions in the world. So this is the project of Rose in Ikwiriri, Rufiji District, and Coast Region.

Molo, near Tororo, Uganda
Presented by Magode Ikuya
(transcribed from English)



We who are in Uganda are not part of the ocean or shores, so we cannot talk of seaweed. But there are aspects in which we live, which if we also address we might find we are addressing common issues. And my own reaction is that this is a serious issue. Because for a long time we in Africa, we have been thinking we are developing, making a lot of progress in our lives. While there are indeed some aspects that are changing and modernizing there are many things that are degrading. I became personally conscious of this degradation for a long time because I have been part of the struggle in Ugandan society. In our first level awareness of degradation back then we were looking first mainly at political questions. And you know of course that politics can degrade a country. You had here one great man in your neighbourhood called Idi Amin. He once said he wanted to welcome Tanzanians as fellow East Africans for them to come there and then he would kill them. And he was killing, he was killing a lot of people and many of our people were around here. So we have had to try to address the political questions. And we imagined that we were finishing the problem. But in the end, we still found what? 1) in trying to solve one problem, we have even have been creating another one. Even when we think we are addressing development questions – building up modern houses, schools and other things which we want in our lives – we are ending up destroying all that was positive in our lives.

Me, I was born long ago. I am now sixty-three. And the time I was being born, the world in which I was being born is not the same as the world I am seeing now. We used to have running streams and fish, clean and blue. There was predictable rain. You could even know which season you are in. But right now in most parts of Uganda, throughout this year for example we have not known whether we are yet in the first season of the rain or the third season. So some of the rivers, those streams which we used to grow in and swim in, having fish and all types of things, those streams are dry. Lake Victoria, the famous lake which unites us all in the region has been going down steadily for many years. Now, therefore, the issue here is, what if these things are going on like that, how do we make sure that the generations that will come after us will find something secure, which can enable us?

So our Molo, the programme in Molo, we are calling it integrated, the "Integrated Farming Initiative". We are trying to address a number of issues in an integrated consistent way, in a manner that can enable our people to readdress all the basic issues that we have forgotten to address in some time.

Our starting point is that around our hills there is Mt Elgon which is based between Uganda and Kenya. Now downstream, downstream there are many rivers which flow from Mt Elgon, many many many streams which flow. There are many streams which flow and later on help even to feed both parts of Lake Victoria and Lake Kyoga including the River Nile. So this whole place here has been one single ecosystem in which the other place produces water and water flows down here. These produce rains because there are forests here which produce rain which goes back into the hills and you get the ecosystem going. It supported a number of cultures, including human communities, those who eat matoke, those who eat birds, those who eat what? There were even monkeys there, monkeys, wild life. All along those streams there were types of plants and trees including the ones which I would call medicinal plants. My grandfather, I found my grandfather when he was still alive, he died at 135 years without going to hospital. He never lost one single tooth. He never wore glasses like I do. And was never bent, just remained straight until he died, he was very athletic. Because they had herbs behind the house which he could use each time he felt ill, he just began eating it a little bit. He never got very sick. Me the other day I was even failing to come here because some humour came and was just putting me aside. Up to now I am still coughing (cough cough) which one time I never did. But because of the general decline and degradation which we are having, all those medicinal plants which were very good to our forefathers are no longer there. All that stock of knowledge is getting upset. The birds which used to feed on some of the plants there, because they were plants that made them sit around there, the birds are no more there. Even the other reptiles like chameleons, which used to eat a lot of flies and other hostile insects, you find they have no good environment now. Now there are more flies than we need and yet you cannot eat flies.

So therefore our approach is to try to restore that which we lost. Restore it back by making sure that the rivers which are now very naked of all trees, of all plants, we can now get back to replant them. The rivers will also be made clean so they can be supporting life which they used to support. Because of land pressure, people are cultivating even right at the edge, at the edge of the river and allowing a lot of water and good soil to run off and at the same time pollute the water. We are coming to a shameful level whereby we might even have no frogs in the future. Where are we going to get frogs? And I am asking, who would chase away frogs? Can you eat what frogs eat? So therefore we want to restore the commonality between things: human beings, wildlife, plants, rain, water, all those things so that they come back, too.

Governments have generally been talking about environment for a long time. They even come and make laws. But each time they make laws (because they are there just to make laws), they say "don't do this, don't do this", but people are more inclined actually to do exactly what the government says, don't do. There was one time when every home was supposed to have a pit latrine, for purpose of health. But what most people did, was to dig, to construct the toilets, but they didn't use them. They kept them for purposes of the authorities, to show the authorities: "I have brought your choo, your choo is there!" But it was not used. So it just became a tourist site, something for showing the big man in authority. Not part of their use. It is not integrated in the life. So the mere fact that you come with the law, 'don't do this' does not mean people will treat it positively.

Therefore our understanding is that in order for people to address their environmental questions, we must give them an incentive. What are they going to get? What use will they have out of it? What use can they see from what they get out of it? Most people cut trees because first of all they want something to use to cook! A man has no access to electricity and since nobody is addressing any of those issues, and then the tree itself is not directly meaningful to him at that material time, he will cut it for temporary material gain.

So we have now gone through our place here, begun identifying a nucleus group – not everybody, just a nucleus. Because we want to set them up so that they begin readdressing the question. Now with us so far we have identified a number of activities which you can do across, along this stream. The first thing we are going to do is fish farming so that people don't just depend on hunting for fish like you hunt for wild animals. Now around fish farming, we will restore the environment. Every fish farm that will be put along that stream, there will be an environment of trees and an environment of a number of other things. Also along the river we will be restoring the old grasses, plants, old grasses, medicinal plants, fruit trees as there used to be. It will enable birds also to come back from where they are now. Water flow will be much better and more certain because not all water will have run. It will be running slowly. And once water is running slowly, it raises the water table even at the higher ground. With high level of water, we can now plant other crops, even on the higher ground. Then we can restore our rain pattern. Then we can also make sure that we can actually supply water in our homes. Because we can circulate the water. Then we can improve working on our health and many other problems.

Now apart from fish growing, we have also known that we can do rice growing provided it is controlled. Also along the stream, but allowing the shore of the river. Then we are also putting up poultry farming in between. For those who are not doing fish farming, they will be doing poultry and other forms of management. With our trees, we will also be able to sell the wild fruits and the medicinal plants. That is money. There are types of grasses which we in Uganda had been using, but now we don't use this for covering for our houses – there are some types of small, small grasses. But right now even if you went in many places those grasses are not there. And yet that grass, if you planted it and had a house of grass, it is much better, it even costs more than the one of iron sheets. So you can plant grass and have economic value. We have even types of grasses which we use for cleaning, for sweeping the house. These were traditional, but all those plants are going out.

So in short, therefore, by using this type of approach, the first thing is that we are restoring what we have lost, so that we can become a new laboratory. But more importantly, in addition, in addition to plants and other things which were part of our environment, we have also thought that even human behaviour, human conduct, is part of human environment. Because when we are talking of degradation, it is not just degradation of plants, it is even a degradation of culture. Even now people no longer know how to sing: these days if you hear them singing hip hop, we don't know whether that is a song or is crying. But the African singing all along was a beautiful voice, proud! Such that now the village situation is so gone, people then take only to drinking for purpose of entertainment, there is nothing they do. But if you can make the environment become more interesting, there are a lot of activities they can engage in. We shall get back to the African story telling. Tangawezi, those things will have come up which now we don't do... Then people can meet around their centres there to discuss many many things and spend a useful time. That is what we mean by changing peoples' environment. Of course, those who want to drink a bit, they can later on have their one glass or two, but after going through many other things. Now that one will also be restoring the culture of people so that people can begin, as they address the environment issue, they can also address other questions that affect them. Now when a man has lived so much in misery, even the face can no longer smile. There is one I was seeing there, a person who has just been there in misery, between him and the face of a dog you don't know ... they are just the same, because they are not smiling, nothing. Now humans cannot be like that. So we must restore culture... Africans are supposed to be full of humour! People who welcome each other!

So our project will start with the place here which is called Kanginima. That is the start. We are starting with about a 20-km stretch. But after that we want to expand it in all directions so that it will have an impact in the whole region. We don't intend it to be just a local thing. At the beginning normally, whenever you start a new product it is sometimes difficult to know how much you will be paid for it. Because not every new product has a known price. I will give you an example, when we were young, we could never think of what? Of having to buy water. That was not possible. Water was a free thing! It

was unthinkable! How can water also be bought? So you couldn't give it a price. But now it is a business. So even when we begin this, therefore, some of the things that we will be doing, because they will be new products, they will begin influencing people to appreciate them slowly. And in the process of appreciating them, is when you create the commercial value. So then from there, once we have restored the environment, people will even pay, they will come to our place there to even pay for seeing frogs. We can insist, even to government, since government currently pays money for the environment, we will be able to say that if you have an environment vote that vote will go to people who have restored the environment. We can insist, provided we organize, we can bargain for that. Currently their money now is only for courts. But by then their money won't be for courts, for taking people to prison. That is not the money we want for the environment. Money for the environment will be to pay people who have restored it. We shall send representatives up to Parliament, even up to be President to make sure that whoever becomes the President must be one of us, and therefore become our voice, to do what we want him to do. So we will not have to wait until Europe is paying us the carbon price; because our governments, what are they doing? If your seaweed is regenerating fish, there is no point why environment money cannot pay you here so you can continue regenerating fish. So we don't have to beg the Japanese to come and buy our things. The mere fact that you are just having that rare fish is enough reason why you should be paid. And our region there, they have studied this whole region, they have studied up to the rain pattern even up to Kenya. Once we have succeeded in our situation, we can link up with our colleagues on what they call the Western side of Kenya which is our Eastern side and we can do similar things. Then we shall restore our water in the Lake, the River Nile will flow. You know that even Egypt depends on that water. Electricity, we will have raised it. So there are many aspects of this project which I can't really define.

So in short, therefore, ours is daring to join you in what you are already doing, and we hope that if we join ourselves very consistently, we can create a pattern throughout East Africa and therefore we can help to reinfluence what happens in the rest of the world. Then we can be able to address the issue of public policy, the politics to make sure that even the politics also becomes responsible, it has not become degraded as it is now. So that even the politics is not just about promises, it is about programmes.

Asanteni sana. Thanks to all of you.

Seme, near Kisumu, Kenya
Presented by Oby Obyerodhyambo
(as recalled and reported by O.O.)



There are four Barbet sites in Seme:

- a) an agribusiness with planting of Tissue Cultures bananas in a plot that is about 3/4 of an acre;
- b) an agro-forestry project still in its planning stage where we intend to plant fruit trees (most likely mangoes and Guava with possibilities of water-berries) in a plot of land a short distance from Lake Victoria;
- c) a seven-acre piece of land with trees alongside a river;
- d) the rehabilitation of bio-diversity on an overgrazed plot about one acre in size.

The Tissue Culture banana project began as a social transformation project which promoted TC bananas through a two pronged strategy i) establish a banana plantation to demonstrate that indeed bananas can be grown as a commercial venture in these parts and ii) establish satellite TC banana plots by providing women with 50 free TC banana suckers. The women belonged to OCHANDO OYUDO Women's Group, a women's group that my mother associates with. They were given free suckers on condition that they prepare a planting pit and get animal manure for planting. Several did this and have harvested bananas for domestic consumption, while others have managed to sell their bananas. Since then, there have been demands from the laggards who did not establish their plots asking for the suckers from Nairobi. Whereas these were delivered free at the inception of the project, at this point I have insisted that those who are interested have to purchase the suckers from the propagators in Nairobi at the cost of 110/= per sucker.

The agro-forestry fruit planting project is in the inception stage. The land has been ploughed and this season was put under millet while in transition. The plan is to fence it to prevent grazing when the crop is removed and then plant mango, guava and water berries. These will be able to co-exist in the first few years of the tree life with food crops, especially vegetables and beans. Once the trees are established, the fruit trees will take over as the main source of income. The intention is to establish an agro-forestry

project that can later allow for the development of a fruit processing plant. We also hope that the locals will see this as an alternative land use strategy instead of trying maize that always fails. The agro-forestry project here is the main project for carbon trading/carbon sequestering.

The same concept is planned for a 7-acre piece that in the past had Eucalyptus trees grown on it, but these have now been harvested. We plan to have an assortment of indigenous trees on this plot, especially those with medicinal value. This will act as a basic arboretum as well as a herbarium to allow for the harvesting and study of traditional trees with medicinal value. Already I have started an inventory of the indigenous trees that are in existence and are getting depleted. Using the book, Useful Trees of Kenya, I have been able to get my mother to assist in identifying the trees. A herbalist aunt will assist in identifying the trees with medicinal uses.

We will be exploring options of establishing a Moringa plantation in the last piece for purposes of establishing it as an alternative fodder crop.

The main activities in the pipeline are: A cross visit by Sammy Muvelah and fencing of the plots.

Lukenya, Kenya
Presented by Sammy Muvelah
(transcribed from English)



My site is located in 43 km outside Nairobi. I travel 0km of tarmac and 10km of very bad road. There is no lake, no ocean, it is a very very dry place. Most people plant maize and beans. And they keep goats and cows traditionally. People suffer a lot. There is no opportunity for agriculture. But between us and city there are some private ranches which keep wildlife.

So after looking at my site, I decided to do some research to find a crop that can grow throughout the year to offer food. Not vegetables, because vegetables also die without water, but a tree. I contacted research institutions, I contacted international organizations and I finally found that tree. The tree is called Moringa ... it is also called muzuzu, and mronge. And then I went to find out how do I – since you can't start from seeds since the place is very dry – how do I make sure if I plant it, it grows properly. But we tried 6000 seeds and we lost all the 6000.

So we went to a research institution and they showed us how to grow trees in dry areas. Right now we have 300 trees that are over 1 metre tall. So this project that we have, that I am running, tends to be a tree nursery, eco-tourism, and vegetable production from Moringa. So I am very consistent with the goals of Msichoke (reads from poster): Ajira, Afya, Mazingira, Biashara.

The site is just about 3 years old. We started a water dam. We have had challenges, failures and successes. And we have just had the first group of people who have paid to transplant trees this month. There were some yesterday and some coming in the coming weeks. We have already started processing, small scale, to see what the processed Moringa powder looks like and we have been testing it with some people in Nairobi who are using it to make soup. For those who do not know Moringa, we normally put the description on a CD and we give it to them and they go and look at it on the computer. There is a whole presentation.

We just finished another dam for 500,000 litres, and we are waiting for the rains, because our first dam failed. We are planning to build a bio-gas plant because we have noticed energy is a problem, but people are willing to come and cook from one place so that they no longer have to fetch firewood, especially those who live near the place. Then from there we will continue to learn.

Wilmington Square & Gray's Inn, London, UK
Presented by Barbara Heinzen
(transcribed from English)

Barbet Learning Site
Confirmed Feb08



Barbara Heinzen
Co-author:
Barbets Duet
Conceptual
Framework;
Author:
Feeling for Stones



Wilmington Square, London

A micro-site of plant pots
in Wilmington Square

UK

An office in Gray's Inn for:
"Making our thinking familiar" to others &
searching for the right people to join the experiment



© Barbets Duet 2009 p. 11

Forgive me for using a picture, but everybody who has had a site has had a lot of space. Here you are talking about a big coast line, a big place in Ruffji, very nice land in Seme, and in Molo, 21 km of a stream. So I wanted to show you my site in Central London. It has a lot of potential. (BH hands around the laptop with photograph of front step.) My site is a micro-site. It is so tiny. It is the size of my front door. Because I live in a city and don't have much of a garden, my shamba is a few pots.

So, I am not on the same scale as the rest of you. But I use my little garden to see how many different kinds of flowers I can grow in my small pots. I use it to discover how many different flowers I can grow in a year. When I am at home, every weekend I try to take a photograph of the new blossoms. In England, the climate is so mild, that even in winter you can have some blossoms. And I take photographs of the bugs: the spiders, the bees, the flies. So, it's a micro experiment in tracking the diversity of my little garden. So that is one part of my experiment.

The other part of my assignment came from Mr Magode. He said, "Your job is to make our thinking familiar." So I have a list of maybe four hundred names of people and organizations. I think I have spoken to maybe 300 of the people on that list, introducing them to what we are doing. I get out my little book, I open my laptop, I have tea, I have coffee, I talk and talk and talk and try to make them understand what we are doing with the Barbets Duet. It is not easy. Most people are using a different set of ideas. They start somewhere in the clouds with these big, very big concepts and then they say, 'all we need is money'. So they look for the money, and then they don't know what to do. When Oby and I first decided to get started, Kenya was in flames. People were fighting. And I said, "What do we do now? We have come up with our ideas, we have tested our ideas, we think they are good. What do we do now?" And he said, "We just begin."

We have a very good idea. We don't have money, but we have our own friendships, our own land, our own places and we have our own ability to work. So while most people thinking about similar issues are

stuck in a little room with money and ideas, we are just doing things. Part of my job is to look for a way to connect the money and other organizations with the people who are doing things in the land at the grassroots. So I talk to academics, business people, financial people, NGO people, anybody I think can be a good partner for us. So my site is a very tiny garden, a tiny tiny garden, and the whole world. I think little by little we will make the right connections and we will all be stronger by connecting the big ideas and the big money to what people are doing every day. Asanteni, thank you all for coming, for actually doing things as opposing to thinking about them, and for working with all of us.

Achievements of the Invention Convention

There were a number of important achievements of the Invention Convention, as listed below.

1. First meeting of all Founding Partners

While Barbara Heinzen had met with all the founding partners individually and several partners knew each other and had visited each other's sites, this was the first time that all partners met together. Simply getting together allowed the partners to discover the complementarities in their thinking and their experience. It also offered an opportunity to deepen our shared understanding of what we are doing and how it might be done.

2. First presentation of founding Barbet Sites

All six sites (including London) were presented to those attending the Convention. The reports from each site gave the others a better understanding of what each was doing, planned to do and the challenges each site was facing. Each site report and discussion took an hour or more. The bulk of the insight and learning that took place during the Convention, took place during these conversations.

3. Discovering the advantages of being together

More than anything else, the site presentations demonstrated the value of working together. The first major advantage was the ability to learn from each other. Longer term, it is possible that there will also be value in developing business opportunities as a group, rather than as isolated endeavours.

4. Confirmation of basic principles

Working together over the course of two days demonstrated the value of the key Barbet principles.

Multiple experiments in different ecologies → rapid learning: The Barbet Site reports demonstrated that although we were hearing about five different ecologies in five different social and economic contexts, we shared a number of common problems. As a result, everyone was able to learn rapidly from each other, comparing experiences and insights based on both common features and the unique qualities of each place.

Engagement & equity: There was huge value in engagement across the boundaries of education and experience. Msichoke is a grassroots rural organisation, while most of the founding partners have university educations and spend much of their time in major cities. However, throughout the Convention, this divide was meaningless as the high quality of questions and enquiry meant that everyone was learning from each other.

Give & Gain: The experience of working together also confirmed the basic value of 'give and gain' – everyone clearly had something to offer and something to learn.

Mosaic rights: The reports from the Barbet learning sites illustrated the importance of a mosaic rights approach to environmental management. While the concept of mosaic rights was one that had been presented and discussed, the utility of the concept became clear as different sites reported their experience with the problems they were facing.

5. The value of 'right pacing'

During the years that the Barbets Duet came together, the founding partners decided not to spend time on raising money, but instead to concentrate on establishing their own learning sites and organising the Invention Convention. A few modest attempts were made to find a sponsor for the Convention, but in the end, the partners decided to proceed at their own expense.

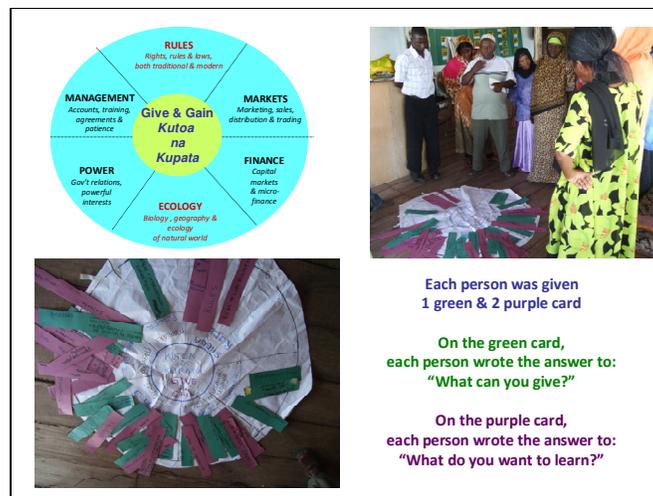
As a result, the progress of the Barbets Duet has been slow, but persistent. Each step of creating this experiment has taken as long as it needed to take. For some partners, it has taken longer to select a site and develop a plan for that site than originally imagined. This gradual pace, has meant that ideas had time to develop and be tested in practical ways. In addition, as all partners have needed to earn their livings elsewhere, work on the Barbets Duet has been integrated with the rest of our lives. As a result, what has been achieved is likely to be more sustainable, because it is already based on what each place can afford both financially and in terms of time.

6. Testing two new tools of strategic thinking

The original agenda, had allowed for an afternoon to use these new tools, but in fact the site presentations and discussions took considerable time. Hence, these tools were simply introduced and tested quickly, but were still found to be valuable.

Tool 1: Give & Gain → identification of knowledge gaps & needs

The first tool is the give and gain exercise, adapted from the approach used by Project Phakama. Each person was asked to note on separate cards what s/he wanted to learn and what s/he had to offer. All the cards were then arranged on the knowledge wheel, which showed the gaps as well as the strengths in our knowledge. We need to be stronger on ecology, less afraid of issues of power (commercial and political) and everyone wanted to know more about marketing and sales.



This was the first time any of us had used this tool. On future occasions, it will be useful to be more specific in what each person has to offer and what each person wants to learn. For example: ‘I want to learn how to market fresh seaweed in Dar’, rather than simply saying, ‘I want to learn marketing’. More time also needs to be spent in using the results of the give and gain wheel to shape what we do separately and collectively.

Tool 2: Business idea – developing a virtuous circle

The second tool, based on work by Kees van der Heijden, was an exercise to think through new business ideas.⁷ In introducing this exercise, Barbara Heinzen gave an example of a new business idea for Msichoke, based on mangrove protection, which appears below.

⁷ The business idea is an exercised developed and used by Kees van der Heijden, formerly of Royal Dutch Shell, and then with the Strathclyde Business School. Kees van der Heijden uses the business idea with established firms to help them identify their

Opening discussions about structure & governance

In the evenings, after dinner, the founding partners discussed what kind of structure and governance would best serve the interests of all involved in the Barbets Duet. The conversation began to identify shared responsibilities and benefits of coming together, as well as identifying a number of critical questions to answer. However, three basic principles were agreed:

Opening principles of the Barbet structure & governance

- 1) Each Barbet site evolves in its own way to its own conditions.
- 2) There is value in coming together.
- 3) The organizational form of that coming together will be one in which we all have a stake and all share the responsibility.

This conversation will continue through email in the coming months and it has been proposed that the partners meet again in six months to develop their thinking more concretely. In the meantime, each partner will look for organisational forms available in his/her own country. A trust is easy to establish in Kenya and might be a good legal form to use. In the UK, a company limited by guarantee is another option. Each partner will also look for examples of institutions (both traditional and modern) that can serve as models for what is developing here.

TOUGH ISSUES

The presentations from each site served to highlight two critical, but very hard issues.

1. Hard economics militate against healthy environments.
2. Governments have failed to protect the environment.

These two points are linked and best illustrated by the conversation held between Rose Lyimo and a young logger in Rufiji.

The logger told Rose Lyimo that he gets paid 1600 Tanzanian shillings (about \$1.20) for each plank of wood sawn from a felled tree, each plank measuring 7feet, 11 inches. He can get 7-10 planks from a tree and it takes a day to fell the tree and saw the planks. He also spends 15 days clearing brush before felling the trees and works to harvest 10 trees in ten days. His maximum earnings for 25 days of work is 160,000 shillings. These same planks sell for 28,000-30,000 Tanzanian shillings (\$21-23) in Dar, and for more overseas. Large bags of charcoal from this same forest sell for 7000 shillings along the road and 35,000 in town. There is no payment available for leaving the forest standing. Because of the drought this year in East Africa, people met in Rufiji said that they could either feed their children, using the proceeds of charcoal and timber, or leave the trees standing.

These economics are hard enough, but when the logger was asked what right he had to cut the trees, he said that his employer had a licence from the Tanzanian government to harvest and sell the timber.

Similarly, the members of Msichoke are facing extremely hard economics. In dry weight, they are getting less than \$0.25 for each kilo of seaweed they produce. This barely covers the costs of inputs, and does not compensate them for their labour. However, a packet of dried seaweed bought in Chinatown in Amsterdam (and brought to the meeting by a friend of Mwajuma Masaiganah's) was selling for \$28 a kilo. Not only are the members of Msichoke not being given a fair price for what can be sold, there is no market for the environmental services they are providing.

These two hard issues: the unwillingness of governments to protect environmental wealth and the unwillingness of markets to pay a living wage for rural producers are ones that the members of the Barbets Duet already face and will continue to face in the coming months and years.

NEXT STEPS

The Invention Convention was a critical achievement in the development of the Barbets Duet experiment. It allows everyone who has joined this experiment to see the value of coming together to test new ways of supporting people who support healthy habitats and high biodiversity. The experiment does not stop here, as the following activities over the coming year will take place.

1. Continued evolution of each site

In the coming year, each Barbet learning site will continue to develop its own thinking and own experiments with creating environmental health and improved incomes: “evolving in its own way according to its own conditions.”

2. Barbet sites will meet again in 1 year

All sites and partners will meet again in another year, probably at another one of the East African sites.

3. Partners will continue discussions on constitutional issues

The founding partners will continue to develop their thinking on the structure and governance of the Barbets Duet as a collective endeavour. They will look for useful models from their own cultural backgrounds as well as legal arrangements currently in use in each country.

As these are quite difficult questions, the partners may also decide to set up a company limited by guarantee, or a trust, in order to manage shared financial arrangements and coordination in the interim.

The partners will try to meet in the next six months to focus on this issue, probably in Kenya.

4. Barbara Heinzen will continue to coordinate activities & look for connections

The need to coordinate the activities of the Barbets Duet remains, a responsibility Barbara Heinzen will continue to meet. She will also continue looking for partners who can make a valuable contribution to the work of the Barbets Duet.

5. Continued efforts by all to ‘make our thinking familiar’

All partners and sites have responsibility for introducing people to our ideas and activities.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Some readers may find the achievements recorded here to be very small. However, what was not small was the excitement felt by all who were involved in the Invention Convention. As one person after another presented the story of his or her site, everyone began to see the potential of what we were doing and the manner in which we were working together.

The record of rapid environmental degradation in East Africa (and elsewhere) is a catalogue of destruction that seems too large to tackle. The failure of our governments and elites to address the underlying laws and economic forces that accelerate that degradation only adds to a sense of futility.

However, there was no futility in the Invention Convention. Instead, the force of imagination, of will and of rapid collective learning gave everyone attending a sense of hope and purpose. At the end of the two days, there was a reluctance to leave; no one wanted to part from the clarifying strength we drew from each other.

Long after this report has been abandoned on some library shelf, the elation of discovering we are not helpless, but powerful in our ability to act together, is what will remain with all those who met in Mlingotini, Tanzania in October 2009.

