



Barbets Duet

Barbets are tropical birds related to woodpeckers & toucans. Some Afrotropical barbets sing in duet, creating the sound of one voice.

www.barbaraheinzen.com → Barbets



BRIEF CONCEPT NOTE

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. Its 'life' value is very high; its economic value is only realised once it is dead. Today's environmental crisis is the consequence of this paradox.

The Barbets Duet will create new economic systems that reward the abundance of life.

Rationale

The Barbets Duet is a 20-year experiment to invent environmental markets and their supporting rules and institutions. It is named after tropical birds called Barbets who often sing in duet. This symbolises the need to harmonise the knowledge of competing cultures for this invention to succeed. The rationale behind the Barbets Duet experiment is as follows:

1. A sound business is part of a clearly defined value chain of goods and services which create economic value and are supported by accepted property rights, trading rules, financial systems and managerial structures.
2. Environmental businesses – whether they are trading in watersheds, carbon emissions, biodiversity or clean air and soils – require new ways to be valued economically, but do not have clearly defined value chains or the support of accepted rules and institutions.
3. The Barbets Duet is an experiment designed to appreciate existing and develop new institutional foundations for secure, valuable environmental businesses that will support local people and others who support the natural world.
4. This experiment is starting in East Africa because of the wealth of institutional models that has existed locally in African societies to create high social equity while also sustaining the diversity and resilience of the natural world.
5. The Barbets Duet will include a Barbet Exchange. This is a way of learning through dialogue and a place to test different institutions, markets and business models at local and international scale.

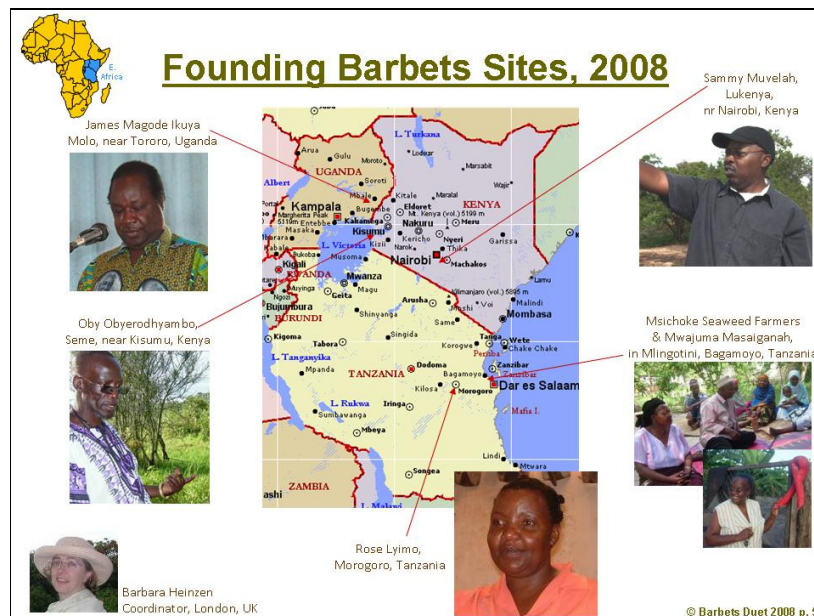
Working Assumptions

The Barbets Duet is guided by several working assumptions. 1) The primary relationship is between people who manage the land (including marine resources) and those who manage markets. To increase healthy, bio-diverse landscapes, both types of managers need to learn new skills and develop new rules in the context of their practical affairs. 2) For this to occur, environmental managers (traditional and modern) and market managers need to engage directly with each other. 3) This engagement will be used to design multiple experiments at multiple Barbet Learning Sites to test different institutional arrangements based on cultural values that link peoples, land and markets. 4) In designing these experiments, both modern and traditional knowledge have something to contribute. 5) Each experiment will have people from different cultures working together equitably in practical settings. 6) Multiple experiments on multiple learning sites will stimulate rapid learning.

Founding Barbet Learning Sites & Organisers

The Barbets Duet was founded in 2008 when a small number of people with Barbet Learning Sites in East Africa joined Barbara Heinzen to create the Barbets Duet. Each site is a centre of learning, open to others, where people are actively, experimentally engaged in new ways of managing the land and/or creating environmental markets. Land managers, businesses, financial institutions, government departments or research institutes can all be Barbet Learning Sites. These sites are places where learning is not abstract, but tested in daily management and decision-making. At present, five sites in East Africa have joined this experiment. All five are land or marine-based sites and represent different cultures, land tenure arrangements, ecosystems and environmental products or services.

The Barbets Duet is coordinated by Barbara Heinzen, London, in partnership with the organisers of the five founding Barbet Learning Sites in East Africa: Oby and Hilda Obyerodhyambo and Sammy Muvelah in Kenya; Mwajuma Masaiganah and Rose Lyimo in Tanzania; Magode Ikuya in Uganda. Photographs of these key individuals appear below.



Early Encouragement

Among those who offered early encouragement were Richard Sandor, founder of the Chicago Climate Exchange; Charles Onyango-Obbo, Managing Editor of the Nation Group Media in Nairobi; Julius K. Kipng'etich, Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service; Arthur Muliro, Deputy Managing Director of the Society for International Development in Rome; and Bill Colquhoun, a former senior executive in Shell Chemicals, now working with the University of Cambridge. For a report of early reactions to the Barbets concept, see the 2007 Sabbatical Report at www.barbaraheinzen.com → Barbets.

More Information

The founding partners of the Barbets Duet are proud to announce their contribution to the invention of new environmental markets. They are currently looking for people and institutions who are interested in participating in the Barbets Duet experiment as researchers, advisors, Barbet Learning Sites, financial backers or publishers of what is being learned. For more information please get in touch with Barbara Heinzen, Coordinator of the Barbets Duet, at barbara@barbaraheinzen.com or visit www.barbaraheinzen.com → Barbets.