



Innovation Expedition

From the Log Book of the Chief Explorer: Expeditions in February and March 2007

My travels in this period engaged me in significant events in Kenya, Oxford, Kananaskis, Alberta, and York University in Toronto.

A. Kenya

Keith Jones joined me on this trip for his first African experience and we involved ourselves in a variety of initiatives covering the spectrum from agriculture, health care, eco-tourism and e-commerce. The Innovation Expedition is building a strong base in Kenya with organizations whose work covers much of Africa, as well as major scientific work in Asia, including China.

1. ILRI (International Livestock Research Institute)

ILRI is one of 16 major global institutes connected through the Collaborative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). With major campuses in Nairobi and Addis Ababa and regional offices in India and China, ILRI is a major global player in efforts to reduce poverty through livestock development. They have recently been selected by the Gates Foundation to serve as its one global knowledge centre on livestock development.

ILRI has recently used the Challenge Dialogue™ process to initiate two major projects:

- i. A regional network to nurture collaboration among all CGIAR institutes working in Africa and with regional and national research centres. This is a serious test model for stimulating structural innovation across all the CGIAR network..
- ii. Innovation Works—an attempt to stimulate increased collaboration and innovation internally in ILRI and externally with their alliance partners and clients.

Keith has been co-facilitator for this Dialogue and helped the ILRI team organize and operate a successful workshop (February 21-22) in which he used their input to help them create another powerful Logic Model explaining their intentions in creating **Innovation Works**.

Keith will provide Affiliates with details on this workshop and the way in which the ILRI planning team has since used the workshop output to gain strong support from their colleagues for launching this unit.

Our team has an ongoing mentoring contract for Keith and I to continue to provide support for the above projects as well as to provide support for creating a new public-private partnership for accelerating vaccine development both for animal and human health issues. Steve Murgatroyd is involved in this breakthrough initiative and will likely participate in their next workshop in Oxford in May.

Another prime mentoring focus for me will be to work with the Benefic Group (Vancouver) to test a new model for mobilizing resources for ILRI. We will explore the feasibility of mobilizing private and public support for strategic alliances involving a number of Alberta institutions with ILRI (and ILRI's partners such as the Gates Foundation and the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics). More on this later.

2. Health Innovations

Our major focus over the past few years has been to use CDS to help launch AfriAfya as an online health knowledge network to support community change agents in marginalized and low income communities. We are now engaged in helping them to build an American board for their newly registered charity in the USA.

We continue to offer strategic planning support to this small award-winning organization, including assisting them in their interactions with other important NGOs, such as Action Africa (with its focus on major health, agriculture and civil society innovations in southern Sudan) and the AMREF (African Medical Research Foundation), now celebrating its 50th year of operations. (They have been identified by the Gates Foundation as their new potential major partner in Africa for building networks to improve health systems.)

Our latest new Affiliate, Dr. Vic Neufeld, through his leadership of the Canadian Coalition for International Health, also has long-standing connections with the above African organizations and many others. Vic was in east Africa in the same February/March period and he will, in future, be providing major leadership for our Expedition's work in health care in developing countries (Africa, Asia and Latin America). Vic will provide Affiliates with an overview of his work and how he would most like to interact with and benefit from our community of practice.

3. Virtual City Challenge Dialogue and Workshop

Our Innovation Expedition has been providing strategic planning support since its founding in 1999 as a small web service company. It now is a highly successful group of companies focusing on:

- Knowledge Management
- e-Commerce
- Mobile Phone Broker
- Satellite Provider

Its flagship product on "value chain automation" is acknowledged by large global commercial clients as being a world leader.

We now have three Affiliates connected with Virtual City—the two founders (Trevor Kanja and John Waibochi) and their alliance partner (Ian Hotz who owns and operates his own consulting company, PowerPlay).

During my recent visit we ran a mini online Dialogue and organized a highly successful workshop of the board and senior staff to plan the next stage of their rapid growth. Tom Ogaranko participated in the online Dialogue and his extensive input had significant impact.

Trevor and John are planning to attend our second Affiliates conference, tentatively scheduled in conjunction with the Banff Venture Forum in early October. (Tom is playing a significant role in this Forum.)

4. Eco-Tourism

Keith and I both spent three days at Sekanani Camp on the Masai Mara, enjoying the animals and continuing my long-standing efforts to help this camp become a model centre for eco-tourism. Keith is exploring the possibility of engaging a Vancouver entrepreneur in these efforts.

B. Oxford, England: The Said Business School; The Oxford innovation Centre; and the Centre for Human Genetics

En route home from Kenya I spent a week in Oxford pursuing:

- The ILRI vaccine project with the Jenner Institute (animal vaccines) and the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics.
- The Oxford Innovation Centre and Oxford Instruments—revisiting its amazing founder, Sir Martin Wood, to gather information for use in Alberta in its ongoing efforts to test models for unleashing innovation.
- building a potential IE base within the Executive Education program of the Said Business School. The new Dean of Executive Education (Gay Haskins) is a long-time member of the global network of the Innovation Expedition. She formerly was with the Economist before heading up the European Foundation for Management Education in Brussels and Executive Education at the London Business School.

These exploratory efforts will lead to further interactions this spring and, hopefully, to future opportunities for myself and other Affiliates to engage with the Said Business School in their distinctive new leadership programs (Science and Civilization; Social Entrepreneurship; and Improving Prosperity in Africa).

C. Kananaskis, Alberta: Energy Innovation Forum (*Making the Case for a Clean Carbon Economy*)

Most Affiliates are aware of EnergyINet's first Innovation Forum as many were involved in it. It was a highly successful international event with diverse participants from the USA, UK and Canada.

Leadership provided by such Affiliates as Steve Murgatroyd, Bob Mitchell, Bob Taylor and Jan Simpson played a significant role in the Forum's success.

Details on the Forum will be posted on IE's website and when Jan completes the draft report on the Forum, it will be made available to Affiliates.

A sidebar discussion at the Forum engaged a number of IE Affiliates, along with John Bromley of the Benefic Group, in creating a new structure and business model for sustaining the EnergyINet dream—now that the initial business model, which was dependent on federal support, has proven to be unworkable.

More details on this exciting activity will be available soon.

D. Launch of the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Migration of African Peoples (1500 to the Present)

Most of you know of the inputs Jan Simpson and I have been providing to Paul Lovejoy to move his innovative global network on the African experience from the status of a Centre to that of a major Institute.

The launch date was chosen to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade by the British parliament on March 25, 1807. (If you want a visual update of this historic event, see the movie *Amazing Grace*.)

The York University event involved a seminar with global participation on the theme, "*Slavery, Memory, Citizenship*." The guest of honour was our Governor General (herself a descendent of Haitian slaves). It was an impressive event and I have pledged some ongoing support from myself and any other interested IE Affiliates. (This Institute includes an innovative digital project to capture rare historical records and to share them widely, particularly with libraries and institutes in developing countries.)

My next major involvement with this group is to be interviewed and taped regarding a number of my Afro-Canadian stories over the past 45 years and to participate in their next international seminar, hosted by the Wilberforce Institute in Hull, UK, in late May.

This log entry was completed on April 3, 2007