

Binka Le Breton



Award-winning author, environmentalist and activist Binka Le Breton lives in Brazil's Atlantic Forest where she co-directs the Iracambi Research Center, working with local community leaders to protect the rainforest and improve rural livelihoods. Iracambi focuses on research and education, natural resource management, developing sustainable communities and researching ecosystems – all in the context of climate change.

In an isolated rural area where, fifteen years ago, there were no good schools, no health care, no roads, no communications and very little hope, Iracambi was a catalyst for mobilizing community action to petition the state governor to set up a new county. Today the community enjoys access to schools, universities, a family health service, improved roads, telephones and internet access. Most importantly, the people of the area have a new understanding of citizenship and the concept of “Yes, we can.”

An experienced speaker and broadcaster, Binka spends part of every year on the lecture circuit sharing her passion for the rainforest and questions of environmental and human rights. Her books include Voices from the Amazon (Kumarian Press 1993), A Land to Die For (Clarity Press, 1997,) Trapped: Modern-day Slavery in the Brazilian Amazon (Kumarian Press, 2003,) and The Greatest Gift, The Courageous Life and Martyrdom of Sister Dorothy Stang (Doubleday, 2008.) Where the Road Ends was published in 2010 by St Anthony's Press, New York and tells story of how Binka and her husband decided to exchange the international development circuit for life in the Brazilian rainforest where they founded first a forest farm, then a non-profit, and finally a rainforest research center.

As president of Brazilian non-profit Amigos de Iracambi, Binka's role is to facilitate its work in saving forests and changing lives in Brazil and beyond, as dozens of foreign students come every year to the Iracambi Research Center to learn first-hand about the challenges and rewards of life on the front line of sustainable development. In the past year Binka did an extensive lecture tour in the US, where she narrowly escaped a tornado and was drafted at the eleventh hour to deliver the keynote speech at an international conference. She also completed research in Colombia for her new book on forced disappearances in Colombia, traveled the Silk Route in Western China and learned more than she ever thought she could about setting up a new website. As a writer, Binka's goals are to give a voice to the voiceless, and her travels take her by bus, river boat, dirt bike and horseback from remote villages in the depths of the forest to the marble halls of the United Nations in Geneva.

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