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**Tools of the Profession
Book Review**

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Gemo, H., Eicher, C. K., & Teclemariam, S. (2005). *Mozambique's experience in building a national extension system*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press. 128 pages. \$13.95 (USD).

In the preface of this book, *Mozambique's Experience in Building a National Extension System*, Professor Dr. Gustav Düvel writes about the importance of a synergistic relationship between the necessary elements within extension. Düvel writes, in part, that the success of an extension system is largely a function of the dynamic interaction of a multitude of factors forming part of the total situation, including the physical, social, cultural, socio-economic and organizational environments and the way these are perceived. (p. x)

Gemo, Eicher, and Tecler (2005) state that the purpose of their book is “to chronicle the evolution of extension in Mozambique over the past seventeen years from 1987 to 2004...” (p. xiii). In doing so, they discuss the “six basic extension models” (p. xii) currently used in Africa: the public extension model, the commodity extension model, the Training and Visit model, the non-governmental (NGO) model, the private sector model, and the Farmer Field School model. The authors chose to begin their discussion with events of 1987, the year the Mozambique government established a national public extension system even though, due to the civil war, the extension system did not become functional until 1992.

For those who may have a limited understanding of Mozambique’s history, this book might require independent research into that history to better understand the book’s context. For example, readers may not know about the human degradation and destruction of war that contributed to Mozambique’s personal and governmental conflicts, including gaining independence from Portugal in 1975, and the “total situation” about which Düvel speaks. Racial unrest and upheaval precipitated mass departures of foreigners including the Portuguese, who left the country, its people, and its economy bereft of essential machinery, resources, and skills. The book describes how Mozambique overcame these conditions and how, over 17 years, the country built an extension system to help its people make a successful living for themselves using their limited resources and implementing technological innovations.

In the introductory chapter, Gemo et al. give a brief background regarding the current extension situation in Mozambique as well as provide justification for the book. Additionally, the authors indicate the book will provide discussion about Mozambique’s current agricultural economics, the creation of “public, private, and non-governmental extension providers, ...the role of the

government, external financiers, and relevant services...and the extension experience from the past seventeen years and draw lessons for the future of extension in Mozambique” (p. 8) but do not discuss whether these current practices are an improvement over the procedures before 1987.

In Chapter two, the authors illustrate the crises Africa faced while attempting to build partnerships—between extension workers, scientists, and governmental representatives—needed to increase agricultural productivity. They also present five African experiences as learning opportunities to Mozambique as means to help the nation improve the establishment of these rural institutions because “Mozambique should devote primary attention to crafting a system of rural institutions that is compatible with its own history, culture, agrarian structure, political ideology and developmental strategy” (p. 15). In contrast to the book’s earlier lack of historical and cultural background, this chapter discusses relationships, dynamics, and power struggles at a level of detail that is interesting while adding a layer of complexity which helps to explain why extension initiatives took such a long time to come to fruition in Mozambique.

The initiations of both a private extension service by local NGOs and a public extension service by the local government during the years of 1987–1992 are the focus of Chapter 3. This chapter concentrates on the public extension service, the population it was designed to help, the delivery model the service used, and the problems the facilitators encountered. In addition, different types of agronomic technological innovations are suggested to help farmers improve food crop management. This discussion provides solid evidence to the theory that “the general objective of public extension has always been ‘to contribute to the increase of agricultural production and productivity’” (p. 23). The second section of the chapter

discusses the resources available to the public extension service. Extension's own employees had "an acute scarcity of qualified technicians in agriculture" (p. 29), external funding was from "donors [who] financed public extension heavily" (p. 31), and production support services "were quite weak" (p. 32). These resource-related factors, as well as the role private extension plays in Mozambique, are discussed in detail in this chapter. However, again, because of the complex relationships between the organizations and donors mentioned, readers may have a hard time following all of the networks and interactions.

Gemo et al. begin Chapter 4, "The Emergence of NGOs in Extension and the Changing Roles of Public and Private Extension: 1993–1998," by sharing a movement towards a more positive future for the Mozambique nation: "The declaration of peace in 1992 ushered in the second phase of the national extension system from 1993 to 1998 and public and NGO extension workers helped refugees return to their villages, resume farming and rebuild livestock herds" (p. 37). When reading about SG 2000—"an international NGO committed to accelerating agricultural development in Africa" (p. 45)—readers will get an in-depth look at how one NGO helped empower the Mozambique population with the innovations needed to continue successful agricultural development. Moreover, the authors share how the public extension service implemented the long-term strategic and preliminary Extension Master Plan. The rest of the chapter addresses the expansion of public extension, and as a result, how the extension system seized the opportunity for diffusion of agricultural innovations while leaving open questions about the roles and influence NGOs may have on the future of agricultural extension in Mozambique.

Chapter 5 explains the National Program for Agricultural Development (PROAGRI) period from 1999–2004, and Chapter 6 provides an in-depth evaluation of

these issues. The authors attempt to handle the daunting task of describing all of the elements encompassing PROAGRI, the National Program for Agricultural Development, a plan developed to "coordinate pooled donor investments in the agricultural sector" (p. 50). This chapter provides an in-depth look at the "first extension master plan" (p. 51), the unification of extension programs in Mozambique, and Mozambique's progression toward moving the responsibility of executing extension at the community level. The authors present the advantages of accomplishing these goals as extension moved from the private sector to the public sector. Other areas of discussion include the establishment and importance of building new working relationships with several different networks, the practice of outsourcing extension, and the associated costs. This chapter contains a huge amount of information, and the reader may become confused or lose interest in all of the details. The purpose of this portion of the book may have been better served had the authors separated it into three more concise sections.

In the next chapter, "Looking Ahead: Critical Issues for Policymakers, Extension Managers, and Donors," the authors indicate the areas that are important to the future of Mozambique and delineate specific challenges to funders, policymakers, and administrators involved at the extension level. Detailed problems and trials are identified and closely examined to assist with the provision of quality services to the Mozambican nation. The details in this chapter are focused and serve an important purpose in providing insight to anyone who has a vested interest in ensuring Mozambique is successful as it begins the second Extension Master Plan (2005–2009).

The “Summary and Conclusion” chapter provides a synopsis of where Africa has been and where it is heading, particularly Mozambique. The authors suggest that

agricultural research is the driving force for generating new technology for extension workers who have a strategic role to play in speeding up the adoption of new technology as well as providing information on health, marketing and nutrition to village people. (p. 104)

To accomplish this, the authors stress that it is essential to hire well-trained extension professionals and scientists so they can diffuse the technology needed in Mozambique for her people to be successful and healthy. Gemo, Eicher, and Teclemariam postulate that extension in Mozambique needs to envision itself as an integral part of “an interactive agricultural knowledge triangle, which is composed of research, extension, and agricultural higher education” (p. 105). One major element that is crucial to the success of this concept is accountability. The ultimate success of Mozambique’s future lies with the government, the donors, the extension professionals, but especially with the people.

The authors depict in great detail the struggles that Mozambicans faced in the past and summarize the continual challenges encountered daily by many stakeholders,

including government officials, policymakers, extensionists, industrialists, and agriculturists. They also accomplish the book’s purpose as stated in the preface and its goals outlined in the introductory chapter by providing an in-depth—albeit, at times, confusing by virtue of insufficient historical and cultural context—look at Mozambique’s experience in creating a national extension system. The authors obviously have extensive knowledge regarding Mozambique’s background and struggles. The book is, at times, hard to follow, especially when the authors discuss complex issues, which lends itself to readers who either already have or are willing to conduct the research necessary to obtain a basic understanding of the history of Mozambique and its international agricultural development status. In fact, *Mozambique’s Experience in Building a National Extension System* might be best suited for specialists in agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa who already have a thorough understanding of the complexities of international agricultural extension services. Similarly, because the book presents a clear picture of the realities of one country’s struggles for food and survival, it might also be a useful resource for academics who are engaged in topics related to international agricultural development and the impact extension efforts could have on a country’s humanitarian gains and economic successes.