

Rural Development Planning in Africa

“In the much talked about and documented worldwide rush to cities, the challenges of rural development, equity and efficiency are being ignored as experts and institutions are by and large concentrating on the pressing needs of the people who are crowding into the cities. And nowhere has this been more pronounced than in the great, needy and inventive continent of Africa. For any individual or institution who cares about development and democracy, this comprehensive synthesis of research, experience and insights into rural development planning in Africa comes at a time of great need, accelerated change, and an on-going explosion of new tools and technologies. It is required reading. The future is already here. Open up that window and let the fresh air of new thinking blow in from Africa.”

–Eric Britton

Professor of Sustainable Development, Economy and Democracy, Institut Supérieur de Gestion, Paris, France

“Rural Africa has been a site of research and policy programmes on a wide range of issues. I highly recommend this book for its thorough effort to synthesize the evergrowing literature on rural development planning in Africa. The book chapters provide details on methods, theories, conceptual models and empirical findings of this growing literature.”

–Ruth K. Oniang'o

Editor-in-Chief, African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development; Founder, Rural Outreach Program Africa

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This book is dedicated to the memory of Wangari Maathai for her relentless effort to conserve environmental resources in Kenya; to Michael Bernard Kwesi Darkoh for his dedication as a teacher and researcher on environment and development; and to Kingsley Lwanda, who was born to Constance Ouko and Robert Ouko in June 2016.

FOREWORD

Rural development remains one of the most enduring challenges confronting the African state, peasants and development practitioners in the public and private sector. Some of these challenges are old (technology, management and finance), while others are new, stemming from rapidly changing regional and global contexts of development (how to harness new technologies, cope with climate change and increase productivity in a shrinking environmental space). However, these changing contexts and challenges of development have also opened up new opportunities never before available for rural Africa (better transport, marketing information flows, and ICT-facilitated emarkets, efinance, ebanking and input delivery systems).

The authors of this volume collectively turned their attention to a subject which has almost disappeared from the vocabulary of an African development scholarship consumed by a manifest craving for an “Africa rising” narrative based on industrialization and urbanization. Several voices, such as those reflected in this volume, called for a return to the future by privileging an integrated approach not only to rural development, but also to an integrated agro-industrialization as part of African structural transformation policies.

Two decades ago, when planning was considered heresy, the title *Rural Development Planning in Africa* would have been scorned. The volume also reflects the “return to planning movement” sparked by the 2009 financial crisis and African government adoption of long-term strategic development plans, covering a period of two to three decades. The authors seem to have parted with rather than affirming outdated

development models often narrowly associating rural development with agriculture to the neglect of other sectors that are equally deserving for attention. Not surprisingly, the new context of African rural development planning is an all-encompassing activity situated within the realm of local governance and inspired by emergent powerful networks, including the state, international development partners, the private sector and rural communities.

The authors of *Rural Development Planning in Africa* have adopted an approach that expands conventional rural development planning trajectories by exploring the role of agriculture, finance and investment, rural-urban linkages and markets, energy, health, and water. While each chapter can be elaborated in a full-fledged volume, Meleckidzedek Khayesi, the editor, has crafted a seminal introduction which stitches into an integrative whole what might seem from the outset to be a collection of disparate chapters.

Two facts add authenticity to this book: it is written by academics and professionals with hands-on, long-term experiences in the field of rural development, and some of them are rural development practitioners in their own right. In addition, all the authors, the majority of whom were raised and have lived in rural Africa, are a unique and welcome addition to an evolving African scholarship ushering in distinctive and context-specific approaches to African development. This volume is an inspirational read for those involved in the academic and policy debate on rural development in Africa and beyond.

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PREFACE

Contributing to African rural development planning experience fulfils a long passion I have had not only in research but also in wanting to improve the living conditions in rural areas of Africa. I have not only read about and carried out research on African rural development programmes, but also experienced the African rural development landscape in a personal way. I was born and raised in a rural district in Kenya. I have been involved in the ordinary rural life in Kenya. I am always fascinated with the rising of the sun, when my rural community wakes up; the development of the day, when this community gets engaged in several activities; and the setting of the sun, when the community settles down to evening meals and storytelling, and then retires to sleep. I remember well how other boys and I would be tending cattle in the afternoon and evening, while the girls would be fetching water and preparing meals. I remember how we, the young ones, would spend the day at school while our parents would be working on their farms or doing other important life-sustaining activities.

My rural community has also changed in several ways. Numerous members now own cell phones, radios and many modern gadgets. I have witnessed a number of rural development initiatives being introduced and implemented in my own local district and others parts of Kenya. Though I moved away to study and work in Nairobi and abroad, I have maintained links with my rural origins. I have been involved in discussions and initiatives seeking to support the development of African rural areas and Africa in general. I cannot fully describe the joy and peace I always get when I am in my rural community. Listening to cattle mooing, cocks crowing, children making joyful sounds as they play, a mother calling her children to

come to the house to eat, and news about happy and sad events in the community remind me a lot about the importance of the basics of life.

In addition to these personal experiences that I have just described, I have also been involved in research and initiatives in rural development. My master's thesis was on rural transport and it helped me to apply scientific analytical tools to rural household travel behaviour and its relationship to the rural economy. The first book review I ever published was on a book entitled *Integrated Rural Development: The Ethiopian Experience and Debate*, written by J.M.O. Cohen in 1987. It was published in the *Journal of Eastern African Research and Development*, 1992, Vol. 22, pp. 157–159. I have individually and jointly conducted other research in rural and urban areas.

African rural development planning is an interest not only of mine but also of several other people and institutions, including researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, the media, politicians, development partners, humanitarian organizations and the public. The contributors to this volume have also experienced the African rural development reality as residents in African rural areas, researchers, decision-makers, implementers and investors. The cumulative experience of the contributors to this book brings life to the topics covered in different chapters. The authors are not just summarizing evidence from which they are detached. They have actually also been part and parcel of the experience in which they acquired knowledge, enabling them to synthesize the information gathered; knowledge is intangible.

The main achievement of this book is in providing a synthesis of research evidence on selected themes in African rural development planning experience. I look at this edition as the first step in a process that may see the authors of this book and/or other researchers updating the chapters and even adding new themes in the coming years.

Meleckidzedeck Khayesi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Editing and writing a book involves networking with several people and institutions. It is indeed a collective effort, and the editor is basically a facilitator of this dynamic group of persons and institutions. I am grateful to the dedicated authors, who spent several hours reading literature, extracting information and preparing chapters for this book. I thank the many scholars whose work on rural development planning provided the information that has been synthesized in the chapters of this book.

I am also grateful for the editing support from Felicia Yieke. I thank the staff of Palgrave Macmillan (Christina Brian, Renee Takken, Sarah Doskov, Chris Robinson, Alina Yurova, Ben Bailey and Dana De Siena, along with Sharon Rajkumar and Ganesh Ekambaram of SPi Global) for their collaborative approach when developing this book.

Last, but not least, I am grateful for the encouragement received from my family and friends.

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