

TCD Practitioner Grant Report: Workshop for Extension Officers in Timor Leste

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Prior to arriving at UF for my PhD in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, I served in the Peace Corps in Timor Leste, working with a variety of international development and conservation non-profits, and completed my Master's degree in Agricultural and Extension Education at New Mexico State University. My research focus is on small-scale sustainable farming systems and international agricultural Extension. As a recipient of the TCD Practitioner Experience Grant, I had the opportunity to spend May-June 2012 working closely with the government of Timor Leste to improve its agricultural Extension system. I conducted this project in three parts: First, research results from my master's thesis (*An Analysis of the Agricultural Sustainability of Small-Scale Farms in Lacluta Sub-District of Timor Leste*) were presented to stakeholders in the Ministry of Agriculture, local leaders in Lacluta, and the farmers that had participated in the original study. Recommendations for improved agronomic, agribusiness, and agroecological practices were well-received and hopefully will help stimulate policy and behavior changes that can develop the agricultural sector and improve rural livelihoods.

Second, I conducted a training workshop with Extension officers in the rural district of Viqueque. Officers were taught participatory methods for working with Extension clientele and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods for conducting local needs assessments. The training was taught in the national language of Tetum and utilized a combination of teaching methods to convey the material. Officers were very positive about the training and requested continued linkages with UF and the TCD program. Third, I collected data through in-person interviews with Extension personnel at the national and field level to determine the challenges/constraints facing Extension and the opportunities for strengthening the system. Preliminary data were presented to the Ministry of Agriculture and USAID-Timor Leste's agricultural development team, and future publications are planned. Hopefully this research will lead to improvements to Timorese Extension and/or additional development interventions that improve agriculture in Timor Leste.

