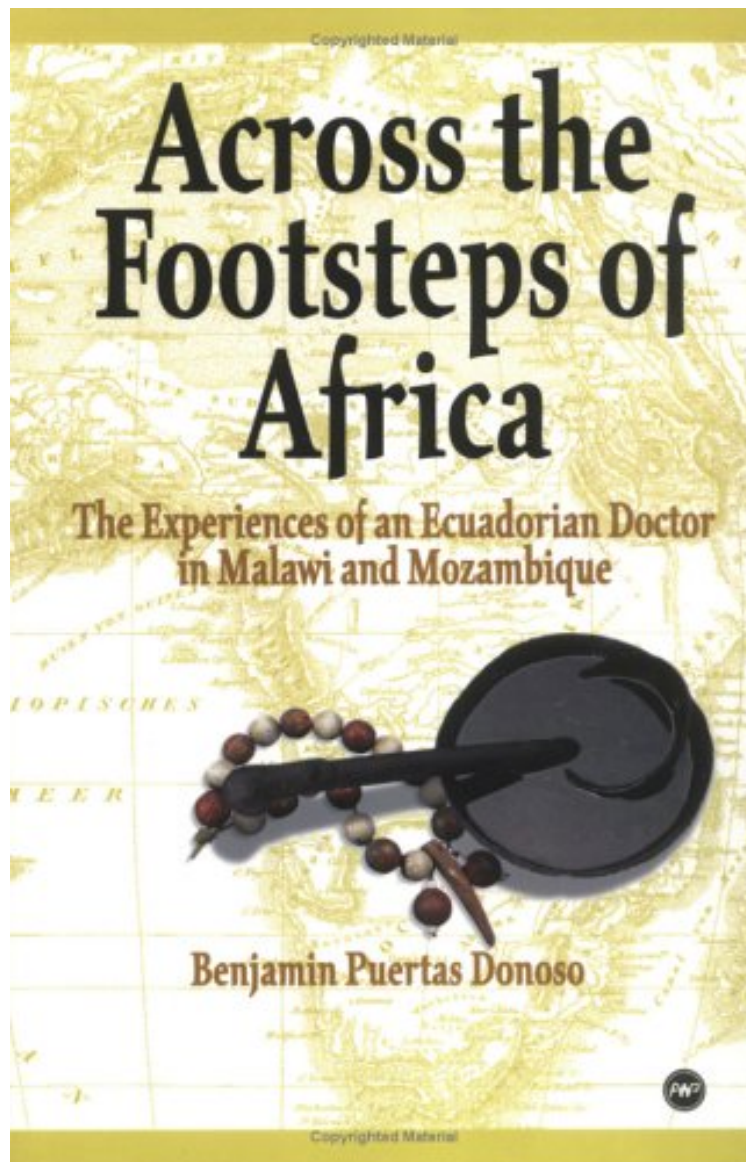


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Across the Footsteps of Africa: The Experiences of an Ecuadorian Doctor in Malawi and Mozambique

Benjamin Puertas Donoso, Benjamin Puertas-Donoso
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Benjamin Puertas Donoso, Benjamin Puertas-Donoso : Across the Footsteps of Africa: The Experiences of an Ecuadorian Doctor in Malawi and Mozambique before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Across the Footsteps of Africa: The Experiences of an Ecuadorian Doctor in Malawi and Mozambique:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An Eloquent BookBy Frances Marie ScuraAn Eloquent Book by a Doctor in the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize Winning Organization, Les Medicines Sans Frontieres Across the Footsteps of Africa by Dr. Benjamin Puertas-Donoso Les Medicines Sans Frontieres have won the prestigious and much deserved Nobel Peace Prize for 1999. I would like to congratulate them and praise their dedicated doctors. I was especially touched by this eloquent and beautiful memoir of an Ecuadorian doctor who worked with the American Refugee Committee in Malawi and with Les Medicines Sans Frontieres in Mozambique near the end of their long, brutal civil war in 1993 and 1994. Dr. Puertas is a gifted writer. The refugee camps where Dr. Puertas worked were not pretty places. But Dr. Puertas took the inconveniences, risks and deprivations of the work in stride. His warm personality bursting with optimism, energy and humility, not only charmed his refugees and coworkers, but captivates his readers as well. However, of course, his success in taking on the gargantuan task of saving lives in wretched conditions was not due to charm alone. In fact he has a genius for organization and administration. Dr. Puertas does not focus the book on his own accomplishments or dwell on the dirt on the floor in the hospitals. His book is very intelligent and shares with the reader a little of the history of the countries he worked in, their governments and politics and he gives the reader a respectful and balanced idea of what the people, the food and the native cultures are really like. He was very impressed with the good natured people and their incredible strength to endure each day. He traveled quite a bit in the region, met a lot of interesting people, and is a good travel guide for the reader sitting comfortably in his armchair. Years ago I too lived and worked in Africa. I served as a Peace Corps teacher in Ethiopia. I was teaching English to children who were starving, with many unnamable and unreatable diseases and living without adequate shelter. I can vouch that every word in Dr. Puertas' book resonated true to my experiences in Africa. Africans take their hard life pretty much in stride, but it is indeed very hard. It is organizations like Medicines Sans Frontieres that bring the doctors with skills and abilities to make things happen to improve their lives. Dr. Puertas is to be commended for giving his time and gifts to humanitarian efforts and also for writing such an inspiring and exceptional account of it. It is Dr. Puertas' great gift as a writer to make this story, necessarily suffused with so much human pain and suffering, a great triumph to the human spirit and a romantic adventure. Dr. Puertas is so likeable, his narrative creates suspense because the reader really cares about what happens to him. This book would make a great movie!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nice Combination of History Lesson and Gripping Personal AccountBy BlusuedeAs others have mentioned, this book in its English "Africa World Press" version exhibits an unusual and almost literal translation from the Spanish. Still, that does not detract from the job Dr Puertas does in describing his time in Africa and why it stole his heart. Moreover, his reports on what it felt like to see and experience the transformative events of southern Africa in the early 1990s are invaluable. This, after all, was a time when Malawi, South Africa and Mozambique all held their first ever democratic elections -- almost simultaneously!For novices to the region's history and geography, he does a great job in introducing us to southeastern Africa. For health workers who have visited and worked in those areas, he reflects the appreciative feelings we all have had for the warmth and openness of those regions' inhabitants. For any prospective audiencemember, he appeals to our common humanity.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. GREAT BOOK FOR THOSE IN THE MEDICAL PROFESION OR OUTSIDE.By Daniela Chiriboga (dani.chiri@usa.net)I am a student at Universidad San Francisco de Quito, where Dr. Puertas is a teacher, and I was lucky enough to be able to read his book's first edition, in Spanish. It is a great book, both for people in the Medical Profesion, as for everyone else. It has very touching stories of survival in Africa, as well as interesting adventures, and a very useful description of a Doctor's work in areas of such poverty and suffering. It is for sure a must read for anyone interested in Public Health, or who wants to read something real, yet different.

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