

Marylyn Porter and Ellen Judd, ed. Feminists Doing Development: A practical Critique. Zed Books, New York, 1999.

Doing Development is a collection of viewpoints of feminists actively involved in development from the industrialized North and developing South. The purpose of the book is to reassess feminist involvement in development work and to redefine the meaning of "development." The focus is the "studying up" in development agencies and development practices. The viewpoints expressed examine the political, gendered and Northern construction of development, the bureaucratic processes of policy formulation, and the controlled portion of global capital that flows through development (p2). The book maintains that the intention of development is often good and many of the NGOs involved make concerted efforts to improve women's conditions. Moreover, the good work is marred by poverty, inequality, and violence against women. For these reasons, Feminist Doing Development addresses the relationship between women, the ambiguities of development and its inherent antagonism.

The contributors to this book come from various cultural backgrounds. One of the problems the book encounters is the definition of feminism. The South wants an inclusive definition that would include men as partners. These Southern writers reject feminism as used by the North. They feel that it's too euro-centric and restrictive to their plights. Feminism in this book is used as an attempt "to change injustice and oppression against women of the world."

The book is organized into four sections. The first "The Structures that Confine Us" looks at the restraints in working within official frameworks. The contributors are from U.K, Pakistan, Japan and China.

The second section deals with various accounts of feminists attempts to change current programs to make them more women oriented. Renu Khanna tells the reader how a "feminist approach changed two health initiatives in Western India, and the lesson learned from this encounters." Barbara Cottrel, a community activists narrates her works in Atlantic Canada. Collette Oseen shares difficulties encountered in projects dominated by men. Ms. Oseen "see[s] the process of feminist organizing as crucial to eventual success of feminist development" (p.13). Finally, Nori Andriyan contrasts different feminist projects in Indonesia (funded by Northern funds) and describes how the fall of Suharto leads to establishing two organizations that are independent of outside funding, resulting in the political agendas that fit the women of Indonesians.

The third section of the book is called "Integrating the Local with Global". The contributors describe their experiences of working between local and global agencies and trying to balance

conflicting messages and demands. Valsa Verghese and Fanella Porter describe their experiences of moving an international feminist NGO from Geneva to Uganda, and the problem it poses to get international donors to fund the NGO in its new abode. Habiba Zaman illustrates her experience by using women working with the garment workers of Bangladesh as a case study. She explores how women could control some aspect of their works in the garment factory and how this could be extended to their homes in order to improve their lives outside their work place. Joy Green and Cora Voyageur, deal with Aboriginal community in Canada and their sufferings. Both paint the inhuman conditions meted against the Aboriginal community by the Canadian government.

The final part of the book, "Working with Global Structures" moves the argument from local to global analysis and action to take. Peggy Antrobus and Linda Christiansen-Ruffman write about their experiences working with the North and the South in connection with the United Nations. Joan Kerr takes the theoretical approach by raising key questions including what globalization means for women. She names three global economies that have impacted on women. According to Kerr, they are "structural adjustment in Africa, trade liberalization in Bangladesh, and the effects of the Asian financial crisis." In conclusion, she offers feminists five strategies to fight the economic status quo that marginalized women. The strategies that should be pursued are: "1. transforming mainstream economics; 2. challenging the World bank; 3. influencing corporate behavior; 4. lobbying national governments and 5. fostering participatory economic." (pp. 193-194). Isabella Bakker concludes the section by discussing what she calls " the new global architecture.

This book is broad in scope with engaging scholarship by the contributors. It is easy to read and to comprehend. It is strongly recommended to readers such as practitioners, activists, academicians in gender development or those merely curious about women and development. Additionally, it would make an excellent text book for all students in social sciences and women's studies. The beauty of the book is that it looks for new ways for feminists all over the world to work together without imposing Western feminism on Southern women. The work demonstrates how global feminism works in various ways to stop the inequality meted against women.

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