

# isis RESOURCE

books videomusictapesarts&craftspostersjournals

## GENDER, SOCIETY AND DEVELOPMENT: WOMEN'S INFORMATION AND NETWORKS, A GLOBAL SOURCE BOOK

Information and information sharing are important issues in the establishment of power relations today. For the women's movement, these issues are of significance especially in empowering women locally and globally.

This "Global Source Book" has three main sections. The first section introduces the topic and provides a detailed perspective about wo-



men's information systems in particular regions. The second section provides the directory, which is the

printed version of the "Mapping the World" database. It contains information on a wide variety of women's information services, including details of the collection or documentation they provide, as well as addresses and the name of a contact person for each organisation. The last section is a bibliography of important literature and a list of resources related to women's information services.

(Netherlands: Royal Tropical Institute KIT Press and United Kingdom: Oxfam Publishing, 1999. 176 pp. ISBN: 90-6832-711-9 & 0-85598-425-2)

## AND OUR RICE POTS ARE EMPTY: THE SOCIAL COST OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS edited by F. Josie and others

The Asian economic crisis has been a nightmare to most people in the region. Prices are skyrocketing, industries are going bankrupt, workers are being laid off and gross national product is decreasing in many countries. The affluent lifestyle that the Asian middle class used to enjoy has deteriorated while the lives of the poor have worsened. This abrupt crash in the financial conditions of the region has shattered the lives of millions of people.

Consumers International Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (CI ROAP) has published this book to follow up the conclusions of the conference on the Asia-Pacific economic crisis held in March 1998. The conference high-

lighted the issues involved in the financial crisis and related this to the structure and effects of the global financial system, showing how such problems can cause ordinary consumers so much suffering. The book does not only delve into the financial aspect of the problem but probes even deeper, into the human and social dimensions of the crisis.

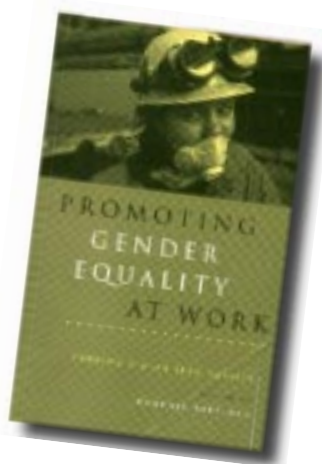
The book is divided into four sections. The first section tackles the relationships of economic policies, financial governance and the ongoing economic crises in Asia. It also explains in detail how financial warfare trigger global economic crises. The second part presents some assessments of the

social impact of the economic crises in some Asian countries. The third part describes the efforts of some organisations, governmental and nongovernmental, to alleviate the impact of the crises and to search for solutions using socially oriented approaches. The last section presents an ongoing research conducted by the CI ROAP for Asia and the Pacific.

The book aims to provide updated insights into the crisis and put forward proposals for interim and long term measures. It also explores the role of the consumer movement as a global organisation in facilitating information and ideas for action on social measures. Finally, it is an attempt to help shape public opinion on rebuilding Asian nations affected by the crisis. (Malaysia: Phoenix Printers Sdn. Bhd. 397 pp. ISBN: 967-9973-86-7)



**PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AT WORK** edited by Eugenia Date-Bah



The book examines the impact of rapid changes in the world economy and the situation of women in the labour force. Women always bear the brunt of the social costs of changes such as globalisation, increased international competition, structural adjustment, recession, the transition to a market-based economy and technological innovations. It consists of twelve contributions from experienced gender specialists.

Attention is drawn to the need to formulate more viable and effective policies and strategies that take due account of the diverse economic, legal and social factors that will improve the situation of women workers. In particular, the book underlines the importance of legislation that would guarantee quality working conditions for women, gender-sensitive labour market policies, appropriate social protection and adequate arrangements for the promotion of training to enhance women's occupational and employment opportunities. It also highlights the relevance of international instruments in ameliorating the plight of women workers. (United Kingdom: ZED Books, 1997. 250 pp. ISBN: 1-85649-453-5)

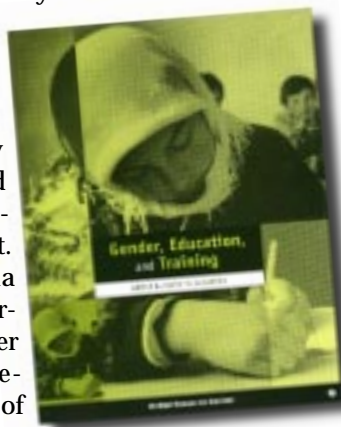
mic, legal and social factors that will improve the situation of women workers. In particular, the book underlines the importance of legislation that would guarantee quality working conditions for women, gender-sensitive labour market policies, appropriate social protection and adequate arrangements for the promotion of training to enhance women's occupational and employment opportunities. It also highlights the relevance of international instruments in ameliorating the plight of women workers.

(United Kingdom: ZED Books, 1997. 250 pp. ISBN: 1-85649-453-5)

**GENDER, EDUCATION AND TRAINING** edited by Caroline Sweetman

A large gender gap in education exists. Women make up an estimated two-thirds of the world's illiterate people and efforts to close this gap are failing on all three indicators of educational participation: access, retention, and achievement.

*Gender, Education and Training*, a collection of articles by development workers and researchers, deals with the role of education and training in promoting equality between women and men in various aspects of development. The article by Fiona Leach explains the persistence of this gender gap and its consequences on the status of women. Succeeding articles discuss how education can actually promote the male-dominated status quo by showing that the promotion of formal education is necessary but not sufficient in trans-



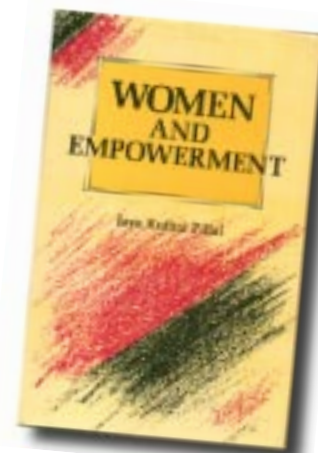
forming gender power relations in society.

Two articles (Longwe's "Education for Women's Empowerment or Schooling for Women's Subordination" and Gordon's "Girls Cannot Think as Men Do") argue that education and training for women's empowerment needs to reverse the values and beliefs being inculcated within the conventional school system.

Four articles (by Cottingham et al., Sibbon, and Spadacini & Nichols, respectively) analyse different approaches and educational techniques already being used in creating social change via gender awareness training. Also included in this collection is Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo's report on the proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) in 1991 held in Hamburg, Germany. (Oxford, U.K.: Oxfam, 1998. 80 pp. ISBN: 0-85598 400 7)

**WOMEN AND EMPOWERMENT** by Jaya Kothai Pillai

Women's empowerment enables them to achieve equal status in society, realise their full identity and attain their full potential. Involving women and encouraging them to participate in all aspects of society, from economic, political and social arenas to legal and educational sectors, will lead to their empowerment.



Asserting that women can empower themselves by understanding the causes of the existing inequality of women in society, the

book is divided in two sections. The first section analyses the existing status of girl-children and women in India according to their rights, as well as social, economic and educational development. It also discusses the status of rural women and strategies of empowering them, specially the importance of the new role of education.

The second section presents research studies done on four categories of women professionals—physicians, engineers, lawyers and managers. It highlights issues concerning success in their chosen careers, equal employment opportunities, the problems they face at home and at work, and the barriers to women's true participation in the professions.

(India: Gyan Publishing House, 1995. 172 pp. ISBN 81-212-0512-3)

## JOINING HANDS TO DEVELOP WOMAN POWER

The presence of strong women with feminist consciousness within an organisation leads to sensitisation of organisations and their policies and programmes. Hence, it is very important to help women working with NGOs, women organisations, women's networks etc., to develop a clear and collective understanding of gender and development and to enhance their feminist consciousness.



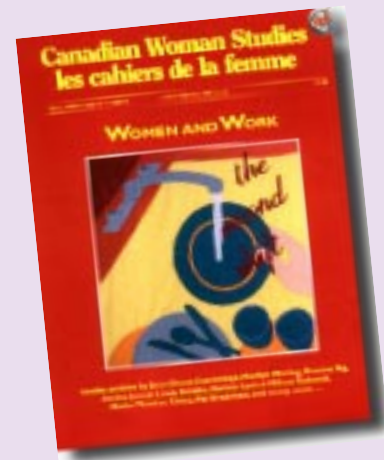
This book reports on the proceedings of a South Asian Workshop on Gender and Sustainable Development, held for a month in Bangladesh. It was jointly organised by the Institute for Development Policy Advocacy and Analysis at Proshika, Dhaka and the FAO-NGO South Asia programme and sponsored by DFID, UK. Women from NGOs, government programmes for women's empowerment, women's studies centres and research organisations participated in this process.

The report discusses the objectives of the workshop, methodologies, activities, and issues tackled. These range from patriarchy to feminism, from gender violence to human rights and from sustainable development to women empowerment.

(Dhaka: The Institute for Development Policy Analysis and Advocacy, 1998. 110 pp.)

# Women & Work

CANADIAN WOMAN STUDIES is a feminist quarterly that aims to make current writing and research on feminist topics accessible to the largest possible community of women. This particular issue (Vol. 18, No. 1) attempts to capture the complexity of women's work and its different dimensions such as



paid/unpaid, public/private, unionised/non-unionised, commercial or voluntary. It also explores the interconnections of multiple oppression that many or most women experience, such as heterosexism, able-ism, racism, and classism, in every area of their lives and work. (Address: 212 Founders College York University, 4700 Keele St., North York, Ontario M3J 1P3, Tel (1-416) 736-5356, E-mail: cwscf@yorku.ca)

The ASIAN WOMEN WORKERS NEWSLETTER is published quarterly by the Committee for Asian Women (CAW). It reports on issues, news, struggles and life experiences of Asian women workers. (Address: Unit E, 4/F, Skyline Tower, 18 Tong

### Publishers

**Royal Tropical Institute, KIT Press**  
P.O. Box 95001, Logo HA Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
Tel (31-20) 568-8272, Fax (31-20) 568-8286  
Email: kitpress@kit.nl, Website: www.kit.nl

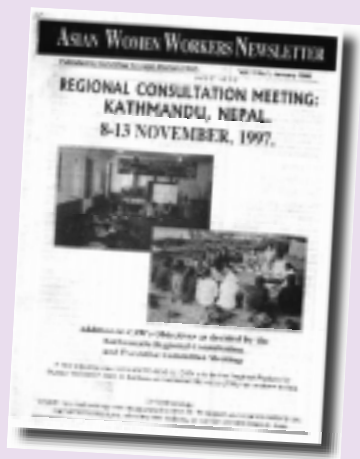
**Carfax Publishing Co.**  
PO Box 25, Abington,  
Oxfordshire OX14 3 UE, UK  
Fax (44-1235) 401-550

**Consumers International**  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
PO Box 1045, 10830, Penang, Malaysia  
Tel (604) 229-1396  
Fax (604) 228-6506  
Email: roap@tm.net.my

**Gyan Publishing House**  
5 Ansari Road, New Delhi 110002, India

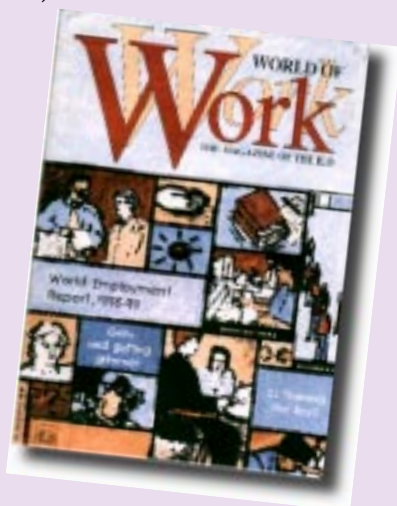
**OXFAM Great Britain (Philippines)**  
95-A Malumanay St., Teachers' Village,  
1101 Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

**St. Martin's Press (exclusive distributor)**  
175 Fifth Ave, New York,  
New York 10010, USA



Mi Road, Mongkok, Kowloon, Hong Kong, Tel: (852) 272-26150, Website: [cawhk.home.ml.org](http://cawhk.home.ml.org)

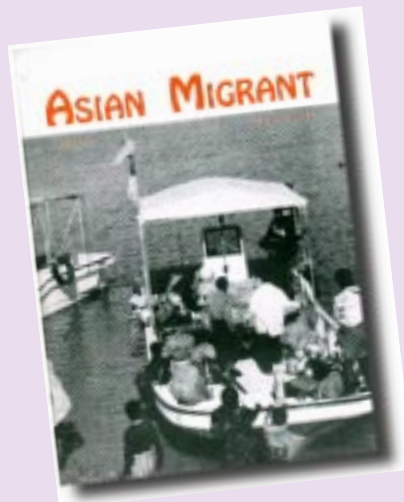
The **WORLD OF WORK** magazine is published five times a year by the Bureau of Public Information of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva. Issue No.7 (Dec 1998) features the 1998-99 World



Employment Report as well as articles on the ethical dimension of economics, the ILO in history, labour issues, economic developments, trade agreements, and job trends around the world.

The **ASIAN MIGRANT** is published quarterly by the Scalabrini Migration Center. It contains news articles and features on issues affecting migrant workers all over the world. Vol. XII, No. 1 contains a review of

trends in international migration in Asia in 1998; an analysis of international human rights standards and the protection of migrant workers in the Asia-Pacific region; and a review of the situation of foreign workers and the construction in-



industry in Singapore. (Address: Scalabrini Migration Center. P.O. Box 10541, Broadway Centrum 1113 Quezon City, Philippines)

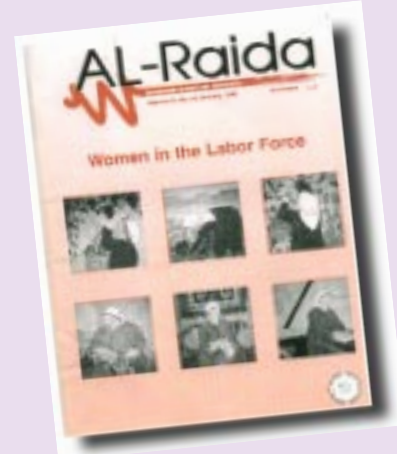
**CHILD WORKERS NEWS** is published by the Arunodhaya Center for Street and Working Children. It focuses on issues affecting children in the labour market both in the formal and informal sectors of employment. This particular issue (Vol. 5, Nos. 3 & 4) explores three major themes: child soldiers; prostitution as a flourishing trade in newly independent Eastern European



countries; and the existence of child workers in Kerala despite a 100 percent literacy rate. (Address: The Arunodhaya Center for Street and Working Children, 30 Arathoob Road, Madras 600013, India)

**OFF OUR BACKS** is a news journal by, for and about women. It has been published continuously since 1970 and is run by a collective where all decisions are made by consensus. The December 1997 issue was dedicated to the theme: women, work and time. It includes the results of the "Ask a Working Woman" survey; a feature on the "Shorter Work Time Group" and its campaign for a 30-hour workweek with 40 hours' pay and longer vacation leaves for employees, and several personal accounts of working women about their experiences in work and activism and how these affect other aspects of their lives. (Address: 2337 B 18th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009, USA, Website: [www.igc.apc.org/oob/](http://www.igc.apc.org/oob/), Tel (1-202) 234-8072)

**AL-RAIDA** is published quarterly by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World of the Lebanese



American University. It has two purposes: first, to enhance networking between Arab women and women all over the world and second, to promote objective research on the conditions of women in the

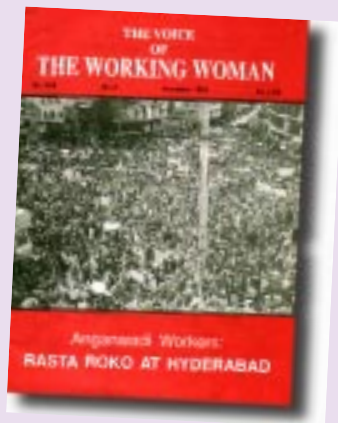
Arab world especially conditions related to social change and development. Volume XV, No. 82 focuses on women in the labour force. It contains articles featuring the female labour force in Lebanon; and spotlighting both personal and professional issues that confront working women.

**AWID NEWS** is the newsletter of the Association for Women in Development, an international membership organisation committed to gender equality in a just and sustainable development process. Vol. 11, No. 1 focuses on women workers in the global economy and examines the role that women play in the development process.

(Address: Women's Programs Office 10 Sandy Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0338, USA)

The **LABOUR POLICY AND LABOUR FORCE NEWSLETTER** is published by the Council of Labour Affairs of Taiwan. It contains news and features on the situation of Taiwan in terms of its labour law, labour force, occupational safety and health, labour-management relations, labour inspection, labour welfare, labour administration and labour insurance.

The **VOICE OF THE WORKING WOMAN** is published by Vimal Ranadive on behalf of AICCWW in



India. The articles are written by working women and cover a range of issues from employment to occupational health, education, and sexual harassment in the workplace.

**RESOURCE MATERIALS ON WOMEN'S LABOUR IN JAPAN** is published by the Asian Women Workers' Center based in Japan. It includes news articles and features and results of researches on various topics that relate to working women, as well as other issues that affect women in general. (Address: 2-3-18-34 Nishi-Waseda, Shinjuku, Tokyo 169-0051, Japan)

The **ASIAN LABOUR UPDATE** is a quarterly news bulletin on labour issues in the Asia-Pacific region. It is prepared and published by the Asia Monitor Resource Center Ltd., a nonprofit, prolabor, non-governmental organisation based in Hong Kong. Issue No.30 (January-April 1999) concludes a short series focusing on changing labour rights



in Thailand, the Philippines, Japan and Macau as transnational corporations continue to tighten their grip

on national economies. (Address: 444 Nathan Road, 8/F, Flat B Kowloon, Hong Kong, Tel: (852) 332-1346)

**HOMENET** is the newsletter of the International Network for Home-based Workers. It is designed and published by HomeNet International, an international network set up to coordinate work with home-

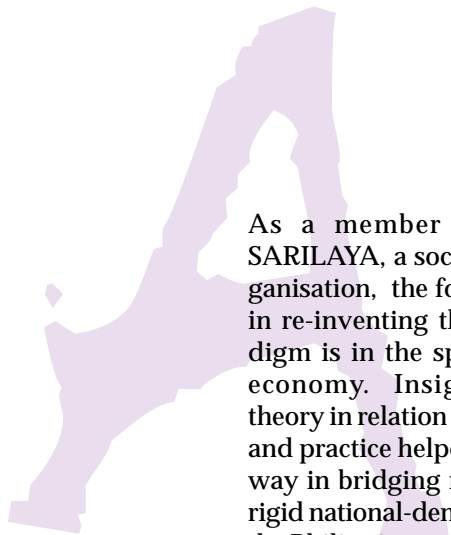


based workers in different parts of the world. This newsletter is part of the process of exchanging and disseminating information on home-based workers and their organisations. Issue No.11 (June 1999) features the "Threadlines Embroidery Workshop" held in India which brought together 36 women from seven countries to exchange embroidery skills and techniques. It focuses on the workshop's role in the empowerment of women through sharing of experiences and knowledge. (Address: Homenet, 24 Harlech Terrace, Leeds LS11 7DX, U.K., Tel: (44-113) 270-1119, Website: [www.gn.apc.org/homenet](http://www.gn.apc.org/homenet))

# Reviews

## Advocating Feminist Strategies in Economic Reforms

A review of *Gender Equity and Economic Reforms: Engendering Policy Critique and Advocacy of Philippine NGOs* by Patricia Fe C. Gonzales



As a member and leader of SARILAYA, a socialist-feminist organisation, the focus of my study in re-inventing the socialist paradigm is in the sphere of political economy. Insights of feminist theory in relation to socialist theory and practice helped me in no small way in bridging my dilemma as a rigid national-democratic activist in the Philippines who was in need of renewal. SARILAYA however, is far from the social/political organisation I joined in my young years. Then, the marching orders came from a seemingly united centre, and it did not matter at all whether one belonged to this or that organisation. What was important was to be attuned and in line with the marching orders.

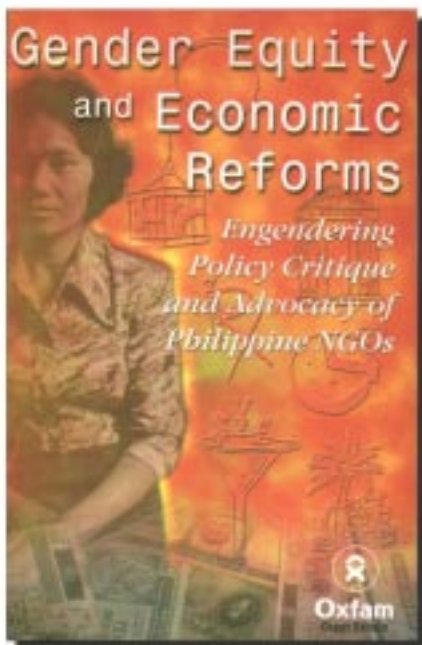
In the new environment of activism today however, not everything is cut and dried or black or white. Activists now find themselves groping for new “handles” with which to view present-day realities or present-day exploitations. Not that exploitation per se has already been eradicated. It is just that a new prism must now be used to analyse realities and accordingly, new paths or strategies need to be found.

Feminist economics is one new prism with which to view society and social change. The contribution

of feminism to economics is not so much to refocus the discourse, but rather to expand the focus of the discourse, to include what had been previously invisible and marginalised.

The book *Gender Equity and Economic Reforms* is an effort to put together a set of articles which can guide feminists, male or female, in feminist economic and social inquiry. For me, the book succeeds in guiding myself in putting together the bits and pieces of my own practice, personal reflections and theorising and relating these to the task of developing a coherent course of action at this present stage of our development as a people and as a movement. It also bridges the gap between the ideological exposition of capitalist patriarchy, and the concrete policy analyses and practical frameworks necessary for charting a feminist way of social change

The book actually starts with a brief survey of the level and extent of economic inquiry, theorising and practical action that have been reached by women’s organisations and institutions. Through this survey, DAWN and OXFAM Great Britain established the need for engaging in the discourse and coming up with this rich publication and sharing in the effort to evolve feminist methods in economic theory



WHILE FEMINIST  
ADVOCACY HAD  
SUCCESSFULLY  
ESTABLISHED GENERAL  
RECOGNITION AMONG  
ACADEMICS AND MIXED  
NGOs OF WOMEN'S  
BODILY, PERSONAL AND  
SEXUAL RIGHTS, AN ASPECT  
THAT REMAINS LARGELY  
UNEXPLORED, IS THE  
QUESTION OF HOW  
WOMEN'S PERSONAL  
EMPOWERMENT AND  
INTEGRITY COULD BE  
ADVANCED WITHIN AN  
ALTERNATIVE, GENDER-FAIR  
AND CRITICAL ECONOMIC  
ANALYSIS.

and practice. The survey report was written by Josefa Francisco, a prominent feminist in the Philippines. Feminist groups or women's organisations had focused mainly on political critique, she contends, but had very limited "handles" with which to address concrete policy advocacy in this field. Francisco calls it a "generalist critique of economics development."

While feminist advocacy had successfully established general recognition among academics and mixed NGOs of women's bodily, personal and sexual rights, an aspect that remains largely unexplored, as revealed by the survey, is the question of how women's personal empowerment and integrity could be advanced within an alternative, gender-fair and critical economic analysis. I dare add the point that feminist economics adds an essential component to the alternative paradigm that qualitatively changes the character of the alternative paradigm itself. A gendered analysis of mainstream economics and the resultant mainstream economic policies emanating from such frameworks cannot help but affect, not only the differential gender impacts of such policies and framework, but the overall concept or alternative paradigm itself which should stand as an alternative to mainstream economics.

In the first part of the book, three feminists report on their concrete experiences and efforts to formulate and implement policy advocacy. Maureen Pagaduan and Lorna Israel relate the experiences of a women's network in advocating for women, aid and development. Both authors point out the need to come up with sharper advocacy strategies by fully developing the analysis of women's micro-economic realities in relation to macroeconomic poverty programmes and development. In another article Sylvia Estrada-

Claudio pushes the boundaries of policy advocacy by insisting that reforming the Philippine health system necessarily means structural reform of both the health-care system and the state.

The second part of the book discusses "gender concepts and tools in economic inquiry." Academicians Jenina Chavez-Malaluan, Jean Frances Illo, Marina Fe Durano and Joselito San Jose provide the "handles" we are seeking, by discussing specific policy areas like women in agriculture, public finance, and women and trade. Lastly, Thalia Kidder discusses some possibilities presented by feminist microfinance, in the Latin American context.

One should not expect to find in this book a cohesive theoretical view on the alternative paradigm, policy and strategies vis-a-vis a feminist direction to social change. But it did give me a feeling that I have companions in this long journey for change, coworkers in the effort to evolve tools, analyses, theories, strategies, approaches, and yes, even to imagine long-term dreams and changed paradigms. While one or the other author might use different terms and view concepts or perspectives from a different angle, the reader can sense the basic unities evolving among feminists on the essential things that we want to put forward and contribute to mainstream thinking. Individual and collective articulation of these ideas will surely help us achieve stronger unity and perseverance in the struggle. ♡

*Patricia Fe C. Gonzales is one of three co-chairpersons of SARILAYA, a national organisation of women in the Philippines, and Luzon coordinator for the Philippine Network of Rural Development Institutes (PhilNet-RDI), a Philippine NGO that works with peasant and rural sectors for rural empowerment and development.*