

Young Women: On the Line

summarised by Maria Ana Manalo Santiago

Two years since its initial attempt to bring a group of Southern feminists to an online discussion, Isis International Manila organised another such virtual meeting of six articulate young women from Indonesia, Philippines, United States and Australia. Women in Action is publishing excerpts of this discussion a glimpse into the minds of young women today: what they are into, their role models, their takes on specific realities, etc.

Technically, the chat experienced a few difficulties only. Two participants lost their connection intermittently. The frustration of real-time chatting among these women, who were generally in the same time zone (except for one), was the difference in Internet connection speed, server reliability and keyboard typing speed.

It was a short, two-hour chat among relative strangers who warmed up to each other almost instantly, discovering common threads and themes, celebrating diversity and respecting their differences as individuals. The excerpts from the discussion have been re-arranged sequentially and edited mainly with the magazine's limited space and brevity in mind.

<TIME:> Friday, 15 Aug 2003 08:04 to 10:07 + 0800

<SUBJECT:> Chat with a group of vibrant, interesting young women on their takes on feminism, being young women from the Global South, and their professional and personal lives.>

<PARTICIPANTS>

<vhalhen> Vanda Lengkong, programme officer of Church World Service, based in Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. Activist member of the Indonesian Student Christian Movement.

<emilyfreeburg2003> Emily Freeburg, secretary of the NGO Committee on Youth and interim coordinator of the Youth Advisory Committee to CONGO.

<dumplingpress> Claire Villacorta, zine editor/writer for *Jawbreaker*, a Philippine-based youth-oriented independent publication that's both feminist and pop.

<amara_quesada> Amara Quesada, programme officer of the Regional Campaigns of Action for Health Initiatives (ACHIEVE), an NGO that assists workers with HIV.

<shirin_sameer> Shirin Sameer, from the Information and Communication Capacity Building programme of Isis International Manila; a cultural activist, journalist and teacher.

<sheharav> Shehara Viswanathan, an engineer working in telecommunications, and also with the Australian Student Christian Movement and the World Council of Churches' women's advisory group.

<mvtcabreraballeza> Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, manager

of Isis International Manila's Media, Information and Communications Services (MICS) programme.

<msmari2> Mari M. Santiago, staff of the Information, Documentation and Resources programme of Isis International Manila, chat moderator.

On invisible mode: **<irenerchia>** Irene R. Chia, online chat/*Women in Action* issue coordinator; and **<sulat_mulat>** Aileen Familara, Isis International-Manila's Information and Communication Technology Development Officer.

Mari Santiago: *Hello everyone! All of the expected participants are online now so we can now start the discussion. Introductions first, ok? I'm Mari Santiago, your moderator for this online chat. I'm a Filipina, a staff of Isis International Manila, 37 years old, but very young at heart. Amara, can you go next?*

Amara Quesada: Hi, good morning, everyone! Everyone calls me Mara. I'm 27. I work for Action for Health Initiatives Inc., an NGO in the Philippines working with migrant workers with special focus on health. I coordinate the Regional Campaigns Programme which has campaigns in the Asian region.

Shirin Sameer: Hi, everyone! I'm Shirin from India. I'm 25 years young and I work with Isis International Manila.



▲ Claire Villacorta, 28, zine editor/writer for *Jawbreaker*, a Philippine-based youth-oriented independent publication that's both feminist and pop.

Mavic Cabrera-Balleza: Hi, Emily! How are you? Mavic here. I'm an observer, though later I'll go on invisible mode.

Emily Freeburg: Hi, Mavic! I'm good. I am about to go to Morocco. I am in Seattle now, but will fly to NY tonight—it's a global week. Hi, Shirin! Hello, Philippines! Hi, everyone! I have never really done this before. I'm glad it's working. I am Emily, 23, from Seattle, but presently living in New York and working for various NGOs. I met up with Isis at the women and media events of some UN meetings this past year.

Claire Villacorta: Good morning everyone. I'm Claire Villacorta. I'm based in Manila. I'm 28. I self-publish and write for a small-scale feminist pop zine called *Jawbreaker*.

Vanda Lengkong: Hello all, sorry for being late. I'm Vanda Lengkong from Indonesia, 24 years old, cool and cute, full of smiles. I work with the Church World Service.

Mari: *Our discussion for today will focus on young women's involvement or non-involvement in the women's movement. To start off, how did you get into your current advocacies/lines of work?*

Amara: After college, I immediately started working for a women's NGO—Women's Education, Development, Productivity and Research Organization (WEDPRO Inc.).

That's where I got acquainted with so-called feminism. After nearly five years and with three NGOs behind me, I believe that my advocacy work, both personal and professional, is still deeply ingrained with the feminist values I've picked up.

Shirin: My mother and father have been involved in the human rights movement since their youth. Their work inspired me to learn more about the issues involved. I have been involved ever since and I'm not likely to go back.

Emily: I studied international development and creative writing, did research on NGOs in Latin America and then, got an internship for a Franciscan NGO in New York. I've always been interested in being a writer, so I followed what women writers were doing. A lot of women team up for publishing and I think that is really interesting for creative and political

reasons. I started to notice what stories about women were missing, and what wasn't being represented. I have always thought women's voices were missing in the classroom, in the media, and other spaces.

Vanda: I joined a Psychosocial Mental Health Training of the Church World Service. After that, they asked me to be one of their staff in North Sulawesi. During that time, several areas in Indonesia were suffering the effects of the armed conflict, causing a significant rise in the number of internally displaced persons (IDP) in my area.

Claire: I keep up with a lot of forms of mainstream expression (pop, teen magazines) and what it has to offer. I was sort of raised on teen magazines, but the vacuousness it retained throughout the years is appalling. So, with the female reader in mind, my partner and I decided to put out *Jawbreaker*, a zine (a self-published magazine) that didn't underestimate its readers. It's youth-focused, and wears our influences on its sleeve. It's our way of connecting with young people.

Mari: *Amara, why "so-called feminism"?*

Amara: The concept was fairly new to me then. Now that I've been around NGOs for some time, the whole concept has evolved into my own perspective of feminism. The way I look at it now is unlike before, but this is still evolving.

Emily: How did you view feminism before?

Amara: It appeared to me that feminism, then, was mainly about telling women that they are oppressed and men are to blame for it.

Shirin: In India and elsewhere in Asia, there are women who refuse to accept the word "feminism." They associate it with colonialism. They have their own definitions.

Mari: *How do you define feminism? How do women's issues and feminism figure into your present professional concerns and personal lives? Do you consider yourselves feminist?*

Emily: I used to be turned off by the word because I thought it was a 40-year-old white women's movement in the U.S. Then, I went to Guatemala, saw the women there and realised how badly the world needs a women's movement... People don't realise feminism is for total social justice. Growing up, I was never comfortable with the word feminism because I thought race concerns were much more important in the U.S. But if feminism is about empowering everyone, keeping class and race on the forefront, then I can call myself a feminist. I can embrace the word.



◀ Emily Freeburg, 23, secretary of the NGO Committee on Youth and interim coordinator of the Youth Advisory Committee to CONGO.

Shirin: I completely agree. I think it starts at the personal level—with parents, brothers, boyfriends, friends. Then, it goes to the next level of people who are not related to us directly, but who influence our lives or with whom we interact, then, to an even wider level. Feminism has a meaning, the context of which changes at each level. Also, it is linked with everything else. Feminism is not a water-tight compartment. For example, if a woman is getting sexually harassed at work, isn't just a question of women's rights, but of society's culture as a whole. Feminism is a struggle for a more just and egalitarian society and, therefore, it is part of the social justice movement.

Vanda: I do agree with Shirin, it depends on our perspective on feminism. People, even women, just think that feminism is a movement of women against men. However, I do consider myself a feminist because I'm a woman. I also live and exist with others (men) and, together, we struggle for justice for all.

Claire: We had to look for feminist resources on our own. I felt disconnected from local feminist initiatives. Much of what I learned was through music and cultural expressions going on abroad that I'd read about in magazines and zines. They called it "riot grrrl," a jumping point for feminist discourse. Young girls would talk about personal issues like public safety, being violated, about how much privilege went to males and the double standard it reflected when girls tried to do things. On a personal level, I always believed in not succumbing to dominant standards of femininity. It seems that I get more flak from leftists who think we're not addressing issues that are "deep" enough. In a small spoken word gig that we had, there were girls who discussed date rape or about wanting to be sexualised on their own terms. Then this lefty guy said that we weren't even getting to the bottom of the whole thing when it came to violence against women. What did he expect? We were trying to initiate something, keep it on the level where it's relevant to these young women, considering that not many of us even talk about these things openly.

Amara: The problem with the left, at least in my experience in the Philippines, is that they totally lack the feminist perspective. I agree with Vanda, whether we're old or young, perspective is very important. It has to be based on the concrete experiences of women. It is also very important that we keep on studying the evolving context of women. I consider myself a feminist. For me, feminism is simply understanding the situation and contexts of women and working to change a situation that puts women at a disadvantage. When I say, working for changes, I mean not only in our line of work, but also in our daily personal lives.

Marl: *There seems to be a general reluctance toward the term "feminist," especially among young people. How do you explain your feminism to your peers/people of your generation?*

Claire: I wouldn't introduce myself as feminist either, but I do make it known that I practice feminism. I try to encourage people that it is not, and should not be, a dirty word. I get a bit conscious in attaching the word to myself, especially since I'm not involved with direct [mainstream] feminist advocacy. In my case, the practice of feminism is a social responsibility on a day-to-day basis.

Amara: It's funny, but even women I've worked with in women's NGOs refuse to be called feminists. I asked why, and one said she didn't want to be associated with the older feminists she knows. Eventually, we are the ones who define what we are.

Shirin: In India, many women, even those fighting for equal rights, do not call themselves feminist because of its colonial connotations. Even today, a lot of feminist discourse is dominated by white women in the West. It is no surprise then that women of colour do not like associating themselves with it. There is a need for a struggle within feminism to break its racist history, as well as its domination by really old women. I think that one cannot be a feminist if one is racist.

Vanda: Yup, that's right. We appreciate the hard work of the feminist movement before, but we should now contextualise this. Is it still relevant or not? Should we reformulate our understanding of it in relation to our realities?

Emily: There are many injustices in the U.S. to deal with, as well as those that they create in other countries. Here, people think there isn't much left to do in terms of asserting women's rights. People are more focused on other movements with other names, even though so many women in the U.S. are poor.

Amara: Feminism incorporates the gender perspective as well as the human rights perspective. In my experience, whatever issue I come across with, my analysis is still from a feminist perspective. We have to recognise that whether it was largely a white women's movement, or one of old women, feminism was and still is a struggle against an oppressive system.

Shirin: Yes, but it has this troublesome history of speaking for others. Many brown women think that the white women have for so long spoken on their behalf. Feminism is a stream full of knowledge. We must drink from it, but we must open our horizons and become part of an even larger movement.

Emily: I think inherent in feminism is emphasising that many more people have voices and should be heard.

Intersectionality of Oppressions

Mari: *We know there are many other kinds of subordination that silence different voices, e.g., race, caste, class, religion. How does this play out in your own contexts?*

Amara: In my line of work, I've seen how these other issues further oppress women. Take the case of women migrant domestic workers. They are women from a third world country doing the kind of job not respected anywhere and not even recognised by laws as work. The sad thing about the experience of these women is that they are in no position to assert themselves because they



▲ Shirin Sameer, 25, Information and Communication Capacity Building Officer of Isis International-Manila; a cultural activist, journalist and teacher.

have internalised the weakness imposed on them by race, by their economic status and by being women.

Shirin: One kind of oppression contributes to the other; they feed on each other. Caste encourages sexism, racism encourages caste. Those who fight oppression are not concerned with feminism alone as it is commonly understood. For instance, for a black woman raped by her colonial master, the issue is not just that she is a woman, but that she is black. How can you separate one from the other?

Claire: I can choose my line of work, but it doesn't necessarily mean that I don't experience the power play in different spaces. Example, I used to be part of an underground music scene, an environment that's male-dominated, mostly middle-middle-lower class. As they busted their asses off to find jobs, I didn't have to worry, being more materially privileged than they are. Still, I felt that

they had the privilege of space and public safety. They could go to areas in Manila where I wouldn't feel safe and secure.

<Yahoo! Messenger: sheharav has joined the conference.>

Shehara Viswanathan: Hello all! This is Shehara from Sydney.

Mari: *Welcome to the discussion, Shehara. Please introduce yourself.*

Shehara: I am 29, an engineer and I work in telecommunications. I'm from the Australian Student Christian Movement and was also on the World Council of Churches' women's advisory group. As a woman of colour who has lived in Australia since I was 9, it has been an interesting experience.

Mavic: Hi, Shehara. This is Mavic, also from Isis. We were discussing the many kinds of subordination and how it intersects with your identity as a young woman. We're now actually following Amara's point that you're worse off because you are poor; you do not belong to the dominant religion; you are a lesbian; and, on top of it, you are a young woman.

Claire: I thought my Catholic school upbringing was pretty oppressive. I was in a classroom with girls who had lots of money. I came from an upwardly mobile family, but these girls tend to look down on girls who didn't wear designer labels. There was also "girl competition." These girls could not grasp the idea of "individuality". They all had these dominant notions of male-female power play. And if you were to call or strike up a conversation with a boy, you'd be branded a flirt or easy. It was hard for me to find kinship with these girls, which was why it wasn't easy for me to learn about feminism. We had absolutely no resources on feminism. The most ironic thing is that we had supposedly feminist nuns in our school.

Shehara: I have been thinking a lot about the levels of violence and power. One of the most obvious in the world at the moment is the oppression of Muslim people. Unfortunately, Muslim women are much more obvious and are often easily identified for abuse.

Religion

Amara: In the Philippines, whether it's Islam or Christianity, religions are largely anti-women. The Catholic Church is the largest and most powerful, and the government just follows its dictates.

Shehara: Generally, the problems with religion in terms of feminism are not truly religious problems, but "man-made" issues of tradition and power disguised as reli-

gion. While a lot of terrible things have been done in the name of religion, so has a lot of good.

Shirin: There are movements of reform within religion. Due to a feminist reading of the Koran, people now agree that abortion is not irreligious. So, it is good that Islamic feminists were able to prove this. But I think that if they weren't able to, we should still insist on what is just. Religion can be empowering, but it is not all we have. One bad thing is that it creates walls. So, Hindu women are separated from Muslim women by an artificial wall. But then, it unites them, too, because the oppression cuts across (religions).

Emily: My religion—Unitarian Universalist—is practically dominated by feminists. It's a very different place to be than being a Muslim or Catholic.

Vanda: Education is the most important thing because if someone is well-educated, she or he will "protect" himself/herself from whatever kind of injustice.

Mari: *What are other distinct issues facing young women today in your countries? Shehara, could you talk a bit about your experiences as a young woman of colour living in a white-majority country? Vanda, could you tell us a little more about what's happening in Indonesia?*

Shehara: Living in Sydney, I am surrounded by people of many cultures and I have not encountered any obvious racism. My bar is quite high, though, as I left Sri Lanka as a result of racism after the riots in 1983. I am Tamil. I think a common theme between all Australian women—young and old—is violence. Other main issues facing women are inequality in the workplace and, for indigenous, migrant and refugee women, a variety of issues related to isolation, racism and violence in their communities.

Vanda: Here in Indonesia, most of the districts are still male-dominated. Women's oppression can be seen in rape, trafficking and domestic violence. Many young women do not realise that they are trafficked but some of them justify it by invoking "economics." Another issue is religion, because one "big" community thinks they have power to pressure the minority.

White is Beautiful...Not

Emily: There are many different young women in the U.S. Some have access to education and some do not. People think it's such a rich country that everyone has a fair shot. Also, the girls have huge body image issues and the situation seems to be getting worse.

Amara: Responsible sexuality is a big issue. More and more young women are getting pregnant—teen pregnancies resulting to unwanted babies or unsafe abortions. The problem here is caused by lack of correct information on sexuality. Young women do not really know their bodies. Also, in the Philippines, all young girls want fair skin.

Shehara: There is racism in Australia, but there isn't a feeling among dark people that they want to be white. There is a difference between fashion whiteness and racism whiteness. As a black woman in Sydney, I never understood the concept of whitening creams as all my white friends wanted my colour. It is only when I travel to Sri Lanka that people make comments about how dark I am. I find it amusing. So, being lily white isn't as important as it is in India. In Australia, there are also issues of anorexia, bulimia, etc.

Shirin: Yes, you are right about tanning, but the racism is still there in terms of feeling. So the brown people in Australia still want to be "white." I lived in Australia for a couple of years and saw a lot of brown immigrants trying to ape the whites because it means a higher status somehow.

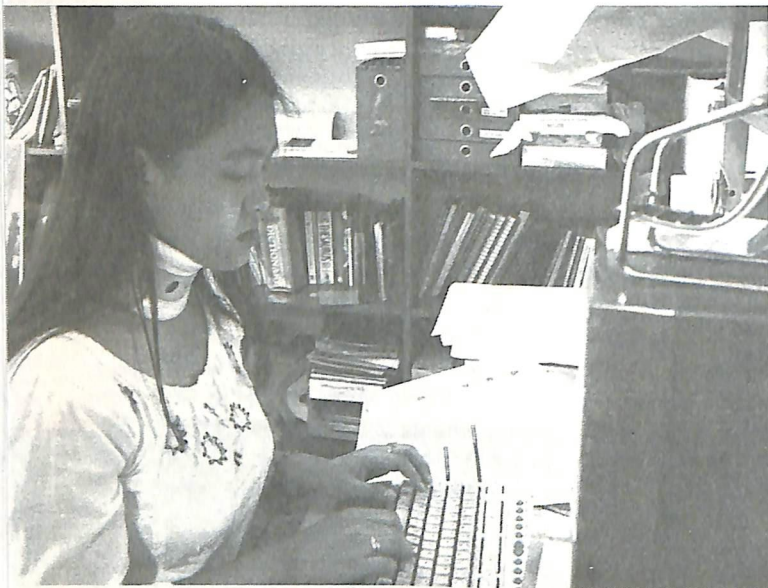
Body Image

Mari: *Claire, are you still here? I agree that body image is a "universal issue." In your countries, how does media reinforce the existing body-image standards?*

Claire: Body image is a big issue with me. Many clothes stores are sizist because "Filipino sizes" are small. There are some efforts to put up plus-size clothing stores, some



▲ Vanda Lengkong, 24, programme officer of Church World Service, based in Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. Activist member of the Indonesian Student Christian Movement.



▲ Amara Quesada, 27, programme officer of the Regional Campaigns of Action for Health Initiatives (ACHIEVE), an NGO that assists workers with HIV.

more stylish than others, but it's hard to assume that people have the same taste. Women's magazines and teen magazines sell thinness as the ideal.

Shirin: But even this "plus-size" business means that we assume that the standard size is thin!

Claire: I'm still trying to decide whether plus-size-ness is tokenism. What bothers me is the slant. Even if one is plus-sized, the emphasis is on "flattering clothing." Sure, everyone wants to look presentable, but flattering? What's there to disguise? As if I can't be proud if I'm big, and I am, so I have to make concessions by allowing my clothes to flatter my figure? Whatever!

Emily: I think the media makes everyone wants to look the same, like Britney Spears basically. And Britney is so boring. I think business is just as responsible. Much of what we buy is chosen by corporate interests, and we all end up looking the same. I think creativity is in danger.

Amara: Problem is, girls go for Britneys and Barbies. Any effort to curb these dominant images does not sell, so, media doesn't take it on. It's also because young women are at a point where they want to belong. Since we are bombarded with images of what we should be like to be accepted, we go for it, with no questions asked.

MEDIA

Shehara: I know it is hard, but what can we do to make even a small difference? We need to change these attitudes. In schools, we have a lot of programmes to en-

courage young women to be healthy and proud of their bodies. But, aside from that, what do we do to change this?

Emily: I have access to independent media. People need to realise that they have access to media, to claim it themselves. Activists have the responsibility to get into it, not just complain about it.

Amara: The Internet is a good form of media and a lot of young women have access to it. But let's not forget the young women from the communities who have no access to information. I think there should be community-based interventions as well.

Claire: There needs to be more independent media that can be made accessible to the mainstream. We have a few independent magazines, but they don't last long because of funding and the demand to go glossy just to be noticed. If more people thought about self-publishing, it could add to what little is out there.

Emily: There are tons of indy media here in the U.S. I think that happens all the time, just small each time. Or it is hard to see what it adds up too, here at least. But only people interested in indy media see indy media. Nowadays, anyone can make something for the Internet, a zine, a website. Media is exploding and tightening at the same time.

Shirin: Oh, yeah, Emily, you guys have some good independent media, but then the majority don't see it. That is why people still hate Iraqis. Let's start our own journal. As they say, every drop counts.

Amara: Packaging is very important. It's very difficult to get into the mainstream.

Claire: Packaging really helps. There are tons of print zines here, but not all of them are after penetrating the mainstream. Some don't even want to be known because they serve their own community, like underground music.

Role Models

Mavic: *Hi, Mavic here. Who do you think are the role models that young women identify with—and not just physically, and why?*

Amara: Our president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, is the last woman I can identify with. She is macho. I have a guy friend who did not like Angelina Jolie in Lara Croft because she was much tougher than James Bond. Men are intimidated by her attitude and her strength, so they prefer to concentrate on her body.

Claire: I was reading about how women in the U.S. in the 1960s fantasised about being a female counterpart to James Bond, but knew that they would more likely end

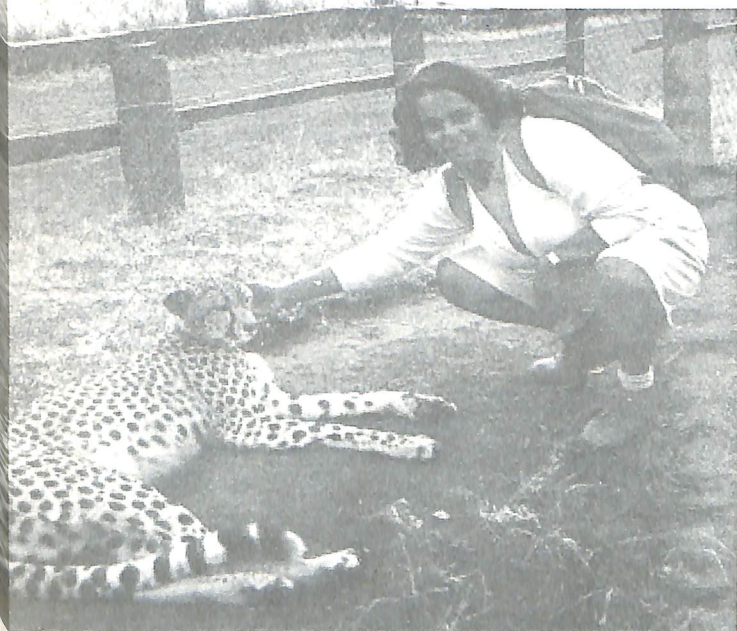
up being one of his disposable chicklets, given time and context. Growing up, it was hard to find role models other than pop stars. It was easier to have male role models. As a girl, my role model was Cyndi Lauper. There's Kelly Osbourne now, because she has a wicked dress sense, and she's plus-size. Of course, she's Ozzy's daughter, too, hehehe!

Shehara: I love Kelly as well.

Amara: When I was growing up, I liked Winnie the Pooh largely because Winnie was neither a girl nor a boy. Funny, I can't really think of a role model. I guess I was never one to pattern my behaviour after someone else.

Vanda: I like Winnie the Pooh, too. I admire Mother Theresa. She was a great woman, fighting and struggling for justice for poor people. Her compassion for humanity was so intense.

Emily: Amy Goodman (democracy now, indy media, foreign correspondent). She goes out and speaks to people too, and when you see her, she moves you. It's so important to inspire people in person. My friends who work for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Eve Ensler [author of *The Vagina Monologues*] because she uses the money she makes to build domestic violence shelters in Africa.



Shehara Viswanathan, 29, an engineer working in telecommunications, and also with the Australian Student Christian Movement and the World Council of Churches' women's advisory group.

Shirin: I respect Amy Goodman, too, because she has the courage and intelligence to provide us with the alternative news. While the rest of the U.S. media tells us that Iraqis are bad, she goes to find out the other side. She takes up issues ranging from peace to corruption to racism to everything that matters. She is not CNN, thank god.

Shehara: From Australia, Cathy Freeman. Mum Shirl and Lowitja O' Donahue, who are indigenous women. Indira Gandhi. The outspoken women of Afghanistan... All the witches that were burnt for their natural healing powers.

Shirin: Please, not Indira Gandhi.

Shehara/Vanda: Why?

Shirin: Because she was a dictator.

Vanda: :-)

Shirin: She did nothing for a just and egalitarian society. Being a woman does not automatically make you anti-sexist. Just because a woman became the Prime Minister does not mean equal rights for women.

Shehara: Different opinions, Shirin. Indira was still a female role model for many young women and role models cannot be perfect. That is what we are fighting—the Barbie principle. We want women with all their imperfections.

Mari: *Indeed, different opinions coming from different contexts. Live and let live.*

Shirin: Yeah, they can't be perfect, but they shouldn't be dictators, too. See, this is a kind of fanaticism, too, that's why people dislike feminism. We seem to think that all goddesses are empowering; they were not.

Amara: Of course, they were not, even the goddesses were male constructs.

Shirin: Not all women are feminists. Margaret Thatcher? Condeleeza Rice? Arroyo?

Shehara: But why is that wrong? They are just different women doing their thing in the world.

Shirin: He, he! The paucity of role models. Okay, and what about our own mothers?

Shehara: Yes, and grandmothers.

Emily: My mom is definitely my role model. She is a partner in an all-male accounting firm. I think we—older and

younger women—need to talk about feminism together and we don't.

Claire: For a time, I didn't get along with my mother. We get along now. She has admirable qualities, but I guess indirectly, she influenced my direction toward the arts. She was involved in theatre, though I am more into pop culture.

Amara: I love my mother and she was so strong for us, but she thinks my father is god who can't go wrong.

Shirin: My mother is my best role model. My maternal grandmother was ultra-racist. She disowned my mother because she married a Muslim! I love my mother. I love my father too. And he is a feminist!

Shehara: My mom and grandma are my biggest role models.



► Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, manager of Isis International Manila's Media, Information and Communications Services (MICS) programme.

My fiancé is also a feminist. His mom and grandma taught him well.

Claire: My boyfriend is a feminist too. He's into girl culture. He's what I call a "riot colehiyala."

Mari: *Interesting role models... Last 15 minutes, sisters. Just to go back to an earlier question, what do you think of older feminists, our feminist foremothers?*

Shirin: Older women are repositories of knowledge, but they also have to continue learning, just like all of us. I want to learn from their experiences, appreciate the good things they did, and not repeat the blunders they committed.

Amara: The older feminists I know refuse to deal with men. Come to think of it, they also refuse to deal with lesbians and gays. I think this goes against the basic principles of feminism, which is human rights and gender sensitivity.

Vanda: They are great. They were the ones who were first to realise that women should struggle for their rightful existence. They started to "open" a new perspective on human beings, especially women's existence. Our duty now is to push it forward based on our own contexts.

Claire: I know of an older feminist who is awfully dismissive of third wave feminism. And to think that my introduction to feminism was third wave! There are older feminists out there with great ideas and some have managed to keep in contact with what young people are doing.

◀ Mari M. Santiago, staff of the Information, Documentation and Resources programme of Isis International Manila, chat moderator.

Emily: Older feminists can help us understand what more there is to do in the struggle. I think as women we oppress women, too.



Shirin: Sometimes I think that they think they have the world figured out already. They are very stubborn and refuse to change or admit that younger women can be intelligent, too, and that they can teach them, too. Feminism cannot be successful if racism, casteism and ageism within the movement do not go away!

ism, casteism and ageism within the movement do not go away!

Amara: Still, there are some who have kept up with the times, they are the ones I can still talk to. With 15 years of the movement behind them, they still have not become grim and fanatic about the issue. I continue to learn from them.

Mari: *Thank you, everyone, for such an engaging discussion. Let's do this again. We'll keep in touch and keep you informed about the offshoot of this online discussion and its future publication in Isis International Manila's Women in Action. Again, thanks and have a good day. ♪*