

“Feminist Political Ecology,”—the theme of this issue of *Women in Action* (WIA)—was inspired by a seminar-workshop of the same title held on May 11, 2007 at Miriam College, Philippines. This seminar, a collaboration among Isis International-Manila, the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era–Southeast Asia (DAWN-SEA), and the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center–*Kasama sa Kalikasan* or Friends of the Earth (LRC-KSK), featured as resource person leading feminist political ecologist Anita Nayar of DAWN and gathered together environmentalists, social movement activists, and academics.

In that workshop, Anita Nayar introduced “feminist political ecology” as an evolving framework distinct from the framework of the more mainstream and reactionary “ecological feminism.” Nayar invited the workshop participants to enrich the framework with their diverse views from various vantage points, and the workshop discussions that ensued generated a conception of a feminist political ecology that is focused on and is constituted by three areas or domains: [1] gendered knowledge; [2] gendered environmental rights and responsibilities; and [3] gendered environmental politics and grassroots activism. One will find that the articles in this volume of WIA are oriented towards analyses within or among these three domains.

We are honoured to have LRC-KSK Executive Director Jocelyn ‘Jo’ Villanueva as guest editor of this WIA issue. Her knowledge and experience of working directly with communities provided the necessary intervention in the framing of this WIA issue’s various articles from diverse cultures and communities across the Asia and Pacific regions.

We hope that this issue reminds us of the need to strengthen our concern for political ecological issues in our activism and sharpen our feminist perspectives and theorising in our analysis of gender and the environment.


Raijeli Nicole
Editor-in-Chief

A Note from the Guest Editor

In many countries of the developing South, various forms of conflicts exist in relation to access and control of land and other resources. Conflicts involving poor communities against state-backed development projects or against resource extractive industries, such as mining, forest plantations, logging, and large-scale dams, often result to people’s landlessness, displacement, and impoverishment. More often than not, this disenfranchisement impacts more tremendously on women because of deeply entrenched cultural practices that systematically discriminates women, because of laws and state regulatory frameworks that recognise neither women’s property rights nor their right to participate in official policy forums, and because of the lack of understanding of women’s role in the family, community, and the larger society.

This special issue of *Women in Action* (WIA) on “Feminist Political Ecology” bravely explores the various facets of ecological issues confronting women and men in resource-rich countries of the South. By interrogating the political terrain that informs specific environmental concerns, this WIA issue makes apparent the inextricable linkages between the environment and issues of class, caste, ethnicity, and most importantly, gender. Indeed, the various articles and essays in this issue show that the intersection of issues of land, natural resources, and the environment is an important vantage point for examining the gendered impacts of contending political, social, economic, and cultural forces unfolding at the local, national, and global levels.

While conceptual frameworks for Feminist Political Ecology emerged in late 1990s and have been mainly used for academic researches, they are at present being rediscovered as potentially powerful analytical tools for understanding and grappling with the multi-dimensional complexity of the environment, development, and gender interface. Thus, this WIA issue also hopes to invite greater engagement from women in feminist organisations, and women and men in mixed organisations in exploring feminist political ecology as an analytical frame our development work.

Congratulations to Isis International-Manila for this special issue of WIA and I consider it a great privilege and a meaningful experience to be part of this publication.


Jo M. Villanueva
Guest Editor