

WOMEN & POWER: FIGHTING PATRIARCHIES AND POVERTY. LA LUCHA Y EL PODER DE LAS MUJERES CONTRA LA POBREZA.

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“World poverty has been created and is kept going chiefly by the abuse of power: abuse of power in international trade, debt, investment and aid, as well as in national and local politics, and abuse of power in the treatment of poor people by rich and of women by men.” A major re-evaluation of ideas about power, this book throws new light on empowerment by showing how women can and do take power into and over their own lives. In exploring and celebrating the achievements of rural Mexican women, the authors demonstrate how it is often poor women in poor countries who are celebrating new powers and changing their own lives rather than the more obvious beneficiaries of women’s liberation in the North.

They deal power in everyday terms: how power is gained or lost through with others in, for example, income-generating projects: how women’s lives are defined or constrained by the power of the state, family or religion; how self-empowerment can transform personal relations; and the effects of power conferred from without by NGOs and/or the international development community. All these examples are set against writings on women’s self-empowerment-from India to Peru.

This book puts the power back into “development”, for activists, for workers in non-government organizations and for women’s studies, in rich as well as poor countries. It is also an excellent introduction to the empowerment debate, particularly within WID and GAD, and to theories of both development and power.

The thing that makes the most impact about this book is that through each one of the testimonies, reflections and discussions, we approach empowerment as a never-ending process... We are invited to recognize the complex journey, at once individual and universal, from dependency to freedom”