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CHANGING THE BOUNDARIES: WOMEN-CENTERED PERSPECTIVES ...

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Jiggins, Janice. CHANGING THE BOUNDARIES: WOMEN-CENTERED PERSPECTIVES ON POPULATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1994. 291 pp. US\$22.00 paper ISBN: 1-55963-260-7. Recycled, Acid-free.

Those concerned about the rapid increase in world population and its relationship to resources and pollution should read CHANGING THE BOUNDARIES. The author, Janice Jiggins, adds the insights of social science to the truths of science and demography, and argues for solutions based on gender equity, population stabilization, and environmental stabilization. From this perspective, Jiggins argues that women differ from men, and their differences matter. In discussing the issues of sustainable development, she reveals fundamental problems in certain environmentalist solutions. Simple solutions based on control and regulatory directives are debunked, as are those that favor a split between nature and human beings. Specific policy concerns (i.e. agriculture, forestry, and population) dominate the middle section of the book. CHANGING THE BOUNDARIES concludes with a call for healthy, educated, and economically secure women.

The idea that the perspective of women matters is not new. An increasing number of people are expressing concern about the deep inequality and lack of understanding of the roles of women in population control, environmental clean-up, and development. Discussion of these complex issues often leads to programs attacking women and "their" fertility, and policies of pill distribution or IUD insertion. Jiggins argues for a more complex program that replaces or supplements pills with treatment of reproductive tract infections and other more comprehensive approaches. Likewise in agriculture, she advocates revising the programs that still target the wrong half in the division of labor. Where initiatives propose tree planting for erosion control or charcoal, it may be that such agroforestry actually displaces and disrupts the current food production. Similarly, responding to a firewood shortage with a cookstove may be a "knee-jerk" response (94-96), a simple answer that stands in the way of more reasonable solutions to energy problems. Obviously, Jiggins contends, any directives issued without consulting the target population, women, are doomed to failure.

Overall this very readable book deserves a place on the library shelf along with the standard environmental works. With her academic and professional background, Jiggins brings the multidisciplinary perspective needed to the work. It is a preeminently sensible and straightforward summary of research results and field observations. Not only does she summarize the new reality of the female centered household (158), but also the human environmental dimensions of the global economy. This is a very good book.