



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

## International Round Table

**“GENDER EQUALITY:  
MAKE  
IT YOUR  
BUSINESS!”**



**International Women's Day**  
10 March 2008  
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

*Organized by:*  
*Division for Gender Equality,*  
*Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO*



## PAOLA GIANTURCO



For the past twelve years, Paola Gianturco has worked as a photojournalist, documenting women's lives in forty countries. Her new book, *Women Who Light the Dark* (September 2007) will be her fourth published by powerHouse Books. Her other books include *Celebrating Women* (2004), *In Her Hands: Craftswomen Changing the World* (paperback, 2004; hardcover, 2000; coauthor Toby Tuttle), and *Viva Colores! A Salute to the Indomitable People of Guatemala* (2006; coauthor David Hill). All of Gianturco's books are philanthropic projects, for which she donates her royalties to carefully-selected nonprofit organizations that relate to each book's content. For *Women Who Light the Dark*, Gianturco is giving 100% of her author royalties to the Global Fund for Women, which advocates for and defends women's human rights by making grants to support women's groups around the world. Paola Gianturco's involvement with women's issues is long-standing. She was senior vice president of the first women-owned advertising agency in the United States; co-taught executive institutes about women and leadership at Stanford University and Mills College; served on the Board of Directors of The Association for Women's Rights in Development (1999-2000). Her board work in the international arena also includes serving as Chair (2000-2001) of the Board of the Crafts Center in Washington DC, which works with low-income artisans in 79 countries. Prior to 1995, Gianturco worked for 34 years in advertising, public relations and marketing.

**Question by Saniye Gülser Corat, Moderator:**  
**Prior to 1995, Ms Gianturco, you worked for 32 years in advertising, public relations and marketing. 1995 was a turning point for you, and from our prior discussion I know that it had to do with your involvement in the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women in Beijing. So, what happened Ms Gianturco?**

A Nepalese mother wrote this poem and it was read at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing: "My girl child must have a voice louder and clearer than mine. She must be able to move with certainty with shoes on her feet and dreams at her side. The present I have given her is not enough, her arms are different; they will reach for the sky where freedom lives".

**News from the 4th World Conference on Women inspired my books. News that in the global South women — even though they were living below the income poverty line — were sending their children to school. I thought they were heroic. I wanted to document that work.** It seemed to me that if they were effective in educating the next generation over time, they could change things not just for their families and for their communities, but over time for their countries and for all of us. *In Her Hands: Craftswomen Changing the World*, was published in the year 2000 and featured 90 women artisans in 12 countries on 4 continents who were living in material poverty, and yet they were giving their time and skills, and their creativity and in fact, giving their very lives to feed and educate their children with the money they earn from making handicrafts.

These women became my friends and teachers, from them I learned that the world is smaller and women's spirits are larger than I had ever imagined. From them I learned about creating an economic and artistic and social legacy. I spent two years photographing and interviewing women, I was sitting with them for hours on the earthen floor of their huts, listening to their stories, marveling at their energy and ingenuity and commitment that make it possible for them to send their children to school. These women inspired me to use my own creativity to help women and their families. I made an inventory of my own assets: I could take pictures, I could write, I knew about marketing, I had time and energy, I had lots of frequent flyer miles from working with clients all over the United States, and I had some money....

I decided to try to create books to enhance readers' awareness and understanding of women and issues that face them around the world, and to inspire them to take action on the difficult problems that beleaguer women and their families everywhere. powerHouse books, New York, has now published 4 of my books, and **each one is a philanthropic project which creates a revenue stream for a specific organization that I select very carefully to receive 100% of my author royalties...**

*Women Who Light the Dark* features local women's groups that are helping with issues that make life dark. **The women who lead these groups may have almost nothing by way of material resources. But even if you have nothing by way of material resources you can sing, you can dance, you can tell stories, and so these women are using the creative arts and creative strategies, and they are succeeding. It is their imaginations that light the dark.**