ForeWord Reviews

WOMEN'S STUDIES

**Grandmother Power: A Global Phenomenon**
Paola Gianturco
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Author and documentary photographer Paola Gianturco's *Grandmother Power* celebrates a newly formalized global phenomenon: inspired by love and compassion, strong and courageous grandmothers are creating a worldwide movement to ensure peace, justice, human rights, healthful living conditions, and education for their grandchildren. Gianturco's newest work, with its 225 full-color photographs and moving stories, reveals what she declares to be "the first time in history that grandmothers have campaigned universally and vigorously for political, economic, and social change."

Today's grandmothers, representatives of the baby-boom generation, are doing what they have always done: working to make the world a better place. And they have the numbers to make a difference; Gianturco writes that there are currently "more grandmothers on the planet than at any other time in history." In the United States alone, there are currently thirty-eight million, and it is estimated that by 2015 there will be forty-two million—and, for the most part, these grandmothers are in good health, monetarily better off, and more youthful than ever before. Some are taking their place on the world stage—Gianturco cites the winner of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a grandmother of eight, who is now President of Liberia; Michelle Bachelet, grandmother of two, who was President of Chile and now leads UN Women; and others. But they are not the focus of Gianturco's work; instead, she highlights 120 activist grandmothers from fifteen countries—ordinary women like Kamla Devi of India, who said, "We shouldn't wait for someone else to help; we should do something."

Her interviews with these women, done between 2009 and 2011, reveal a growing movement that has arisen spontaneously on five continents and is magnifying its power by joining hands and hearts across the globe. In Canada, 245 groups have raised thirteen million dollars to help grandmothers from fifteen African countries to raise and care for HIV/AIDS orphans. Gianturco's interviews also document the work of Argentine grandmothers still searching for their grandchildren who were given to others after their parents were tortured and murdered during the nation's brutal military dictatorship; how hundreds of grandmothers in

India have learned solar engineering to bring light to their villages; how the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers travels the world to perform healing ceremonies; how courageous Israeli grandmothers are monitoring checkpoints and reporting abuses; how, in Senegal, tradition-breaking grandmothers are working to put an end to female genital mutilation; and how, in the United States, the Raging Grannies perform at demonstrations to shake citizens from complacency.

*Grandmother Power* is a beautiful and inspiring book that belongs in all schools, libraries, and on coffee tables across the nation; it would make a treasured gift for all who have a vision for global justice, and especially for those who are grandmothers. All royalties from the book will be donated to the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign.

Paola Gianturco is a grandmother and author of several books, including *Women Who Light the Dark*, *Viva Colores! A Salute to the Indomitable People of Guatemala*, *Celebrating Women*, and *In Her Hands: Craftswomen Changing the World*. Her work has been exhibited at the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris and the United Nations in New York, Chicago's Field Museum, San Francisco's International Museum of Women, and many other venues.

*Kristine Morris*