

Who Runs the World? Unlocking the Talent and Inventiveness of Women Everywhere

Lois Quam

Forbes Books

(200pp)

979-888750080-5

A change-making organization is used to illustrate the transformative potential of empowering women and girls in the inspiring book Who Runs the World?

Speaking on behalf of the Pathfinder organization, Lois Quam argues for universal, unrestricted access to reproductive education and health care in *Who Runs the World?*, a book that dares to rethink approaches to large-scale problems around the globe.

As the effects of climate change grow more apparent, the book says, effecting change becomes more urgent than ever. The solution to innumerable contemporary problems, it claims, is to provide women with reproductive freedom so that they can devote their time and attention to helping to improve life for their families and communities and to contributing solutions to problems on a grander scale, making the world safer and fairer for all.

The book combines personal experience, academic sources, and interviews with Pathfinder leaders from across the globe with down-to-earth examples of the organization's work. Combined, these elements demonstrate the efficacy of Pathfinder's approach and its impact on women and communities around the world. Powerful stories, as of the Nigerian motorcyclists recruited to transport pregnant women to the hospital so they could give birth in safety, speak to the necessity of sound, local strategies for helping women achieve their ideal families. Elsewhere appear stories about helping women no matter their goals, whether they want infertility treatments to get pregnant or contraceptives and safe abortions, all in service of individual well-being and for the good of local and global communities.

Issuing calls to action to government officials who make laws regulating reproductive health care and to individual citizens who care for the women in their lives, the text is decisive and assertive. Its organization-specific work is divided into three clear parts that cover the past, including Pathfinder's own checkered history; the present, including descriptions of the organization's varied efforts to increase access to reproductive health care in different environments; and the future, which explains how initiatives like youth-focused programs can lead to fast and drastic changes that benefit future generations. By examining Pathfinder's strengths and weaknesses, the book models the organization's policies: reassess a program's practices and results on a regular basis and make changes that help it better help others.

A text that's attuned to contemporary social and political challenges, but which filters expressions of them through one organization's work, *Who Runs the World?* spotlights a particular mission to change the world by empowering women and girls.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (May 9, 2024)

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