



ISSUE 3 & 4

**WOMEN  
& TRADE**

GENDER EQUALITY &  
EMPOWERING WOMEN

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

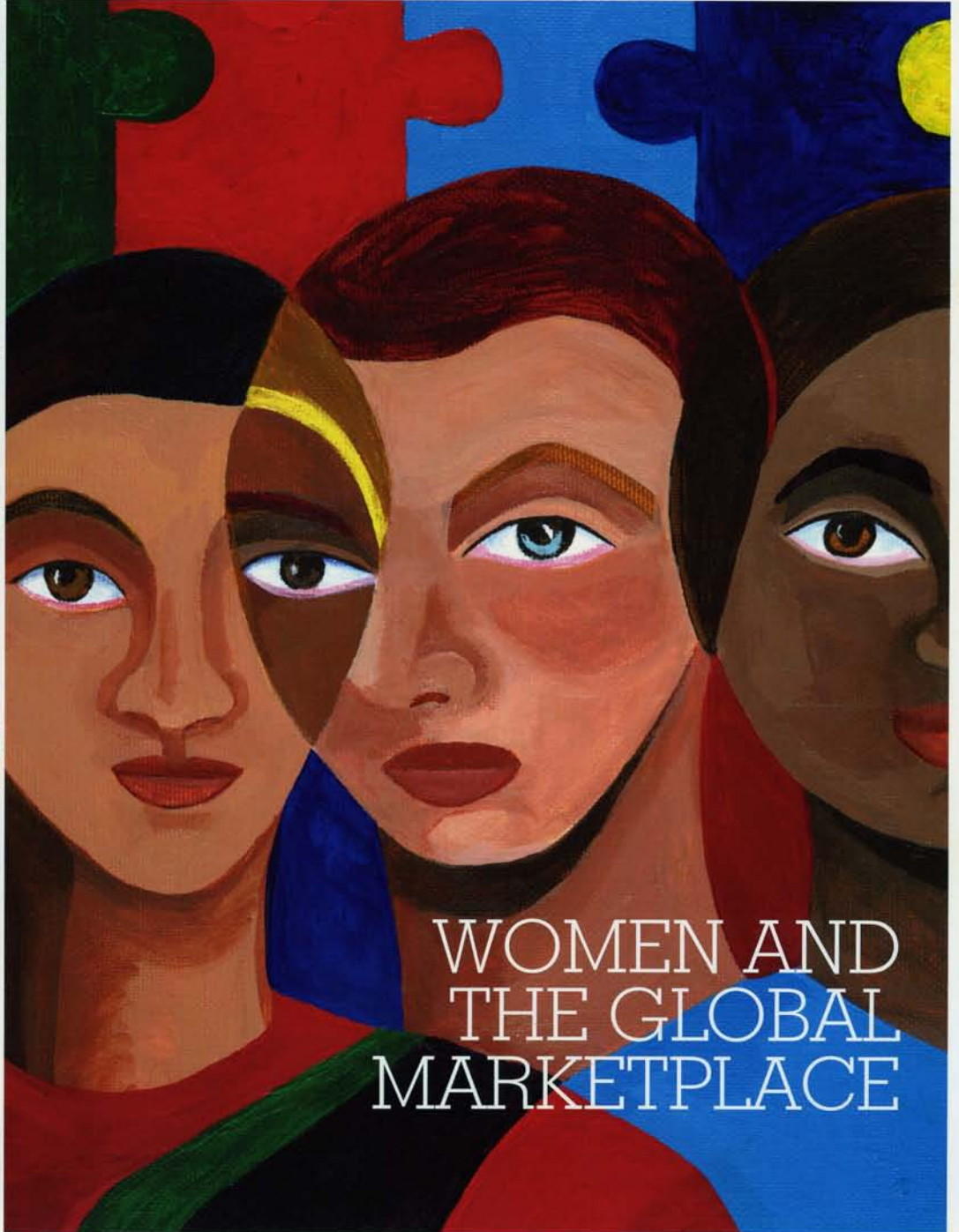
# FORUM



14-19: FEATURE  
**LIGHTING  
THE DARK**



28-29: BUSINESS TALK  
**THE POTENTIAL OF  
WOMEN-OWNED  
ENTERPRISES**



WOMEN AND  
THE GLOBAL  
MARKETPLACE

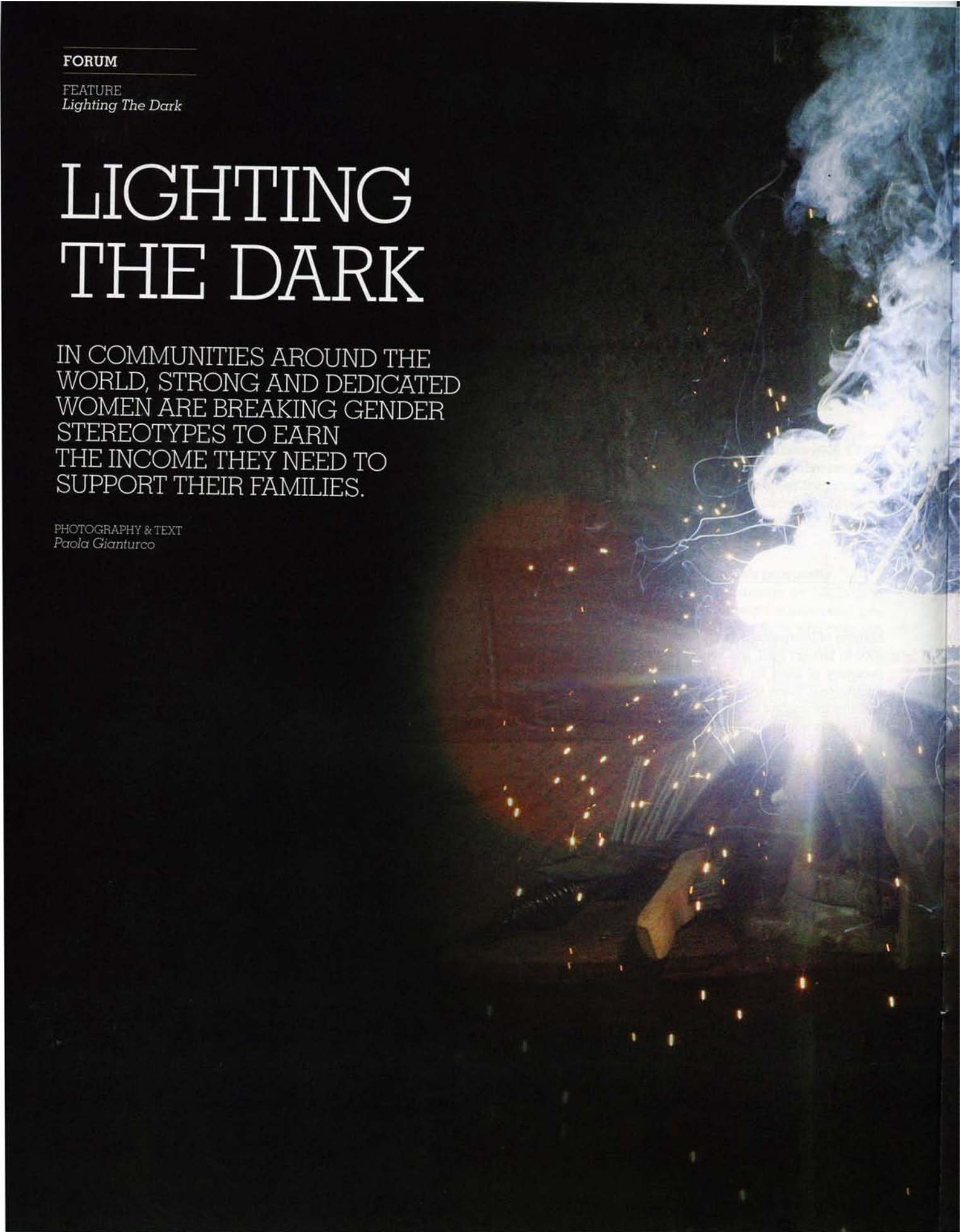
FORUM

FEATURE  
*Lighting The Dark*

# LIGHTING THE DARK

IN COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD, STRONG AND DEDICATED WOMEN ARE BREAKING GENDER STEREOTYPES TO EARN THE INCOME THEY NEED TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES.

PHOTOGRAPHY & TEXT  
*Paola Gianturco*







The United Nations Development Programme has estimated that a quarter of the world's families are supported exclusively by women, and another quarter primarily by women. These women are my heroines.

For the past 12 years, I have worked as a photojournalist documenting women's lives in 40 countries. Many of the women I photograph live below the UN income poverty line, yet they manage to feed and educate their children with the money they earn as entrepreneurs. Many are illiterate; their access to resources is limited. Most work in groups, some in cooperatives. They run micro-businesses, often without the benefit of microcredit, equipped only with skill and determination.

These women share the conviction that education can open up new possibilities for their daughters and sons. But even in places where tuition is free, school shoes and uniforms, books, paper and pencils are beyond reach. Energy, ingenuity and commitment make it possible for them to save the necessary funds for schooling. Some juggle four or five income-generating projects at once.

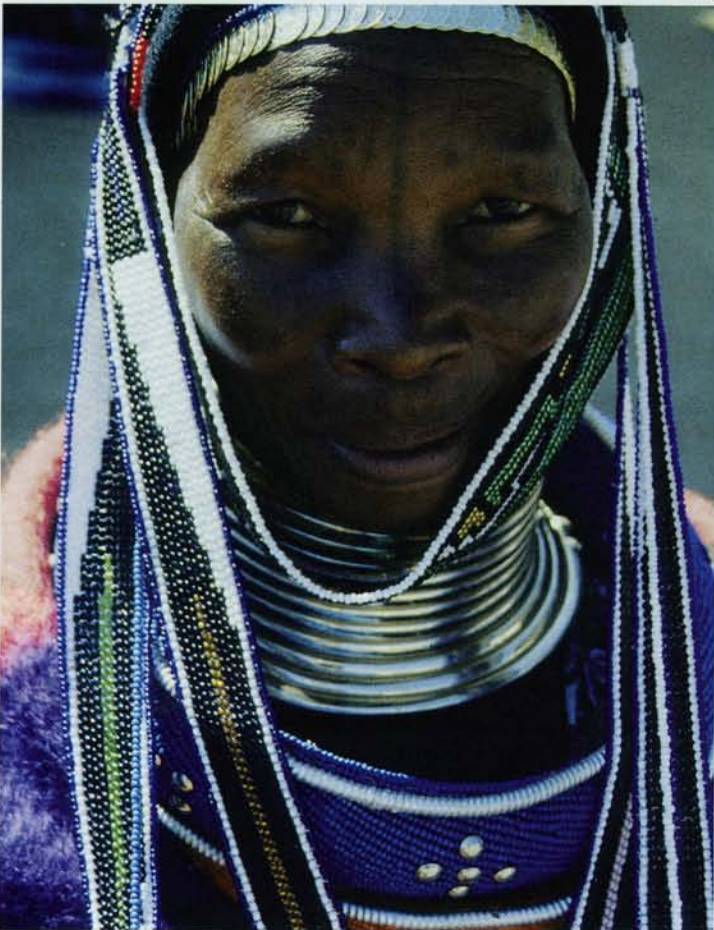








03



04



06

- 01 (Previous page)  
Welder, Condega.
- 02 (Page opposite)  
Mayan weaver.
- 03 Embroiderer, Thailand.
- 04 Ndebele beadwoman.
- 05 Rug weaver, Ayvacik, Turkey.
- 06 Weaver, Guatemala.





01



02

The story of women earning money to send their children to school can be told in many ways.

Around the world, female artisans are using skills their mothers taught them to make and sell crafts that are considered "women's work" in their cultures: rugs in Morocco and Turkey; beadwork in South Africa; weaving in Guatemala; appliqué in Panama; embroidery in India and Thailand; pottery in Nepal; knitting in Bolivia. While documenting their stories, these women became my friends and teachers. They showed that the world is smaller – and women's spirits are larger – than I had ever imagined.

Today, everywhere I work I find local women helping each other to solve the intractable problems that make life difficult for them and their families. These grass-roots women's groups are using creative strategies and entrepreneurial approaches to light the dark.






03

Women in Nepal and Nicaragua are bravely violating gender roles and performing jobs that have been considered inappropriate for women: driving taxis in Kathmandu; leading treks in the Himalayas; working as welders, carpenters and electricians in Condega. These jobs offer more opportunity and income than typical "women's work"

Near Kisumu, Kenya, 43 rural women's groups are tackling poverty, disease and malnutrition. They arrange to have deep wells dug on credit, then sell water (a jerrycan-full costs a few cents). Over time, they repay the drillers, then use the revenue from water to buy seeds so they can grow food.

These dedicated women are the focus of my latest book. Eighteen of the 23 groups in *Women Who Light the Dark* are grantees of the Global Fund for Women, which receives all royalties from the book. My decision to create books as philanthropic projects was inspired by the example of heroic, entrepreneurial, low-income women in the developing world whose lives demonstrate new ways to create economic, social and artistic legacies. 

*In Her Hands: Craftswomen Changing the World* (co-authored by Toby Tuttle) and *Women Who Light the Dark* are published by PowerHouse Books

- 01 Cornfield Kenya.
- 02 Water group at new pump near Kisumu Kenya.
- 03 Taxi driver, Kathmandu, Nepal.