

Book Reviews

Adjustment with a Human Face: Protecting the Vulnerable and Promoting Growth, Giovanni Andrea Cornia, Richard Jolly and Francis Stewart (eds), a UNICEF study, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987 (319pp, £27,50, ISBN 0 19 828609 0 pbk).

The book is in two parts, with contributors who have had experience and exposure in a wide range of socioeconomic settings. The book looks at the social and economic needs of children in 10 countries, studying child welfare in the context of a deteriorating economic situation. The situation of infants and other vulnerable groups is studied against a background of world depression, depressed commodity prices, the debt crisis of Africa and Latin America, and drought in Africa. All these factors tend to lower *per capita* incomes and employment opportunities and increase cuts in social expenditure. The study wishes to show how stabilisation and adjustment policies can be successful economic strategies while still protecting vulnerable groups, ie adjustment with a human face.

Part One of the book is concerned with issues arising out of the economic decline of the first half of the 1980's, and the effects of subsequent policy measures on child welfare. Evidence of the effects of this recession on child welfare are detailed in tables and analytical models. These diagrams enable the reader to absorb vast amounts of statistical data easily, in a systematic manner, allowing for comparisons. Basic household needs such as fuel and food are emphasised so that readers can understand the struggle that vulnerable groups have to undergo to survive in a situation where policy issues are beyond their control. The conclusion of Part One is a comprehensive summary of how child welfare has been negatively affected by growing economic imbalances, in particular declining household incomes. Part One deals thoroughly with care issues and vulnerable children, as it covers nutritional, health and social opportunities for such infants.

Part Two of **Adjustment with a Human Face** is an overview of an alternative approach to the failed policies illustrated in Part One. The crucial consideration in the alternative approach is to combine adjustment with the protection of vulnerable groups and the restoration of economic growth. Policy considerations are also linked to the forces of supply and demand so that the preferred options are seen in the context of both the vulnerable group and economic restoration.

The book illustrates clearly how policy makers should view the needs of local small farmers, while at the same time addressing global factors that threaten vulnerable groups. For this reason students of welfare, economics and development, and those professionals who adopt a systems approach to the analysis of socioeconomic trends affecting vulnerable groups, are fully provided for. The book is a detailed, illustrated analysis of the economic trends in the countries studied. Very few readers could read it for sheer enjoyment, unless they were well read in welfare

economics, development and other disciplines in which statistics are appreciated. **Adjustment with a Human Face** is a valuable resource and reference book, which would suit

postgraduate readers and professionals with a commitment to understanding how economic adjustment policies could be successful while protecting vulnerable groups, such as children.

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Agricultural Extension for Women Farmers in Africa, Katrine A Saito and Jean C Weidemann, World Bank, Washington DC, 1990 (57pp, US\$6.95, ISBN 0 8213 1657 5).

This is a short publication, and is quite condensed but the few pictures and generous spread of case studies make the book interesting and readable. The cover is probably too light coloured to withstand the tough usage for which the book is destined.

The book is product of almost two years of research into the problems facing women farmers, and various ways of developing agricultural extension services to women, in Africa. The work was financed by the UNDP Regional Programme for Africa and is part of ongoing research into raising the productivity of women farmers in Africa.

The book is jointly authored by Katrine Saito and Jean Weidemann, senior economist and consultant respectively in the Women in Development division of the World Bank's Population and Human Resources Department. The authors acknowledge contributions to the publication by many experts within and outside the World Bank. The book has four chapters, Chapter 1 addresses the question of why women need help, and focuses on the role of women in agriculture in Africa, and the particular constraints they face in access to resources and information. Chapter 2 examines the information needed to modify the extension system to better reach women farmers, and the information needed to modify the focus of research to address women's activities and constraints on these, and to monitor and evaluate programmes.

Ways of collecting such data are suggested. Chapter 3 deals with the transmission of the extension message to women. In this chapter the writers examine the role of extension agents and the importance of gender, the use of home economists and subject matter specialists, the use of contact farmers, and the use of groups. The final chapter examines the formulation of the message to be delivered, and the linkages between extension and agricultural research and technology.

One strength of the book is that it views women as an integral part of a complex socioeconomic setting, and avoids defining extension for women only in terms of 'women's' factors, or shortfalls in women-related information. While acknowledging the need to review such factors and provide women-specific information, the authors have looked at extension as an open ended strategy that takes note of different situations and explores new directions for involving women in their own learning not as objects of extension but as participants.

Another strength of the book is its guidelines for action. The literature on women in agriculture rarely goes beyond just expressing views on the situation of women. The