

*Kiran Asher* is an interdisciplinary feminist scholar trained in wildlife ecology, comparative politics and feminist theory. At present she is associate professor in the Department of International Development, Community, and the Environment (IDCE) at Clark University, Massachusetts. She coordinates the Masters Program in International Development and Social Change (IDSC) and teaches courses in IDSC and Women's studies. Since 1992, she has conducted research, published and worked with Afro-Colombian movements, including women's collectives, on ethnic and territorial rights, economic development and environmental conservation in the Chocó region. Prior to that, she has conducted conservation-related fieldwork in India, China, the USA, and various Latin American countries including Belize and Brazil. She has also worked as a biodiversity consultant for the World Bank, and as a gender consultant for several Colombian NGOs. More recently she has attempted to link feminist theory and politics, development work, and activism through her unremunerated work for an international NGO CARE-USA, and the Julian Cho Society, a movement struggling for indigenous land rights in southern Belize.

Asher's research focuses on the complex, contradictory and constitutive connections between political economy, society, and ecological processes. In her forthcoming book, *Black and Green: Afro-Colombians, Development, and Nature in the Pacific Lowlands* (Duke University Press, 2009), she argues that Afro-Colombians are neither neglected victims of development, nor heroes of a cultural, "environmentally friendly" alternative to development. Eschewing the many binaries—tradition vs. modernity, progress vs. underdevelopment, exploitation vs. resistance, local vs. global, theory vs. practice and so on—that plague and limit thinking about third world development and environmental movements, the book disrupts the notion that development is a hegemonic, homogenizing force of western rationality. Through an ethnographic and historical account of black organizing in the Pacific lowlands, it shows that the Afro-Colombian movements were shaped by, and partially shape, economic development and political processes in the 1990s. By tracing the claims made in the name of culture, nature, and development by Afro-Colombian groups and the state, the book shows how struggles for positive social and environmental change are shaped differentially *by and against* local, national and global influences.