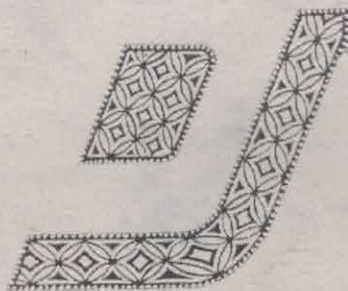


Pacific DAWN Research Network Meeting: Alafua



Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
(DAWN)

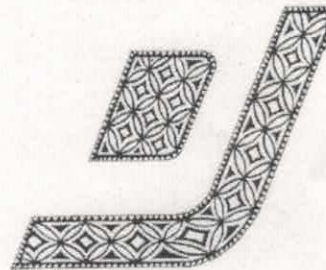
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Pacific DAWN Research Network Meeting: Alafua



Compiled and Written by

Yvonne Underhill-Sem
Regional Co-ordinator: Pacific DAWN
1999

Pacific DAWN

Research Network Meeting: Alafua



Pacific DAWN is the presence of connected interdependent researchers networking for

alternative political strategies using a methodology that looks at all pertinent factors the social, economic, political and historic in an inclusive holistic way, linking the macro with the micro, urban with rural, male with female, old with the young, rich with the poor, the powerful with

the powerless, looking through the eyes of the poorest in our society, to promote gender justice and social transformation.

Grace Mera Molisa
November 1998



University of South Pacific Centre, Alafua, Samoa

9-12 November 1998

With financial support from DAWN, Pacific Women's Resource Bureau/Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Pacific YWCA, UNIFEM, UNESCO (Pacific), University of the South Pacific Continuing Education.

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PREFACE

This is a report of a meeting initiated by DAWN (Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era) in its move to strengthen its presence in regions of the South.

The main aims of the meeting were to:

- strengthen networks among Pacific women working on development issues from feminist perspectives, and
- consider the nature of support for a Pacific DAWN research initiative.

I would like to thank the participants for their contribution and their time. Other realities of life - birth, sickness and pressing work commitments - prevented three other participants from joining us at the last minute and several other women sent their apologies and supportive messages earlier.

I would like to particularly thank Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop for her enabling support and creative assistance in organising this meeting. Thanks also to Rochelle Fonoti and Helen Tanielu for their assistance prior to and during the meeting. Faafetai lava to Sonny N. Sofe who designed the Samoan art work and Fono Valasi who prepared the report for printing. Thanks finally to those participants who provided notes for this document which made my job much easier, and to Julita who reminded me that pictures can speak a thousand words.

I hope this record contributes to the growing recognition of the contributions Pacific women make to understanding and transforming our homes, communities and countries so that we can all live with respect and freedom from gender injustices.

Kia manuia

Yvonne

Yvonne Underhill-Sem
Pacific Regional Co-ordinator
DAWN
Lotopa, Samoa
March 1999

Welcome:

Margarita Vaai, Director, University of the South Pacific Samoa Centre.

Margarita warmly welcomed everyone to Samoa, the University of South Pacific Alafua Campus and the University of South Pacific Samoa Centre.

Prayer:

Sister Pesio Iosefa, Catholic Education Services, Samoa.

God and loving Father and Mother, Creator and Sustainer of life - members of the DAWN have gathered here to discern their plan of action for the Pacific Region, to discern your will for the sake of your people and for the protection of our environment.

The lives and voices of people from other regions of the world witnessed intense human sufferings because of wars, because of the terrible gap between rich and poor, and because of various kinds of discrimination. Their voice was a cry to you their God and to their fellow humans for recognition of their dignity and human rights.

Others and those from the Pacific, pointed to the violence being done to our environment in the name of development and the all-consuming desire for profit or in their thirst for power.

It was a consciousness of the terrible violence done to creation, to human beings and to nature. Polluted air and water, diminishing natural resources, continuing extinction of forms of plant and animal life, pointed to violence being done to your creation.

We believe that we are part of an interdependent world that you created - a world of delicate balance. To go on ignoring this interdependence is to make our world unliveable. We believe that the struggles for justice, for peace and for integrity of creation are linked to one another. DAWN is a human response to the forces and trends that endanger life in our world. Justice, peace and integrity of creation are a Christian struggle against the powers of death - it is your kingdom versus the kingdom of this world.

We thank you, our God, for the quality of our achievement that is represented here, for the many and diverse efforts that continue to contribute toward building a better world. These actions for works of Justice, these sure convictions - Judith, Rachel, Sara, Elisabeth and Mary.

Pour out your spirit upon each member of this meeting - members of DAWN.

Confirm and strengthen their vision.

Be the hope that sustains them and strengthen them in these changing challenging times.

GOD of hope - bless them. Guide them.

AMEN

Introduction:

**Yvonne Underhill-Sem, Regional
Co-ordinator, Pacific DAWN**

The aim of this meeting organised by DAWN was to develop a work programme for a Pacific DAWN initiative for the period 1998-2000. The focus was on developing and supporting credible **research and analysis** in the region on issues of current concern that dovetail with DAWN's research themes.

An introduction to DAWN

DAWN¹ is a network of women in the economic South who are actively engaged in feminist research and analysis of the global environment focusing on four major themes: political economy of globalisation; social reproduction, reproductive rights, sexuality and gender justice; sustainable livelihoods; and political restructuring and social transformation

DAWN has been active in the major United Nations conferences in the last decade and has established its credentials as a South based network of women scholars and activists whose analysis and advocacy efforts have helped shape the debates and outcomes of the Conferences. DAWN's latest strategic direction is to work towards developing a presence in all regions of the South, connecting with regional issues and advocacies, and working with and through existing organisations and networks operating regionally. In this way DAWN seeks to more widely share its analysis. At the same time a regional presence will inform DAWN's global work by drawing attention to regional realities. A regional presence will also contribute to strengthening regional research, analysis and advocacy capacities on issues of global importance.

DAWN in the Pacific

DAWN has already held two meetings in the Pacific. In December 1992 a regional meeting was held at the University of the South Pacific, following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), to discuss environmental issues in the Pacific. It also provided regional feedback on DAWN's evolving analysis of population and reproductive rights.



Grace Molisa

Although there was no report of this meeting, the book edited and produced by Atu Emberson-Bain (*Sustainable Development or Malignant Growth: Perspectives of Pacific Island Women*, 1994) was an outcome of that meeting. In April 1996, DAWN held its annual Steering Committee meeting in Suva. Several Pacific women have been connected with DAWN meetings held elsewhere over the last decade and have been on DAWN's mailing list, receiving its regular newsletter, DAWN Informs. The DAWN Secretariat is now located in the Pacific region with Claire Slatter, the past regional co-ordinator for the Pacific, the new General Coordinator for DAWN and the University of the South Pacific hosting the Secretariat for the term of Claire's coordinatorship (three to four years).

DAWN 1998 and beyond

With the new emphasis on building a DAWN presence in the regions of the South and linking global and regional work, a series of regional meetings are being held to discuss regional issues of concern to women researchers and activists and to see how these link with DAWN's present work under its four theme areas. This meeting focuses specifically on the **research and analysis** aspects of DAWN's current themes in the Pacific context. It is hoped that this meeting will revitalise the web of networks which connect Pacific researchers concerned about development issues from feminist perspectives.

Working within a DAWN framework provides another way to influence decision-making in the region, although this is never an easy task. There is much more at stake than just undertaking 'sound' or 'good' research. Providing an analysis of research results is also required, while influencing policy makers entails an understanding of contemporary political relationships that is vital to doing advocacy work effectively. There are many strategies to deal with these issues, strategies that have been tried elsewhere with varying degrees of success. This meeting takes these challenges as a base for inviting discussion not just on the themes, but also on the research practice and application.

Leading Thoughts:

'The importance of feminist research/analysis and advocacy: a DAWN perspective': Claire Slatter, General Co-ordinator, DAWN.

Introduction

I would like to begin by adding my welcome and thanks to all of you who have given up work, family and other commitments to be here for this regional DAWN meeting. I would especially like to thank Yvonne Underhill Sem, Regional Coordinator (interim) for the Pacific, who worked so hard to organise the meeting. We are indebted to you Yvonne - thank you for agreeing to take on the responsibilities of Regional Coordinator for the Pacific and for doing such a sterling job. I would also like to record my thanks to Dr Peggy Fairbairn Dunlop, who gave support and assistance to Yvonne, and offered the premises of the USP School of Agriculture as the venue. Fa'afetai lava, Peggy. As you know, USP is hosting the DAWN Secretariat for the next three years, and it's wonderful to have the regional meeting hosted by USP's Alafua Campus. Thank you also to Makarita Vaai, USP Centre for supporting this meeting and opening it. It's very appropriate that you open it Makarita. Thank you too to Sister Pesio for her words of prayer. Last, but not least, may I add my thanks to Yvonne, to the Pacific Community, UNIFEM, UNESCO and the Pacific Regional YWCA, for the generous financial contributions they made towards the cost of bringing participants to the meeting.

The focus and object of feminist research, analysis and advocacy

Feminist research is usually concerned with uncovering and documenting the realities of women's lives and starts from the premise that we live in a gendered world, in which women are more or less subordinated. Feminist research entails digging beneath surface appearances and deconstructing coded information or responses. Feminist analysis includes asking broader questions about our research findings, drawing on the wider body of knowledge and information contributed to by feminist theorists to find meaning and explanation, and offering a view of what exists, why, and with what effects or results for women and others whose care and welfare depend on women. Feminist advocacy engages feminists in campaigns or efforts to transform thinking, policies, programmes and systems, toward more equitable, or gender-just understandings and arrangements. Feminist research, analysis and advocacy are closely linked - feminists rely on the results of research, and on the frameworks for understanding gender issues provided by feminist analysis, to support their advocacy efforts in pursuit of transformed gender relations.

Research is often dismissed by activists as an academic pursuit, undertaken for the individual advancement of scholars, and often entailing little value for advocates of social change. It is true that a lot of academic research will do little to change social, economic and political realities and that a lot of academics live in ivory towers, write esoteric treatises, and are disconnected from the real world. Yet, there are, and have always been, scholars who engage in social processes and in social movements, and contribute their research and analytical skills to these endeavours. These researchers are fuelled by a wider vision and often a consuming passion for a cause. The research that they do provides information and data that enable us to understand our political, economic and social realities. Their research can work to catalyse movements for change as well as provide ammunition, for want of a better word, for resistance or campaigns for policy change. Some of the best researchers are committed activists, who undertake research to obtain data and uncover information to support the causes they care about, or the struggles they are engaged in. The results of their research are not confined to written reports - they may be more powerfully conveyed in film or drama. I am pleased that we shall have at least one feminist researcher at this meeting who has distinguished herself not only through her published work, but also, increasingly, through her documentary films.

There is, however, far too little research being done by feminists in our region - which is why this meeting which has brought together a number of us who have been doing research and analysis of gender issues in many different forms and at many different levels, is a really important occasion. Of course there are others like us who we have yet to discover and connect with, but this will be a start, we hope.

Because this meeting has been called by DAWN, our focus will essentially be on the four themes on which DAWN is presently undertaking research, analysis, advocacy and training. I want to use this opportunity to provide some background on DAWN. In doing this, I shall I hope highlight for you the importance of feminist research, analysis and advocacy on global issues, especially in the context of what has come to be termed globalisation.

Background on DAWN

When DAWN first began, in 1984, on the eve of the international governmental and nongovernmental conferences marking the end of the UN Decade for Women, our aim was to analyse the development experience of women in our countries and regions, as critical feminists from the South. The women who came together to produce this analysis were feminist researchers and activists who had long been involved in the women's movement, in researching gender issues, and in monitoring developments in their countries and regions. We started by drawing on our own experience and knowledge and sharing our concerns about what was happening in our regions, and

how it was impacting, in our view, on women. Out of this process of reflection, sharing and discussion, the outline of the first DAWN analysis crystallised. The analysis was developed and extended by feminist economist Gita Sen, who carried out extensive documentary research over a period of several months (with the aid of a research assistant), maintained close contact with everyone and shared the detailed analysis as it evolved, for comment, feedback and collective ownership. A few months before the Nairobi conferences, a meeting was held to consider and make last changes to the final draft.

The resulting product, published under the title *Development, Crises and Alternative Visions - Third World Women's Perspectives*, was a South feminist analysis of development which reflected the collective wisdom of 22 women. The DAWN analysis assessed three decades of development efforts from the vantage point of poor women of the South. By adopting this stance, DAWN was making clear that it did not measure the progress of women by advancements made by women in the professions, in leadership or government, or other high profile arenas (important as these advancements are), but by the survival, improvements in living standards, and enjoyment of rights and opportunities of the poor, and especially poor women, in the South. The DAWN analysis highlighted the particular impacts on the poor and on women particularly of economic and political crises in the South - debt, famine, militarisation and fundamentalism. These were seen to have their origin in large part in both unequal economic relations between the industrialised capitalist world and nations in the economic South or 'Third World', and in an inappropriate development model which exacerbated economic inequalities within countries of the Third world, as well as between them and developed countries.

The DAWN analysis challenged the dominant paradigm or model of development and by focusing on the global economic and political processes, introduced for the first time, macro-structural issues onto the agenda of the international women's movement. DAWN anticipated the negative impacts on women of structural adjustment programmes (which were then only beginning to be applied in indebted third world countries) and raised to the foreground the steadily worsening condition of women in a world marked by growing inequality, conflict and violence. As you may recall, the report presented by the UN at the end of the Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi unequivocally confirmed that women's material condition had worsened, rather than improved, over the Decade.

DAWN's feminist vision for alternative economic frameworks

DAWN's feminist vision explicitly states:

Our vision of feminism has at its very core a process of economic and social development

geared to human needs through wider control over and access to economic and political power We reject the belief that it is possible to obtain sustainable improvements in women's economic and social position under conditions of growing relative inequality, if not absolute poverty for both women and men We want a world where inequality based on class, gender and race is absent from every country and from the relationships among countries...where basic needs become basic rights, and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated.

Gita Sen and Caren Grown, 1987, *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions*, New York: Monthly Review Press.

By the 1990s, structural adjustment policies (SAP's) and free market economics had become 'economic commonsense' - endorsed by economists within international financial institutions, development agencies and governments alike, and validated by the failure of leading socialist economies and the collapse of socialist regimes. In the decade, 1985-1995, we witnessed growing global inequalities in resource distribution. There were net transfers of wealth from the South to the North as countries of the South were forced to service their debts by selling off their assets, plundering their natural resource bases, and increasing their production of commodities or manufactured products to raise their export earnings. An unprecedented growth in poverty - an estimated three billion of the world's six billion population, are said to be living in absolute poverty - and a rapidly widening gulf between rich and poor, and between North and South, are now acknowledged facts. The particular impacts of SAP's on women also began to be documented in this decade by feminist researchers - increased (unpaid) work burden and responsibilities, reduced access to health and education, expanded employment opportunities under poor/unregulated conditions, reduced real earnings with currency devaluation and tax 'reforms', increased external migration in search of work, increased trafficking, sexual violence and other forms of exploitation.

Despite mounting evidence of its devastating social and environmental impacts, the global regime of SAP's has continued to be enforced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) and related institutions, with poverty alleviation programmes being set up to take care of those impoverished in the process. Until the Southeast Asian financial crisis destroyed the foundations of the fast-growing economies of that region, they were being held up as living proof that developing countries (including Pacific Island countries) could attain the same spectacular success, by following the economic reform prescriptions of the international financial institutions. The emergence of the World Trade Organisation meanwhile worked to lock all states who

signed up into the obligation to adhere to its provisions for global free trade, however unfair to a national economy these provisions may be.

In the last six years or so, macro-economic issues have become a central concern of international women's networks and organisations working on gender and economic justice issues. This relatively new focus within the international women's movement is a response to the deepening development crisis in the South. Taking on macro-economic issues and issues like trade, is also a response from the women's movement to what has euphemistically come to be termed 'globalisation'. I say euphemistically, because the term suggests a process driven by apparently neutral developments like advances in technology, and generating its own momentum, rather than a process which is being directed and shaped by particular interest groups or power blocs. In reality, *globalisation* reflects the monopolisation of power by private corporate interests within industrialised capitalist countries. And one of the important reasons for doing research and analysis on global environment issues is to be able to help us understand what globalisation entails; the interests that are driving it and served by it; how different categories of people within our national populations are affected; how we might protect our long term interests from being eroded by those who have political and economic power to make decisions over our lives.

Since 1985 DAWN has been monitoring developments in the global economy under the research theme of alternative economic frameworks. Until 1990, its research and analysis was solely focused on tracking and analysing macro-economic developments and issues. In 1990, two new but closely related themes were added to its research and analysis agenda: environment and sustainable livelihoods, and population and reproductive rights. With these two new themes DAWN sought to link its advocacy for macro-structural change with women's struggles for control of their livelihood resources, and for reproductive rights in a global environment increasingly dominated by rightwing fundamentalism.

The two new themes dovetailed with the foci of two major UN Conferences, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. DAWN, like many other global NGOs working on development issues, found itself drawn into the processes surrounding the Conferences. The intention was to influence the thinking, debate, agenda, and ultimately the outcomes of these meetings, which resulted in commitments by governments to programmes of action.

In both these meetings DAWN's critical South feminist perspective challenged mainstream (and essentially Northern male) thinking by conceptually clarifying the essential and non-negotiable interests of women in the debates and negotiations. The ICPD Plan of Action was seen as a major victory for the women's movement (given

the efforts of the Vatican and other rightwing governments in the lead up to and at Cairo) and DAWN made a significant contribution to building solidarity, conceptual clarity and coherence within the women's lobby. DAWN also engaged in processes preparatory to the World Summit on Social Development, and of course the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing. As with the ICPD, feminist analyses of current issues were prepared to assist women's lobbying efforts at these meetings. In 1996, a fourth theme, Political Restructuring and Social Transformation, emerged, and work is currently underway to develop a South feminist analysis of issues relating to this theme. You will be hearing more today on all four of the research themes.

Expanding DAWN's research and analysis agenda

Global analyses and global advocacy has been DAWN's primary preoccupation in the five years after 1990 and what I have shared with you on DAWN's work at the global level will have illustrated the importance of doing feminist research, analysis and advocacy at this level. In the current programme phase DAWN is focusing more attention on regional work, encouraging and supporting regional research, analysis and advocacy on issues which fit with its four global research themes, and working to strengthen regional capacities, especially in the areas of research and analysis. We will be looking closely at DAWN's four research areas later today, and discussing our own work, how it relates to DAWN's global themes and whether we would like to undertake research and analysis of issues in our region under any of the four themes, and if so, how we would like to do it and with what advocacy objectives. This is our agenda in this meeting.

From global analysis and advocacy to regional engagements

You all bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in working on issues affecting women to this meeting. My hope is that in the process of sharing our experiences, our concerns and our insights on issues on which we have been working, or would like to work, we shall inspire one another to want to do some initial collaborative work on one or two issues of common concern. The last regional meeting which DAWN held in the Pacific inspired a book - *Sustainable Development or Malignant Growth - Perspectives of Pacific Island Women* edited by Atu Emberson-Bain (who was unable to join us at the last minute). Without wishing to pre-empt what may emerge from our discussions tomorrow, it is already evident to me from the informal sharing that has already taken place over the weekend amongst those of us who arrived early, that there is a considerable interest and engagement by several of us in both sexual and reproductive rights issues and political restructuring and social transformation issues in our own national contexts. I think I should say no more, except to express the hope that our discussions catalyse us into working collectively on something in the year ahead. Thank you for patiently listening.

Themes:

The concerns of feminist research/advocacy

In her opening speech, Claire introduced the underlying concerns of feminist research. She traced the development of DAWN from 1984 prior to the Nairobi Conference marking the end of the UN Decade for Women, through the collective way in which DAWN's analysis evolved, and concluded by outlining DAWN's vision. Introducing the main theme that frames DAWN's analysis, the political economy of globalisation, Claire showed how other themes fitted into this concern for understanding the politics of macro-economics and structural issues. More recently, the focus of DAWN has broadened to include a concern for developing regional links under the other thematic area of environment and sustainable livelihoods, population and reproductive rights and political restructuring and social transformation.

Research topics, involvement and practice

Following this discussion, participants introduced themselves and aspects of 'research' that they were involved with. This covered a fascinating range of **research topics and activities**.

- analysing the socio-cultural antecedents to adolescent obesity in Tonga (Caroline Fusimalohi);
- documenting the land rights of indigenous Fijian women (Alumita Duratalo);
- analysing the impact of new religious movements on women in Samoa (Maureen Sier);
- involving women in planning which addresses water scarcity problems on their small islands in Samoa (Kilali Alailima);
- documenting the way in which biological research on weeds in Fiji lead to the need for gender sensitising workshops in the agricultural sector (Mereseini Ngatalevu);
- analysing the plantation experiences of Melanesian-Samoans and their current social and economic situation in Samoa (Asenati Liki);
- exploring post-colonial identities through the use of English in Samoa (Sina Vaai);
- documenting oral histories in Palau (Julita Tellei);
- initiating socio-cultural research on the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence in FSM (Tina Takashy);
- undertaking research supporting Vanuatu's Women in Politics group (Grace Mera Molisa);
- undertaking research on domestic violence in Samoa (Frances Soon-Schuster);

- documenting issues related to food security, sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation in PNG (Elizabeth Cox);
- introducing a simple survey/research tool to enable grassroots women to self-report and ways to document the incidence and severity of 'smacking' of their own children in Samoa (Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop);
- analysing the relationship between population mobility and Pacific identities (Yvonne Underhill-Sem).

The way in which participants were **involved** in their research also varied as we situated ourselves in:

- government departments,
- teaching institutes,
- non-government organisations,
- communities and villages.

Diverse also were the **research practices** we adopted:

- analysis of interviews using statistical analysis as well as qualitative techniques,
- field experimentation,
- review and analysis of laws and legal practice,
- combining development activism with documentation, participatory research and advocacy,
- standard demographic analysis,
- life history matrices,
- discourse analysis.

Throughout these discussions the 'feminist' perspective that emerged was more than just a focus on women but involved an implicit political commitment to equity and justice in health, education and all aspects of life.



Frances Soon Schuster and Tina Takashy

Substance and Analysis:

Having briefly shared our research interests, involvement and practice, we turned to closer scrutiny of DAWN's four main research themes and their meaning in the Pacific context. These brief summaries generated a lot of discussion and interest as we aligned our knowledge of the Pacific with these themes. What follows are some recollections of our discussions.

Sustainable livelihoods in the Pacific

Asenati introduced this theme (see Appendix) highlighting the focus on trade liberalisation and globalisation, the competition for natural resources (arable land, coastal access, flora and fauna), the loss by women of their livelihood resources, the emergence of new (and genderised) processes of exclusion, and the feminisation of poverty. The framework emphasised the need to be aware of and counter these new processes on a global scale, of the need to build alliances with the environmental and human rights movements and with governments, and the need to also build a network of sustainable communities.

The main issue raised in this session concerned the privatisation of knowledge (intellectual property) through patenting and the importance of understanding TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) in the context of the development of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This was especially important to women at the grassroots where problems of patent and rights are unknown but potentially exploitative. We learnt of developments in Fiji such as the case of 'kavakava', the initiative of translating the concept of intellectual property into Fijian and the drafting of new legislation on intellectual property.

Other issues discussed included the need for effective and ethical research practices so that indigenous knowledge is not appropriated for the benefit of other people and purposes; the question of representation and who has the right to speak and tell the story on behalf of indigenous people; the idea of sustaining and empowering women to deal with wealth without tapping into global society; the uniqueness of Papua New Guinea with its extreme and rapacious extractive industries and the neglect of agriculture as the resource base that sustains livelihoods. Throughout these discussions, there was optimism in finding solutions to problems faced by women in a global environment. The Sustainable Livelihoods theme is of direct interest to the Pacific although the issues are very complex and the concept paper did not really touch on the many complexities. In some parts of the Pacific, people still maintain a way of life that more closely resembles that of their forebearers with minimal impact from the forces of globalisation. The challenge is to provide choices so that people can decide the pace and nature of change in their lives.

Political economy of globalisation in the Pacific

As the core focus of DAWN research analysis and advocacy, Claire introduced this theme in her introduction to the meeting. We discussed responses in our countries to the forces of globalisation especially, structural adjustment programmes, deregulation and trade liberalisation policies. The resounding conclusion was the need to better understand the process of 'globalisation' and how it manifests itself in each country. We also needed to ask the right questions about the full implications of government decisions to sign various international treaties and conventions, such as for instance becoming a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The implications of such decisions may affect the way Governments provide social services. Several participants found renewed confidence to begin or continue asking critical questions about macro-economic issues such as what specifically would new trade arrangements mean, who or what is driving new initiatives, how different groups in our communities will be affected and how the long-term interests of our communities can be protected.

Reproductive health and rights in the Pacific

Yvonne introduced the theme "Reproductive and sexual rights" (see Appendix) highlighting a number of key directions for the future: assessing the implementation of ICPD resolutions, revisiting conceptual frameworks, developing policy analysis, strengthening linkages among civil society initiatives and disseminating analysis and undertaking training.

There was a discussion about the dangers of reporting that we in the Pacific are working towards implementing the Cairo Program for Action, when at the same time issues of sexuality, sexual diversity, abortion, women's control over her own body and fertility are censored out of public debates. More family planning programs and more male involvement alongside this censoring, betrays the fundamental gains and achievements of Cairo, which were about placing gender relations and the question of women's right to information and control at the centre of our discussions and programs.

There was also some discussion about the interrelatedness of gender violence and the poor reproductive health or high reproductive health risks that women face every day. There is not enough discussion and linking of these issues in the Pacific. In Papua New Guinea people talk a lot about violence at home and about the rising rate of incest and child sexual exploitation/abuse. This should not be understood as Papua New Guinea being more violent, more primitive, less developed, but rather a sign that women, and many people in the community at large are acknowledging the fact that gender violence does exist, does very seriously restrict women in ways that might not be apparent and most certainly affects, and puts at high risk, women's reproductive health.

Domestic violence KAP (knowledge, attitudes, practices) survey for the Federated States of

We also discussed how the concept of 'reproductive rights' was still negatively imbued with being of western origin and therefore not 'rightfully' part of the Pacific. Such positions are regularly justified through recourse to 'tradition', 'custom' or religious teaching, which themselves can also contribute to the poor reproductive health of women. More work is needed to ensure these positions do not become entrenched but instead are reinterpreted to highlight the value of respect for women and her bodily rights.

Leadership, representation, accountability and social equity

Amelia introduced the theme 'Political restructuring and social transformation' (see Appendix). Concern was expressed over the emergence of alliances between the World Bank and male dominated NGO's as governments became preoccupied with unstable economic and political situations. The masculinity of civil society and faith-based groupings was also recognised as problematic with women increasingly questioning why they were being excluded. Examples of male dominance and resistance to gender sensitisation were given revealing its widespread nature in the Pacific.

Also of concern was the growth of personal and professional corruption of leadership, men and women, in both governments and NGO's. Educated elites were manipulating the economy and political system for their own interests which meant the interests of the community did not get served. It was acknowledged that women, who have risen rapidly in the ranks of NGO leadership and politics, are rapidly moving into the formal (electoral) political base. While this constitutes a loss to many NGO's, we were hopeful that in the long run, this trend would lead to more widespread gender equity.

Other issues of concern included:

- the presumption of a uni-directional link between political restructuring and social transformation;
- the growth of disciplinary forces like the police and defence forces;
- the need to define 'social transformation' to include transformation of gender relations toward more equitable social relations and work distribution, protection of girls and enjoyment of equal rights between men and women;
- the need for legislative tracking of bills that changed political structures making them less transparent and accountable to the general public;

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- the need to deal with the vacuum left by NGO's who had lost their civil society commitments;
- the need to continue pressing for more women to be in formal political systems; and
- the need to understanding the complex but intimate relationships between politics and culture.

The importance of understanding the 'languages' in which current changes were occurring was recognised. It was noted that the current Comprehensive Reform Programme in Vanuatu was thought to be different from other economic restructuring programmes as 'we invited it upon ourselves'. However, the end result could well be the same since the language used in discussions on globalisation is the same as that used in Vanuatu.

In the course of these discussions arose some visions of the kind of society we wanted to live in.

In Micronesia; where those who have the least can nonetheless survive, enjoy access to basic needs, including health care, educational and job opportunities, and safety, where such basic needs are basic rights. People in Micronesia used to say "we don't want to be like Hawaii or Saipan, where the people had suffered dispossession, marginalisation and disenfranchisement."

In PNG; where globalisation is undermining simplicity and alternatives and destroying what we want to preserve, people need to regain the agency and leadership they used to have to promote alternative visions and ways of supporting alternative systems or processes.

In Vanuatu; where a peaceful society exists in which there is stability and certainty and happy families.

In conclusion, economic reforms in the Pacific have not generally been accompanied by political reform, (except in the special case of Fiji). New political institutions in Fiji might facilitate the implementation of economic restructuring but they also allow for some challenges. Social transformation is a larger agenda than political reform. It seeks more fundamental societal change, accompanied by changes in values and beliefs. Cultural transformation is a very important part of social transformation as culture can be a major block or obstacle to women enjoying their rights, becoming decision-makers, acquiring ownership or control of land etc. Our political systems are based on patriarchal political cultures which require transforming but not into other patriarchal political systems.

Proposed Pacific DAWN research programme:

After absorbing the framework within which DAWN research themes evolved, the synthesising discussion lead us to many potential research topics. We eventually reduced these to precise research topics which we individually could initiate or contribute to:

- Exploring the role of external agencies in transforming gender relations in the public sector
With contributions from DAWN's analysis, especially the nature of external economic directives, this proposal will provide case studies of Tonga and Palau. In addition, it will contribute to Tonga's gender policy. Proposer: Caroline Fusimalohi. Other contributors: Julita Tellei for Palau
- Monitoring Comprehensive Reform Programme (CRP) in Vanuatu
Contributing to the polishing, packaging and dissemination of ongoing work analysing CRP in Vanuatu. Proposer: Grace Molisa.
- Exploring issues of individual and family rights and law with a focus on child abuse in Samoa
Following a major project on domestic violence in Samoa, this project incorporates different perspectives, especially the impact of economic and cultural globalisation, with a focus on child abuse. Proposer: Frances Soon Schuster
- Child abuse issues in Samoa
This programme was begun in June 1998 with two main aims; first, to open up community and national discussion about the culture of hitting and abuse through words, and second for women (and families) to examine their own perceptions and practises of disciplining behaviour and their relationships with their children and family members. Based on these findings, to identify a one-year advocacy and information programme for National Council of Women on the issue of physical violence. Proposer: Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop
- Developing a checklist of questions to assess the extent to which Palau is being transformed by global macro-structural economic conditions:
Becoming more aware of the political economy of globalisation and its impact especially on women, this project will pull together a set of questions to stimulate in-country discussion on the implications of, for instance, becoming a member of World Trade Organisation (WTO). Proposer: Julita Tellei. Other contributors: Claire Slatter
- Domestic violence KAP (knowledge, attitude, practice) survey for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM):
This proposal continues the research begun in 1994 on domestic violence, but is expanded to include violence in general. Proposer: Tina Takashy
- The impact of CAIRO on grassroots women in a context of structural adjustment:
This would be a *semi-* historical comparative study to explore net gains in women's reproductive health and access to health services from 1960-2000. It will determine the extent to which grassroots women in Papua New Guinea are affected by Cairo influenced initiatives on the one hand and on the other the impact of health cut backs and fee structures based on structural adjustment. The study will use oral history and testimony and participatory surveys of awareness, attitudes and behaviour with regard to core Cairo themes and limited quantitative measures. It will involve a comparison of the role and impact of 20-30 community-based women health providers and women's health services which began in Sepik villages 40yrs ago 1959/60 and which have been re-introduced Post Cairo. Proposer: Elizabeth Cox. Outputs: Research paper and popular account. Recommendations to planners of Women's Health Projects nationally and locally. Time-frame: 12 months (1999).
- Documenting the impact of local, self-help development initiatives on the livelihoods/quality of life of people who can still access and control adequate subsistence resources (land, water, food)
This will involve detailed documentation and resource auditing at the beginning and at intervals during periods of local project implementation. It will analyse the way 'new projects' affect the gender division of labour and access to and maintenance of important natural subsistence resources. This will involve participatory research action and resource and gender auditing checklists and instruments, and will be integrated into the operations of the 'implementing' NGO. Proposer: Elizabeth Cox. Outputs: Case studies (written and audiovisual) of communities implementing their own development projects. A paper and recommendations on best practice in the promotion of sustainable community-based development initiatives. Time-frame: 12 months (March 1999-March 2000).
- Gender auditing and the impact, over time, of gender training in progressive NGOs
This will involve the application and analysis of simple checklists measuring individual and organisational gender awareness, attitudes and behaviour, and any changes over time. This will be integrated into the operations of the 'training' NGO. Proposer: Elizabeth Cox. Other contributors: Sarah

Garap. Outputs: A paper and clear recommendations and guidelines for gender trainers in the PNG, NGO context.

Time-frame: 12-18 months, commencing June 1999.

- Engendering intellectual property rights in the Pacific
Within the context of more complex livelihoods throughout the Pacific (DAWN's Sustainable Livelihoods theme), this project will begin to explore issues of gendered knowledge and the impact of legislation such as that involved in TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property System).
Proposer: Yvonne Underhill-Sem. Outputs: Paper and public awareness of these issues for women in the Pacific. Time-frame: Within 18 months.
- Exploring the concept of "doing more with less" at the National University of Samoa (NUS)
Despite the numerical dominance of women at NUS, there is still need to make it more women-friendly. This work can provide insights into the how women

appear to be making progress in times of economic restructuring but without the support that women need to fully participate (eg creches)

Proposer: Sina Vaai.

- Women in mental health in Fiji

This project is poised to go with collaborators in Fiji pending research funds. Cast within the perspective of the stress related to new economic directives, this could develop from a Fiji case study into a region wide study.

Proposer: Alumita Durutalo.

In addition to these specific research projects, other participants related activities which did not require the formulation of a research project; adapting DAWN perspectives (especially the effects of structural adjustment policies) into a proposed doctoral study on poverty and household incomes in Samoa; providing a concept paper on political restructuring and social transformation as it affects the Pacific; and providing case studies on women in agriculture in Fiji from a masters paper that is near completion.



Yvonne Underhill-Sem
- Caroline Fusimalohi
Amelia Rokotuivuna

Mereseini Ngatalevu
Alumita Durutalo

Networking and Funding Pacific DAWN Work Plan:

The various research topics proposed were loosely fitted under the four DAWN themes although some spanned a number of areas. Some were at advanced stages of conceptualisation while others developed directly from insights gained at this meeting. While individuals took responsibility to develop these proposals, there was a collective understanding that this would be best done with inputs and comments from everyone at the meeting and as well as from others who were not able to attend the meeting. It was hoped that this group could sharpen each other's analytical abilities especially if we develop as part of a regional network getting and providing feedback from various people in various forums. To do this we need to build trust about sharing information within the network, providing space for oral testimonies where people speak for themselves, and trusting one another in regard to individual and group intellectual property. One major challenge was to enable people working at the micro level to see the linkages and for people working in other networks to also be included.

This may be possible due to the communication advances of email (except for one participant who did not have email until 5 months after the meeting), which we all agreed was necessary for a successful network especially in the Pacific where it is very expensive to run regional meeting. Finding funds to facilitate this networking was given

high priority and urgency and the Regional Coordinator agreed to work on this urgently.

In these early stages, most research topics will focus on one country but will be cast within a broader context informed by DAWN global analysis. Within a shared analytical context, other country case studies can develop. This process ensures that individual countries benefit from our research efforts at the same time as having the potential for multi-country and regional syntheses which can inform DAWN global analysis. In this way, Pacific DAWN research projects which pay due attention to their own specific historical and political contexts, can inform and advance DAWN global analysis.

Over the next three months, these proposed research projects will be developed and costs identified. Some costs will be absorbed by the organisation or institution that participants are currently involved in, but others will be in need of separate financial support. UNESCO MOST was discussed as one possible funding option especially where the project spans more than one country. The proposed PWRB/SPC initiative on research on domestic violence was also enthusiastically discussed and we will keep in touch with developments.



Kilali Alailima and Rochelle Fonoti

Conclusions:

At the conclusion of the meeting there was a shared commitment to see a Pacific DAWN research programme. This entailed continuing to familiarise ourselves with published and ongoing DAWN analyses and thinking about how our experiences and insights contributing to future DAWN analysis. We also recognised the trust involved in working collectively as well as the tremendous support that comes with being part of a network that shares a common commitment, especially as many of us live and work in places isolated from others but with an interest in critical feminist analysis.

It was agreed that the Regional Co-ordinator remains for the next 18 months when we will convene another meeting to look at our progress and future. The Regional Co-ordinator would act as a catalyst and link for developing

a Pacific DAWN presence initially through these research proposals. This is likely to entail seeking research funds once the proposals are advanced, as well as seeking funds to ensure that all contributing members of Pacific DAWN are connected to email.

The concluding sentiments of the meeting were positive as we sat chatting around the table after formally closing the meeting. Although we all have competing work and family commitments to attend to, this meeting encouraged us to remain informed about the political economy of globalising forces, to keep asking those difficult questions about changes in our communities and country, to seek support for clarifying and addressing these issues and then ultimately to provide credible alternatives, based on 'sound' research, that ensure a just society.



Claire Slatter Elizabeth Cox
Julita Tellei



Margarita Vaai Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop
Tina Takashy Sr Pesio Iosefa

Appendix A

Pacific DAWN Research Network Meeting - Final Programme

Overall Meeting Aims:

- To strengthen networks among Pacific women working on development issues from feminist perspectives
- To consider the nature of support for a Pacific DAWN initiative

Monday 9th November: THEMES

Days aims:

1. To learn what we are all doing: research projects, activism, how we work, who we work with and why. Discussion: what are the issues that concern us and why and what methods and strategies are we using in the way we work?
2. To be informed about DAWN: its background, the new global program, and its activities. Discussion: how can linking with DAWN contribute to strengthening our research and analysis of global environmental issues relevant to the Pacific?

Days end:

To be informed about one another's work, DAWN's work and the relevance of DAWN's work to the Pacific today

8:30 – 9:15am

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Makerita Vaai (*USP Samoa Centre*)
Sister Pesio Iosefo (*to bless the meeting*)
Yvonne Underhill-Sem (*Interim Regional Co-ordinator for Pacific DAWN*)

9:15 – 9:45am

SESSION ONE

Chair: *Yvonne Underhill-Sem*
Opening Address: *Claire Slatter* - DAWN General Co-ordinator

"The importance of feminist research/analysis and advocacy: a DAWN perspective"

9:45 – 10:00am

Questions and discussion

Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop (*Director, USP Continuing Education*)

10:30am – 12:30pm

SESSION TWO: Research in the Pacific

Chair: *Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop*
Rapporteur: *Alumita Duratalo*
Individual contributions - what research are we involved in, how do we work.

1:30 – 5:00pm

SESSION THREE: DAWN Research Agenda

Chair: *Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop/Elizabeth Cox*
Rapporteur: *Tina Takashy*
Presenters:
Claire Slatter: Political economy of globalisation
Amelia Rokotuivuna: Political restructuring and social transformation
Yvonne Underhill-Sem: Social reproduction, reproductive rights sexuality and gender rights
Asenati Liki: Sustainable Livelihoods

5:00 – 5:30pm

SESSION FOUR: Setting a Pacific DAWN Agenda

Chair: *Elizabeth Cox*
Rapporteur: *Julie Tellei*
Discussion on DAWN's presence in the Pacific - whose agenda?
Confirming programme, chairs and rapporteurs for rest of meeting.

Tuesday 10th November: SUBSTANCE AND ANALYSISDays aims:

Looking at the substantive issues in which DAWN is working: what could a Pacific Dawn research and analysis programme include.

Days end:

Clarity on substantive issues for the Pacific region

- 8:30 – 10:30am** **SESSION FIVE: Environmental issues in the Pacific**
Chair: *Yvonne Underhill-Sem*
Rapporteur: *Caroline Fusimalohi*
- 11:00am – 12:30pm** **SESSION SIX: Globalisation in the Pacific**
Chair: *Yvonne Underhill-Sem*
Rapporteur: *Caroline Fusimalohi*
- 2:00pm – 3:30pm** **SESSION SIX contd...**
- 4:00 – 5:30pm** **SESSION SEVEN: Reproductive health and rights in the Pacific**
Chair:
Rapporteur: *Mereseini Ngatelevu*

Wednesday 11th November: PACIFIC DAWN WORK PLANDays aim:

Substantive issues and how to deal with them - small group discussion
Methodological, ethical, political issues in research

Days end:

Elements for a possible Pacific DAWN Agenda 1998-2000

- 8:30 – 10:30am** **SESSION EIGHT: Leadership, representation, accountability and social equity in the Pacific**
Chair: *Claire Slatter*
Rapporteur: *Rochelle Fonoti*
- 11:00am – 2:00pm** **SESSION NINE: Synthesis of discussion on the substantive issues in the Pacific.**
Individual and small group work
- 2:00 – 3:30pm** **SESSION TEN: Identifying priority issues under 4 themes**
Collective synthesis
- 4:00 – 5:30pm** **SESSION TEN contd...**

Thursday 12th November: NETWORKING, FUNDING, PACIFIC DAWN WORK PLANDays aim:

Deciding on a Pacific DAWN Work Plan. Discussion: how to fund, how to communicate, how to strengthen, how to keep in touch, regional co-ordinator.

Days end:

An operational work plan, revitalised network.

- 8:30 – 10:30am** **SESSION ELEVEN: Refined research projects - further reflection on substantive projects**
Chair: *Julie Tellei*
Rapporteur: *Alumita Duratalo*

Tuesday 10th November: SUBSTANCE AND ANALYSIS

11:00 – 12:30pm **SESSION ELEVEN contd...**
What resources does Pacific DAWN have and how and where might we/Pacific DAWN access them?
 Chair: *Amelia Rokotuivuna*
 Rapporteur: *Grace Molisa*

2:00 – 3:30pm **SESSION FIFTEEN: Synthesis of meeting discussion**
 Chair: *Claire Slatter*
 Rapporteur: *Rochelle Fonoti*

4:00 – 5:30pm **SESSION SIXTEEN: Closing Addresses and Thanks**
 Chair: *Yvonne Underhill-Sem*

Wednesday 11th November: PACIFIC DAWN WORK PLAN



Grace Molisa *Asenati Liki*
Maria Kerslake

Thursday 12th November: NETWORKING, FUNDING, PACIFIC DAWN WORK PLAN

8:30 – 10:30am **SESSION ELEVEN: Refined research projects - further reflection on substantive projects**
 Chair: *Jillie Taitel*
 Rapporteur: *Alumina Daryoto*

11:00am – 2:00pm **SESSION TEN: Identifying priority issues under 4 themes**
 Collective synthesis

2:00 – 3:30pm **SESSION TEN contd.**

4:00 – 5:30pm

8:30 – 10:30am

Days end

Days end

Days end

Days end

Days end

Days end

Days end

Days end

Days end

Appendix B

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Appendix C

Summary of DAWN Themes

Reproductive Rights, Sexuality and Gender Justice

(Summarised by Yvonne Underhill-Sem)

Background

Sexual and reproductive health and rights issues have been a major focus of many women's movements since the 1970's. These struggles centre on demanding the right of women to control their own fertility (to retain bodily integrity). Initially this approach met huge resistance by institutions who had long-standing ideological and material interests in controlling women's fertility. In the last decade however, these protracted debates have culminated in an unprecedented legitimisation of feminists frameworks on population, development and sexual and reproductive rights. In the nineties, the accepted wisdom is that gender related issues, including sexual and reproductive health are critical mainstream issues not marginal ones. A notable turning point was the acceptance of 'reproductive rights' at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994. This signalled a broad agreement to more comprehensive, inclusive and ethical policy frameworks. Central to these debates has been the recognition of women's human rights.

DAWN's contribution to these debates was to place reproductive rights within the context of social, economic and political frameworks. It identified the UN Conferences as strategic entry points for alternative analysis of gender and development issues and provided analysis that highlighted the links between issues related to structural adjustment and reproductive rights and health. DAWN's framework for women's reproductive rights and health incorporates attention to women's economically productive and cultural roles as well as their biological reproductive functions (DAWN 1994).

Tensions and challenges

Despite the apparent advances in placing sexual and reproductive rights on centre stage as seen for instance at ICPD, there are still major tensions in the field which continue to require further work - there is still a lot of work to be done because social and gender inequities and exclusions persist. The political, social and economic environment in which this occurs however, is getting more complex.

In particular, cultural, state and market place challenges need to be met.

- Cultural challenges arise over the concept of individual ownership of the body. The notion of international standards of human rights is complex especially in combination with cultural identities which explicitly resist imperialism.
- State challenges include protecting selected customary codes of behaviour; managing contradictions between statutory legal systems and customary codes; and care not to overlook women's basic rights in other areas of social well-being (eg. education).
- Marketplace challenges include the State moving away from its responsibility to provide basic needs such as primary health services as well as leaving the testing and marketing of new medical technologies to private sector interests.

Directions 1998-2000

In this context, DAWN's current research programme on Reproductive Rights, Sexuality and Gender Justice focuses on the following issues:

- Assessing the implementation of ICPD resolutions (Cairo+5 Global Forum).
See Sonia Correa's paper which outlines the whole process
- Revisiting conceptual frameworks: concepts such as sexual rights (feminists do not use this term even in countries with no taboos because it is considered to be part of the gay movement not the women's movement), male responsibility and human/citizen rights (agencies talk about involvement which is not the same as responsibility); better understandings of micro-macro economic linkages; human and citizenship rights at the national level.
- Developing policy analysis.
Policy and legal frameworks are diverse and unstable so there is a need for close analysis to understand the linkages and processes.
- Strengthening linkages among civil society initiatives.
Because UN conference resolutions are not binding instruments, there is still a need to for advocacy and applying pressure on governments and intergovernmental agencies. Forming partnerships and coalitions that extend across national contexts and beyond the boundaries of women's movements are necessary.
- Disseminating analysis and undertaking training.
Effective social mobilisation and public debate depends on sharper theoretical frames as well as good policy analysis.

References

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Sustainable Livelihoods

(Summarised by Asenati Liki)

Background to the Project

This project identifies two major forces impacting women's livelihoods in the world today - trade liberalisation and economic globalisation. The project is concerned with the fact that there has been a lack of research attention to the widespread effect of these two forces on the local economies particularly at the grassroots level. Thus, it aims to identify the environmental and socio-economic changes resulting from these process and their impact on women's lives and livelihoods, and addresses what needs to be done.

The competition for natural resources has intensified very significantly. The global environment is undergoing significant changes due to intense contestation for the use and allocation of natural resources as livelihood resources for local communities or as commodified tradeables for both national and international businesses. Competition for arable land, coastal access to the sea, forest resources, water, flora and fauna, are some examples of this situation. Those easily and more immediately affected by such environmental problems are women. Not only are they losing their livelihoods, but women do not have the compensatory access to new economic opportunities. Yet women remain responsible for the care of families and communities, and with a degraded resource base their livelihoods are seriously affected.

Trade liberalisation and economic globalisation have brought about new processes of exclusion and privileging. New trade mechanisms such as TRIPS (trade-related intellectual property rights) have become ingenious ways of resource appropriation through legal manipulation and genetic engineering. Such processes are genderised processes creating a new gender division of wealth. The feminisation of poverty throughout the world is thus an increasing reality.

What needs to be done?

First and foremost, we need to be aware and understand the experiences of women all over the world as a result of these macro economic forces. We must understand the underlying processes creating and sustaining the impoverishment of women.

Secondly, here is a need to form a powerful global coalition among governments, NGOs and international organisations to combat the environmental crisis and defend the rights of women to livelihood resources.

Thirdly, we need to strategise for women's economic empowerment in an increasingly marketised society.

Finally, there is a need to establish a global network of sustainable local communities to not only counter market forces but also to reclaim the market as community space.

Political restructuring and social transformation

(Summarised by Amelia Rokotuivuna)

Why did DAWN chose this theme?

At the DAWN Steering Committee Meeting in Manila of April 1998, Peggy Antrobus, the previous General Co-ordinator of DAWN said of this theme: "DAWN's concern was with the impacts of the changing economic milieu on the role of the State and its capacity to deliver women's practical interests for gender justice. It is therefore connected to our globalisation theme"²

In her address on behalf of DAWN, Dr Gita Sen stated seven forces that have shaped the lives of women since Nairobi 1985;

- "Most important ... is the speed of the globalisation process itself, and its indicators not only for economics but in the political sphere, in cultural life and in our lives"³
- "A second ... is what is happening in the realms of global trade and finance. The wider and greater instability of global trade and finance have meant that there is far greater pressure on governments to earn foreign exchange and to make sure that they follow all the dictates of international institutions so that they will not fall into financial crisis"⁴
- "Trade and finance when set in this scenario illustrates the direct link between the forces of globalisation with national governments."⁵
- "And the fourth thing is a very important force that I have already alluded to the undermining of the economic role of governments, of states, so that the state is unable to do any more even the minimal things it used to do,

² Draft Minutes of DAWN Steering Committee Meeting, Manila, April 1998.

³ Sen, Gita, 1995, 'The forces shaping women's lives' in *Look at the World Through Women's Eyes*, Plenary speeches from the NGO Forum on Women, Beijing 1995.

⁴ *ibid* ⁵ *ibid*

such as providing people with public services of health, of education, of clean water and of sanitation ... but this undermining ... has not undermined the repressive capacity of the state"⁶

- In her closing statement Dr Sen stated "... we need to continue to challenge capitalism, the major force unleashed by globalisation ... we need to work to transform our governments and our states, not to destroy these institutions but to transform them so that they become more accountable to us ... we need to continue to build the institutions of civil society of which we are a part"⁷

The Pacific Context

In the Pacific the term 'governance' has been used extensively for the same idea of 'political restructuring'.

- "There has been much talk of governance in the South Pacific in the past few years ... governance has become the political and economic message of the late 1990s ... the messengers are the premier international organisations such as the World Bank, OECD, UN and IMF relayed in the South Pacific by prominent donors such as Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain"⁸
- The term governance ... "allows international institutions ... to discuss political matters in institutional terms and not to have to engage in real debate on politics and democracy"⁹

So here we see where the term originates from and we find that it is the same political restructuring agenda as explained above and the agenda has been coming from Bretton Woods Institutions (IMF and World Bank).

Even our political leaders accept this premise without questioning and to illustrate this point I quote the Prime Minister of Tuvalu:

"... firstly, our donor partners ..." are "fed up with the poor economic performance ... despite the millions of dollars poured into our economies every year ... and of course with the shift in our development partners emphasis and interests to other larger regions of the world, following the end of the Cold War, we are increasingly under pressure to perform exceptionally well, making the best use of limited resources that are now made available to us. And of course we can see it for ourselves, that our economic wealth has somewhat concentrated mainly in certain quarters of our mass populations, leaving behind the majority of our people. Development is definitely not equitable, putting it in simpler terms. And who has been in charge of the development wheel? Obviously, the government is. Then surely, something is wrong with our 'governing systems'.

We ought to look at the lines of authority in which our governments operate and establish where we need augmentation. Are there other means of administering our 'development wheel' other than governments only"¹⁰

Already in this quote the Prime Minister of Tuvalu is thinking that if the state is not able to deliver the solution, other players - the NGOs and private sector - might be invited to instead? Are these appropriate choices? Are the NGOs organised and as strong as the private sector? What about the delivery of basic needs services? Who is going to perform this function?

Questions for the Pacific

- Regarding public sector reform:
 - a) what forces within countries are calling for these reforms?
 - b) which roles is the State prepared to shed and for what reasons?
 - c) what is the effect of these reforms on gender justice?
 - d) in these reforms, where will the Beijing commitments end?
- In strengthening civil society, will it be able to counter the private sector lobby. In this new ambience, are women merely co-opted?
- The masculinity of the State;
 - a) do we understand the patriarchal nature of the State?
 - b) how can we work for gender justice within such a patriarchal institutional context?
 - c) what are in our cultural norms that enhance these patriarchal characteristics?
- What are some of the political processes (both foreign and indigenous) that work towards social transformation which contributes to gender justice.
- Do we understand the nature of fundamentalist and or nationalist forces that shape political processes and have detrimental effects on gender justice.

The DAWN agenda for Political Restructuring and Social Transformation goes beyond governments and Beijing Platform commitments- it questions the premise of these. It goes to the fundamental essence that works at changing the paradigm.

⁶ ibid

⁷ ibid

⁸ Molisa, Grace, 199. 'Governance in Vanuatu: In search of the Nakamal way'.

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ ibid

Appendix D

Evaluation of meeting

What I got out of the meeting

- Very informative in the sense that I listened to and shared common experiences with women from other countries in the region
- For me as a researcher, the link with other researchers has been an enriching experience
- Frankly, quite a lot in terms of understanding the materials handed out at the discussions and meeting other committed people, and encouragement to keep working in the area I am trying to develop in the interests of local women.
- The meeting has been good in broadening and deepening my understanding of globalisation and its impact on lives of women in the Pacific
- Information, dissemination/updates etc
- Information awareness
- Exposure to critical thinking would be a major contribution to my research
- The network with other women globally
- Assistance with potential research topics/issues
- Comfort in sense of support from DAWN when undertaking my research
- Clarified many DAWN themes
- Met wonderful women
- Provided an opportunity to think critically and synthesise issues
- Renewed my commitment to work for development issues that affect the women in the Pacific
- Appreciated the need for 'good' research
- Better understanding of what DAWN is all about
- Realisation of the importance of research, analysis and advocacy to change/transform social, economic, legal, political, cultural and religious structures and processes thus ensuring gender and social justice etc
- Support and technical networks to enhance national, regional work/advocacy etc
- Recognition that globalisation is inevitable and that we all need to understand "the beast" before responding to it
- Networking with other women activists, researchers and advocates and learning from them and the situation (part of it) in each persons country/ community
- The process of empowerment just took place for me. I feel/gained more knowledge/update of what is happening around the region and the world. This experience strengthens my conviction to continue my own advocacy work in my community ... in development, education, environment protection and

conservation including human resource development and fellowship building and policy development

- Exposure to other researchers and linking; agreeing to continue dialogue in research was a big plus for me
- An understanding of how well informed or otherwise we were about global issues which are affecting our region
- An appreciation of the openness of participants of the honest sharing of information and expression of concern about developments in the countries and the interest and commitment they showed to making a difference by being more involved in work on these issues
- Enrichment through sharing
- Networking both formally with DAWN and informally with other participants is a big problem
- A good introduction to a context into which our own interests and issues can be put and critiqued so that it can be translated into a definite direction (or directions)
- A refreshing way to look at our own values and why they have become the way they are
- Knowledge of globalisation etc and research action plan. Learned from others experience. Privileged to met other women who are in the struggle to bring the nations emphasis on women's lives
- Information from reading the material
- A support network for our research efforts

What could have been done better

- Sometimes discussions wandered off from the main topics of discussion
- Better organisation and inclusion of more women here in Samoa at our doorstep
- Simplification of terms and less rhetoric - connecting more the local to the global in terms of concrete examples
- Could be more direction from the chair in keeping discussions on track
- More women from other places
- Sending out and absorbing information beforehand
- Position on four main research areas formulated before arrival
- Groups work on thematic issues by primary interest to refine research topics and present to group
- Receiving the materials earlier
- Some sessions were a bit difficult when more than one person was talking. Chair of future meetings need to be more direct. But otherwise it was done much in the pacific way.
- Better preparation of participants through simpler outlines or summaries of the issues and analyses under each theme as the material is too dense/heavy to be able to read/absorb in an evening
- Some lengthy material could have been given out before so reading can be done before the workshop starts
- Better organised by inviting a key speaker to speak on globalisation etc for easy and clear understanding of

the concepts. The first two days were a bit too much discussion which sometimes lead us to ask "where are we going". But we came through it well

- Reading material to be available earlier
- Hold meetings where transport links can be possible/direct

How useful will it be for me to continue with DAWN

- DAWN will enable me to link my studies with what is happening at the global level
 - Very useful in terms of future work and regional development
 - I find continuing links with DAWN helpful with improving my practice of focussed critical analysis
 - Networking with other women in the South will be an advantage
 - Useful to sharpen my critique on development issues (especially those that 'jar' with the DAWN perspective)
 - Useful to be involved (even if an aside) in feminist research projects
 - Useful to sustain links with women throughout the region
 - Extremely useful to provide the 'fuel' to strengthen advocacy, lobbying efforts and to formulate constructive positions on macro policies and decision-making process
 - To enhance research and analysis skills and experience
- DAWN connection is useful for me and my sisters in my country because it opens up a needed connection between us and competent researchers in the region and higher institutions, something we do not have since we have limited access to colleges and universities . I may begin by utilising DAWN as a point of resource network or link before we develop sufficiently enough to contribute more.
 - For all the reasons in 1(networking, introduction to another context to put our work, refreshing look at values) plus support for any "alternative ways" that we can come up with so address issues that affect our lives
 - Sharing and knowledge from grassroots level and ivory tower researchers, linking of micro-happenings to macro-happenings
 - Depending on how regularly the communication happen and flow it should become quite useful,

