



Navigating 40 Years of Global South Feminism: a DAWN Timeline Toolkit



YEARS
IMAGINING
FEMINIST
ALTERNATIVES

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Acronyms and abbreviations guide

A note on acronyms: To ensure this toolkit is accessible to all allies, regardless of their familiarity with DAWN's history, here is a quick reference guide to the abbreviations used throughout the timeline and this document:

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CESCR Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CPD Commission on Population and Development

CSO Civil Society Organisation

CSW Commission on the Status of Women

DAWN Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

DSM Deep-Sea Mining

DTI DAWN Training Institute

ETOs Extraterritorial Obligations

FDJ Feminist Digital Justice

FfD Financing for Development

FPV Feminists for a People's Vaccine

GEEJ Gender, Economic and Ecological Justice

ICPD International Conference on Population and Development



LGBTQA+ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Asexual, and other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

PANG Pacific Network on Globalisation

PEAS Political Ecology and Sustainability

PEG Political Economy of Globalisation

PPPs Public–Private Partnerships

PRST Political Restructuring and Social Transformation

SAPs Structural Adjustment Programmes

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

SFE School of Feminist Economics

SRHR Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

TWN Third World Network

UN United Nations

WHO World Health Organization

WILPF Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

WSF World Social Forum

WTO World Trade Organization

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An archive for collective memory and advocacy

As part of DAWN's 40th anniversary celebrations, we launched an interactive timeline documenting four decades of feminist research, activism, and solidarity across the global South. But this is more than a commemorative scroll. It is a living archive designed to:

- Trace the intellectual and political genealogy of Southern feminist thought.
- Connect historical struggles to contemporary campaigns.
- Highlight the connection between struggles and mobilisation efforts from an internationalist perspective
- Equip activists, researchers, and educators with accessible, citable, and shareable feminist history.

This toolkit is designed for allied organisations, DAWN Training Institute (DTI) alumni, educators, and movement builders who want to use the timeline as a resource for advocacy, training, and collective reflection.

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Why this timeline matters

In an era of accelerated digital amnesia and resurgent authoritarianisms, preserving and activating global South feminist memory is a political act. This timeline matters because:

1. IT COUNTERS EPISTEMIC ERASURE

Mainstream development narratives often centre Northern institutions and timelines. This archive situates global south network interventions as central to global feminist history. DAWN's interventions from its first meeting in Bangalore in 1984 and its groundbreaking participation at Nairobi 1985, to our latest fellowship aimed at supporting young women feminists working in conflict areas and our 40th Anniversary Celebrations.

2. IT REVEALS PATTERNS OF POWER

The framework shows that today's crises (debt, extractivism, anti-gender backlash) are not new. They are mutations of systems DAWN has been analysing for 40 years. It's necessary to place them in their historical context and understand this lineage to prevent us from fighting each battle as if it were unprecedented.

3. IT IS A TOOL FOR INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

The timeline bridges an analogue activist generation with younger digital-native feminists. It offers DTI alumni and former members a space to reflect on legacy, while offering newer activists a tangible connection to the movement's roots.

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Quick-start guide (visual navigation)

The [timeline](#) is organised around key moments shaping women's and LGBTQA+ people's rights and feminist agenda in the global South and DAWN's institutional evolution and contributions to wider feminist struggles:

1. CHOOSE

Select the filter on top to view only DAWN moments or only the broader historical context moments.

2. ERA

Use the horizontal scroll or top menu to jump to a specific year or period of time (1975–1985, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s, 2020s).

3. DEEP DIVES

Click on any card to expand it. Expanded view reveals the full historical context, analysis, and links to related publications or videos.

** **Language note:** The interactive timeline is currently in English. However, many linked publications are available in multiple languages, including Spanish.*



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Thematic guide: If your work focuses on... explore these moments

IF YOU WORK ON...

EXPLORE THESE KEY MOMENTS

USE IT TO...

INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL SOUTH FEMINISMS

1984 (First Meeting in Bangalore), **1985** (Drafting DAWN's first book & the Nairobi Conference), **1995** (Beijing Conference).

Understand the foundational concepts of Southern feminism. Trace how activists linked gender justice with critiques of capitalism, militarism, and colonialism to challenge mainstream development thinking and Northern-centric narratives from the very beginning.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE & ANTI- AUSTERITY

1985 (Protests against Structural Adjustment Programs), **2000** (Marketisation of Governance), **2008** (Global Financial Crisis), **2020** (Feminists for a People's Vaccine)

Trace the genealogy of neoliberal economic governance and cite DAWN's 40-year critique of debt, structural adjustment, and corporate capture in your advocacy.



CLIMATE & ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE	1992 (Earth Summit / Rio Summit), 2012 (Rio+20), 2020–2025 (Deep Sea Mining / Blue Economy Project)	Connect early Southern feminist critiques of “green capitalism” to current campaigns against extractivism in the Pacific and beyond.
SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & RIGHTS (SRHR)	1994 (International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo), 2014 (Breaking Through Silos), 2019 (ICPD+25 Nairobi Summit), 2024 (ICPD+30)	Demonstrate the long arc of DAWN’s leadership in shifting the global debate from “population control” to SRHR and bodily autonomy.
FEMINIST LEADERSHIP & MOVEMENT BUILDING	1986 (Structuring DAWN in Rio de Janeiro), 2003 & 2005 (First DAWN Training Institutes in Bangalore & Montevideo), 2025 (40 th Anniversary Fellowship)	Inspire intergenerational dialogue and mentorship. Use the DTI history to advocate for sustained investment in Southern feminist leadership pipelines.
DIGITAL JUSTICE	2020 (Feminist Digital Justice Initiative launched), 2023 (Declaration on Feminist Digital Justice / “Challenging the Algorithm” training)	Ground current digital rights work in a Southern feminist critique of data colonialism, tech monopolies, and platform capitalism.
CHALLENGING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	1990s (UN Tribunals for former Yugoslavia & Rwanda), 2009–2019 (The Political Economy of Conflict and Violence Against Women), 2022–2024 (Regional workshops with Masimanyane)	Situate local anti-violence work within a global political economy framework. Use DAWN’s analysis to expose how militarism, extractivism, and austerity fuel gendered violence.

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Hidden gems: where to find DAWN's intellectual legacy

HISTORICAL LIBRARY

Embedded within the timeline are direct links to free downloads of DAWN's foundational texts in different languages, such as:

- [*Development Crises and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*](#)
- [*Marketisation of Governance: Critical Feminist Perspectives from the South*](#) (2000)
- [*The Remaking of Social Contracts: Feminists in a Fierce New World*](#) (2014)

MULTIMEDIA ARCHIVE

Look for the  icon on specific cards to access embedded multimedia resources. Beyond texts, the timeline holds a rich visual and audio history. For example, you can find:

- **ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE AND HISTORICAL VIDEOS**

Watch foundational clips, such as a video on DAWN's early encounters in the 1980s, or the video launched at the World Social Summit + 5 in Geneva (2000) alongside the Marketisation of Governance analysis.



- **DOCUMENTARIES AND ANIMATED FILMS**

Explore the “[Old Dogs, New Tricks](#)” project on Public-Private Partnerships, which features seven animated films and two full documentaries (including a specific documentary on PPPs in Mexico premiered at the 2023 DTI).

- **PODCASTS AND AUDIO SERIES**

Listen to a dedicated podcast series on [Public-Private Partnerships](#), and audio resources created for the [Feminists for a People’s Vaccine campaign](#).

- **WEBINARS AND DAWN TALKS**

Access recordings of “[DAWN Talks](#)” (conversations with Southern feminists navigating the COVID-19 crisis), as well as expert [webinars](#) exploring policy transformations during the pandemic and the [gendered impacts of China’s engagement in the global South](#).

- **ACCESSIBLE VISUAL ARTS**

Discover multilingual resources and cartoons produced during the Feminists for a [People’s Vaccine campaign](#) to translate complex global health issues into accessible tools for broader audiences.

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Using the timeline in collective spaces

We encourage you to use the timeline as a prompt for collective reflection in your organisation, classroom, or community group. We have organised these guiding questions into three thematic areas to help facilitate your discussions:

FOR PERSONAL AND ACTIVIST REFLECTION

- If you look at this timeline, what historical moment do you recognise in your life as a true turning point in your activism for women's rights? What was your "aha" moment?
- Which feminist victories represented on the timeline feel most meaningful or transformative to you personally?
- If you had to add one event—one struggle—to this timeline, at what point in history and in what region would you place it? Why is it important to you?

FOR POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

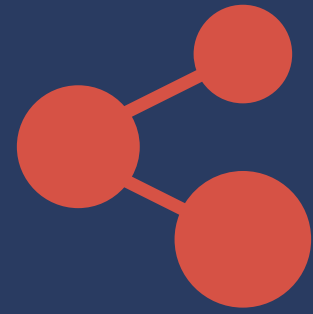
- As you scroll through the timeline, you can see various forums and conferences (UN, WTO, WHO, CEDAW, CESC, and others): How have these forums for international advocacy changed over the years? Which changes do you think have been most beneficial for the rights of women and LGBTQA+ people? Which aspects concern you most?



- How have global political events affected local feminist struggles in your community or region?
- What tensions or disagreements within feminist movements do you think are important to acknowledge and discuss?
- How have spaces for feminist organising changed over time — politically, digitally, institutionally, or socially?

FOR BUILDING FUTURE SOLIDARITY

- When we look back at history, we see various moments of collective building and possible forms of solidarity across the global South: How do you think we can strengthen our bonds of solidarity now? How do you think we can strengthen our transnational feminist solidarity now?
- What does feminist solidarity mean to you after reflecting on this timeline?
- Looking at this timeline, what gives you hope? What concerns you most about the future?



Share your feedback

We'd love to hear from you! Your insights help us improve and make our resources more relevant for allies and movements across the global South.

- HAVE YOU FOUND THIS TOOLKIT USEFUL?
- HOW DID YOU USE IT IN YOUR ORGANISATION, CLASSROOM, OR COMMUNITY?
- WHICH SECTIONS OR TOOLS WERE MOST HELPFUL?
- DID IT SPARK NEW IDEAS, DISCUSSIONS, OR ACTIONS?



Send your feedback to info@dawnfeminist.org



DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES
WITH WOMEN FOR A NEW ERA