

PANDEMIC POLICIES AND RESISTANCE

SOUTHERN FEMINIST
TOOLKIT FOR ACTIVISM 2025



DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES
WITH WOMEN FOR A NEW ERA

MENU

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**MORE THAN
A BOOK: A TOOL
FOR COLLECTIVE
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**SHARE YOUR
FEEDBACK**



MORE THAN A BOOK: A TOOL FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION.

As part of its 40th-anniversary celebrations in 2025, DAWN released the book **Pandemic Policies and Resistance: Southern Feminist Critiques in Times of Covid-19**, concluding a five-year collaborative research-action initiative.

The book is an anthology of twelve case studies penned by feminist activists and researchers from various countries in the global South: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, South Africa, India, Malaysia, China, and Kiribati.

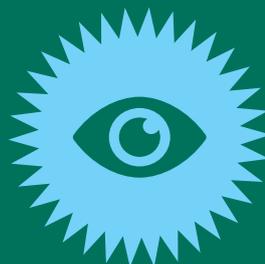
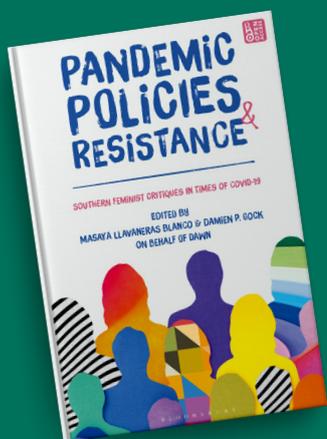
The fundamental purpose of the collection is to examine the impact of state responses during the Covid-19 pandemic, analysing whether the crisis ushered in a feminist and democratic transformation or instead reinforced existing systems of oppression.

It serves as an exercise in documenting and making sense of governance mechanisms during a global emergency, centring Southern responses that highlight radical care and collective organising.



OPEN ACCESS

We've made this book freely available to download as part of DAWN's commitment to the democratisation of knowledge and South–South feminist solidarity. Whether you're an activist, educator, student, or policymaker, **this is a resource for you. [Get your copy!](#)**



WHAT'S INSIDE THIS TOOLKIT

This book is a tool for learning, dialogue, and resistance. This toolkit was designed for allied organisations and collectives who want to share or use the book in their advocacy, research, education, or community organising.

- **Why does this book matter now?**
- **How to Use This Book in Your Activism**
- **Thematic Guide**
- **Dialogue With Authors** (Insights & Full Event Recording)

We invite you to tag **@DAWNfeminist** and use **#PandemicPoliciesAndResistance** in your posts so we can amplify and connect across movements.

If you need editable formats, translations, or assistance with graphics, email info@dawnfeminist.org. Together, we amplify Southern feminist voices and build tools for transformative change.



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WHY DOES THIS BOOK MATTER NOW?

When we started the collective process that led to the production of this volume back in 2020, we understood it as a way of bearing witness to the responses to the system shock that the pandemic brought to the structural aspects that sustain our lives collectively. In that way, this book is an exercise in documenting and making sense of what was happening in the governance mechanisms at play, centring Southern responses to a global emergency experienced by all, albeit in different ways.

But why does it still matter now that the pandemic is “over”? It was, after all, *a rare period and we are back to normal.*

We give you three reasons why!



The pandemic, while experienced differently across contexts, was a rare moment of shared global precarity that exposed the interdependence of life, health, and livelihoods across borders.



Rather than returning to a pre-pandemic “normal,” we now face a new reality marked by entrenched authoritarianism, nationalist rhetoric, and weakened multilateralism.



The radical care and diverse forms of collective organising that emerged during the pandemic remain vital references for building coalitions and transnational solidarity today.

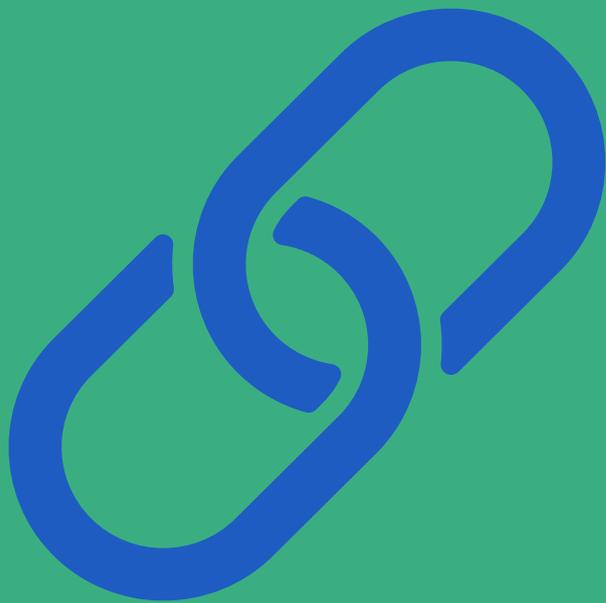
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HOW TO USE THE BOOK IN YOUR ACTIVISM

The book **Pandemic Policies and Resistance: Southern Feminist Critiques in Times of Covid-19** uses a multi-pronged analytical framework to examine how feminist responses to the pandemic can illuminate pathways toward justice.

This framework brings together three interconnected approaches that can help activists and researchers uncover power dynamics, resist one-dimensional responses, and build transformative, feminist alternatives:



INTERLINKAGES APPROACH

Examines how broad policy areas—specifically labour, care and social protection, macroeconomics, and migration and human mobility—influence each other and affect power relations, acknowledging that these areas are deeply intertwined and not experienced in isolation.

WHY IT MATTERS

- HELPS ACTIVISTS AND RESEARCHERS MOVE BEYOND “SINGLE-ISSUE” POLITICS TO IDENTIFY ROOT CAUSES AND SYSTEMIC CONNECTIONS.
- SUPPORTS COALITION-BUILDING ACROSS SECTORS BY REVEALING HOW ISSUES LIKE DEBT, LABOUR, AND CARE INTERSECT.
- REVEALS HOW AUSTERITY POLICIES DISPLACE STATE RESPONSIBILITIES ONTO HOUSEHOLDS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN.



See, for example, how austerity increased the unpaid workload of mothers in Ghana and fostered indebtedness among farmers in Chapter 2, **Food for Thought Curtailed: Austerity, Socioeconomic Crises and Ghana’s School Feeding Program.**

USE IT TO

- **ADVOCATE FOR CROSS-SECTORAL POLICY REFORMS AND TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION.**
- **ANALYSE HOW ONE AREA OF POLICY (E.G., MACROECONOMICS) IMPACTS ANOTHER (E.G., SOCIAL PROTECTION).**
- **PUSH FOR HOLISTIC, CROSS-SECTOR DEMANDS WHILE DRAWING CLEAR CONNECTIONS ACROSS ISSUES.**
- **EXPOSING HOW SILOED RESPONSES CAN BE INEFFECTIVE AND PERPETUATE HARM.**



See, for example, how the interlinkages lens shows us the interconnections between labour rights, macroeconomic policy, social protection and care in Chapter 1, **Macro-Patriarchal Pandemic Policy: The India Case**



INTERSECTIONAL LENS

Prioritises an understanding that categories of oppression and/or privilege are interconnected with each other in complex ways. For example, gender intersects with class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, caste, location, citizenship, migratory status, and age. This approach recognises that experiences are not homogeneous and that policies can have significant distributive consequences built on racialised, nationalist, ableist, and patriarchal logics.

WHY IT MATTERS

- **AVOIDS ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL POLICY APPROACHES; PREVENTS HOMOGENISING POLICIES THAT ERASE LIVED REALITIES.**



For example, see how intersectionality is used to analyse cash transfers in Chapter 8, [Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes in Bolivia during the Covid-19 Crisis: A Thwarted Redistributive Potential](#).

- **UNCOVERS HOW MARGINALISED GROUPS ARE IMPACTED DIFFERENTLY AND HOW (INADVERTENTLY OR NOT) SOME GROUPS STAND TO REAFFIRM THEIR PRIVILEGES THROUGH THE OPPRESSION OF OTHERS.**
- **EXPOSES HOW POLICY DESIGN CAN EMBED PATRIARCHAL, RACIALISED, AND ABLEIST ASSUMPTIONS.**



- **STRENGTHENS INCLUSIVE ANALYSIS, ORGANISING AND ADVOCACY.**
- **HELPS CENTRE A MULTIPLICITY OF VOICES AND EXPERIENCES AND MAKES SPACE FOR MARGINALISED PERSPECTIVES**



For an example of this, check out how reliance on digital technologies in education and social protection ignored class, gender and race inequalities that affect domestic workers in Chapter 10, **Grassroots Feminist Organising in Jamaica: Fostering Transformative Change for Domestic Workers during Covid-19.**

USE IT TO

- **TAILOR ADVOCACY FOR SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES (E.G., MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS).**



For example, see Chapter 12, **Organising from the Heart: Migrant Domestic Workers' Resistance in Malaysia during the Covid-19 Pandemic.** The chapter shows that by organising in ways that acknowledged the specific characteristics of migrant domestic workers in Malaysia (due to gender, class and migratory status) organisations like AMMPO and PERTIMIG, achieved significant policy victories despite the challenges brought by the pandemic.

- **UNCOVER STRUCTURAL BIAS IN PUBLIC POLICY AND POLICY DESIGN.**
- **ADVOCATE FOR INTERSECTIONAL POLICY-MAKING.**
- **ENSURE DIVERSE VOICES ARE REFLECTED IN YOUR MESSAGING, DEMANDS, AND RESEARCH.**



SOUTHERN FEMINIST ANALYSES

The book centres on analyses from the global South, offering situated perspectives on how different governments responded to the crisis, reflecting their long-term policy trajectories, commitment to redistributive justice, and democratic practices.

WHY IT MATTERS

- CONFRONTS AND OFFERS ALTERNATIVES TO NORTH-CENTRIC NARRATIVES OF CRISIS AND RECOVERY.
- VALIDATES THE KNOWLEDGE AND AGENCY OF COMMUNITIES OFTEN SIDELINED IN GLOBAL DEBATES.



For an example of this, check out Chapter 11, [Collective Care to Confront the Pandemic: Migrant and Pro-migrant Activism in Chile](#), to see how grass-roots feminist and migrant organisations acted in ways that model mutual aid and radical care politics.

- ILLUMINATES RADICAL PRACTICES OF CARE, ECONOMIC JUSTICE, SOLIDARITY, AND RESISTANCE.
- DEMONSTRATES THAT FEMINISM IS NOT UNIVERSAL OR CONCERNED WITH SINGLE ISSUES.



USE IT TO

- REFRAME ADVOCACY IN TERMS OF PEOPLE'S SELF-DETERMINATION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TERRITORIES WHERE THEY LIVE.
- REAFFIRM DIGNITY AND FEMINIST POLITICAL VISIONS EMBEDDED IN THE DIVERSE REALITIES OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH.



For an example of this, check out the experience of “territorial parliaments of care” carried out in Argentina in Chapter 9, [Building a Care System in Argentina: Transformative Potential and Persistent Challenges](#).

- HIGHLIGHT THE CREATIVITY AND RESILIENCE OF GRASSROOTS FEMINIST ORGANISING.
- AMPLIFY GLOBAL SOUTH LEADERSHIP IN SHAPING DESIRABLE AND EQUITABLE FUTURES.
- DECENTRED NARRATIVES THAT FRAME FEMINISM AS SOMETHING FOREIGN TO THE COUNTRIES AND COMMUNITIES OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH.

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THEMATIC GUIDE



IF YOU WORK ON...

CHAPTERS TO CONSULT

WHY IT HELPS

CARE POLICY & LABOUR RIGHTS

Argentina (Ch. 9), Jamaica (Ch. 10), Trinidad & Tobago (Ch. 3), Malaysia (Ch. 12), China (Ch. 4), Barbados (Ch. 7)

Reveals how unpaid care burdens and precarious labour conditions affect women, domestic workers, and the importance of social protection.

MIGRATION & HUMAN MOBILITY

Chile (Ch. 11), China (Ch. 4), Kiribati (Ch. 5), India (Ch. 1)

Exposes how border controls and border and mobility restrictions deepened precarity for migrants and how care networks supported survival and livelihoods.

MACROECONOMIC JUSTICE

India (Ch. 1), Ghana (Ch. 2), South Africa (Ch. 6), Bolivia (Ch. 8), Trinidad & Tobago (Ch. 3), Barbados (Ch. 7)

Connects austerity and fiscal policy to everyday deprivations, especially for women, Indigenous, racialised and poor people and challenges dominant economic paradigms.

DIGITAL INEQUALITY & ACCESS TO SERVICES

Bolivia (Ch. 8), Jamaica (Ch. 10), Malaysia (Ch. 12), Chile (Ch. 11)

Shows how digital-first strategies excluded vulnerable populations while at the same time digital tools also enabled new forms of activism.

INTERSECTIONALITY IN CRISIS RESPONSE

South Africa (Ch. 6), Bolivia (Ch. 8), Jamaica (Ch. 10), Chile (Ch. 11), Malaysia (Ch. 12), India (Ch. 1)

Demonstrates how layered oppressions shaped outcomes and why “universal” policies often fail the most marginalised.

GRASSROOTS FEMINIST ORGANISING

Argentina (Ch. 9), Chile (Ch. 11), Jamaica (Ch. 10), Malaysia (Ch. 12)

Highlights mutual aid, care collectives, and feminist responses to state inaction that transformed crisis into collective action.

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DIALOGUE WITH AUTHORS

On August 4 2025, DAWN hosted the online launch of **Pandemic Policies and Resistance: Southern Feminist Critiques in Times of COVID-19**, bringing together the book's authors and guests not only to celebrate the publication but also to collectively reflect on the lessons from five years of research and activism.

The full recording of the event is available to watch on [DAWN's YouTube channel](#). Below are some of the main points that emerged from the conversation, as noted by the co-editors **Masaya Llavaneras Blanco** and **Damien P. Gock**.





WATCH & DISCUSS: USING THE ONLINE DIALOGUE IN YOUR ACTIVISM

We encourage you to watch the full recording on [DAWN's YouTube channel](#) and use these questions to guide a discussion in your organisation, classroom, or community group.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DISCUSSION



**THE ROLE
OF THE STATE**

**CARE LABOUR
UNDER PRESSURE**

**DATA GAPS AND
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES**

**THE AUTHORITARIAN
TURN**

**RESEARCH
FOR ACTION**



THE ROLE OF THE STATE

In many cases, states prioritised wealth accumulation over social reproduction, relegating care responsibilities to women, especially those most marginalised. Ritu Dewan described this as patriarchal macroeconomics, where patriarchy and macroeconomic systems serve each other. Corina Rodríguez Enríquez referenced Argentina's case as a “pandemic of electoral authoritarianism” (as in Venezuela, India and Nicaragua) and the need to prepare for futures in which we see shifts in power towards feminist movements.

- **IN YOUR CONTEXT, HOW HAS THE STATE'S PANDEMIC RESPONSE PRIORITISED CAPITAL OVER CARE? IS CAPITAL BEING PRIORITIZED OVER CARE IN THE PRESENT? IF SO, HOW?**
- **WHAT EXAMPLES OF PATRIARCHAL MACROECONOMICS CAN YOU IDENTIFY LOCALLY OR NATIONALLY?**



CARE LABOUR UNDER PRESSURE

The pandemic gave the false impression that care work would be valued. In reality, care burdens grew drastically while recognition never arrived. Women were pushed out of the labour market, and debt levels rose for both states and households, as Silvia Fernández pointed out.



- **HOW DID CARE BURDENS SHIFT IN YOUR COMMUNITY DURING THE PANDEMIC?**
- **WERE THERE ANY POLICIES OR COMMUNITY ACTIONS THAT EFFECTIVELY RECOGNISED OR REDISTRIBUTED CARE WORK DURING THAT TIME? WHAT WAS THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN ACHIEVING THAT?**
- **WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CARE-RELATED CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN, GIRLS, AND MARGINALISED GROUPS IN YOUR COMMUNITY RIGHT NOW?**



DATA GAPS AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Access to gender-sensitive data remains a challenge, especially for marginalized communities such as trans people (e.g., India). Even when data proves the centrality of care, it often fails to translate into recognition or resource redistribution. “We had the data to prove the centrality of care and yet nothing happened”, said Leigh-Ann Worrel.

- **WHAT CRITICAL GENDER-RELATED DATA IS MISSING IN YOUR CONTEXT TODAY, AND WHO IS MOST INVISIBLE IN CURRENT STATISTICS? DID ANYTHING CHANGE SINCE THE PANDEMIC?**
- **HOW DOES THE LACK OF THIS DATA AFFECT POLICIES, FUNDING, AND EVERYDAY REALITIES RIGHT NOW?**
- **DO YOU ALSO FIND OBSTACLES TO TRANSLATING EVIDENCE INTO EFFECTIVE POLICY CHANGE?**



THE AUTHORITARIAN TURN

Leigh-Ann Worrell warned against romanticising a past that never truly existed, noting the return of idealized colonial, racist, anti-gender, and anti-migrant politics. Ritu Dewan described these as “patriarchal fears” amplified during the pandemic.

- **SINCE THE PANDEMIC, HAVE YOU SEEN POLICIES, POLITICAL RHETORIC, OR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN YOUR COUNTRY OR COMMUNITY THAT REFLECT AUTHORITARIAN, ANTI-GENDER, OR ANTI-MIGRANT POLITICS?**
- **HOW HAS THE GLOBAL CONTEXT INFLUENCED THESE DEVELOPMENTS IN YOUR LOCAL SETTING?**

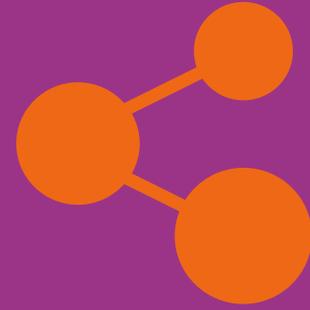


RESEARCH FOR ACTION

Research should contextualise struggles, reveal systemic connections (e.g., between patriarchy and capitalism), and support coalition-building among a wide diversity of movements and communities. Participants stressed the need for spaces that connect research with activism, foster solidarity, and resist the criminalisation of dissent.

- **HOW CAN YOU USE FEMINIST RESEARCH HAPPENING NOW TO STRENGTHEN CAMPAIGNS, TRAIN MEMBERS, OR INFLUENCE POLICY?**
- **ARE THERE SPACES IN YOUR NETWORKS FOR DIALOGUE ACROSS MOVEMENTS? IF NOT, HOW COULD THEY BE CREATED? CAN INTERLINKAGES BE A USEFUL TOOL IN THAT PROCESS?**

6



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?**
- **WHAT COULD WE ADD OR IMPROVE?**
- **DID IT SPARK NEW IDEAS, DISCUSSIONS, OR ACTIONS?**



Send your feedback, inquiries and suggestions to info@dawnfeminist.org



DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES
WITH WOMEN FOR A NEW ERA