

DAWN

Dreams and Awakenings



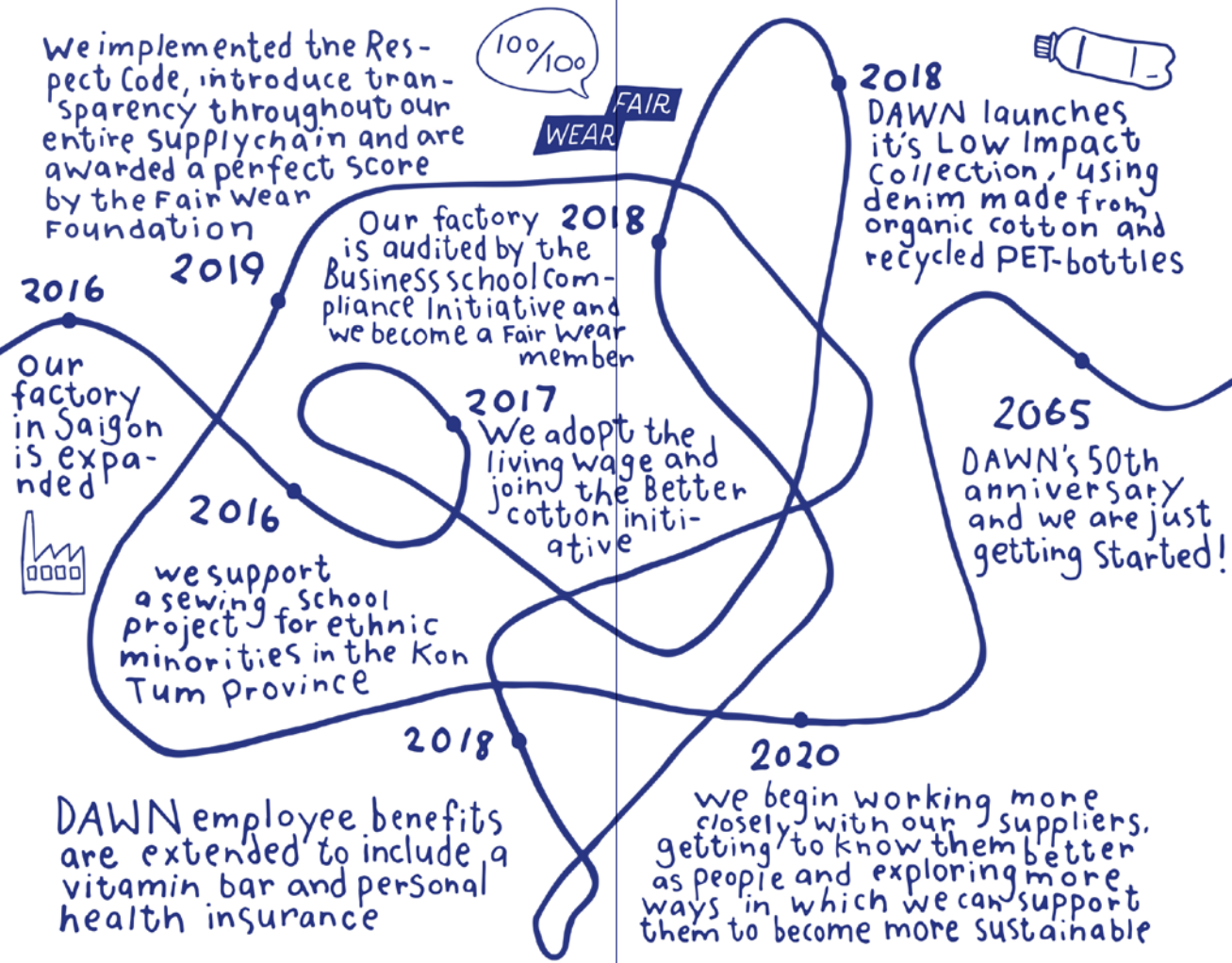
Environmentalist.

The blunt report

A long Journey...

We aspire to be more than just a collection of beautiful pictures and smart slogans. We are not a glossy brand that hides behind certificates and pretends that the world is intact. We have not chosen an easy path. Far from it. Detours and even roadblocks can be expected. It is hard work to keep moving forward. Fortunately, we did not fully grasp this when we first set out on our journey. But despite our naivety, we *do* know what our goals are and can see that we are closer to achieving them than many other labels.

2015
DAWN is born. Yay!



...to a better World

Sustainability, fairness and environmental awareness are not buzzwords for us, but complex topics and constant challenges. In a world where attention spans are shrinking while sensationalism is increasing, honest and detailed reports go against all recent trends. It is therefore even more important to resist these tendencies. And this is exactly what this report aims to achieve.

intact world

Dreaming Dreams

We had been working in the fashion industry long enough to know things needed to change and that change would only be possible with a fresh start. And so, five years ago, we decided to set up our own company, which we named DAWN. It was never our ambition to take over the market. Instead, we wanted to become a beacon for the fashion industry: proof that companies can operate in an eco-conscious and ethical way and then share the benefits of their success with everyone involved. For us, this is the DAWN, the beginning of a new era that the world urgently needs.



Recognizing Reality

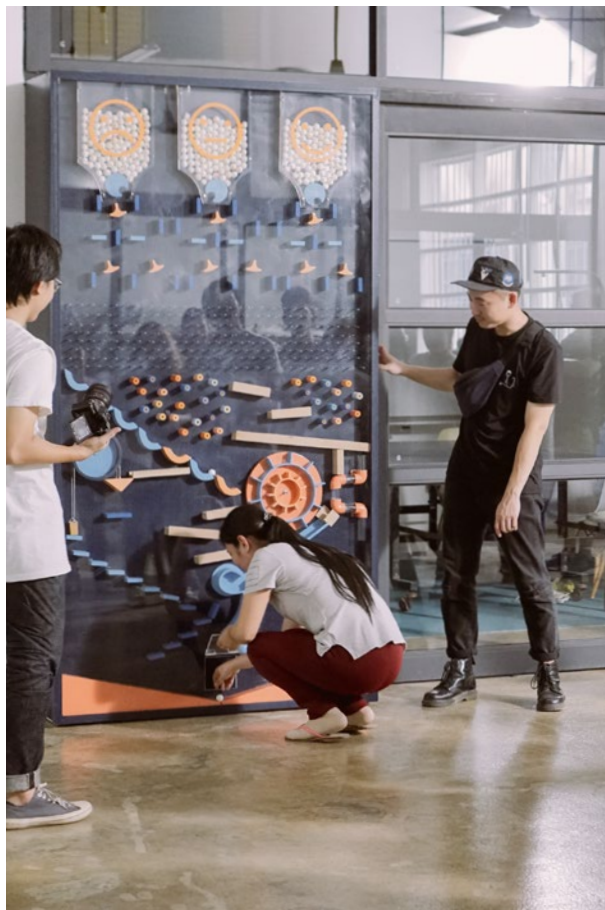
Since the foundation of DAWN, progress has not always been smooth. Sometimes we have even lost the momentum. This industry is tough. Our best efforts and initiatives are routinely dwarfed by the large-scale and slick marketing campaigns of our bigger competitors. Supposedly *sustainable* collections are booming, as is the *certification* industry. Hence we fight not only for credibility but also transparency. In addition to the communication challenges, we must also overcome economic barriers. For example, we always try to develop fabrics with great wear properties as well as a good eco-balance. But for each new development, weavers demand large purchase quantities. We therefore need to perform a constant balancing act between innovation and economy. This is the daily challenge we face and want to share with you, our partner, our customer; the one for whom we manufacture these thoughtful clothes.



Our green balcony of our factory in District 9, Sài Gòn, and probably the only green balcony around here.

Empowering People

Real change requires the active participation and self-confidence of all stakeholders. This is why at DAWN we increase our employees' scope for action and promote their strengths. We know each team member by name and are accessible to everyone. Through our Social Experiments initiative, we have been able to playfully create a new kind of dialogue and let our employees participate even more in the running of our business. Sometimes it takes unusual impulses to bring important discussions to the table, where they belong!



A somewhat different game of chance: With this Social Experiment, we playfully learn what the atmosphere in the DAWN Factory is like.



Coping with Setbacks

Even after many years in Vietnam, we still experience cultural differences. How to find a common language? Is it even possible to run a company without it? Through our Happiness Experiment, we have learned a lot about the real needs and dreams of our employees. But in many cases, we still need to find out how to align these dreams with other goals. To accept that some wishes cannot be realised is still difficult for us to reconcile.



Watch this video about our Social Experiments.

Fair Wages

For us, it goes without saying that our employees must be paid fairly and appropriately for their work. Using the so-called Anker Methodology, we calculate the Living Wage. This exceeds the payment regulated by the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) by 42% and the statutory minimum wage by 81%. In addition to a secure income, we offer our employees private health insurance, which also covers one additional family member. We are always open to new ideas, especially if they increase wellbeing. For example, in recent years we have introduced a vitamin bar, acupuncture therapy, massages and short fitness sessions.



An unfair Advantage

The fact that we need to talk about a Living Wage at all shows how problematic the issue of fair pay still is. Living Wage is often confused with “minimum wage”: the legally regulated income within a region or country. In Vietnam, the minimum wage of our industry is not enough to make ends meet, leading workers to take on second jobs, work excessive overtime, incur debt and worry about the future. Fortunately, our employees do not have these worries. Nevertheless, it is still true that too much work is being done in our company as well.



In our canteen, we cook daily with love and fresh ingredients from our balcony garden.

Avoiding Overtime

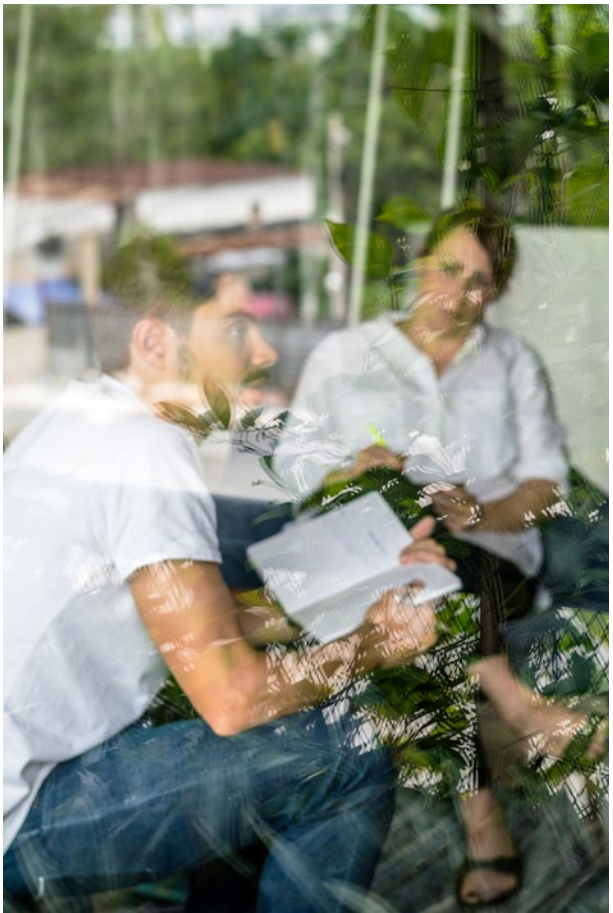
Fewer bottlenecks means less overtime. Accordingly, DAWN has developed a delivery schedule which is synchronized with production. This means that our production team always has a seat at the table when we talk to our sales department about desired delivery windows, which we then determine together, as one team. To develop products efficiently, our lead designer, Ines Rust, travels regularly to Vietnam, where new collections are designed and implemented with the team on-site. Through these measures, we are able to significantly reduce overtime hours.



This is where our jeans are sewn. The room is bright, air-conditioned and full of great people.

Sudden Nightshifts

Despite our efforts to streamline and optimise our production and development processes, bottlenecks still occur, particularly in the sample sewing department, which is frequently over-stretched during peak times. Deceleration of new product development—in order to relieve this strain—is still only partially effective. Although overtime is reduced on average, some of our executives still work too much. The problem is well known within our industry and yet little changes: Retailers still expect the first summer collections in November and the first winter articles in June. To put it bluntly: this is sheer madness.



A Perfect Score

We achieved a perfect 100% score in our first Brand Performance Check by Fair Wear and are extremely proud to occupy a leading position among many like-minded brands. Successes like these embolden us in our mission and give us the momentum to take on the challenges that lie ahead.



The roof of our Sài Gòn factory, where in the future we plan to install solar panels.

Still Not Enough

We have not yet proved that the vision and values of DAWN are economically sustainable. Five years into its journey, the brand is still to become financially independent. Until it does, DAWN remains an idealistic dream.



Read our Brand Performance Check by Fair Wear.

Naivety Instead of Courage

It was not courage but rather naivety that moved us to found DAWN five years ago. We could not have imagined back then how complex it would prove to be. That was probably a good thing! Operating our own production in a country far away, with a different language and alien culture is for us a daily challenge. For despite everyone's openness and goodwill, misunderstandings still regularly occur, and can escalate into crises if we are not mindful.



A behind-the-scenes look at our photo-shoot, highlighting what this report is all about: offering insights.

Our DAWN experiment—to ethically and sustainably produce beautiful clothes and market them with passion and authenticity—has so far neither succeeded nor failed. We continue to believe passionately in our mission, while recognising that there remains a long way to go and much to do. We are profoundly grateful to all those who support us and choose to accompany us on our journey.

Thank you for staying with us this far.
Ines and Marian





Should your attention span not be exhausted and you would like to know more; or even want to visit us in Sài Gòn, feel free to drop us an email at:

hello@dawndenim.com