

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Summary Report: Costing the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence and the Resources Required to Address it

Background

The Pacific region has some of the highest rates of violence against women and girls (VAWG) globally with 2 in 3 women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. It is well established that VAWG takes a significant toll on the well-being, health and safety of survivors of violence, their families and communities at large. Across the Pacific, intimate partner violence (IPV), also referred to as domestic violence (DV), is the most prevalent form of VAWG. Global commitments to ending all forms of VAWG, notably through Sustainable Development Goal targets 5.2 and 5.3, have supported increased advocacy to sufficiently resource national VAWG response efforts and to better understand the detrimental cost of violence on national economies.

Costing the economic impact of intimate partner violence (IPV) and the implementation of critical elements of national policies and laws on intimate partner violence holds important implications for policy implementation and its budgeting. Evidence suggests that investments in preventing and responding to intimate partner violence have a significant cost saving potential, can generate economic and social benefits, and improve gender equality. Such costing research is also necessary information for lobbying and advocacy campaigns to assist in securing the funding and to planning the roll-out of commitments made. These efforts are likely to have flow-on effects for country-led gender-responsive budgeting initiatives.

To contribute to gender-responsive budgeting efforts in the Pacific, a multi-country costing of intimate partner violence study in Fiji, Solomon Islands and the Republic of the Marshall Islands was undertaken in partnership with national and regional stakeholders to cost:

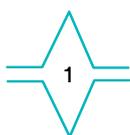
1. the impact of intimate partner violence on the economy; and
2. the resources required to fully implement national measures, such as laws, policy frameworks, services and programmes, to address intimate partner violence.

The studies focused attention on intimate partner violence as the most prevalent form of VAWG in the region. Furthermore, the multi-country costing study aligned with regional and national gender-responsive budgeting efforts to provide evidence that supports policy and advocacy efforts to target budget investments and add the economic argument to VAWG prevention and response efforts.

In the Solomon Islands, the costing study assessed the impact of IPV on the national economy and costed the resources required to implement a minimum package of services for survivors of VAWG nationally, which took into consideration the scope of the Family Protection Act 2014 and the national protocols outlined by the National SAFENET Referral Network (SAFENET). SAFENET members defined and validated the findings of the costing study. The research team worked hand in hand with the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Social Affairs (MWYCFA), SAFENET and UN Women to undertake the study. This country brief presents the findings and recommendations for Solomon Islands.

1. Country briefs are available for Solomon Islands and Republic of the Marshall Islands. Findings from Fiji are integrated into the Fiji National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls.
2. See acknowledgements.

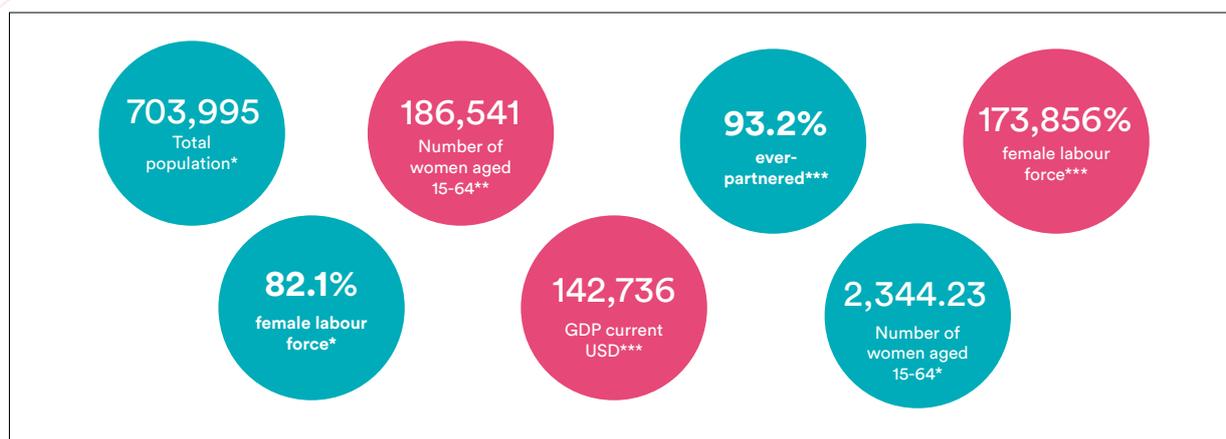
An initiative of the United Nations funded by the European Union



Context: Demography, Economy, Social Development and Intimate Partner Violence In Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands consists of six major islands and over 900 smaller islands, with a total land area of 28,900 square kilometres. In 2021, Solomon Islands had a population of 703,995 people, and a total gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 1,65billion, with an average annual GDP growth rate of -0.2%³.

Figure 1a: Demographic and economic characteristics of Solomon Islands



*World Bank Development indicators, 2021

**Solomon Islands census data, 2019

***Family Health and Safety Study (VAWG prevalence study), 2009

Globally, one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) by a male partner.⁴ The prevalence of IPV in the Solomon Islands, is double the global average (two out of three women). According to the 2009 Family Health and Safety Study,⁵ 64% ever-partnered women aged 15–49 reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime, with 42% of women reported experiencing physical and/or sexual partner violence in the last 12 months.⁶

Figure 1b: Percent and number of women affected by intimate partner violence

All ever-partnered women	Solomon Islands
% lifetime physical and/or sexual partner violence	63.5%
% current physical and/or sexual partner violence	41.8%
# women experiencing violence in lifetime	110,399
# women experiencing violence in past 12 months	72,672

3. The World Bank Development Indicators 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/> [accessed 20 Nov 2021]

4. Karen M. Devries et al., "The Global Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence against Women," *Science* 340, no. 6140 (2013): 1527–28.

5. Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 2009. Solomon Island Family Health and Support Study: A study on Violence Against Women and Children. Noumea: Secretariat of the Pacific Community

6. *ibid*

The main piece of legislation to address intimate partner violence in Solomon Islands is the Family Protection Act 2014 (No. 15 of 2014).⁷ The Family Protection Act came into effect in 2016 and provided a legal definition of domestic violence for the first time in the country's history. The law prohibits physical, sexual, psychological, and economic domestic violence and provides mechanisms for safety notices and protection orders for women and girls experiencing violence. Also, in 2016, the Penal Code (Amendment) (Sexual Offences) Act 2016 (No. 3 of 2016)⁸ was passed to expand the definition of consent and include child sexual offences. Implementation of the Family Protection Act falls across several government ministries, coordinated by MWYCFA.

Moreover, in 2013, SAFENET⁹ was established to improve access to justice, health, legal and other support services for survivors of gender-based violence. SAFENET is a network of frontline service providers made up of government and non-government organisations. As such, SAFENET's remit covers all forms of gender-based violence experienced in Solomon Islands, including IPV. SAFENET has been progressively strengthened through the development of SAFENET Guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures, National and Provincial SAFENET Response and Referral Pathways and the inclusion of Case Management Services.¹⁰

To date, there has been limited analysis or research done into gender-based violence-related costing and gender responsive budgeting (GRB) in Solomon Islands. Past initiatives include a Country Gender Assessment commissioned by MWYCFA with the Asian Development Bank in 2015¹¹. Section 8.3 of the assessment's report relates to Resource allocation for gender mainstreaming in Government and states: 'Even though gender-responsive planning has been identified as a priority, government spending on gender is very limited. Where there is spending related to gender—for example, in health or education— expenditure is not monitored in a transparent manner to demonstrate what returns are coming from specific investments'.

According to the Solomon Islands Government Beijing +25 National Review Report for 2014-2019, it acknowledges that while GRB is yet to be realised in the country, there are few significant initiatives in the country that provide an opportunity for the 11 government ministries to track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.¹²

Costing the Impact of IPV on the Economy

Methodology

To cost the impact of IPV on the national economy of Solomon Islands, the study assessed two cost categories and related measures:

- 1. Individual Direct Costs**, representing the actual 'out of pocket' payments and actual expenditures borne by survivors of violence in their effort to address the violence and access services, including transportation, phone credit, health care services, judicial services and social services.
 - a. Measure 1.1:** Out-of-pocket expenditures to women for accessing services. None of the countries in the study had out-of-pocket expenditure data in publicly available datasets; therefore costing averages from Iran^{12,14} (an upper middle income country as is Fiji and Republic of Marshall Islands) were utilized across all three countries. As data on the number of times women sought help was unavailable, prevalence rates were used to approximate incidents with the assumption of one visit per woman over the past 12 months.

7. Family Protection Act 2014 (No. 15 of 2014) - https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=98705

8. Penal Code (Amendment) (Sexual Offences) Act 2016 (No. 3 of 2016) - https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=102536

9. SAFENET Guidebook 2017, <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/09/sops-gbv-solomon-islands-safenet-guidebook-2017>

10. *ibid*

11. Solomon Islands: Country Gender Assessment, November 2015, <https://www.adb.org/documents/solomon-islands-country-gender-assessment>

12. Solomon Islands Government, MWYCFA. 2014 – 2019 national review report on Solomon Islands implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

13. Fourouzan, A., Dejman, M., Baradaran-Eftekhari, M., & Bagheri-Yazdi, A. (2007). Study on direct costs of domestic violence against women in legal medicine centers of Tehran (2002). Archives of Iranian Medicine, 10(3), 295–300 Updated in Vyas et al. (2021) The Economic Cost of Violence Against Women and Girls in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review of the Evidence. Trauma Violence & Abuse. DOI: 10.1177/15248380211016018

14. Estimates suggested women paid \$62.42 USD per visit to access medical care, \$22.36 USD per visit to access police services and \$45.48 USD per case to access legal/justice services and counselling/NGO services.

2. Individual Indirect Costs, representing the value of lost productivity from both paid work, time loss due to injury and illness, as well as the foregone value of lifetime earnings for women who have died as a result of intimate partner violence.

- a. **Measure 2.1:** Percent and number of women affected by violence and whose work was affected. None of the countries in the study published data on number of days absent from work due to violence; therefore the study used an estimate from a study in India¹⁵ which documented an average of seven (7) days off work per incident.
- b. **Measure 2.2:** Number of workdays lost and cost of productivity loss
- c. **Measure 2.3:** Total productivity loss as a percent of GDP

The study relied solely on existing published data and secondary data analysis; no primary data was collected. The study derived its calculations from existing national surveys (including the 2009 Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study—A study on violence against women and children¹⁶ (VAWG prevalence survey)— the 2013 Household Income and Expenditure Survey¹⁷) and the World Bank demographic and economic datasets (for labour force and national GDP). Due to a limitation of reliable national wage data, wages were approximated using GDP per capita data.

Limitations

The study in the Solomon Islands faced numerous limitations. First, comprehensive and existing national data sets were uneven and incomplete. The limitation in access to available data and lack of collected data on all the variables of interest limits the accuracy of the findings. For example, GBV Administrative Data system in Solomon Islands is in its formative stages of development, however it is not yet widespread enough to contribute data to the study on trends of women's access to services. In addition, certain variables, such as number of days absent from work due to violence, were not collected and/or reported in the most recent prevalence survey. Data from India and Iran in addition to available national data was used to craft a data set and form calculations. Second, estimating out-of-pocket expenditures involves identifying women utilising services and estimating their expenditures including transport costs, commodities e.g., medicines, and service costs e.g., counselling. These expenditures are usually estimated directly by gathering primary data at facilities which include administrative data on the number of women accessing services and then sampling women and asking them directly about their expenditures¹⁸. The scope of the study during COVID-19 did not allow for primary data collection. Third, there is great variability across the three countries in terms of their data availability which presents difficulties in comparisons between countries. Lastly, the study only looks at data for adult women and does not have data to cost the economic impact of IPV on girls and boys under the age of 18 years. Furthermore, disaggregated data based on disability and sexual orientation, gender identity and/or sex characteristics was not possible due to lack of data.

15. ICRW (2000) Domestic violence in India: A summary report of a multi-site household survey Washington DC.

16. Government of Solomon Islands, the Pacific Community, Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs, Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: A study on violence against women and children, 2009 <https://pacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/SolomonIslandsFamilyHealthandSafetyStudy.pdf>

17. Government of Solomon Islands, National Statistics Office, Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2012 – 2013 <https://www.statistics.gov.sb/statistics/demographic-statistics/household-income-and-expenditure-surveys>

18. Vyas et al. 2021. The economic cost of violence against women and girls in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review of the evidence. Trauma, Violence & Abuse

Findings

Measure 1.1: Out-of-pocket expenditures to women for accessing services

Key finding: the study estimates that \$536,801 USD is spent per year by adult women in Solomon Islands who access services for intimate partner violence.

Figure 2: Percentage and number of women who experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence who ever sought help from formal services per year (self-reported)

Source of formal help	Percent of women who experienced violence and who sought services	Number of women
Doctor / Medical personnel 	6.0%	4,360
Police 	5.1%	3,706
NGO / Women's organization 	3.1%	2,253
Legal advice / Courts 	2.4%	1,744

Data source: Family Health and Safety Study (VAWG prevalence study), 2009

Figure 3: Out-of-pocket expenditures to women for accessing services per year

Source of formal help	USD
 Doctor / medical personnel	\$272,151
 Police	\$82,866
 NGO / Women's organization	\$102,466
 Legal advice / courts	\$79,317
Total direct cost to individuals USD	\$536,801

Calculation notes: Costings were calculated by taking the number of women who experienced violence in the past 12 months (prevalence study) and multiplying it by the proportion of women who sought help (Figure 2). Costings from Iran were utilized to estimate out-of-pocket expenditure per service with the assumption that women sought services on average once over the past 12 months.

Measure 2.1: Percent and number of women affected by violence and whose work was affected

Key finding: In Solomon Islands, 72,672 women experienced violence in the past year with 59,664 of those women participating in the formal sector work force.

The economy is strongly affected by lost labour output caused by deaths,¹⁹ injuries and illness because of violence. Violence impacts women in the workforce in multiple ways. Physical, sexual and emotional violence can directly impact a woman’s ability to come to work or perform work-related duties. For example, she may be injured, sick, seeking medical care or admitted in the hospital. Violence has a detrimental impact on well-being and mental health leading to an inability to concentrate on work-related duties; survivors may be concerned about the anticipation of violence when they get home, concerned for the safety of their children and experiencing emotional and psychological strain and stress due to their experiences. Furthermore, violence inherently erodes a survivor’s sense of self, power, confidence and self-esteem, which can manifest as a reduction in confidence by a survivor in other spheres of her life such as the workplace. Lastly, partners who are perpetrators of violence can intimidate, threaten, disrupt and cause stress to survivors by showing up to their workplace or waiting for them to finish their work hours. It is important to note that further research and exploration is needed to understand the impact of violence on women in the informal sector.

Figure 4: Number of women affected by violence and whose work was affected



Calculation notes: To estimate the costs associated with lost productivity because of IPV requires an estimate of the total number of women affected. This was calculated by estimating the number of abused women whose work could potentially be affected by violence i.e., multiplying the total number of ever-partnered women who experienced violence in the past 12 months by the percentage of women who worked. And then by multiplying this by the female labour force participation rate. In Solomon Islands, the number of ever-partnered women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the past 12 months was 72,672 and the female labour force participation rate 82.1%. This number was then multiplied by the proportion of women reporting that the violence affected their work in various ways. For Solomon Islands, the percentage of women reporting that their work was affected by IPV was approximated using the same percentage of women reporting that their work was affected from Fiji because such data were not gathered in the prevalence survey.

19. Data on the number of women killed by their male partner was not available in Solomon Islands.

Measure 2.2: Number of workdays lost and cost of productivity loss

Key finding: Annual productivity loss of women in the formal sector due to intimate partner violence is estimated to be \$15,09 million USD and the equivalent of 1,415,997 lost work days.

In Solomon Islands, the estimated number of women unable to work or who took sick leave because of violence was 10,978, which when multiplied by 7 days yields 76,847 absent days from work. Multiplying this figure by the GDP per capita per day led to an estimate \$818,848 USD productivity loss because of work absence / sick leave. Additional factors, such as being unable to concentrate, partner interrupting work and lost confidence in ability are additional factors that affect ability to work.

It is important to note that these figures do not take into consideration the informal sector, whose composition is disproportionately female. It can be assumed that the annual productivity loss is actually higher than the findings present.

Figure 5: Number of workdays lost and productivity loss

	Lost Days	Lost Productivity (USD)
 Unable to work/sick leave	76,847	\$818,848
 Unable to concentrate	941,790	\$10,035,333
 Partner interrupted work	38,185	\$406,881
 Lost confidence in ability	351,120	\$3,741,396
Total	1,415,997	\$15,088,283

Calculation notes: As the prevalence survey did not collect time taken off work because of violence, the total number of days lost because of sick leave was estimated by multiplying the number of women affected by 7 days²⁰; the number of days lost because of not being able to concentrate and because of losing confidence in ability was estimated by multiplying the number of women affected by 0.75 (i.e., assuming a 25% productivity loss);²¹ and the number of days lost because partner interrupted work and for other reasons was estimated by multiplying the number of women affected by 5 days.²² For each category of productivity loss, the number of days lost was multiplied by the “daily wage” where annual wage was proxied by the GDP per capita. The GDP per capita was divided by 220 annual workdays to approximate the daily wage.

20. The 7 days estimate was taken from study conducted by ICRW, Domestic violence in India: A summary report of a multi-site household survey. 2000: Washington DC. In Fiji, the IFC reported on the cost of violence on productivity, at a sample level, also reflected in these calculations

21. A study by Canavan et al. (2013) assumed post-traumatic stress disorder to lower productivity by 50%. Canavan et al. International Journal of Mental Health Systems 2013, 7:9 <http://www.ijmhs.com/content/7/1/9> Because we do not illicit whether lost confidence or unable to concentrate were because of PTSD, we use a conservative 25% reduction in productivity.

22. No data exists on extent to which partner interrupting work reduces productivity; therefore, we use an estimate of five days.

Measure 2.3: Total productivity loss as a percent of GDP

Key finding: In the Solomon Islands, intimate partner violence against women amounted to almost 1% of the country's GDP.

Figure 6: Total productivity loss per year

	Total productivity loss
Total productivity loss in USD	\$15,088,283
Percent of GDP	0.96%

Calculation notes: Annual productivity loss (measure 2.2.) sum was divided by the country's GDP to estimate productivity loss as a percentage of GDP.

Costing the Resources Required for a Minimum Package of Services for Survivors of IPV

The study worked hand in hand with SAFENET and MWYCFA to define a minimum package of essential services to cost that would benefit existing priorities and budget advocacy for EVAWG in Solomon Islands. The following minimum package was decided upon jointly by SAFENET and its stakeholders for costing:

Figure 7: Minimum package of essential services costed for Solomon Islands in coordination with SAFENET

Minimum Essential Services and Prevention Package

Thematic area: Social services

1. Expand network of safe houses
 - » Establish and expand inclusive safehouses
 - » Develop protocols and data reporting templates
 - » Provide support to survivors of violence
2. Ensure high quality counselling
 - » Support counselling and training of counsellors
3. Set up a service for children
 - » Set up child protection shelter
 - » Support children through the courts

Thematic area: Law and justice

1. Strengthen capacity of police, court, and other judiciary staff
 - » Develop and deliver training
2. Improve access to legal services
 - » Develop and deliver training

Thematic area: Health

1. Improve GBV response services in health facilities
 - » Upgrade GBV response units

Thematic area: Prevention for School Age children

1. Improve awareness to GBV and Family Protection Act in schools
 - » Build pilot initiative in 10 schools

Thematic area: Coordination, governance & communication

1. Awareness raising about Family Protection Act and relevant public service
 - » Training for IPAM
2. Coordinated campaign on Family Protection Act
 - » Broad campaign and resource materials on FPA and GBV

Methodology

To estimate the resources required to implement actions to address intimate partner violence, a three-stage process was conducted in partnership with SAFENET and MWYCFA.

Stage 1 engaged SAFENET stakeholders to define and agree upon the package of national measure to cost. A series of consultations was conducted to help identify the intervention areas and related activities to cost. In addition to the consultations, a workshop on gender-responsive budgeting was conducted to increase understanding on gender-responsive budgeting and how this costing exercise can contribute to national objectives.

Stage 2 focused on data collection on the prices for each input necessary to deliver the agreed package of services. Data was collected through interviews with existing service providers, existing budget shared with the research team and procurement lists. For each thematic area, a list of inputs were identified and priced to identify an intervention activity cost estimate.

Stage 3 involved estimating the resources required to deliver the national package for a three-year projected period. To estimate the total cost of the package in year 1, the quantities of each input used in the implementation for each intervention component (defined in stage 2) was multiplied by its associated unit costs. To estimate the costs in years 2 and 3, an inflation rate, based on the average of the previous 10 years in Solomon Islands, was applied to all activities implemented in those years.

Figure 8: Methodology stages

STAGES	Summary description of broad steps
Stage 1: Define the key elements of the Package	Identify and agree upon the key elements of the package (including types and quantities of inputs)
Stage 2: Collect data	Data to be collected from a variety of sources: » Service provider data regarding target population, quantities, and costs of key inputs » Macroeconomic indicators (i.e. GDP)
Stage 3: Estimate the cost of the package	Estimate the costs of implementing the agreed service package in alignment with the legislation

Limitations

The costed minimum essential services and prevention package is not comprehensive or exhaustive of the prevention and response actions required to address the issue of violence against women and girls in Solomon Islands. For example, the costing does not include other forms of GBV beyond IPV, does not include other core services currently in place and that are required to address GBV (e.g. GBV Administrative Data, SAFENET coordination, community-based awareness raising on access to services for women and girls, emergency preparedness and response etc.) and does not cost robust primary prevention efforts currently in place or that are required to stop violence before it starts. Nevertheless, the costing provides a strong foundation for the investment needed to amplify existing efforts to respond to GBV in Solomon Islands.

Findings

The overall cost of the minimum essential services and prevention package over the three years for national coverage was estimated to be \$2,787,112 USD (\$1,039,436 USD in year 1; \$797,103USD in year 2; and \$950,573 USD in year 3). The financial resources required for each thematic area over the three years is also shown in Figure 10 The highest costs were for the implementation of an inclusive safe house (\$695,074 USD for years 1-3) and for services for children (\$749,724 for years 1-3).

Figure 9: Total resource requirements over three years for minimum essential services and prevention package

Intervention / activity	Total USD	USD Year 1	USD Year 2	USD Year 3
1. Social services				
1.1 Expand network of safe houses				
1.1a Establish / expand inclusive safe houses	695,074	134,093	226,202	334,779
1.1b Develop protocols and training trainers	87,043	65,125	10,785	11,133
1.1c Provide support to survivors of violence	196,005	63,403	78,251	54,351
1.2 Ensure high quality counselling	296,606	92,511	98,766	105,329
1.3 Set up a service for children	749,724	291,407	225,517	232,801
Total social services package	2,024,452	646,539	639,521	738,392
2. Law and justice				
2.1 Capacity strengthening	177,669	106,626	34,957	36,086
2.2 Develop min. stds. for legal service access	49,372	49,372		
Total Law and justice package	227,041	155,998	34,957	36,086
3. Health				
Total health package	211,113	80,636	34,851	95,626
4. Child protection				
Total child protection package	231,396	105,645	74,985	50,766
5. Governance				
5.1 Awareness raising	22,646	19,848		2,798
5.2 Coordinated campaign on FPA	70,463	30,770	12,788	26,905
Total governance package	93,110	50,618	12,788	29,704
TOTAL	2,787,112	1,039,436	797,103	950,573

Conclusions and Reflections

This costing study sought to raise awareness and shed light on the detrimental economic impact of IPV on society and support advocacy efforts to invest in prevention and response efforts to meaningfully address gender-based violence in Solomon Islands. The costing study articulates what is already known – that the issue of VAWG in Solomon Islands is pervasive and that action is needed urgently to ensure women and girls, in all their diversity, live a safe, dignified life free from harm.

Although the findings and cost estimates should be interpreted with caution (see Limitations) as they are likely to be underestimates of the true burden of violence and are a fraction of the total cost required to address VAWG, the findings pave the way forward for key reflections:

1. VAWG, especially intimate partner violence, is pervasive with detrimental social, health and economic consequences for individuals, families and societies. The social and health-related impacts of VAWG are well known and documented. This study concretizes the economic impact that occurs when women and girls are unable to engage and live their full potential
2. VAWG harms a society's economy, labor force and productivity. Addressing VAWG holistically directly contributes to economic indicators.
3. Investing in VAWG prevention and response actions is key. VAWG is often underfunded and underinvested in for a multitude of reasons, which leads to increased spending by survivors and service providers on costs to access care, treatment and services alongside a loss in labor force participation by survivors. A strong investment in evidence-based and survivor-centered approaches to end VAWG is imperative.
4. Concrete VAWG costings can substantively contribute to gender-responsive budgeting efforts. Solomon Islands' response to VAWG through SAFENET and primary prevention interventions is a key example of a country that is ready to meaningfully invest in further efforts.
5. Increased investment, resources and prioritization are needed to support countries in the Pacific region in strengthening VAWG-related data collection and reporting to allow for consistent, coordinated data that can be used by civil society, governments and other stakeholders to inform policy development and implementation, budget planning and advocacy.

Acknowledgements

The multi-country costing study on VAWG in the Pacific was commissioned by UN Women through the Spotlight Initiative Pacific Regional Programme. The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year programme between the European Union and the United Nations aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.

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