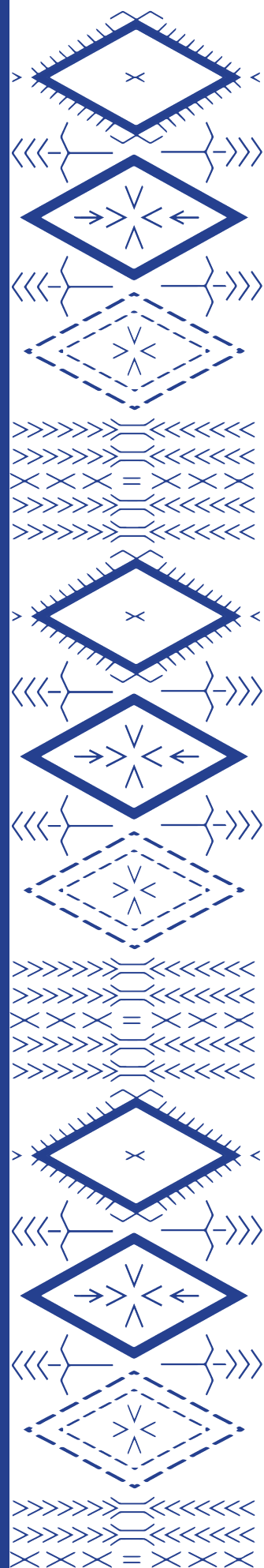




VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SOUTH TARAWA, KIRIBATI:

FINDINGS FROM A
2019 BASELINE STUDY



BACKGROUND



From 2018 to 2023, the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs (MWYSSA) of the Government of Kiribati, in partnership with UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office is implementing the Strengthening Peaceful Villages (SPV) programme in South Tarawa, Kiribati. The SPV programme is an evidence-based, community mobilisation intervention, adapted from SASA!¹, that aims to promote gender equitable and non-violent social norms and prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG).

The programme targets 18 villages, reaching half of the country's population (approximately 56,400 people),

and engages a wide-range of stakeholders – including women, men and youth community members, community and cultural leaders, religious leaders, among others – to address the imbalance of power between women and men in the community which leads to violence against women and girls.

Despite having some of the highest rates of violence against women globally, there has been little research and evaluation in the Pacific on the effectiveness of interventions aimed at stopping VAWG before it starts. To measure the impact of the SPV programme in reducing population levels of violence,

and identify what works to prevent VAWG in low-resource, high-prevalence settings such as Kiribati, the MWYSSA and UN Women, commissioned the Equality Institute to carry out an independent impact evaluation of the intervention. This will be used to inform the implementation of the SPV programme, as well as contribute to the emerging evidence around what works to end VAWG and build the practice knowledge regarding violence prevention interventions in the Pacific region.

This evidence brief summarises the key findings from the Baseline Study of the SPV Impact Evaluation, which was carried out in early 2019, and aims to make the research findings freely available and accessible to audiences beyond the programme. A full report of the baseline findings is available at: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/fiji/knowledge-products>.

THE CONTEXT:

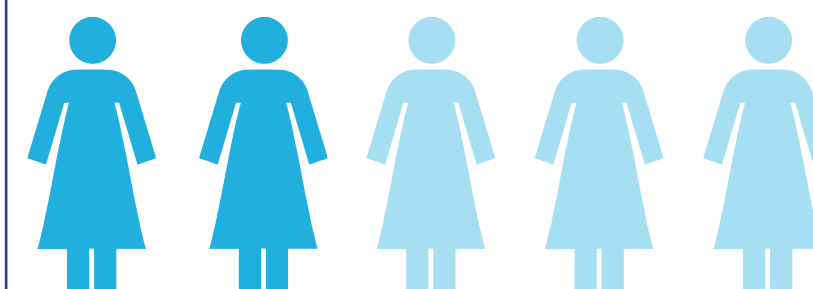
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN KIRIBATI AND THE PACIFIC REGION

PREVALENCE OF WOMEN AND GIRL'S EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

Globally, one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) by a male partner.² **The Pacific region has some of the highest rates of violence against women in the world** (Figure 2), which in many countries is double the global average (2 out of 3 women) and most cases are perpetrated by an intimate partner (e.g., husband, boyfriend).

In Kiribati, the 2009 nationally-representative *Family Health and Support Study* (KFHSS) found that 68% of women aged 15 to 49 had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a husband or boyfriend and 36% had experienced this violence in the past year.³ While the SPV Baseline Study only collected data on South Tarawa, and not the whole of Kiribati, the findings of this baseline are consistent with the results of the 2009 FHSS.

2 OUT OF 5
women have experienced IPV
IN THE LAST YEAR



The 2019 SPV Baseline Study found that, in the past year, **38 percent of women** in South Tarawa had experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner.

Figure 1: Women who have experienced violence

The 2019 SPV Baseline Study found that 38% of women and girls aged 15 to 49 had experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a male

intimate partner in the past year (Figure 1). This suggests that there has been little change in the prevalence of IPV in the past decade.

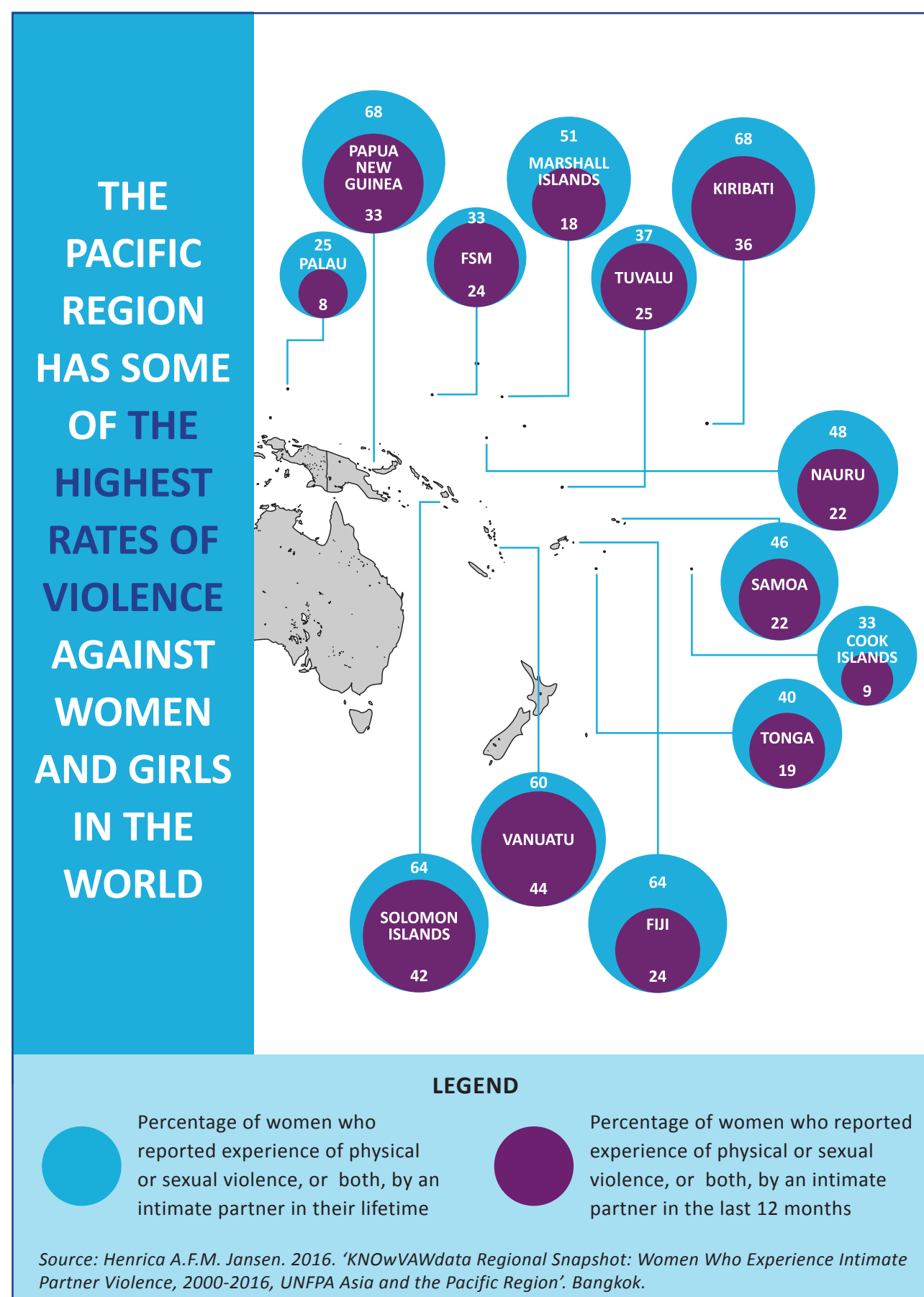


Figure 2: Prevalence of violence against women in the Pacific

HOW THE BASELINE STUDY WAS IMPLEMENTED

Data on women and men's experience and perpetration of violence for the SPV Impact Evaluation Baseline Study was collected in South Tarawa between February and April 2019. Data collection included in-depth interviews with select community members as well as a **survey of 629 randomly-selected women and 556 men, aged 15 to 49 years, across 18 SPV intervention villages in South Tarawa where the programme is being implemented.**

The survey was adapted from the World Health Organisation (WHO) Survey on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women⁴, the United Nations Multi-country Study

on Men and Violence⁵, and the **SASA!** Community Men's Survey.⁶ This evidence brief primarily summarises findings from the survey component of the Study, and also includes key quotes from the in-depth interviews.

This study took a consciously feminist approach to research.⁷ This means that the study sought to adhere to the highest ethical standards, collaborating and building on the strengths of local partners, and seeking to transform gender inequitable social norms. All aspects of the study followed the WHO ethical and safety guidelines on conducting research on VAW⁸ – the current global gold standard for ethics in VAWG

research. Through the training and the fieldwork, this study strengthened the capacity of over 30 i-Kiribati researchers to ethically and rigorously collect data on VAWG. The Study was conducted in close partnership with MWYSSA, the Kiribati National Statistics Office (NSO), UN Women, and the Kiribati Women and Children's Support Centre (KWCS). All findings from this Study presented here have been validated by i-Kiribati research partners and stakeholders. The KWCS developed the Study's safety and support plan and contributed to the training of the enumerators, further strengthening the study's ethical and safety mechanisms.

FINDINGS FROM THE 2019 BASELINE STUDY

MEN'S PERPETRATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The SPV Baseline Study is the first time that data on men's perpetration of violence against women and girls has been collected in Kiribati.

Overall, 57% of men surveyed in South Tarawa reported that they had perpetrated physical and/or sexual violence against a female intimate partner in the past year.

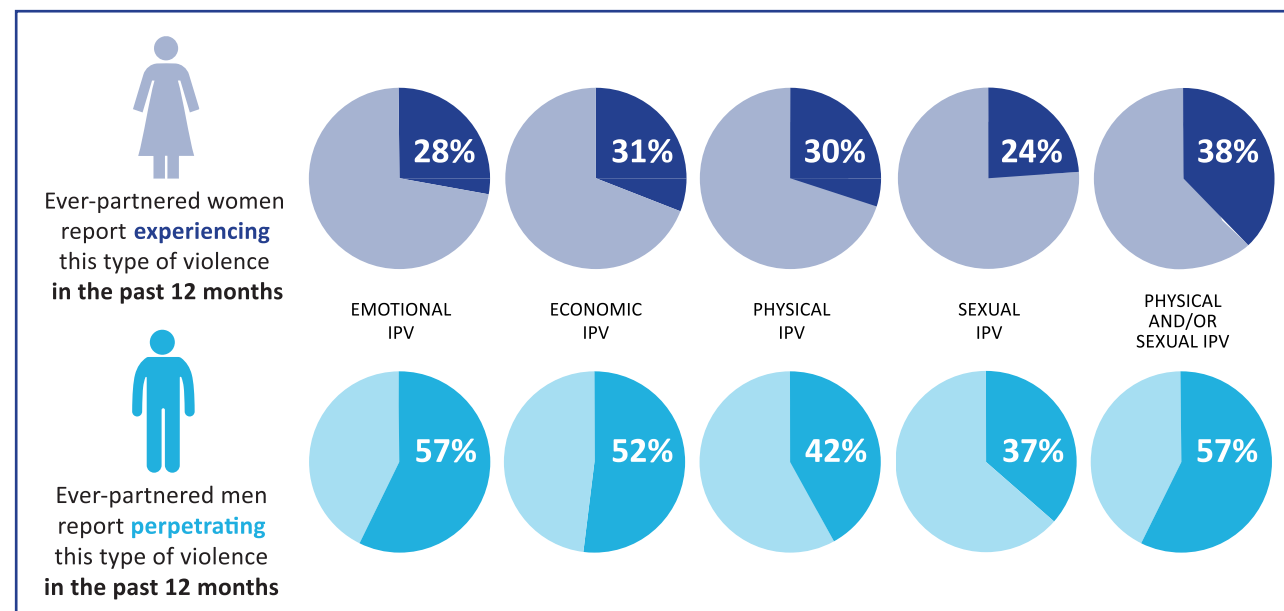
Men's reports of perpetration of IPV are higher than women's reports of experiences of IPV, for all types of violence

(Figure 3). This is a common pattern in other studies on men's perpetration of violence. One possible reason for this in the Kiribati context is that men's use of violence against women is normalised and there is widespread impunity around men's use of VAWG. At the same time, there appear to be perceptions of shame for

women around experiencing IPV, which may reduce their disclosure of violence.

OVERLAPS, FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

As in most countries across the world, **women and girls in South Tarawa experience multiple forms of violence at the same time.**



Of the women who reported experiencing any form of IPV in the past 12 months, 69% experienced two or more forms of violence, while 21% experienced all four forms of violence (Figure 4).

The violence that women and girls in South Tarawa experience is frequent and severe, which is also consistent with global patterns of VAWG. Among all women who had experienced IPV in the past year, three quarters (74%) had experienced severe violence – meaning violence that has a high potential for causing physical injury (Figure 5). Similarly, the men's survey found that 68% of men who perpetrated IPV in the past year had perpetrated severe violence against their female partners.

Figure 6 illustrates that women and girls' experiences of IPV are rarely isolated events: the majority of women and girls who have experienced IPV in the past year have experienced this violence more than once,

and a large proportion have experienced violence five or more times. In total, 71% of women have experienced, and 86% of men have perpetrated, an act of physical and/or sexual IPV two or more times during the past year. This demonstrates that, **in South Tarawa, men's use of violence against their female partners is usually a pattern of behaviour, not a one-off incident.**

Figure 3: Women's experiences and men's perpetration of different types of IPV, in the past year

Figure 4: Women's experiences of various types of violence and multiple forms of violence during the past 12 months

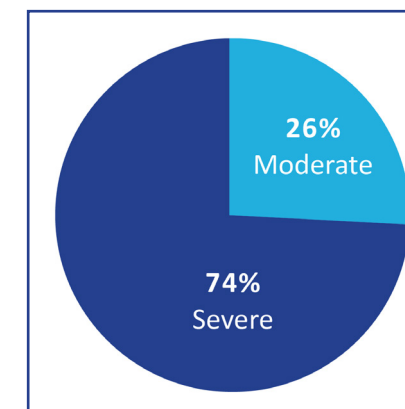
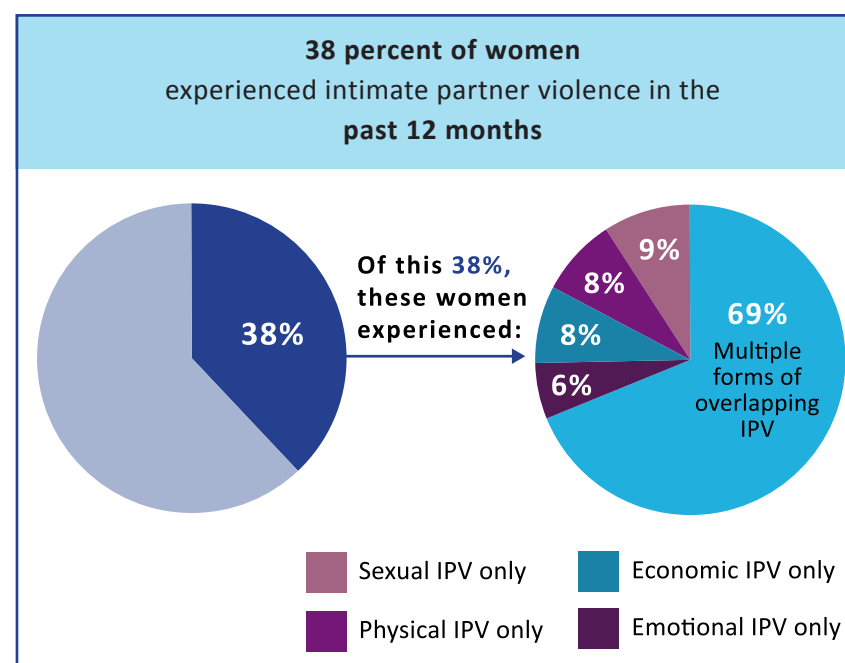


Figure 5: Severity of physical intimate partner violence experienced by women during the past 12 months

WOMEN'S HELP-SEEKING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR WOMEN WHO EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE

While the Baseline Study found that the prevalence of VAWG is high in South Tarawa, the data on women's help-seeking and community support for women

who experience violence tells a more hopeful story. Amongst women who had experienced IPV, 66% had told someone about the violence. Compared to several other countries in the region, **this percentage is high and signifies a strong informal support network in place in Kiribati, particularly through friends and family.** In line with most other contexts, **however, very few women in South Tarawa sought help from formal services, such as police, healthcare workers, or local leaders, after experiencing violence.**

A key outcome of the SPV programme is that, over time, community members will demonstrate support to survivors of violence. In the Baseline Study, only 35% of women experiencing violence reported that someone from their community stepped in to help during an incident of abuse, and around one-third of

women and men had witnessed or heard a woman being abused by her husband but did not step in to help. The qualitative interviews revealed that some community members choose not to intervene in cases of domestic violence due to violence being highly normalised in the community. The justifications for non-intervention included fears of safety, hesitancy to involve oneself in private affairs, or fears that they will make things worse. Similarly, while 52% of women and 76% of men had heard about ways to reduce violence in the community, only 5% and 10%, respectively, had ever spoken out or taken specific action. However, **the findings also indicate a strong community readiness to address VAWG. Most people (68% of women and 76% of men) believed that their communities can prevent violence against women.** The aspiration to live in more peaceful and equitable communities was also strongly reflected in the in-depth interviews: **many community women and men ended their interviews with statements expressing their desire for non-violence between couples, healthy and safe living environments, and a good future for their children.**

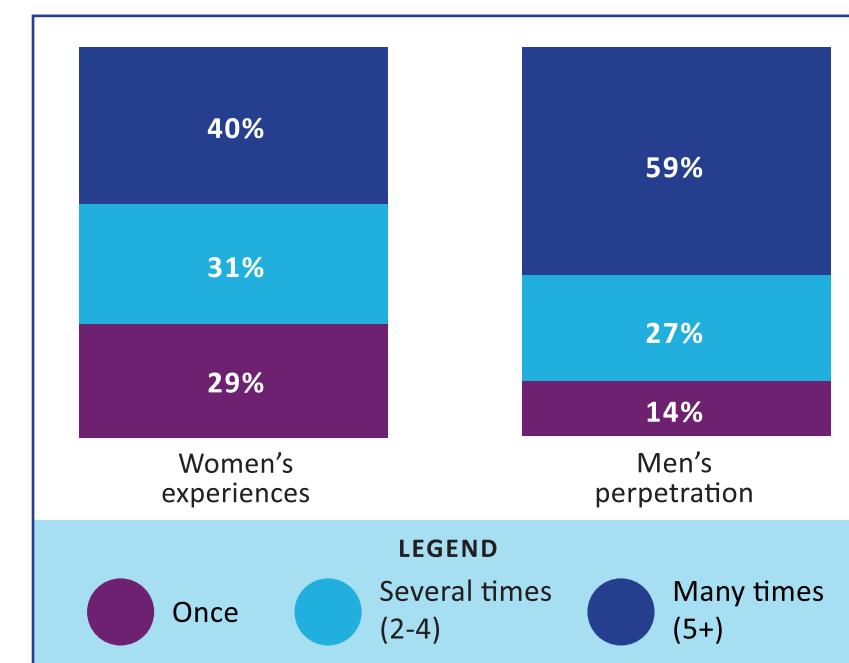


Figure 6: Frequency of women's experiences of intimate partner violence, among women who had ever experienced physical, sexual violence or both, within the past 12 months

WHY DOES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS OCCUR IN SOUTH TARAWA?

ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SOUTH TARAWA

The global evidence shows that **gender inequality is the root cause of violence against women and girls.**⁹ While gender inequality does not look the same in every country and context the Baseline Study findings strongly indicate that gender inequality is the root cause of VAWG in South Tarawa. In the Kiribati context, the following expressions of gender inequality have been shown in this Baseline Study to be most consistently associated with higher levels of violence against women and girls: condoning VAWG, men's power and control over women and girls, traditional gender roles and norms, and male sexual entitlement.

Condoning violence against women and girls

Attitudes and social norms that justify, excuse or trivialise VAWG or that blame victims are key drivers of VAWG.¹⁰ Such attitudes and norms serve to revictimise women and girls who have experienced violence, excuse men for their violent actions, and downplay the seriousness of this violence and its impacts – often making it harder for survivors of violence to access the support services they need. In-depth

“MY HOPE IS THAT US, HUSBANDS AND WIVES, WILL COLLABORATE BETTER IN THEIR DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN THE HOME AND FAMILY, AND THAT EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN WILL BE ACHIEVED.”

Male Community Member

interviews indicated that **men's use of violence against women is normalised in the community and there is widespread impunity around men's use of violence.**

In South Tarawa, while 77% of women and 87% of men agreed that physical violence against a partner is never acceptable, at the same time, 88% of women and 70% of men agreed that wife-beating was justifiable under at least one condition – such as if a woman neglects the children, if she goes out without telling him, or if she doesn't complete the housework well. In-depth interviews revealed that men can use these 'disciplinary' acts of violence with impunity, knowing that they are unlikely to be shamed by their community – rather, the

woman is likely to be shamed for not being a 'good' wife or woman.

The baseline study found a clear link between the justification of violence and men's use of violence, as **men who had perpetrated physical and/or sexual IPV were more likely to agree with a justification for wife abuse, compared to men who had never perpetrated IPV.** Similarly, victim-blaming attitudes were evident in South Tarawa among both women and men, as 37% of women and men agreed that if a woman is raped, she is to blame for putting herself in that situation, and around 20% of women and men agreed with the statement “A woman is to blame if her husband uses violence against her”.

“[COUPLES CONFLICT] IS THE KIRIBATI LIFESTYLE. WE LOVE WATCHING FIGHTS AND LISTENING. SOMETIMES WHEN A BUS COMES ACROSS A FIGHT LIKE THAT, THE BUS WOULD STOP AND WATCH. THE BUS DRIVER WOULD WATCH AND HIS PASSENGERS GOT THE CHANCE TO WATCH AND LISTEN TOO. IT IS GREAT ENTERTAINMENT FOR EVERYONE.”

Male Interviewee

This normalisation of VAWG is also apparent in women's help-seeking behaviour, as the primary reasons that women did not seek formal help after experiencing violence were that she perceived the **violence as not serious, or that she believed it was normal and did not warrant help-seeking.** During the in-depth interviews, some community members said they choose not to intervene in cases of domestic violence due to this type of violence being highly normalised in the community.

Men's power and control over women and girls

Male dominance and control over decision-making, and their limiting of women's autonomy, contribute to VAWG by implying that women have a lower social value, making women economically dependent on men, and undermining women's participation in the public sphere.¹¹

“WHAT ELSE BUT GET A BEATING. SHE COPS ONE ON HER FACE AND FALLS DOWN.”

Female Community Member

“[THE COMMUNITY] MIGHT JUDGE THAT THE WOMAN WAS BEATEN UP BECAUSE SHE WAS BEING DISOBEDIENT TO HER HUSBAND.”

Male Community Member

The findings from South Tarawa demonstrate that men's controlling behaviour is associated with IPV. Out of all married or partnered men, 83% said they want to know where their female partner is all of the time and 74% agreed with the statement, “I have more to say than [my partner] does about important decisions that affect us.” **Men who report violence perpetration are more likely to agree or strongly agree with this series of relationship control behaviors.**

Of the women who experienced IPV in past 12 months, 80% also experienced controlling behaviour, while, for women

who did not experience IPV in past 12 months, only 28% of them experienced controlling behavior (Figure 7).

Among all ever-partnered women, one-fifth (19%) said that their partner had ever refused to use a contraception method or tried to stop her from using a contraception method. **Women in South Tarawa who experienced past year physical and/or sexual IPV were more likely to report that their husbands controlled their sexual and reproductive health, compared to women who do not experience IPV.** For example, 40% of women who had experienced IPV in the past year said that their partner had made them have sex without using contraception so that she would become pregnant, compared to 23% of women who had not experienced violence in the year prior to the study.



Figure 7: Women who experienced physical and/or sexual IPV in past twelve months were also much more likely to experience controlling behavior from their male partner.

Although the Baseline Study found that many household decisions are made jointly between wives and husbands and there is some evidence of women being more involved in leadership positions in the maneaba, parliament, law enforcement and other previously male-dominated spaces, however a large majority of women (90%) and men (93%) agreed that a woman should obey her husband. Similarly, 62% of women and 70% of men believed that, “A man should have the final say in all family matters.” Participants in the in-depth interviews also described that when women made decisions on their own, particularly when without first consulting their husband, this often led to violence.

Traditional gender roles and gender norms

Around the world, levels of violence against women and girls are consistently higher in contexts where there are more rigid rules which separate women and men’s roles and more strict ideas about what a ‘good’ woman or ‘good’ man is as defined by the local culture.¹²

The survey data from South Tarawa shows that communities agree, at least in theory, with gender equality. More than 80%

“MEN ARE LIKE BOSS AND WOMEN ARE JUST LIKE... IF YOU DON’T OBEY THEM [MEN], THEY’LL GET MAD.”

Community Leader

of women and men agreed that people should be treated the same, whether they are male or female, while 92% of women and 99% of men agreed that men should share work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning and cooking. However, validation of these findings in South Tarawa suggested that, in reality, these household roles are less equally shared. The Study also found that **men who had perpetrated physical and/or sexual IPV had significantly less gender equitable attitudes, highlighting that the link between strict gender roles and VAWG holds true in South Tarawa.**

This is confirmed by the in-depth interview data, which revealed highly rigid and traditional gender norms and roles within the community of what it means to be a woman or man in Kiribati culture. When violence is considered part of the normal way of things, the use of violence is also often tied to men’s notions of masculinity, or what it means to be a man. Men were described as heads of households, responsible for supporting and providing for

their families. Women’s roles were largely limited to the domestic sphere and involved childcare and housework. Often, these gendered roles and responsibilities were upheld through the threat or use of violence: if women did not fulfill household responsibilities and perceived normative roles in the partnership and family they were at higher risk of experiencing violence, and wife beating was seen as being justified. This common attitude about men’s authority in the household reinforces the community perception that women experience violence because they fail to fulfil expectations of their role in society.

The Study highlighted particularly rigid social norms about women’s sexual autonomy. For example, the majority of women (90%) and men (78%) agreed that a woman should be a virgin when she gets married, while 31% of women and 44% of men agreed with the statement that, “A woman cannot refuse to have sex with her husband.” Furthermore, similar to the 2009 KFHSS,¹³ this study also found that **women with the least equitable attitudes about sex were less likely to experience IPV than women with more equitable ideas about sex.**

This suggests that women’s sexual autonomy is seen as transgressing gender norms and men may use retaliatory violence to reinforce male authority and maintain the status quo.¹⁴ This may be a reflection of a situation in which women who are sexually empowered are viewed as deviating from gender norms dictating that men hold power with respect to sexual decision-making in relationships.

Male sexual entitlement

In contrast to the social norms about women’s sexuality, the Study found evidence that men believe they have a right to sex. Male sexual entitlement – that is, men’s sexual dominance over women and the sexual objectification of women – has been found to contribute to the social acceptance of men’s perpetration of sexual violence against women.¹⁵ This is evident in the high proportion of men (37%) who admitted to sexual IPV perpetration as well as the nearly a quarter of all men (21%) who agreed with the statement, “A married man needs other women, even if things are fine with his wife,” although only 6% of women agreed with this. Furthermore, 66% of partnered men agreed with the statement, “When I want sex, I expect my partner to agree.”

Men who reported physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence perpetration were more likely to have had

transactional sex or sex with a sex worker (76%), compared to men who did not report perpetration (66%). Similarly, women whose husbands had an affair with another woman were 41% more likely to have experienced physical and/or sexual IPV, compared to women whose husbands had not been with another woman at the same time as with them. These results point to the importance of healthy relationship practices in intimate partnerships, such as communication and trust.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SOUTH TARAWA

This section outlines the factors which contribute to VAWG in South Tarawa. **These contributing factors do not, themselves, cause VAWG** but they interact with the root causes of VAWG discussed above to make the violence more likely, more frequent, and more severe.¹⁶

Experience of, and exposure to, violence

Witnessing or experiencing violence during childhood has been shown in many contexts to be a contributing factor to both women’s experience and men’s perpetration of IPV, as it can normalise the use of violence to resolve conflicts.¹⁷ **The Baseline Study found that large proportions of both women and men in South Tarawa had**

experienced some form of child abuse. Women who experienced childhood sexual abuse were 45% more likely to have experienced physical and/or sexual IPV in the past year than women who were never sexually abused in childhood.

Significant associations with IPV experience were also found for women’s experiences of childhood emotional abuse and neglect and childhood physical abuse. Men who experienced childhood physical abuse were 30% more likely to report past year physical and/or sexual IPV perpetration against a partner, compared to men who had were never physically abused during childhood. Similarly, men who had experienced childhood sexual abuse were 21% more likely to have reported perpetrating physical and/or sexual IPV than men who were never sexually abused as children. This highlights the need to prevent all forms of abuse in childhood and adolescence, and to promote positive family environments as a strategy to end VAWG.

Men’s exposure to violence outside the home can be a contributing factor to their use of violence against their intimate partners.¹⁸ In South Tarawa, the Study found that 16% of men had been involved in fights with weapons and 16% had also been involved in a gang, and this was strongly associated with their perpetration of IPV. Men who had ever been

“THE WOMAN... SHE IS THE HEARTBEAT OF THE HOME; AND THE MAN BELONGS OUTSIDE [E.G. LABOURS OUTDOORS OF THE HOME].”

Male Community Member



involved in fights with weapons were 29% more likely to have perpetrated physical and/or sexual violence against a female intimate partner in the past year, compared to men who had never been involved in fights with weapons. Similarly, men who had ever been in a gang were 34% more likely to have physically or sexually abused their wives or girlfriends, compared to men who had never been in a gang. This is confirmed by the data from the women's survey, which found that women who said their partner had been involved in a physical fight with another man were 67% more likely to have experienced IPV in the past year, compared to women whose husband had not been involved in a fight with another man. These factors reflect models of manhood or masculinity that stress strength, toughness and dominance over other men. Other literature that shows that alongside gender inequality, violence against women is often

also supported by such models of masculinity.¹⁹

Men's consumption of alcohol

Evidence from around the world suggests that alcohol does not, itself, drive violence against women and girls, as not all people who drink are violent, and many people who do not drink are violent. However, alcohol is seen to be a significant contributing factor to VAWG in the context of social norms and practices that condone or support violence against women and girls, in particular those relating to masculinity and masculine peer group behaviour.²⁰

The Baseline Study found that alcohol abuse is a contributing factor for IPV in South Tarawa. Close to a third (31%) of women reported that their husband frequently drank alcohol, and 66% frequently saw their husbands drunk. **Women who reported past year physical**

and/or sexual IPV were far more likely to also report frequent alcohol use by their partner (41%), compared to women who did not experience this violence (23%). Similarly, men who had perpetrated IPV against a female partner had significantly higher self-reported alcohol use than men who did not use violence.

Alcohol also emerged as a recurring theme in the in-depth interviews of women and men who described their own experiences with couple conflict.

Notably, discussions in the in-depth interviews about the link between alcohol and IPV appeared to be upheld by community gender norms that expect women to be obedient to their husbands' wishes, and serve their husbands' needs. This highlights how **gender inequality is an underlying cause of women's risk of IPV in South Tarawa, while alcohol may serve as a contributing factor in some cases.**

"IF A MAN GOES OUT DRINKING AND COMES BACK HOME AT LATE HOURS, AND THEN THE NEXT DAY, HE WOULD BE GRUMPY WHEN WOKEN UP BY HIS WIFE BECAUSE OF HIS LACK OF SLEEP. HE WILL THEN TAKE HIS ANGER OUT ON HIS WIFE BY BEING GRUMPY OR WORSE, BASH UP HIS WIFE."

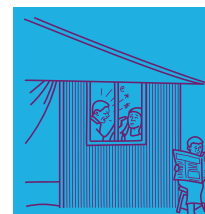
Female Community Member

WHY DOES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS OCCUR IN SOUTH TARAWA?

EVIDENCE FROM THE 2019 BASELINE STUDY IN SOUTH TARAWA, KIRIBATI

GENDER INEQUALITY

The **root cause** of violence against women and girls



CONDONING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Belief that VAWG is acceptable under some circumstances.

Blaming women for the violence they experience.

Belief that VAWG is normal or not a serious issue.



TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES AND NORMS

Community/social norm that men are always 'the boss' and women must obey their husband.

Community/social norm that women's main roles should be limited to housework and childcare.

There are strict social rules about what a 'good' woman should be, and women who break these rules are punished. However, these same rules and punishments do not equally apply to men.



MEN'S POWER AND CONTROL OVER WOMEN AND GIRLS

Men controlling their female partner's behaviour and movements.

Men controlling women's sexual and reproductive health.

Men using violence when his wife/girlfriend makes decisions without consulting him.



MALE SEXUAL ENTITLEMENT

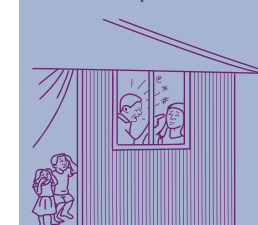
Men believing they have a right to sex.

Men expecting that their wife/girlfriend should have sex with him whenever he wants to.

Men viewing women as commodities or sex objects.

FACTORS THAT REINFORCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

These factors alone do not cause violence against women. But they can make the violence more severe and more frequent.



CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE OF, AND EXPOSURE TO, VIOLENCE



MEN'S HARMFUL CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SOUTH TARAWA

HOW WILL THE SPV PROGRAMME HELP PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS?

The findings from the Baseline Study on what causes, and contributes to, violence against women and girls in South Tarawa is being incorporated directly into the SPV Programme planning and provides tailored guidance on what will be most effective in preventing VAWG in the South Tarawa context.

To prevent violence against women and girls in South Tarawa, the SPV Programme is implementing the following strategies:

1. Local Activism – led by 90 women, men and youth village activists who have been empowered to take action to prevent VAWG in their villages, and are engaging family, friends, neighbours, and others in personal and informal activities that spark self-reflection, critical thinking, discussion and positive change for peaceful and healthy relationships and families.

2. Community Leadership – led by 60 diverse community leaders, female and male, in both formal and informal leadership positions, who are engaging fellow leaders, groups and community members by leveraging their roles, visibility and influence to speak out against VAWG,

provide positive support to women who are experiencing violence, and create safe homes, families and villages.

3. Institutional Strengthening – led by 11 Institutional Allies within the MWYSSA who are engaging their fellow employees and leaders to analyse and strengthen how the MWYSSA as an institution can prevent and respond to violence against women.

Through adapting this approach to the Kiribati culture and context, the SPV Programme is trialling which SASA! strategies and messages will be effective in addressing the root causes and contributing factors of VAWG in South Tarawa.

In addition to this Baseline Study, the SPV Impact Evaluation will continue to collect data at midline (at the midpoint of the

SPV Programme) and at end line (six months after the end of the Programme). The research will be conducted in the same communities at each point and the in-depth interviews will involve a cohort of community women and men who will be followed throughout the Programme. Through this three-stage study design, the Impact Evaluation will be able to assess the effectiveness of primary prevention interventions at reducing population-level rates of current IPV in South Tarawa.

The evidence, presented above, on current community awareness about VAWG and the strength of existing informal support networks in South Tarawa, suggests community readiness for this type of intervention.

“MY HOPE FROM THE WORK OF THIS [SPV] PROJECT IS THAT VIOLENCE WILL BE PREVENTED IN OUR COMMUNITIES ONCE THE INEQUALITY BETWEEN THE MEN AND WOMEN ENDS. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, THEN PEACE AND HARMONY WILL BE A PERMANENT THING. PEACE WILL BE IN THE VILLAGE. [...] THE ABUSE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN WILL DIMINISH. THAT IS WHAT I SEE AS THE GOAL OF THIS PROGRAM. WE HAVE TO START AT THE PREVENTION SO THAT VIOLENCE DOES NOT HAPPEN...”

SPV Program Team Member

Contact details

For more information about the Baseline Study or about the SPV Programme in general, please contact:

Anne Kautu

Principle Women's Development Officer, Ministry for Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs (MWYSSA), South Tarawa, Kiribati.

Email: annemarie.kautu@gmail.com

Karawa Areieta

Manager Strengthening Peaceful Villages Programme (SPV), Ministry for Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs (MWYSSA), South Tarawa, Kiribati.

Email: kareieta@gmail.com

Mauea Wilson

Programme Coordinator - Primary Prevention, UN Women Kiribati, South Tarawa, Kiribati.

Email: mauea.wilson@unwomen.org

Farrah Kelly

EVAWG Technical Specialist - Prevention, UN Women Fiji Multi-country Office, Suva, Fiji.

Email: farrah.kelly@unwomen.org



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The Strengthening Peaceful Villages (SPV) Programme is implemented in partnership with UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO) with funding from the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership).

The Pacific Partnership programme brings together governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG), and increase access to quality response services for survivors. The EUR22.7million programme is funded primarily by the European Union (EUR12.7m) with targeted support from the governments of Australia (EUR6.2m) and New Zealand (EUR3.2m) and cost-sharing with UN Women (EUR0.6m). The Pacific Partnership programme has three outcome areas which are coordinated by the Pacific Community (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (Forum Secretariat) and the UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO). The Strengthening Peaceful Villages programme is implemented under Outcome 2, coordinated by UN Women. More information here: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/fiji/ending-violence-against-women/pacific-partnership>.

The brand imagery being used for Pacific Partnership is inspired by empowering female-specific tattoo motifs used in the Pacific. Termed *veiqia* in Fiji or *malu* in Samoa, these tattoos are believed to give shelter, strength and protection to young women, just as the Pacific Partnership aims to empower women, improve gender equality and end violence against women and girls. The Pacific Partnership’s implementers respectfully acknowledge that these symbols were traditionally only marked on women, and are empowering and reflect heritage, tribe, identity and strength. For details about female tattooing in the Pacific Islands, for example in Fiji, there are projects such as The *Veiqia* Project creative research project inspired by the practice of Fijian female tattooing: www.theveiqiaproject.com.

Artwork by Karawa Areieta and Scarlett Thorby-Lister, adapted from SASA! original materials by Raising Voices (Raising Voices (2020). *SASA! Together: An activist approach for preventing violence against women*. Kampala, Uganda: Raising Voices).

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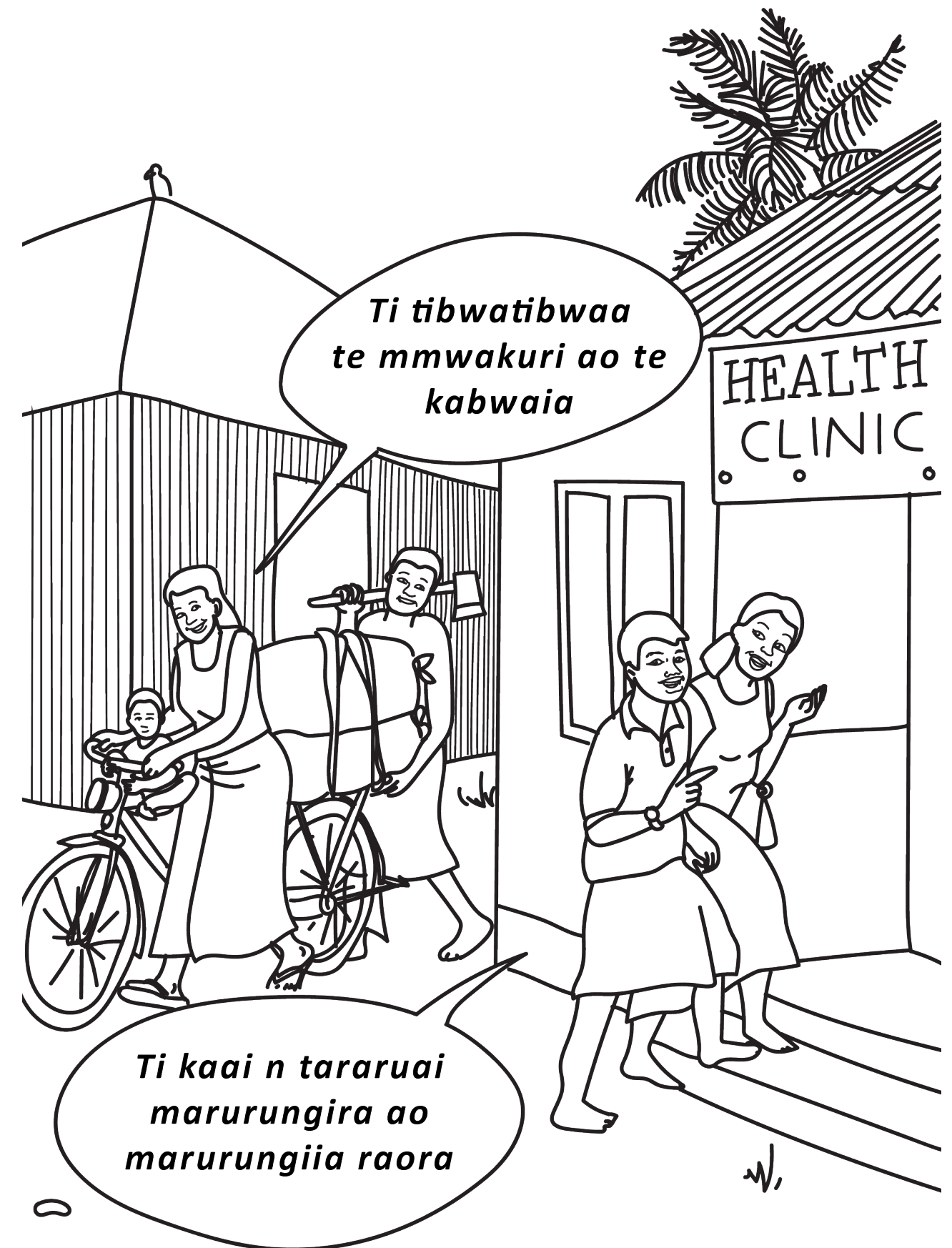
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