

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Evidence Brief¹: 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) in the world. Across the Pacific, intimate partner violence (IPV), also referred to as domestic violence (DV), is the most prevalent form of violence against women and girls (VAWG). In the Solomon Islands 64% of ever-partnered women aged 15–49 reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, with 42% of women reported experiencing physical and/or sexual partner violence in the last 12 months.²

Costing the economic impact of IPV and the implementation of critical elements of national policies and laws on IPV 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 planning the roll-out of commitments made. Such 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 Islands³ was undertaken in partnership with national and regional stakeholders⁴ 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.

In 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). The study was coordinated by the Ministry of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), SAFENET and UN Women from 2021 to 2022.

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1. This brief summarizes key findings from the costing study in the Solomon Islands and is a companion to the full report, inclusive of additional information on methodology and limitations.
 2. Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 2009. Solomon Island Family Health and Safety Study: A study on Violence Against Women and Children. Noumea: Secretariat of the Pacific Community
 3. 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.
 4. See acknowledgements.

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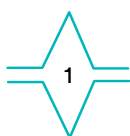
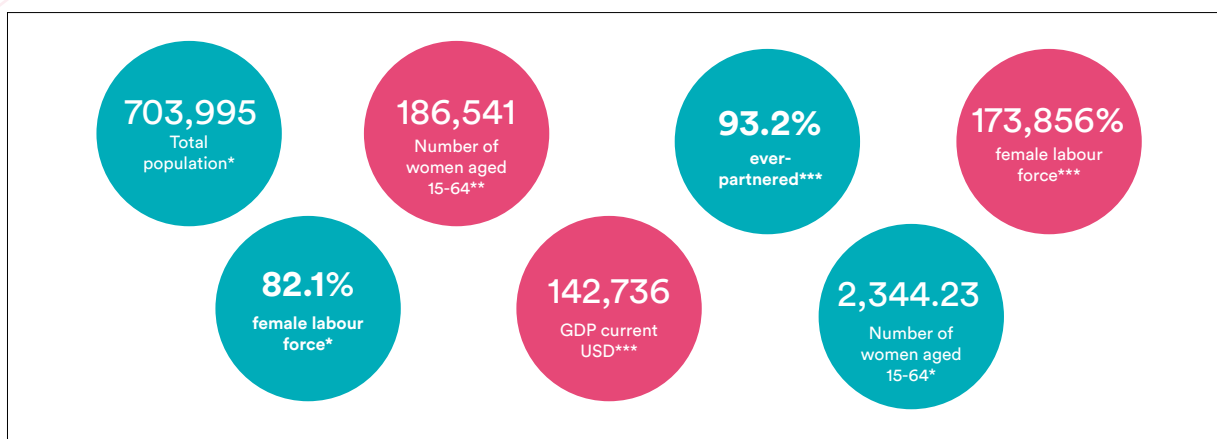


Figure 1a: Demographic and economic characteristics of Solomon Islands



*World Bank Development indicators, 2021

**Solomon Islands census data, 2019

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

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

Costing the impact of IPV on the economy

The research study presents the costs that have an impact on the economy of Solomon Islands, divided on two costs categories:

- 1) **Individual Direct Costs**, representing the actual 'out of pocket' expenditures related to intimate partner violence borne by survivors, including health care services, judicial services and social services. Because no out-of-pocket expenditure data exists in Solomon Islands, updated average expenditures to women for seeking services in Iran, an upper middle-income country, was used,⁵ combined with prevalence rates to approximate incident (i.e. the assumption was one visit per woman over the past 12 months because no data on the number of times women sought help was available).

Direct out-of-pocket expenditures amounted to \$536,801 USD and included survivors' access to health services (\$272,151 USD), police (\$82,866 USD), NGOs/Women's organisations (\$102,466 USD) and legal/judicial services (\$79,317 USD).

- 2) **Individual Indirect Costs**, representing the value of lost productivity from both paid work and unpaid 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.

5. Fourozan, 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

- 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 India⁶ which documented an average of seven (7) days off work per incident.

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.

- b. **Measure 2.2: Number of workdays lost and cost of productivity loss**

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

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.

- c. **Measure 2.3: Total productivity loss as a percent of GDP**

The annual productivity loss of IPV was estimated to be \$15.09 million USD, which amounts to almost 1%⁷ of the country's GDP.

The findings face numerous limitations including uneven or incomplete publicly available national data sets, reliance on secondary data to estimate out-of-pocket costs (versus primary data collection) and a lack of disaggregated data.

Costing the resources required for a minimum package of services for survivors of IPV

The research team worked hand in hand with the National SAFENET Referral Network (SAFENET) and with the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Social Affairs (MWYCFA) to define a minimum package of essential services, estimating the resources required to provide primary, secondary and tertiary support for survivors of IPV. It was structured around five thematic intervention areas, which were chosen through stakeholders' consultations.

Social services	Expand network of Safe Houses
	High quality counselling
	Shelter services for children
Law and Justice	Strengthen capacity of police, courts, and judiciary staff
	Improve access to legal services
Health	Improve Gender-Based Violence response services in health facilities
Prevention for school age children	Improve awareness to GBV and the Family Protection Act in schools
Coordination, Governance & Communication	Awareness raising about the Family Protection Act and relevant public service regulations/laws within public service
	Coordinated campaign on the Family Protection Act

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

7. 0.96%

The overall cost of the package over the three years was estimated to be **\$2,787,112 USD**. The highest costs were for the implementation of an inclusive safe house (\$695,074 USD years 1-3) and for services for children (\$749,724 USD, years 1-3).

It is important to note that 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. Nevertheless, the costing provides a strong foundation for the investment needed to amplify existing efforts to respond to GBV in Solomon Islands.

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

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