



WHY MONEY MATTERS

IN EFFORTS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



“Violence is a major obstacle to women’s and girls’ development and to the welfare and development of communities and societies as a whole. Over the past decade, gender equality has become a core development objective in its own right, as well as a critical channel for reducing income and non-income poverty. Much progress has been made, however, there remains a significant ‘gender gap’. Violence against women and girls is an expression of this inequality.”

— **World Bank**, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*¹

This short advocacy briefing – prepared for UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign activities during 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence in 2016 – aims to highlight some of the costs to national economies and households of violence against women and girls. It also gives some examples of how strategic investments to address this violence can make a concrete and long-lasting difference in lives of women and girls as well as their communities.

The funding landscape of efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls is continuously diversifying to encompass new emerging development partners, international NGOs, philanthropists, high-net-worth individuals and the private sector. This briefing aims to reach out to organizations, United Nations Member States and interested individuals with a strong message that increasing their funding of initiatives can make a critical difference. By contributing to efforts to end violence against women, they can also help remove a major barrier to individual, community and national development.



FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Global recognition that violence against women and girls is a human rights violation has advanced significantly in recent decades.

A violation of one human right has an impact on the enjoyment of others so that women and girls who experience violence also see their life chances, livelihoods, health and well-being affected in myriad ways.

Violence against women has an emotional, physical and social cost. It also has a heavy, long-term economic cost. This was clearly recognized by the international community when in 2015 governments adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 5 of which includes the commitment to:

“eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including

*trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; and to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation”.*²

This explicit integration of the need to address violence against women as an essential component of sustainable development represents a major advance for the rights of women and girls around the world, many of whom continue to be denied their basic human right to a life free from violence. However, while SDG 5 is undoubtedly a positive development, the scale of the challenge is vast and far exceeds the resources currently allocated to address it.³

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

While the prevalence of various forms of violence varies from country to country, women and girls are at risk in every part of the world.⁵

DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The United Nations defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.⁴

Intimate-partner violence against women is not limited to acts of physical and sexual aggression; other forms of violence, such as emotional, psychological and economic abuse, are receiving increasing attention.

Each individual experience of violence has very personal psychological, physical and social consequences that statistics alone cannot convey. However, the sheer scale of the violations does give an insight to the extent of their impact and their entrenched nature.



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WORLDWIDE



30 PER CENT OF WOMEN

have experienced **physical or sexual violence within a relationship** from a male intimate partner⁶ and

7.2 PER CENT OF ALL WOMEN

have experienced **non-partner sexual violence**⁷



AT LEAST 200 MILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS

have undergone some form of **female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)** in the 30 countries in North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia where the practice is most prevalent⁸



MORE THAN 700 MILLION WOMEN

worldwide alive today were **married as children** (below 18 years of age). Of those women, some 250 million were married before they were 15. Child brides are often unable to effectively negotiate safe sex, leaving them vulnerable to early pregnancy as well as sexually transmitted infections, including HIV⁹



ADULT WOMEN ACCOUNT FOR ALMOST 1/2

of all human trafficking victims detected globally.

Women and girls together account for about 70 per cent of people trafficked, with girls accounting for two out of every three child trafficking victims¹⁰



Photo: UN Women/Fatma Elzahraa Yassin

Violence against women is a manifestation of gender discrimination and inequality and its financial and economic impacts mean that it is a barrier to development.¹¹ The SDGs acknowledge this and challenge governments and the international community to provide adequate response services for survivors¹² and to put in place prevention mechanisms to stop violence against women and girls from happening in the first place.

Achieving Goal 5 by 2030 will require a concerted international effort, a key part of which is realizing global spending that recognizes both the scale of the problem and the potential benefits of a world free of violence against women. All available evidence shows

the immense cost of violence against women and girls on many levels. It also illustrates how even relatively small-scale investments that are timely and well targeted can bring enormous benefits to women and girls and to their wider communities.

This short advocacy briefing aims to highlight a few examples that demonstrate why allocating adequate resources to prevent and address violence against women is not only a legal obligation and a moral imperative, but a sound investment too. It also underscores why the political will shown by the international community in adopting SDG 5 must be translated into the resource commitments needed to prevent and end this pervasive human rights violation.

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WHY DOES MONEY MATTER?

Despite the success in negotiating and adopting international instruments and standards on violence against women and girls and a visible increase in political will, resources to translate these into effective practices remain woefully lacking.

Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was the key theme under review at the 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2012. The aim was to assess progress made against the conclusions agreed in 2008. The 2008 recommendations included a call to increase financing significantly for women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment through Official Development Assistance (ODA), national government resources and other types of donor support. The 2012 review found that, notwithstanding some important advances, little actual progress had been made in increasing funding for women's organizations and gender equality.

Despite growing recognition that violence against women is a public health and human rights pandemic and a serious obstacle to development, it continues to have an unjustifiably low priority on the international development agenda in planning, programming and budgeting. As a result, the work on preventing and ending violence against women and girls suffers from chronic underfunding.

The current spotlight on women and girls has had relatively little impact on improving the funding situation for a large majority of women's organizations. A recent study by The Foundation Center found that only 2 per cent of all human rights-related global giving by private foundations is allocated to ending violence against women and girls, one of the most prevalent human rights abuses in the world.¹³ In 2010, the median annual income of over 740 women's organizations around the world was just US\$20,000.

The current trend of persistent underinvestment must be reversed. Discussions about the post-2015 development agenda, including the SDGs, provide a pivotal opportunity to reposition the issue of violence

against women and girls. Governments from all regions of the world have made achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls a central ambition of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. An ambitious and robust financing package will be needed to turn these commitments into reality for women and girls.

The ambitious agenda for achieving gender equality and women's rights in the post-2015 development framework must be matched by ambitious resources to prevent and address violence against women and girls effectively. This will require gender equality to be given high priority in ODA and to be allocated sufficient resources in national budgets.



Photo: UN Women

Investing in preventing and ending violence against women and girls is imperative for sustained global economic development. However, making this case requires a strong evidence base. There is an urgent need for an informed analysis of specific needs in different contexts. Such an analysis is crucial to ensure that the programmes prioritized are those that address prevalent forms of violence against women and girls in particular settings – and that address them effectively. Greater evidence is also needed on the costs of violence and resource requirements for responding to victims’ needs -- an integral part of ensuring adequate financing.

Achieving the ambitious targets set by the SDGs by 2030 requires an intensive global effort and a step

up in resource commitments. It demands innovative solutions and the forging of new partnerships to mobilize funds from all available sources – including national governments, overseas development assistance, private enterprise and philanthropic bodies and individuals.

Ending violence against women and girls is not only a human rights imperative, it is also a smart, long-term investment. It is essential in order to take forward women’s economic empowerment and sustainable development and to bring us closer to a world where each individual can achieve their true potential free of the shadow of violence. That is why money matters.



Photo: Vidura Jang Bahadur

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THE COST OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Violence against women and girls devastates lives. It causes pain, suffering and illness.

It deprives women and girls of quality of life and well-being. There is evidence that its harmful effects are long-lasting; it contributes to the intergenerational transfer of poverty and the children of abused women are more likely to engage in violent or delinquent behaviour and to have poorer health and educational outcomes.¹⁴

Violence against women also has serious consequences for global development, with significant threats to the household's economic welfare both in the short and longer term. It also makes a significant call on scarce public resources for essential health, security and infrastructure services. This human rights violation is costing the world dear.

GLOBAL COSTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



A recent study estimated that the **cost of violence** in 2013 could be as high as **11.2 PER CENT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY** with intimate-partner violence accounting for 5.2 per cent of the total¹⁵



US\$16.55 BILLION was the **total approximate cost of violence against women** in **Australia** in 2015-2016, with the cost of pain, suffering [reflected by long-term health impacts] and mortality accounting for 47 per cent of all costs¹⁶



£16 BILLION was the estimated **cost of domestic violence** in 2009 in the **UK** [including service-related costs, lost economic output and human and emotional costs], of which 63 per cent was attributable to human and emotional costs¹⁷



US\$5.8 BILLION was the direct medical cost [including mental health care] and lost economic output in the **USA** in 1995 resulting from **intimate-partner violence against women**¹⁸



Photo: UN Photo/Kibae Park

Violence against women and girls has wide-ranging repercussions, impoverishing households, stifling economic development in communities and affecting national finances. The underlying economic costs – expenditure on service provision, lost income for women and their families, decreased productivity for businesses and lost revenue for governments – impact negatively on future human capital formation.¹⁹

Very few robust estimates on the economic costs of violence against women and girls are available from low and middle income countries. However, the data that is available gives an insight to the very high toll it takes on national and household budgets.

- In Bangladesh the total cost of domestic violence against women to households, the State and non-state actors amounted to 2.1 per cent of GDP in 2010.²⁰
- In Viet Nam, it is estimated that expenditure and lost earnings resulting from domestic violence amounted to 1.4 per cent of GDP in 2010.²¹

In recognition of the information gap, the Department for International Development (DFID) in the United

Kingdom has funded a project to investigate the social and economic costs of violence against women and girls in Ghana, Pakistan and South Sudan.²² In addition, the Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia and UN Women have recently initiated a regional project to estimate the costs of violence against women in the Arab States.²³

Strengthening evidence about the cost of violence against women is important in order to enable governments to devise informed national action plans and to ensure effective implementation. Understanding sector specific costs is an important element of this evidence base.

Nevertheless, even the very limited number of examples set out in this briefing paint an alarming picture, all the more so since the data is likely to represent just the tip of the iceberg because, with few exceptions, the studies quoted focus mainly on intimate-partner violence or domestic violence.

Irrespective of the variation in methods used, costs measured and reporting indicators applied, the high cost of violence against women and girls is undeniable.

HOUSEHOLDS

It is households that often have to meet the immediate costs of support services for women and girl survivors of violence. In many cases, this involves

medical treatment for physical injuries, which can incur high costs. Although less evidence exists on the costs of other types of support, such as social services or justice, where estimates are available, they point to equally high costs for the household.

COSTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: HOUSEHOLDS



OVER 1/2 (52 PER CENT) of the total cost of violence against women in **Australia** is **borne by victims or survivors** [2015-2016]²⁴



US\$163.50 is the approximate amount spent in **Bangladesh**, on average, by **families experiencing domestic violence** on seeking support; a large portion went on seeking health services [2010]²⁵



US\$185 is the average amount paid by women micro-entrepreneurs in **Ecuador** for social support and/or medical attention for **intimate-partner violence** [2012]²⁶



28 PER CENT of women's average monthly incomes is the approximate health-care cost per incident of **intimate-partner violence** in **Viet Nam** [2010]²⁷



US\$157 is the average total cost to families in **Morocco** for services sought after an **incident of intimate-partner violence**, compared to a gross national income per capita of US\$2,250 [2008]²⁸

HEALTH CARE AND JUSTICE SECTORS

Women, particularly those in low and middle income countries, often make limited use of the justice system for a variety of reasons, such as the social acceptability of intimate-partner violence, a low level of trust in the police and justice systems and impunity.²⁹ Ending impunity for violence against women is an important element not only in ensuring women's access to their right to justice but also in preventing future violence.

Effective responses by the authorities are both cost effective in the present and contribute to the overall preventive aim. But supporting service providers to achieve adequate and appropriate responses, including through capacity building and training, has cost implications.

The services that women and girls who have experienced violence use most often relate to health, either to address immediate injuries or longer-term health complications brought on by the violence. The available evidence highlights the high cost these services for both families and public services. Moreover, the costs are likely to be underestimated primarily because there has been a tendency to focus on direct

injuries and to omit costs associated with psychosocial support and mental health needs. For example, estimates from high income countries highlight the high cost of mental healthcare, underscoring the fact that the effects of violence on women's health can continue long after the violence has stopped.

RAMIFICATIONS OF RAPE

"According to Jewkes, Sen, and Garcia-Moreno [2002], among adolescents and women age 12 to 45, the frequency of pregnancy as a result of rape varies from 5 to 18 percent. In addition, younger rape victims often have an increased rate of later, unintended pregnancies. Rape frequently results in gynecological problems, problems of sexual functioning, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection. HIV infection and the stigma it carries put both female and male victims of sexual assault at increased risk of further violence. A similar range of reproductive health consequences may also follow intimate partner violence."³⁰

Photo: Sven Torfinn



COSTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: HEALTHCARE & JUSTICE



US\$1.05 BILLION is the approximate cost to the health system in **Australia** attributable to **domestic violence** [2015-2016]³¹



US\$3.7 MILLION is the annual cost of **FGM-related obstetric complications** in six African countries [**Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal** and **Sudan**], ranging from 0.1 per cent to 1 per cent of government spending on health for women aged 15-45 and adjusted to 2008 currency rates³²



US\$1.2 MILLION is the annual cost of treating physical injuries because of **intimate-partner violence** against women in **Uganda** in 2008³³



US\$1.28 BILLION is the approximate cost to justice, services and funeral sectors linked to **violence against women and girls** in **Australia** in 2015-2016³⁴



US\$6.7 MILLION was the annual cost to the justice system in **Morocco** in 2008 for addressing **violence against women**³⁵

RAMIFICATIONS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

“Intimate partner violence results in an increased incidence of suicide and suicide attempts, as well as in depression, anxiety, and phobias (Heise and Garcia-Moreno 2002). Additional consequences include substance abuse, eating and sleep disorders, poor self-esteem, posttraumatic stress disorder, psychosomatic disorders, and risky sexual behaviors. Sexual assault results in consequences that can be long lasting and severe, including posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, and conduct disorders, as well as sleep and eating disorders.”
[Jewkes, Sen, and Garcia-Moreno 2002]³⁶

PRODUCTIVITY

Women and girls’ empowerment and participation in productive work outside of the household is vital for economic growth, which is essential to end poverty and increase shared prosperity. Violence against women has huge costs in terms of lost productivity in the workplace as a result of absence due to injury or emotional distress or reduced performance. These costs are particularly detrimental in settings where a large proportion of women are engaged in micro-enterprises where they not only cut profitability and productivity but can threaten the business’ very existence.



Photo: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren

COSTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: PRODUCTIVITY



US\$1.43 BILLION was **lost in productivity** to businesses in **Australia** in 2015-2016³⁷



4.5 PER CENT of monthly household income was the average amount estimated to be **lost per violent incident** in **Bangladesh** [2010]³⁸



55 DAYS OF PAID WORK is **lost by female micro-entrepreneurs** on average in **Ecuador** in their lifetime because of **intimate-partner violence** [2012]³⁹



7 DAYS OF PAID WORK is the average amount of time women had to forgo **per violent incident** in **Nagpur, India** in 1999⁴⁰



ABUSED WOMEN EARN ABOUT 1/3 LESS than women who have not experienced violence [2008/2009 and 2010 respectively] in **Tanzania** and **Viet Nam**⁴¹

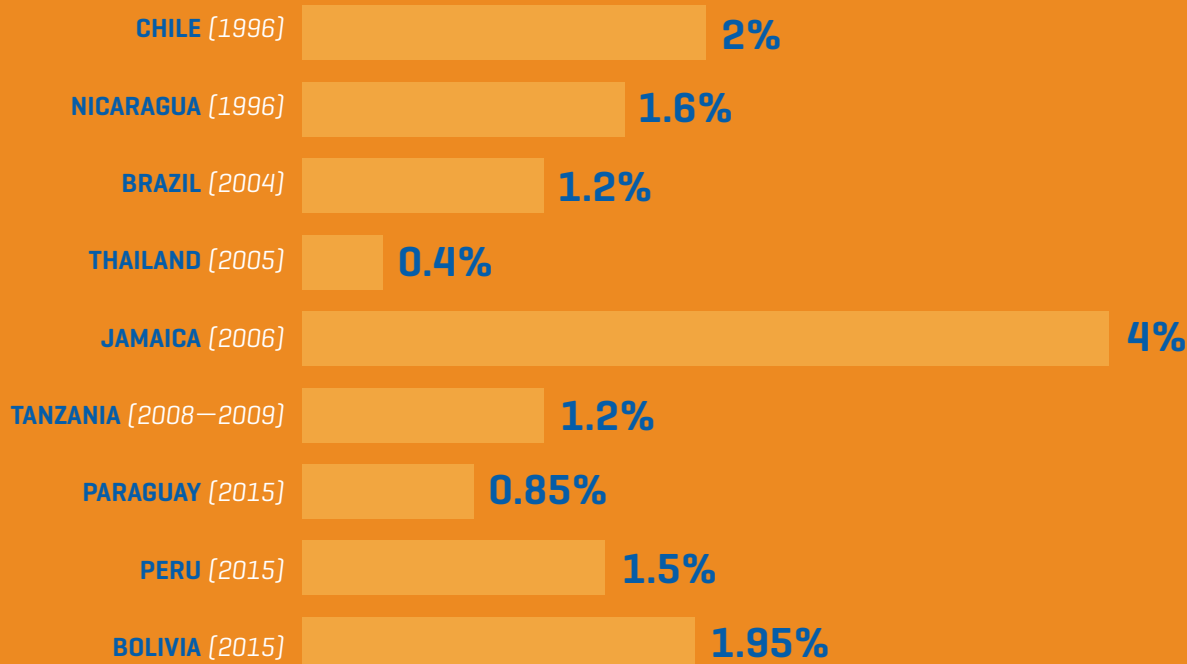


5.5 DAYS OF PAID WORK was missed by women in **Viet Nam per violent incident** [2010]⁴²



ALMOST 8 MILLION DAYS OF PAID WORK in the **USA** were **lost because of intimate-partner violence against women**, amounting to US\$0.9 billion in lost productivity and a further US\$0.9 billion in lifetime earnings lost because of homicide [1995]⁴³

IN LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES, LOST PRODUCTIVITY BECAUSE OF INTIMATE-PARTNER VIOLENCE AS A PERCENTAGE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) RANGES FROM 0.4 PER CENT TO 4 PER CENT:⁴⁴



These considerable productivity losses result in slower economic development, increased socioeconomic inequality and an erosion of human and social capital.



Photo: Graham Crouch

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THE BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS

Data on current expenditure to end violence against women and girls is scarce.

But evidence of both the huge social and economic costs of this human rights pandemic and of the immense long-term benefits of ending it is increasing.⁴⁵ In addition, the available information highlights the importance of ensuring funding streams specifically dedicated to ending violence against women and girls to ensure that adequate resources are available to implement vital interventions as well as to conduct research and strengthen the collection of data.

Experts are unanimous in asserting that the benefits of ending violence against women and girls would far outweigh the resources required to respond adequately to the needs of survivors and to prevent future violence.⁴⁶ For example, evidence (albeit scarce) from high income countries suggests that the impact of legal reforms and the provision of programmatic support services on reducing gender-based violence can yield substantial financial savings.

USA

The US anti-violence law of 1994 provided US\$1.6 billion (over five years) in programmatic support that involved increasing penalties for perpetrators and improved resources for police, prosecutors and those providing services for victims. Researchers estimated that savings of US\$14.8 billion were achieved by cutting direct property losses, physical and psychological health-care needs, policing, victim services, lost productivity, reduced quality of life and fatalities.⁴⁷ Longer-term estimates suggest that the law has been instrumental in reducing intimate-partner violence and homicides, which fell by 53 per cent and 26 per cent respectively over the 15 years following implementation of the law.⁴⁸



Photo: Gaganjit Singh



Photo: UN Photo/JC McIlwaine

UK

In 2004, the cost of domestic violence was estimated to be £22.9 billion. By 2009 this had fallen to £15.7 billion. The reduction in costs was attributed to a decline in the prevalence of domestic violence and to the call on services to respond to it. At the beginning of the decade slightly over a third of domestic violence incidents were reported to the police; by 2008-2009 this had risen to almost half. During this period, the cost of services rose slightly while productivity losses and the human and emotional costs both declined.⁴⁹

The challenge for many governments, particularly in low and middle income countries, is to allocate sufficient funds to implement their national action plans and their response and prevention strategies.

Recently, several studies in the Asia Pacific region costed the resource requirements for the implementation of legislative reforms and national action plans. For example, a study in the Cook Islands and the Marshall Islands explored the additional cost implications, over several fiscal years, of fully implementing the draft Family Law Bill (Cook Islands) and the Domestic Violence Prevention & Protection Act (Marshall Islands).⁵⁰ In both countries, the results of the study have helped governments plan for improved services. For example, in the Cook Islands the police service was allocated increased funds and in the Marshall Islands a cost-sharing agreement with NGOs has helped guide implementation and coordination of the law.

Tracking the flow of resources in order to monitor how international and national commitments translate into investment in efforts to address and prevent violence against women will be crucial in the coming years. Its importance was recognized, for example, when in May 2015, the Development Assistance Committee

of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) introduced a new tool to help identify gaps between policy commitments and financial commitments and to hold governments accountable for delivering on their SDG commitments. The OECD has inserted a new code in its statistical system to track aid in support of ending violence against women and girls. The first set of data, which is due to be released in 2017, will provide evidence to strengthen transparency and accountability in donor financing for gender equality and women's rights.

Funding linked to the Sustainable Development Agenda is increasingly focusing on "smart investments" that "put people first and prioritize those most in need, address global challenges that perpetuate inequalities affecting billions around the world, and have high-payoffs for improved well-being and quality of life, poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainable development, with multiplier and intergenerational effects that will yield benefits for decades to come."⁵¹ Funding efforts to prevent and address violence against women and girls will promote each of these aims. Indeed, such efforts are central to realization of the Agenda.



Photo: Vidura Jang Bahadur

SOLUTIONS: Investments Matter

LAO & TIMOR-LESTE

A recent multi-country study in **Southeast Asia** examined the costs of multisectoral service provision to women and girls affected by violence in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Timor-Leste.

The study found that the cost of delivering a minimum package of essential services (over three fiscal years) for women and girls who experience violence amounted to 0.31 per cent of GDP (in 2015) for Timor-Leste and 0.25 per cent of GDP (in 2015) for Lao PDR – a fraction of the cost of consequences of violence.⁵²

The study has been a successful advocacy tool in Timor-Leste where the evidence on the effectiveness of the provision of shelters secured 100 per cent funding from the Government.⁵³ The study highlighted how addressing violence against women through a comprehensive, well-integrated, properly funded response can contribute to long-term savings through its impact on women's health and well-being as well as on families, communities and society at large.⁵⁴

The study provides policymakers with critical new evidence to help close the implementation gap between policies and internationally recognized best practice, and to ensure that the comprehensive service packages outlined in national action plans and other key policy documents are properly budgeted for and resourced.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

In **Papua New Guinea**, markets provide a vital opportunity for women to make a small income by selling garden produce. However, markets can be very unsafe places, with sexual harassment and violence by men prevalent. As part of UN Women's "Safe cities free of violence against women and girls" programme, a series of interventions were implemented in Port Moresby. One such intervention was the infrastructural transformation of markets along with the introduction of a cashless-based payment method and increased training and financial and business literacy. Previously occupied by men, one newly renovated market is now used for business and co-shared by men and women vendors.⁵⁵

PALESTINE

In **Palestine** intimate-partner violence against women is pervasive with 37 per cent of women reporting exposure to violence from their husbands. In 2008, the Palestinian Civil Police established the Family Protection Unit (FPU), a police station specializing in cases of family violence. Since 2012, UN Women has supported the Palestinian Civil Police to develop standard operating procedures and with training. The intervention led to positive shifts in practice and attitudes in dealing with victims of violence, resulting in increased reporting to and confidence in the police. In 2014, of the 3,840 reports received by the FPU, 829 were referred to the public prosecution service, a seven-fold increase over 2011.⁵⁶

JAMAICA

In **Jamaica**, UN Women supported a project implemented by Jamaica AIDS Support for Life with a three-year grant amounting to US\$505,115. The aim of the project is to mobilize community-based and faith-based organizations and to empower women living with HIV/AIDS; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people; women living with disabilities; and sex workers by providing training in life skills and legal literacy. Support for Life is the only NGO providing clinical services to people living with HIV and other key populations in the country and has consistently been part of the best practices submission to the Global AIDS Response Report. The perspective of more than 90 per cent of all clients who access Jamaica AIDS Support for Life services is that they are enjoying better health.⁵⁷

GAMBIA

In Gambia, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women supported a project implemented by the Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the health of Women and Children (GAMCOTRAP) for two years with a US\$93,501 grant. The project focused on ending FGM/C and has achieved remarkable results. The grantee reached out to the heads of villages in 58 communities, organizing trainings for community leaders led by their chiefs. In addition, more than 300 women attended a series of training workshops on empowerment aimed at enabling them to claim their rights and take an active role in protecting other women and especially girls from FGM/C. In testimonies and interviews with young mothers in two districts, 64 per cent said they did not intend to subject their daughters to FGM in the future. In addition, community elders are discussing among themselves how to protect girls and communities.⁵⁸



Photo: ONU Mujeres



CONCLUSION

The movement to prevent and address violence against women and girls has made huge strides in recent decades.

It has succeeded in ensuring that the link between ending these violations and furthering women's empowerment, sustainable development and gender equality rings out loudly in the international arena and in national and community discourse.

Putting an end to violence against women centre stage is crucial, but unless this is supported by the resourcing the issue demands, for many women and girls around the world the reality will continue to fall far short of the rhetoric. This briefing provides only a glimpse of the price they and their communities are paying for this shortfall.

There are many arguments that can be made about why ending and addressing violence against women is a priority. The moral, legal and political arguments are important and have been powerfully made. Emerging evidence suggests that an equally persuasive case can be made about the social and economic costs of these violations.

Funding measures to prevent and address violence against women and girls is a smart, sustainable

investment on a whole range of levels. Whether viewed from the perspective of human suffering, reflected in health care costs and childhood trauma, or social costs, as reflected in the costs in policing and to the justice sector, or the purely economic costs of lower productivity – violence against women and girls is devastating for women and girls and it is hindering the development of the individual, her family and her community.

What is equally clear, even from a brief overview, is that improved resourcing can unleash potential and reward investment exponentially. The clear benefits to women, families, communities and national economies of freedom from violence against women and girls are a compelling incentive for increased funding.

It is crucial that efforts to secure and sustain financial resources from all available sources – from national governments, as part of development assistance, philanthropists and the private sector – are sustained and intensified. All the evidence shows that funding the solution is a price well worth paying.



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

ENDNOTES

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