

Counting the Costs of Violence Against Women and Girls In Ghana

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a significant social, economic and public health problem. No country is immune from this problem and it impacts all socio-economic groups, all ethnicities and all ages. This does not mean it is inevitable; it can be transformed through political will, through increased investment in programmes and policies, and through community support for normative change.

Globally, 35% of women have experienced some form of violence in their lives. We know that this violence has implications for women's health and well-being, however, we have less understanding about the impacts of violence against women and girls on communities, businesses and on the national economy. While it has been estimated that violence against women and girls costs the global economy to the tune of US\$8 trillion¹ there are few studies, particularly in the developing world that outline the national economic costs of such violence². In recognition of the dearth of knowledge on the impacts



Young women in ceremonial dress at a community health event sponsored by USAID. (USAID/Kasia McCormick) 2012

and costs of VAWG, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has funded a project to investigate the social and economic costs of VAWG. Working in Ghana, South Sudan and Pakistan, the National University of Ireland, Galway with Ipsos MORI and International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) in collaboration with in-country partners will be conducting research to estimate the economic losses caused by VAWG as well as the non-economic costs of violence that impact on economic growth, development and social stability.

BOX 1 : ABOUT THE WHAT WORKS PROJECT

The current project is Component Three of the What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls Programme funded by DFID. Component One of the programme is led by South Africa Medical Research Council, and is supporting and evaluating 14 interventions to prevent VAWG. Component Two, led by the International Research Committee, is exploring the links between VAWG and conflict in South Sudan, and carrying out evaluation studies of specific interventions in conflict and humanitarian emergencies settings. (See www.whatworks.co.za for further information).

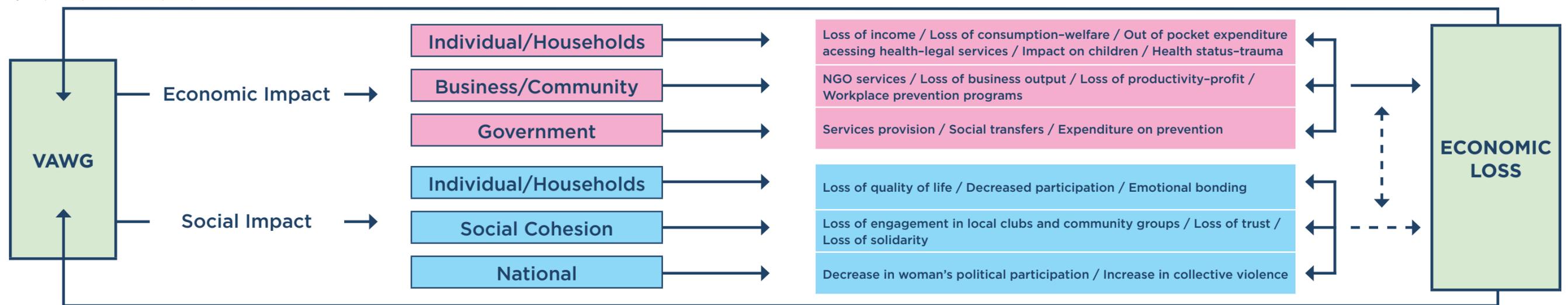
Component Three, Economic and Social Costs of Violence against Women and Girls is a three year multi-country project that estimates the costs of VAWG, both social and economic, to individuals and households, businesses and communities, and states. It breaks new ground in understanding the impact of VAWG on community cohesion, economic stability and development, and will provide further evidence for governments and the international community to address violence against women and girls globally.

This project contends that the failure to eliminate VAWG constitutes a drag on national economies and on inclusive human development. There is thus strong incentive for investment by government and other stakeholders to address VAWG – the cost of inaction is significant. This project aims to build knowledge about the impacts of VAWG and thus to mobilise political will to eliminate violence worldwide. Through the development of new costing methodologies that can be applied within different national contexts, this project will provide policy makers with the tools to estimate the impact of VAWG. To develop such tools, it is necessary to collect data and evaluate methodologies within a range of political, economic, cultural and social contexts. This study is therefore being conducted in three countries in the Global South that exhibit marked differences in terms of context: South Sudan, Pakistan and Ghana.

In Ghana, the project aims to fill the gaps in our understanding of the socio-economic impacts of VAWG, focusing on intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence (NPSV). The project will go beyond costs to individuals by providing estimates of the loss to the overall economy of Ghana. In addition, we examine costs arising from the impact of VAWG on social cohesion and political stability.

1 Hoefler and Fearon: "Benefits and Costs of the Conflict and Violence Targets for the Post-2015 Development Agenda", 2015 http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/sites/default/files/conflict_assessment_-_hoefler_and_fearon_0.pdf
2 Eg: Duvvury et al, 2013: "Intimate Partner Violence: Economic Costs and Implications for Growth and Development" (Vietnam); Siddique, 2011: "Domestic Violence Against Women: Cost to the Nation" (Bangladesh); Vyas and Watts, 2013: "Estimating the Association between Women's Earnings and Partner Violence: Evidence from the 2008-2009 Tanzania National Panel Survey"

Figure 1: Impact Pathways of VAWG on the Economy; a Conceptual Model



THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this project, we argue that VAWG not only impacts on individual women and their families but also ripples through society and the economy at large. To understand how this occurs we provide above a graph of our conceptual framework.

We show here how VAWG has economic impacts and social impacts. We also show that these impacts occur not only at the individual level (such as through missed days at work, health costs due to injuries and psychological distress) but also at the community/business level and at the state level. Economic impacts at each of these levels, including lost income at the individual level and loss of economic outputs for businesses that erode national tax takes, undermine economic growth. Social costs also accrue through the individual, community and state level. These impacts have serious consequences for well-being and capabilities, for social cohesion and participation, and for social stability. These impacts cannot be immediately monetized; however, we hypothesise that over time many of these impacts are translated into economic costs, through for instance, chronic disability, limited access and performance in education, and increases in social instability and conflict. See Figure 1 above.

This project recognises that the impacts of VAWG at these different levels interact with each other, as do both social and economic impacts, meaning that it is difficult to simply aggregate costs across levels. The research project aims to explore these diverse and dynamic impacts with a view to highlighting their macro-level influence on both economic and social development.

3 Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection: "Ghana's fourth progress report on the implementation of the African and Beijing Platform of Action and review report for Beijing +20"

4 Modern Ghana: "Violence Against Women: Ghana's New Evil", 3 May 2014

5 Ibid

6 Ibid

7 Essel, P.I. International Women's Day 2013: Effects of Violence against Women on the Socio-economic Growth of the Nation.

BOX 2: ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Multiple Indicator Cluster Studies carried out in 2006 and again in 2011 assessed the attitudes of women and men about the acceptability of domestic violence. In the 2011 survey, the acceptability of partner violence on the part of women increased. The increase in rural areas was especially pronounced.

Perceptions on wife beating by women and men aged 15-49 years⁸

ISSUE	2006	2011
Women who believe a man is justified in wife beating (any reason)	47%	60%
Women in rural areas who believe a man is justified in wife beating (any reason)	57%	70%
Women in urban areas who believe a man is justified in wife beating (any reason)	36%	51%
Men who believe a man is justified in wife beating (any reason)	36%	36%

8 Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection: "Ghana's fourth progress report on the implementation of the African and Beijing Platform of Action and review report for Beijing +20" p19

VAWG IN GHANA

Inequitable gendered social norms in Ghana result not only in widespread discrimination but also in violence against women and girls. Indeed, findings from the 2006 and 2011 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) show that attitudes that tolerate violence against women have become more prevalent in Ghana in recent years, in spite of efforts made to reduce VAWG (see box 2)³. The most reliable data relating to the prevalence of VAWG comes from the Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 2008, which included a module on domestic violence (see box 3). Comprehensive data related to other forms of violence is less available. Ghana experiences a number of other harmful traditional practices which constitute violence against women, including female genital mutilation, early and forced marriage, female ritual slavery and witch camps. While not all of these practices are captured within this research, they are indicative of a social and cultural environment, which enables the systematic abuse of women and girls.

Sexual harassment outside of the home is common: in one study, 74% of female employees reported experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace⁴. Harassment and forced and transactional sex have also been recorded in educational institutes⁵. In spite of its high prevalence, there are no laws against sexual harassment. Very little reliable data is available on other forms of non-partner sexual violence with evidence suggesting that many forms of violence against women and children are not reported to formal authorities. A study conducted by Gender Centre on Violence against Women and Children in Ghana, found that 95% of women who admitted having been raped did not lodge a formal complaint with the police⁶. It can be concluded that the 531 cases of defilement recorded by the Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit in 2012⁷ represent the tip of an iceberg.

BOX 3: PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN GHANA

The 2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey included a module on domestic violence. It found that:

- 36.6% of women aged 15-49 reported experience of physical violence by an intimate partner since age 15;
- 15% of women said their first sexual experience was forced or against their will
- 27% of women experienced psychological abuse at the hands of a partner; and
- Almost a fifth (18.8% of women aged 15-49) reported some experience of sexual violence.

WHAT IS BEING DONE?

Some progress has been made in Ghana towards a political and legislative framework that combats violence against women and girls. Since ratifying the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in 1986, laws have been passed on inheritance rights, female genital mutilation, trafficking, and most recently domestic violence (2007).

Civil society and women's rights organisations in Ghana have played an important role in lobbying for improved legislation and implementation. The government has put in place a framework for the enforcement of these laws as well as a national gender policy. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is tasked with overseeing the national response to VAWG, supported by the Domestic Violence Victims Services Unit (DOVVSU) among other bodies.

Despite these efforts, implementation is weak and progress on the ground is slow. Ghana has been described as experiencing a "yawning gap" between legislation and practice. Policy implementation has not been effective, with delays in legislation and a lack of funding.⁹

9 Mitchell, L. 2011. 4. Perceptions-of-the-Domestic-Violence-and-Victims-Support-Unit-Ghana-Police-Service-2012. Available at: <https://gadnetwork.org>

10 Essel, P.2

11 2015 Budget Statement of the Government of Ghana: http://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget/Budget-Statement-2015_0.pdf. 2014 Budget statement: http://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget/2014_Budget_Statement_0.pdf

COSTS OF VAWG TO GHANA

This study aims to quantify the impact of violence on Ghana's economy and society. No such analysis has previously been carried out in Ghana, or indeed elsewhere in West Africa, and so it is difficult at present to clearly demonstrate the cost of violence to the economy and society.

The impact, once assessed, is likely to be significant. One 1998 study showed that 8% of women had been prevented from going to work, selling or making money, while 1 in 10 women had had their earnings taken away from them¹⁰. These findings demonstrate the existence of economic violence in the home, and show the connection between different forms of violence, and women's own financial security.

The government investment in VAWG prevention and response dropped from GH¢91,038,708 in 2014 to GH¢43,631,694 in the 2015 budget¹¹. Even in a period of economic contraction, this research aims to demonstrate that such cuts constitute a false saving, as the continuation of violence will have a more damaging effect on both economy and society in the long term.

HOW WILL WE ESTIMATE COSTS?

This is a unique and ambitious project. Globally, the costing studies that exist tend to concentrate on developed OECD economies. No comprehensive study exists for Ghana, and few exist for any African countries. Where research does exist for developing economies, it mainly focuses on intimate partner violence (IPV). The current study considers IPV, but also non-partner violence faced by women and girls in schools, workplaces and/or public places.

The study will use multiple innovative quantitative and qualitative methodologies. These include: household surveys with 2000 women; surveys with male and female employees in 100 businesses; gender responsive budgeting to identify the level of investment by government in addressing VAWG; narrative interviews and focus group discussions; along with innovative analytical approaches. The sample for the business surveys will be drawn from the two cities of Accra and Kumasi, shown on the map below and circled in yellow. The women's survey sample will be drawn from across Ghana with the exception of the cities of Bawku, Yendi and Bimbili, shown on the map below circled in red.

MAP OF GHANA SHOWING GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE



- 2 cities to be included for fieldwork for the Business survey = circled in YELLOW
- 3 cities to be excluded from the sampling/fieldwork for the Women's survey = circled in RED

The framework of the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) will be used to estimate the macroeconomic loss due to violence. This approach will capture the structural interlinkages that exist within real economies. For example, the loss of income for an individual woman as a result of violence impacts the economy in two ways: firstly through losses in output for a particular enterprise and sector, and secondly through losses in her consumption of goods and services. As such, the SAM framework can be used to account for the interaction or multiplier effects of costs at the individual/household, business/community and government/state level.

WHO IS CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH?

The research is carried out by an international consortium in partnership with the Institute for Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), based in Accra. In addition, a National Advisory Board (NAB) of key national, provincial and local stakeholders has been established. The NAB will ensure that the research is relevant and accurate, and that it is used effectively to advocate for increased emphasis on the elimination of violence against women and girls in Ghana.

Research Lead for Ghana: The Institute for Statistical Social and Economic Research

Principal Investigator: Dr Nata Duvvury, NUI Galway

Consortium Members: NUI Galway (Ireland); Ipsos MORI (UK); International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) (USA)

HOW WILL THE RESEARCH BE USED?

In Ghana, this research will be used to provide evidence about the urgency of eliminating violence against women and girls. Through the NAB, pressure will be brought to bear for increased investment, leadership and coordination for violence prevention and response. In consultation with the NAB, a national research uptake strategy and targeted policy advocacy strategy will be developed to ensure that the research findings and recommendations will be useful, and used, by a variety of actors including civil society organisations, ministerial policy makers, and political representatives.

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

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2.	Fauzia Issaka	DFID
3.	Lynne Henderson	DFID
4.	Elizabeth Asante	ISSER
5.	ACP Habiba Twumasi-Sarpong	DoVVSU / Police
6.	Felix Asante (observers)	ISSER
7.	Dr. Lilian Anyete-Nyampong	CHRAJ
8.	Dr. Philomena Nyarko	GSS
9.	Anthony Amuzu	GSS
10.	Daniel Degbotse	MoH
11.	Ruth Grant	NETRIGHT
12.	Victoria Natsu	MoGCSP (HT/DV)
13.	William Mensah (observer)	IPSOS GHANA
14.	Dr. Ama Pokuaa Fenny (observer)	ISSER, UG
15.	Hilary Gbedemah	The Law Institute
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