

COSTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

An Examination of the Evidence

What Works to Prevent Violence: Economic and Social Costs of Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence against women, recognised globally as a fundamental human rights violation, is widely prevalent across high-, middle-, and low-income countries. It imposes direct and indirect costs and losses on the well-being of individuals, families and communities, businesses, national economies, social and economic development and political stability. Recently,

there has been a growing interest in deriving the associated costs of violence against women. This has coincided with an explosion of costing studies in recent years, particularly after 2000. In this review of the evidence, we provide an assessment of *what* we have learned and we establish the *gaps* which still need to be addressed in future costing studies.

COSTING STUDY LOCATIONS

55

There are currently over 55 studies that quantify the costs of VAW



43

High-income country studies

4

Upper-middle income country studies

7

Lower-middle income country studies

2

Low-income country studies

TYPES OF COSTS

44%

Narrow costing

Studies that estimate either direct *or* indirect costs.

49%

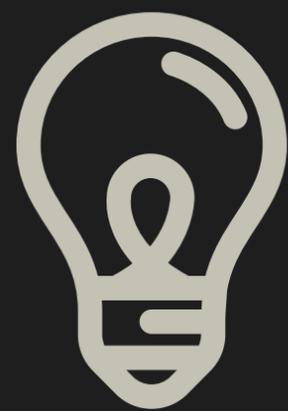
Broad costing

Studies that estimate both direct *and* indirect costs

7%

Full costing

Studies that estimate direct *and* indirect costs *and* full accounting for individuals, communities/businesses and government



No costing study has calculated the full economic cost of VAW in a developing country context

MAGNITUDE OF COSTS



KEY MESSAGES

1

Huge growth in studies

Since 1988, there have been over 55 studies that have calculated the costs of violence against women in many countries, with the majority of studies taking place after 2000. Within developing country contexts, the vast majority of studies only take place after 2004 and represents a significant gap in the current literature.

2

Providing comparisons can be difficult

Regardless of geographic location and economic status, the associated costs of violence against women are significant. However, providing a comparison of costs among developed and developing countries can be difficult. In industrialised economies, the focus is more on establishing expenditure (for example, on service provision or welfare payments) while for developing countries, the focus is on understanding the impacts on work and productivity in a context where few services are available. As a result, costing studies in the Global North are more focused on the *cost of the solution* while developing countries are more focused on the *cost of inaction*.

3

Estimating the full macroeconomic cost

Only 7% of studies provide estimates of the 'full' economic cost of violence against women. However, care is required when characterising these studies as fully reflecting the true macroeconomic cost. The current approach provides only an aggregate estimate of the loss of income: they do not reflect the macroeconomic loss owing to women experiencing violence in so far as they fail to take into account the consequent loss of output and demand. This loss can arise as a result of the *complex interlinkages* which exist in the economy and means *multiplier* effects should exist. These multiplier effects suggest that current estimations of the costs of violence against women are significantly underestimated.

4

Linking the economic and social costs

While several studies have examined the various health and social consequences of violence against women, a substantial link between the social and economic impacts has not yet been examined. This represents a significant gap in current studies examining the costs of violence against women.

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