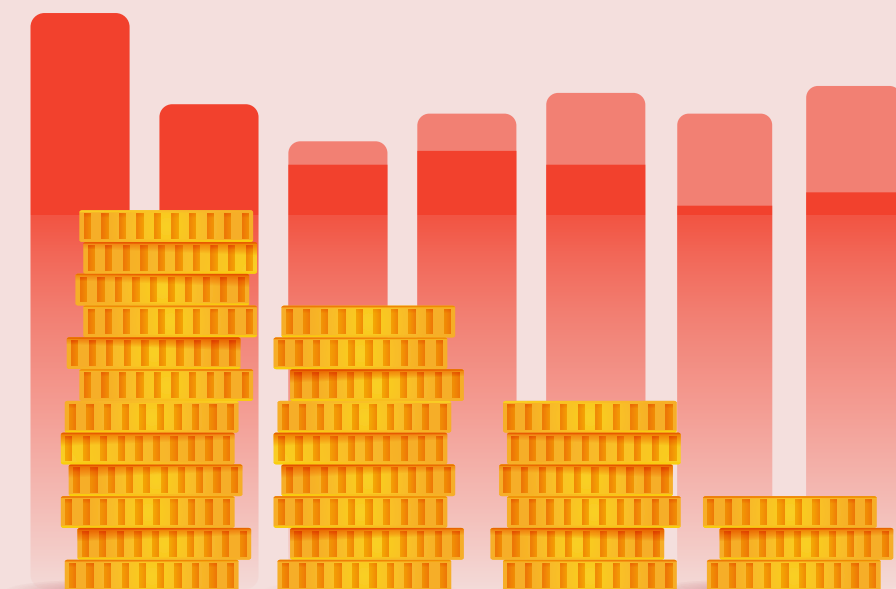


# Financing Women's Justice Needs:

Global Perspectives on Violence Against Women, and a Case Study on Uganda



Global Report

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Cover Diagram: Based on Justice aid disbursements (combined legal and judicial development and VAWG), Figure 5.2 of the report, produced using OECD DAC data.

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# Foreword

Justice for women is at the heart of sustainable development and is essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda. The close link between Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions is self-evident: without equal and effective justice for women, many of the other SDGs, including those related to education, health and decent work will not be achieved. Accessing and securing justice is not only a goal in and of itself but also a means to realizing the rights of women and girls. Effective justice systems based on the rule of law are central to women's ability to become equal partners in decision-making in equitable, inclusive, and just institutions.

The Third International Conference on Financing for Development of 2015, and its outcome, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), serve as the agreed basic framework for financing the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The AAAA is committed to the promotion of equality and the empowerment of women and girls, through tracking budget allocations among other processes. It furthermore endorses inclusive economic growth, social inclusion, and respect for all human rights, as well as the right to development and peaceful and inclusive societies. Underlying these commitments is a pledge to reconfigure social systems and the global economic system to ensure that no country or person is left behind.

Representing the third in the series of research that we have joined forces to undertake with the aim of creating awareness on women's justice needs and the justice gap, we are proud to present to all stakeholders this research on "Financing Women's Justice Needs: Global

Perspectives on Violence against Women, and a Case Study on Uganda." Our previous reports "Justice for Women" (2019) and "Justice for Women Amidst COVID-19" (2020) complement this study, which is the first of its kind and essential for a deeper understanding of the structural barriers that prevent women from accessing justice.

In this report, we underscore the interrelatedness of laws, justice policies, institutions, and budgets that promote women's human rights. All these elements are critical for keeping the wheel of justice in constant motion and for women's full benefit.

We sincerely thank the Governments of Uganda, the Netherlands, and Germany for their contributions to this study. We hope that the study will be replicated in other countries and serve as a tool for programming at national, regional, and global levels.



# Acknowledgments

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# Executive Summary

# The Setting

A woman's right to be free from violence is, first and foremost, a basic human right. This is recognized internationally and reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and several regional instruments. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.1 commits to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, while SDG 16.1 refers to significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. Yet every year, more than 326 million, or 13 per cent, of women around the world experience violence at the hands of their intimate partners.<sup>1</sup>

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), the World Bank, and Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies are playing a critical role in data collection and building the evidence on people-centred justice. The partners belong to the Justice Action Coalition, which is a high ambition multi-stakeholder coalition, launched in 2021 to achieve measurable progress in justice outcomes for people and communities by 2030 and beyond. Over 60 countries and organizations have endorsed the principles of people-centred justice.<sup>2</sup>

The partners have embarked upon this global desk review to quantify how much public financing is being invested to prevent and respond to violence against women (VAW). Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is one form of violence among many that fall under the heading of violence against women and girls, which includes trafficking of women and girls and conflict-related sexual violence. It is typically the most pervasive form of violence faced by women, and one which has emerged as a clear priority for

justice responses. The focus is on the spending side of the budget – while acknowledging the potential importance of analysing taxation within the perspective of women's human rights.<sup>3</sup> The structural nature of the drivers of violence lies in deep-seated disparities in the home, community, and society.

## Understanding the Costs of Violence

As documented in the 2019 [Justice for Women](#) report, the case for investing in violence prevention and response arises from avoiding the major costs associated with such violence. Survivors of violence encounter health costs, often suffer loss of productivity and experience financial hardship.<sup>4</sup> There are intergenerational impacts on children who experience or witness violence. There can also be repercussions on women's political participation and leadership in the community and nationally. All these costs add up and mean that violence can negatively affect a country's economic growth and prospects for human development.<sup>5</sup>

If women do not report VAW to the police or the authorities, substantive justice gaps emerge, exacerbating the denial of rights associated with the violence itself. This justice gap faced by women survivors of violence can be quantified by comparing how many women experience VAW to how many incidents are reported in criminal statistics.<sup>6</sup> The comparison starkly reveals enormous justice gaps affecting women in all countries for which data is available – in 23 of the 34 countries, fewer than one per cent of survivors appear in criminal justice statistics. In only two countries – France and New Zealand – do more than 10 per cent of women report experiencing IPV. In Australia, the gap exceeds 95 per cent. In Uganda, the number of cases being reported to the police is insignificant relative to the prevalence of VAW reported in national surveys: in 2022, 44 per cent of women aged 15-49 had experienced physical violence, but fewer than 6 per cent of them had sought help from the police.<sup>7</sup>



## Measuring Investments in Violence Prevention and Response

Knowledge about how much governments are spending to prevent and respond to violence against women is scarce. Investments to address these disparities – for example, closing the earnings gap between women and men and increasing women's financial independence – would help in reducing the risk of future violence. However, these relationships are methodologically complex to capture, and these broader types of investments are not included in the estimates presented. The assessment of evidence on gender budgeting initiatives suggests that there have been some important gains, but also cases where limited impacts are evident. A recent systematic review, which covered 78 relevant studies published by the end of 2000, concluded that “most studies scrutinize the ex-ante stages of gender budgeting... (and) little is known about the outcome and impact of gender budgeting.”<sup>8</sup> Across the 72 developing countries covered by a recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) survey of government officials, about one-fourth reported that more programmes incorporated goals for women and girls, but in only 10 per cent of those countries, policies were changed or rules or regulations modified due to budgeting.

At the same time, however, around one-third of officials in both the G20 and the broader set of countries felt that they lacked adequate information to assess the impacts of gender budgeting.<sup>9</sup> Under SDG Target 5.c, governments have committed to “[a]dopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.”<sup>10</sup> The indicator that has been developed to track progress, SDG 5.c.1, is a fiscal process indicator that measures whether a country has a system to track allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. However, it does not measure how much finance is allocated. Currently, only about one in four countries in the world – 26 out of the 105 reporting, meet all three

criteria set by the target and are thereby deemed to have tracking systems in place. Regional averages range from a low of 13 per cent in Latin America up to 62 per cent in Central and Southern Asia.<sup>11</sup>

Several challenges confront attempts to undertake budgetary analyses of VAW at the national level, which are multiplied at the global level. The core general constraint is the absence of fiscal data showing public investments in VAW prevention and response. These constraints limit the analysis of spending on violence prevention and response, even where gender budgeting is in place, making it impossible to establish a full global picture of public spending on violence prevention and response.

The desk review carried out for this research identified data providing a snapshot for a dozen countries, where it was possible to establish the magnitude of spending. One key finding that emerges is that, even where systems of gender budgeting are relatively well developed, the budgets may not provide insights into the level and pattern of public investments to advance justice for women experiencing violence.

Moreover, while most countries now have national laws against VAW, their scope varies, and many do not legislatively provide for budget allocations. As underlined by the 2010 UN Women guidance on VAW legislation, this is essential.<sup>12</sup> For example, the Mexican Law on Access of Women to a Life Free of Violence (2007) established obligations for the State and municipalities to take budgetary and administrative measures to ensure the rights of women to a life free of violence.

## Research Findings

Data on national spending on violence against women is not available in any global financial databases. The main global source, the IMF's Government Financial Statistics, does not include this category. To ascertain spending on VAW, it was necessary to look at individual country documents. The study restricted the fiscal sources to budget documents rather than more

general plans, which may or may not be reflected in the actual budget. This information was only available for two years, 2018 and 2021, as shown in Table 4.1, for up to 12 countries (five countries have only one of those years available). Another key constraint is that the analysis is limited to national-level data, and in countries with federal or decentralized systems, lower levels of government may play a key role in resourcing justice for women.

This study finds very low levels of spending on VAW around the world. Among the 12 countries for which budget data was accessed, the highest share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 0.02 per cent, in the cases of Australia and Spain. The highest budget share can be seen for New Zealand (0.56 per cent of the budget), followed by Albania and Bangladesh (both 0.3 per cent).

This is only a very small part of the share of budget spending going to justice in this set of countries, defined using the IMF functional classification on “Public Order and Safety” which includes expenditures for police services, fire protection services, law courts, prisons, research and development on public order and safety, as well as public order and safety not elsewhere classified. This ranges from a high of 5.8 per cent of the budget in Albania, down to below one per cent in Australia.

**Table ES.1 National Budget Spending on Violence Against Women and on Justice, as a Percentage of the Budget and National Income, 2021**

Country	Spending on VAW, 2021		Spending on justice, 2021	
	Share GDP (%)	Share Budget (%)	Share GDP (%)	Share Budget (%)
<b>Albania</b>	0.002	0.30	1.80	5.80
<b>Australia</b>	0.020	0.07	1.90	4.60
<b>Bangladesh</b>	0.004	0.288	n/a	n/a
<b>Canada</b>	0.007	0.124	1.8	4.30
<b>France</b>	0.01	0.024	1.70	2.90
<b>India</b>	0.0001	0.004	n/a	n/a
<b>Ireland</b>	0.002	0.009	0.80	3.40
<b>Mexico</b>	0.001	0.0137	n/a	n/a
<b>New Zealand</b>	0.01	0.556	1.90	5.10
<b>Spain</b>	0.02	0.15	2.00	4.10
<b>Uganda</b>	0.031	0.0073	n/a	n/a
<b>United Kingdom</b>	n/a	n/a	2.10	4.30

**Sources:** Total budget spending, GDP, and justice spending taken from IMF Government Finance Statistics database, as available (unless otherwise noted). Justice expenditures are defined using the IMF functional classification. Sources for VAW spending are listed in Chapter 5.

There are nonetheless some encouraging country-level findings. For example, Australia was the first country in the world to introduce budgeting for women's concerns in 1984 with the publication of a Women's Budget, aiming to ensure that important budget decisions of the federal government would be made "with full knowledge of their impact on women."<sup>13</sup> This approach has recently gained major momentum, with a new National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032, accompanied by action plans, and the Minister of Finance also holding the portfolio of Ministry of Women, among other factors. Australia's Women's Budget Statement is an official budget document published as part of the annual budget by the Ministry of Finance, which provides an easy and transparent way to track the federal government's spending, including on addressing domestic and family violence.<sup>14</sup>

Public funding in Australia to address domestic and family VAW has risen in recent years – from about AUD two million (USD 1.36 million) annually in 2010, 2013, and 2014 to AUD 644 million (USD 438 million) by 2023. There was a steep increase in spending between 2021 and 2022 (rising from AUD 157 to 424 million), and domestic violence has been firmly on the federal budget agenda since 2021. The share of the federal budget addressing domestic violence has risen every year since 2015, from below 0.001 per cent each year until 2014 to almost 0.1 per cent of the budget in 2023.

A thorough analysis of Uganda, presented in Chapter 6, shows significant progress in implementing budgeting for women through policies, laws, and systems. However, financing for the delivery of justice for VAW is still inadequate. The multi-sectoral nature of justice delivery and the cross-cutting nature of women's issues contribute to a complex set of arrangements, involving multiple state and non-state actors, which makes budgeting for women quite complex in Uganda. This is especially vivid in the case of justice for women experiencing violence.

The review of policy statements and annual work plans of implementing agencies in Uganda<sup>15</sup> found that there were no specific budget lines for eliminating VAW, as these interventions are accommodated under cross-cutting issues.<sup>16</sup> This made it difficult to ascertain the actual amounts allocated and spent on the prevention of VAW.<sup>17</sup> Inconsistency and the lack of transparency in financing for VAW in Uganda is shown in very limited dedicated budget lines, low and conditional funding to local governments, and uncoordinated, low, and opaque donor funding for access to justice and VAW to key local actors, including civil society organizations (CSOs) in implementing the National Policy on eliminating violence against women.

The available evidence shows that interventions aimed at reducing the prevalence of violence against women and improving care for survivors remain grossly under-resourced in Uganda. Budgetary shortfalls for the elimination of VAW initiatives are observed across all government agencies responsible for tackling this issue. Because of funding shortfalls, interventions fail to meet the global standard requirements on the elimination of VAW and the three priority actions of prevention, response services, and ending impunity outlined in the National Policy on eliminating violence against women.

## Conclusions

### Several major conclusions emerge from the global analysis, specific to VAW:

1. The focus on addressing VAW has grown and is consistent with the SDG agenda on Goals 5 and 16, and reflected in national development plans and strategies.
2. Most countries have laws in place that address VAW, although the scope of legislation varies.
3. There is extensive evidence of justice gaps faced by women experiencing violence, especially demonstrated by the fact that low percentages of women report violence to the police.

4. Very few countries publish fiscal data that enable public spending on justice for women experiencing violence. Currently, only one in four governments are meeting obligations under SDG Target 5.c.
5. In those countries where quantification is possible, the amounts being spent are small – typically far below one per cent of the budget, and a tiny share of national income.
6. The result is that women survivors face major justice gaps, across a range of areas – from non-reporting to police to delayed responses and lack of legal assistance – which means they are unable to access the allocated resources.
7. There is positive evidence of increased development funding directed toward addressing VAW, with such allocations now more consistently tracked and reported. This increase in development support for addressing VAW contrasts with overall declines in aid to the justice sector more broadly.
8. Women's groups, public scrutiny, and accountability mechanisms all play a critical role in seeking to hold governments accountable for their responses, or the lack thereof, to VAW.

## Recommendations

The global analysis leads to a series of recommended steps, to address budgeting in more general terms, as well as strengthen fiscal reporting and budgeting specifically related to addressing VAW. The recommendations are largely directed at governments, with some specific points for consideration by development partners. Each of the recommendations is presented at a general level, and requires consideration and adaptation by country stakeholders and advocates. Recommendations that are specific to Uganda are presented in Chapter 6.

## Recommendations on Fiscal Reporting and Budgeting

### For Governments:

- Governments should work to meet their commitments in SDG Target 5.c. Currently, only one in four governments are meeting this SDG target.
- Introduce discrete budget lines to track spending on VAW. This will likely require country-level analysis to establish spending and policies that mainstream VAW prevention, alongside directly targeted measures and programmes focused on prevention and response.
- Define measurable objectives and benchmarks for tracking inputs and outcome indicators related to VAW. While there is currently no agreed-upon standard, further work and analysis are needed. In general, the targets presented in national plans, such as Australia's new NAP, are often underdeveloped. The GRPFM Indicators developed by the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) could feed into the establishment of these objectives and benchmarks.
- Collect disaggregated data on women's justice needs, including financial costs, to inform financial planning and decision-making.
- Consider the use of the key indicators in the [Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Finance Management](#) (GRPFM),<sup>18</sup> in particular, those focusing on tracking and reporting (Indicators 6 and 7), evaluating impacts on service delivery, applied to justice service delivery (Indicator 8) and collecting disaggregated performance information for justice service delivery (Indicator 5).

### **For Development Partners:**

- Strengthen financial tracking for VAW. The High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality was established by the Secretary-General's Executive Committee to review and track United Nations budgets and expenditures across the system.<sup>19</sup> In line with this objective, United Nations agencies should make structural and operational changes required to enable financial tracking of spending on VAW.<sup>20</sup>
- Bilateral and multilateral partners should expand efforts to report spending to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) under the special code for Violence Against Women.

Reporting by development partners should distinguish which government agencies are being financed, and levels of support for local women's organizations working on VAW.

## **Recommendations for Increasing Budget Spending on Violence Against Women**

### **For Governments and Development Partners:**

- Review appropriateness of current spending levels, including the balance between prevention and response, supported by evidence of what works. The collection of disaggregated information could help (i) estimate the resources required to effectively respond to VAW, (ii) identify financial deficits where budget line items are already identified in the country's budget documents, and (iii) better justify the need for additional financing if current allocations are insufficient.
- Where needed, increase budget allocations to combat and respond to VAW, and ensure that the relevant agencies are adequately resourced.
- Assess and, where needed, increase financial support for local women's organizations to

strengthen their advocacy efforts, service provision and monitoring of government performance.

- Review policies and laws in sectors complementary to the legal system that affect women's experience and response to violence. Public financing decisions should recognize the complexity of violence and consider the potential multiplier effects associated with jointly investing in these complementary systems.
- Invest in data systems to enhance measurement of the extent of VAW prevalence in different contexts. This could include considering the combination of high-frequency data and comprehensive survey data to better understand the scale of the problem.
- Announce targeted levels of public investments to combat VAW, as a route to increase political commitment and public scrutiny.

## **Recommendations on Closing Justice Gaps**

### **For Governments, with Support from International Partners and CSOs:**

- Review coverage of national laws addressing violence against women to ensure compliance with internationally accepted standards including on definitions of violence against women and intimate partner violence – for example, marital rape.
- Implement measures to increase reporting by survivors to police, and monitor progress.
  - Identify country-specific barriers and institutional changes needed to increase reporting.
  - Review protocols and support available to survivors to eliminate barriers that deter justice seeking. For example, police officers, who are often the first

point of contact for survivors entering the legal system, could be trained to be more empathetic and sensitive to the needs of women who have experienced violence.

- Develop strategies to protect women and prevent retaliation from perpetrators, thereby encouraging increased reporting.
- Develop survivor-centred approaches to justice to close implementation gaps between the existing legal frameworks and their practical implementation. For example:
  - Create protocols addressed to formal justice actors on how to appropriately handle cases of VAW, such as introducing different evidentiary standards.
  - Implement capacity building programmes.
  - Establish specialized courts for VAW cases.
  - Ensure that efforts to close justice gaps are sufficiently resourced.

## Recommendations on Increasing Accountability

### **For Governments, with Support from International Partners and Engagement of CSOs:**

- Regularly publish spending plans and reports on budget execution related to measures addressing VAW.
- Consult with CSOs, including groups representing survivors, to determine spending priorities and assess the adequacy of allocated resources.



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# List of Acronyms

<b>AAAA</b>	Addis Ababa Action Agenda
<b>AUD</b>	Australian Dollars
<b>BFP</b>	Budget Framework Paper
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
<b>CSBAG</b>	Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and Health Survey
<b>EOC</b>	Equal Opportunities Commission
<b>FIDA-Uganda</b>	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers
<b>FWODE</b>	Forum for Women in Democracy
<b>FY(s)</b>	Fiscal Year(s)
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IDLO</b>	International Development Law Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>JLOS</b>	Justice, Law and Order Sector
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate Partner Violence
<b>MDAs</b>	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
<b>PEFA</b>	Public Expenditure Financial Assessment
<b>PFM</b>	Public Financial Management
<b>MFPED</b>	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
<b>MGLSD</b>	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
<b>OAG</b>	Office of the Auditor General
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance

<b>ODI</b>	Overseas Development Institute
<b>ODPP</b>	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>VAW</b>	Violence Against Women
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UPF</b>	Uganda Police Force

# Chapter 1: Introduction

# Background

In 2015, global leaders recognized the rule of law and justice as essential tools for achieving sustainable development. Target three of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (otherwise known as SDG 16.3) seeks to ensure equal access to justice for all. Justice for women and girls is at the heart of sustainable development and is essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda. There are close links between Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on gender equality and women's empowerment and SDG 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Moreover, without equal and effective justice for women, many other SDGs, including those related to education, health and decent work, will not be achieved. Accessing and securing justice is not only a goal in and of itself but also a means to realising the rights of women and girls.

Under SDG Target 5.c., governments have committed to adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels." The indicator that has been developed to track progress – 5.c.1 – is a fiscal process indicator that measures whether a country has a system to track allocations for women. It does *not* measure how much finance is allocated. Currently, only about one in four countries in the world – 26 out of the 105 reporting, meet all three criteria and are thereby deemed to have tracking systems in place, with regional averages ranging from a low of 13 per cent in Latin America up to 63 per cent in Central and Southern Asia.<sup>21</sup>

In the same year, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) provided an agreed basic framework for financing the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>22</sup> The AAAA is committed to the promotion of equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including through tracking budget allocations for women and girls, among other processes. The AAAA endorses inclusive economic growth, social inclusion, respect for all

human rights – including the right to development and peaceful and inclusive societies.<sup>23</sup>

There has been progress since 2015 with an increased recognition of SDG 16 as a critical enabler of other SDGs. The Task Force on Justice Report provides most recent estimates of the global justice gap, showing that 5.1 billion people lacked meaningful access to justice as of 2019.<sup>24</sup> A strong movement on people-centred justice is committed to close this justice gap.<sup>25</sup>

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), the World Bank and Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies are playing a critical role in data collection and building the evidence on people-centred justice. The partners belong to the Justice Action Coalition, which is a high ambition multi-stakeholder coalition, launched in 2021 to achieve measurable progress in justice outcomes for people and communities by 2030 and beyond. Over 60 countries and organizations have endorsed the principles of people-centred justice.<sup>26</sup>

On 11 November 2021, members and partners of the Justice Action Coalition agreed on a [Joint Action Plan](#), which includes a list of national and international priorities as well as [joint deliverables](#), to be produced by and with partner organizations working on people-centred justice.<sup>27</sup> The partners, UN Women, UNDP, IDLO, World Bank and Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, have embarked upon this study as one of the joint deliverables and seek to highlight the importance of financing justice for women to prevent and respond to violence against women.

Women's justice needs have been documented through a series of desk reviews and household surveys.<sup>28</sup> Challenges to women's justice needs include discriminatory laws, lack of protection from violence, legal identity, labour, and property rights.

While extensive research has been undertaken on women's justice needs, research on financial investments in justice for women is relatively scarce. The Justice for Women Report of 2019 noted the need for addressing this knowledge gap and highlighted that "unequal access to justice is expensive. Evidence is mounting that unresolved legal problems are costly both to the individuals directly affected and to society."<sup>29</sup>

## Research Scope, Methodology, and Limitations

This global study is a desk review which aims to quantify how much public financing is being allocated to prevent and respond to Violence against Women (VAW).<sup>30</sup> Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one form of VAW. It is characterized as the most pervasive form of violence facing women, and one which has emerged as a clear priority for justice responses. Other forms include trafficking of women and girls and conflict-related sexual violence.

The analysis seeks to capture public investments in both prevention and responses to VAW, within the constraints of existing data, and recognising that a range of programmes and policies may contribute to prevention and/or responses. Prevention programmes include teaching safe and healthy relationship skills and working to change harmful social norms.<sup>31</sup> Government responses to violence include criminal prosecutions, support for survivors of violence (such as cash assistance, emergency accommodations/shelters, and counselling), as well as legal aid, specialized courts and tribunals. Protection orders are a response that can also prevent, or at least reduce, the risk of future violence.

The study is based on a review of peer-reviewed and grey literature, particularly the reports of multilateral agencies and governments. It is informed by a background paper which reviewed

national development plans and justice sector strategies, national budgets and reports, and a detailed case study on Uganda (summarized in Chapter 6).

The focus of this study is on the spending side of the budget – while acknowledging the potential importance of analysing taxation.<sup>32</sup> We recognize that the structural nature of the drivers of violence lie in deep-seated disparities in the home, community and society. For this reason, we would expect investments to address these disparities – for example, closing the earnings gap between women and men, and increasing women's financial independence would help to reduce the risk of future violence. Some spending that is not tagged as preventing VAW, such as structural economic measures promoting equity in pay and employment and social welfare support, may have substantive long-term benefits in reducing the risk of violence. However, this is methodologically complex to capture, and these broader types of investments have not been included in the estimates presented.

The scale of public financing for violence prevention and response is considered in the context of the overall government budget and economy. This includes presenting the share of the budget allocated to responding to VAW, as well as its proportion relative to the national income. This study had initially sought to review several fiscal years since 2018 to examine financial commitments and implementation of measures related to VAW. However, this proved impossible due to the general lack of fiscal data.

Several challenges confront attempts to undertake budgetary analyses of VAW at the national level, which are multiplied at the global level. The core constraint is the absence of fiscal data showing public investments in VAW prevention and response. Most countries do not have systems in place to track spending on equality. As recently reported under SDG indicator 5.c.1 (Box 1.1), and to be discussed in Chapter 3, only about one in four countries have systems in place to track and make public allocations for women's rights and women's

empowerment.<sup>33</sup> Even for countries that do have fiscal processes in place for reporting under SDG indicator 5.c.1, this indicator does not measure quantity or quality of finance allocated.

**Box 1.1 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 5.c.1**

SDG Indicator 5.c.1 “Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment” measures progress towards Target 5.c. of the SDGs to “adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.” It links the policy and legal requirements for equality with resource allocations for their implementation. By tracking and making resource allocations to measures such as eliminating violence against women public, governments commit to higher levels of transparency and accountability in budget decision making.<sup>34</sup>

Budget allocations for VAW prevention and response typically do not appear as a line item in published national budgets.<sup>35</sup> National spending on VAW is not available in any global financial databases. The main global fiscal data source, Government Financial Statistics of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), does not include this specific category of expenditure. We restricted the fiscal sources to budget documents rather than more general plans, which may or may not be reflected in the actual budget. Another key constraint is that we are limited to national level data, particularly at central level. This is a limitation in countries with federal or decentralized systems, as lower levels of government play a key role in resourcing women’s justice needs.

The foregoing constraints limit the analysis of spending on VAW prevention and response. There is a serious lack of systematic information on budgetary allocations to combat VAW. It is therefore impossible to establish a full global picture of public spending on violence prevention and response. Available fiscal data on VAW prevention and response is partial, dispersed, and difficult to aggregate. In practice, governments tend to make one-off spending announcements, and the data has not been systematically collated, so it is not possible to present a national, let alone a global picture. There are a few exceptions, including the case of Australia, as presented in later parts of the report.

Announced spending may not be implemented as promised. Weaknesses in budget execution have been linked to the fact that “supplementary provisions will render them redundant; amounts given by line item are deliberately loose or unclear, in anticipation of a real allocation during budget execution; and/or in practice, the priorities are set outside the formal budget framework, for example, by the president’s office.”<sup>36</sup> While this is not the case in all countries, it is an important caveat to bear in mind when considering spending announcements and planned budget allocations.

The desk review identified data providing a snapshot of public spending on VAW for a dozen countries. Only two years were consistently available, 2018 and 2021, as shown in Table 5.1, for up to 12 countries (five countries have only one year available). Chapter 6 presents a case study on Uganda that was commissioned for this report.

# Chapter 2: The Case for Investing in Justice for Women and Girls Experiencing Violence

# Introduction

A woman's right to be free from violence is first and foremost a human right. This is recognized internationally and reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development along with several regional instruments. SDG Target 5.1 commits to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls everywhere, while SDG Target 16.1 refers to significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

This chapter briefly reviews the cost of VAW to women and society, outlines commitments to SDGs 5 and 16, and examines the coverage of national legislation on VAW. It also provides new estimates of the share of women survivors reporting to the authorities based on the best available data. The existence of legal frameworks that prohibit and respond to VAW is a critical piece of the puzzle to understanding financing women's justice needs. Specifically, if key national laws are absent, or overly narrow in scope, or even if such laws exist but women do not report violence to the authorities, there are major justice gaps that shape the effectiveness of public investments to combat VAW.

There are established global and regional standards for preventing and responding to VAW. These include the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2013), focused on the elimination and prevention of all forms of VAW; the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, better known as the Istanbul Convention; the Updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; the Essential Services

Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, Core Elements and Quality Guidelines, designed by UN Women, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNFPA, UNDP and UNODC; Guidelines produced by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences; and General Recommendation 33 of the CEDAW Committee on Women's Access to Justice.

These frameworks encompass multidisciplinary preventive and protective measures, such as emergency barring orders, protection orders and access to shelters. They are implemented within the broader context of strengthening multisectoral services, programmes and responses to VAW. These include state and independent women's shelters and counselling centres, 24-hour hotlines, social aid services, "one-stop" centres, child services and public housing services to provide low-threshold, easily accessible and safe assistance for women and children, as well as protection and support.

The emerging picture underlines enormous justice gaps facing women survivors, setting the stage for an examination of financing to address justice for women. As documented in the 2019 Justice for Women report, published by UN Women, IDLO, World Bank and Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, the case for investing in violence prevention and response arises from avoiding the major costs associated with such violence. Survivors of violence encounter health costs, and often suffer lost productivity and experience financial hardship.<sup>37</sup> There are intergenerational impacts on children who experience or witness violence. There can also be repercussions on women's political participation and leadership in the community and nationally. All these costs add up and mean that violence can negatively affect a country's economic growth and prospects for human development.<sup>38</sup>

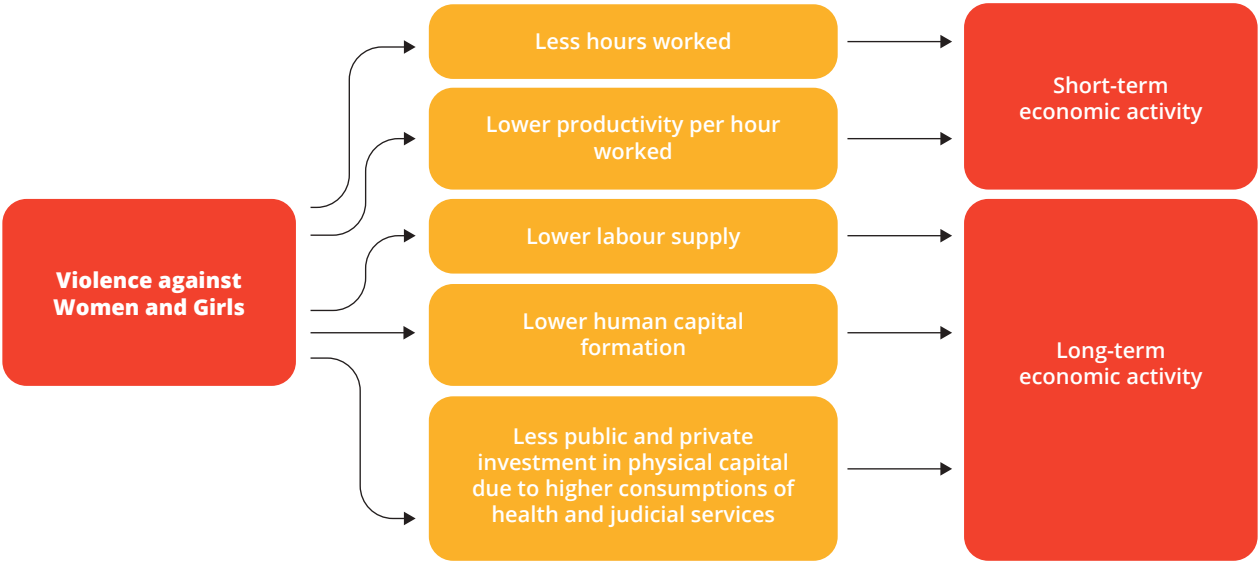
Figure 2.1 outlines the transmission channels from VAW to lower economic growth, in the short and long term, as recently laid out by the IMF.<sup>39</sup> The major economic channels arise from



the damage to physical and mental health which reduce both working hours and productivity per hour worked, lower investments in physical capital due to higher costs of health, legal, and

judicial services, which can extend into the longer term. Larger direct costs can arise due to housing costs for survivors seeking safety, as well as intergenerational effects on children.

**Figure 2.1 Violence against Women and Girls and Economic Growth: Transmission Channels**



**Source:** Rasmané Ouedraogo and David Stenzel, "The Heavy Economic Toll of Gender-Based Violence: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY, November 1, 2021), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4026507>.

In conceptualizing and measuring the costs of violence, an important basic distinction is between tangible and intangible costs.<sup>40</sup> Tangible costs include the loss of income, medical costs arising from injuries, and the costs of policing and the criminal justice system. Spending for health services associated with VAW can include emergency department visits, hospitalizations and outpatient visits, services of physicians, dentists, physical therapists, mental health professionals, ambulance transport and paramedic assistance. Some key short-term costs related to physical, sexual, and emotional violence may also extend into the longer term.

Lost income or productivity can be quantified using data on the number of days of work missed by survivors.<sup>41</sup> The workdays missed are the number of days when survivors were unable to perform paid work and/or household chores (including household chores and childcare for women not employed outside the home) because of illness, injury, or disability related to violence. The extent of lost economic potential and aspiration vary depending on the profile of survivors – if rates of VAW are worst among the 15–25 year age group, the economic repercussions would likely be larger.

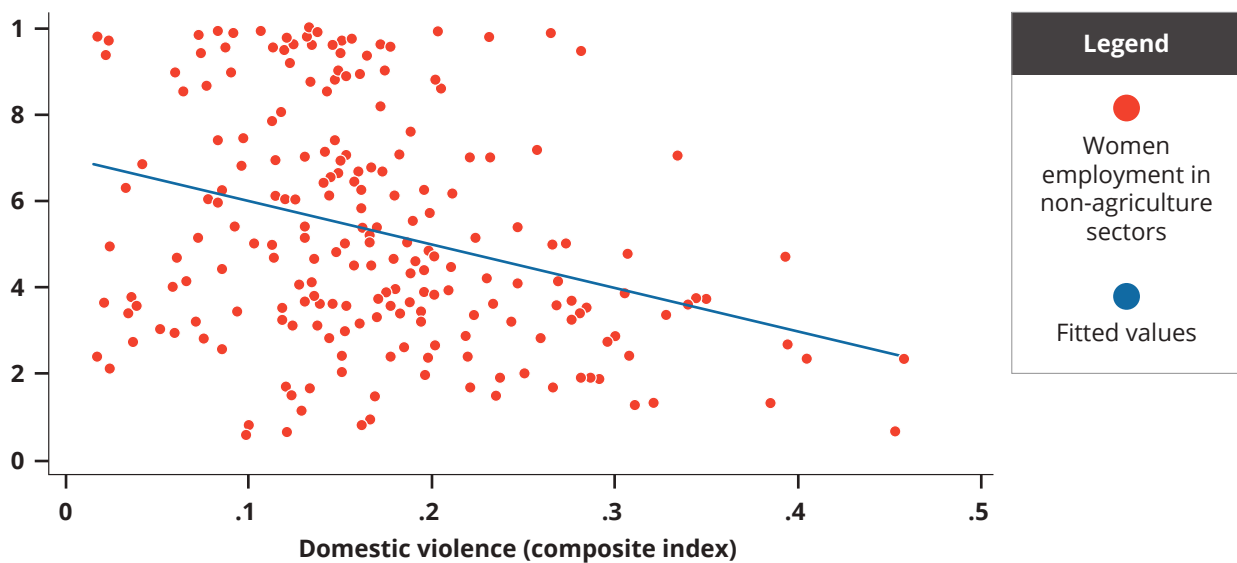
The tangible costs of VAW have been calculated across a wide diversity of settings. World Bank estimates for the tangible costs of VAW range between one and five per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with figures for Viet Nam, Bangladesh, and Uganda ranging between one and two per cent of GDP.<sup>42</sup>

UN Women estimates the economic costs of VAW in Viet Nam, using survey data to establish the number of work days typically lost from this type of violence, to which the costs of medical treatment, police, legal support, counselling, and judicial services were added, leading to estimated annual costs of about 1.4 per cent of GDP.<sup>43</sup> It is estimated that in the US, survivors of VAW lose a total of eight million days of paid work each year, and between 21-60 per cent of survivors of VAW lose their jobs due to reasons stemming from abuse.<sup>44</sup>

Recent IMF investigations of the economic consequences of VAW in 18 Sub-Saharan African countries find that an increase in the share of women subject to violence by one percentage point can reduce economic activities (as proxied by nightlights) by up to eight per cent.<sup>45</sup> This economic cost was due to the significant drop in female employment, and worsened in countries without protective laws against domestic violence. The results show a negative correlation between women's employment (in the non-agriculture sectors) and VAW prevalence, as shown in Figure 2.2.

Intangible costs of VAW include pain and suffering, and reduced quality of life.<sup>46</sup> Estimates of intangible costs per violent incident are much larger than tangible costs.<sup>47</sup>

**Figure 2.2 Relationship Between VAW and Women's Employment**



**Source:** Rasmané Ouedraogo and David Stenzel, "The Heavy Economic Toll of Gender-Based Violence: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY, November 1, 2021), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4026507>.

Total tangible and intangible costs of VAW have been estimated in various settings. A report commissioned by the Canadian government estimated the total economic impact of spousal violence at CAD 7.4 billion (USD 6 billion), amounting to CAD 220 annually (USD 180) per Canadian, of which about 7.3 per cent (CAD 545.2 million) were costs incurred by the judicial and criminal justice system, including policing services, courts and legal aid.<sup>48</sup> The bulk – CAD 6 billion (USD 4.9 billion) – was borne by the primary survivors, in which the intangible costs of pain and suffering and loss of life accounted for over 91 per cent. Tangible costs – due to medical care, hospitalizations, lost wages, missed school days and stolen/damaged property – amounted to CAD 525 million (USD 430 million).<sup>49</sup>

A case study of the United States estimates lifetime costs of VAW at USD 103,767 per survivor, totalling nearly USD 3.6 trillion over survivors' lifetimes, based on 43 million adults with victimization history.<sup>50</sup> This estimate included USD 2.1 trillion (59 per cent of total) in medical costs, USD 1.3 trillion (37 per cent) in lost productivity among survivors and perpetrators, USD 73 billion (two per cent) in criminal justice activities, and USD 62 billion (two per cent) in other costs, including survivor property loss or damage.<sup>51</sup> The same study finds that government sources cover an estimated USD 1.3 trillion (37 per cent) of the lifetime economic burden.<sup>52</sup>

In the case of the United Kingdom, estimates inclusive of loss of life satisfaction<sup>53</sup> amount to about 10 per cent of GDP.<sup>54</sup> A narrower approach adopted by the United Kingdom Home Office – limited to tangible costs – estimates that the cost for a single survivor of domestic abuse is GBP 34,015 (USD 42,000), totalling GBP 66 billion pounds (USD 81.4 billion) or about three per cent of the United Kingdom's GDP in 2017.<sup>55</sup>

Evidence suggests that the long-term costs of VAW are substantial. Several studies have estimated the lifetime health costs of VAW at the country level by multiplying an aggregate "top-down" estimate of short-term annual costs with an estimated duration for which the cost applies. This methodology was applied to measure the

lifetime excess economic cost of VAW for women in the United States at USD 103,767 (2014) per person with 59 per cent attributable to medical costs.<sup>56</sup>

A recent Australian investigation of the health impacts of VAW, documents long-term costs, with some costs developing years after the violence began and persisting after it has ceased.<sup>57</sup> The study quantifies the excess lifetime out-of-hospital and pharmaceutical health costs of women who experience VAW, using the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, and applies a novel combination of econometric and actuarial techniques to a large and unique dataset.<sup>58</sup> It found that women with a history of VAW had 42 per cent higher lifetime health costs per person than women who do not experience VAW.<sup>59</sup>

Considering the major costs incurred by VAW, the rest of this introduction further substantiates the scale and urgency of the challenge, by presenting the most recent global data on the prevalence of violence. The global picture covers all regions and country groups and is based on representative population surveys.

## Rates and Patterns of IPV around the World

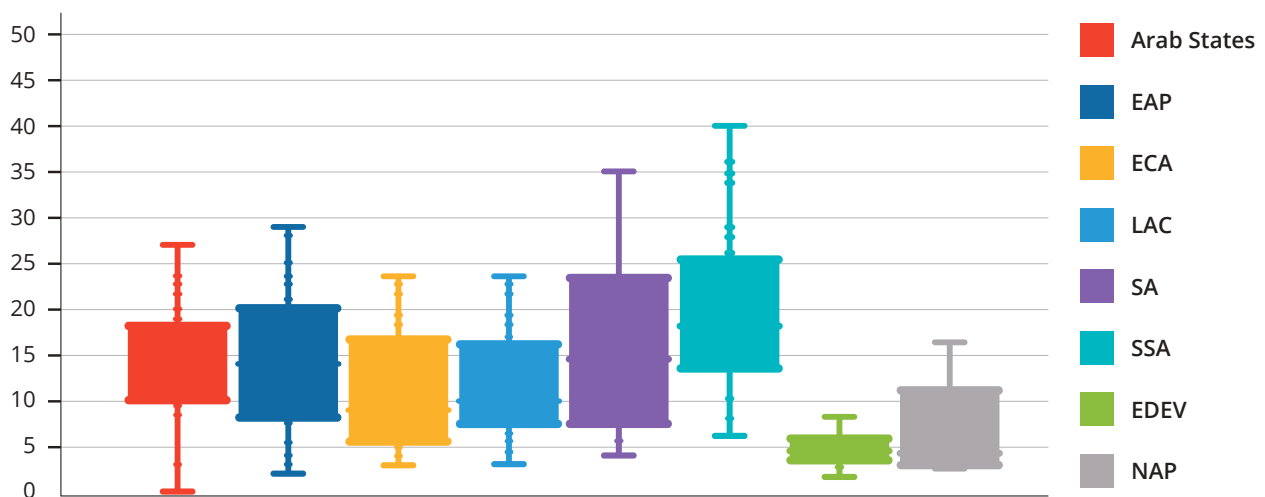
Recent estimates suggest that more than 326 million women, or 13 per cent, around the world experience violence annually at the hands of their intimate partners.<sup>60</sup> The prevalence indicator used by the United Nations SDG and the WHO measures "the percentage of ever-partnered<sup>61</sup> women 15-49 years old in a given population who have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the 12 months preceding the survey."<sup>62</sup> The figure is based on self-reporting in surveys which generally follow special protocols to protect survivors but may nonetheless underestimate the true prevalence. Despite a similar methodology underpinning the surveys, the instruments are

implemented in different contexts with different implementation challenges. Behind this global aggregate, there are large differences in current rates of VAW across regions and country groups (Figure 2.3),<sup>63</sup> as well as within countries.

The lowest national rates of current VAW, where data is available, are reported from Canada, Hong Kong, and Switzerland, at less than two per cent, and the highest rate is in Iraq, where a shocking 45 per cent of women have experienced VAW in the past year. Across developing regions, average rates of VAW are lowest in Central and Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean (all seven per cent), and highest in

Arab States, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia (around 18 per cent). Variations within regions are illustrated by the high and low outliers. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the highest in the region is Madagascar (35 per cent) and the lowest in Comoros, at seven per cent. These wide variations underline the scope for improvement, especially in the worst performing countries.

**Figure 2.3 Share of Women Who Have Experienced VAW in the Last 12 Months, By Region and Country Outliers (per cent)**



**Note:** EAP (East Asia and Pacific), ECA (Europe and Central Asia), LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean), SA (South Asia), SSA (Sub-Saharan Africa), EDEV (European Developed), NAP (North America)

**Source:** United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “SDG Global Database,” <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>.

National average prevalence rates do not reveal higher risk faced by certain groups. For example, the current prevalence of VAW in Australia is around 1.5 per cent, but much higher for women with different experiences – notably Indigenous women and women living in rural and remote areas. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women report experiencing violence in the last 12 months at 3.1 times the rate of non-Indigenous women.<sup>64</sup> Women in rural, regional, and remote areas are 1.4 times more likely to have experienced IPV than women living in capital cities.<sup>65</sup> Higher prevalence in rural areas has been traced to several factors, including geographic and social isolation, lack of accessible support services, economic dislocation, problems with privacy, confidentiality and anonymity in small communities, and greater access to firearms and other weapons.<sup>66</sup>

## Setting the Scene: A Review of Government Commitments Towards SDG 5 and 16

High level government commitments towards SDG 5 and 16 are reflected in national development plans and justice sector strategies. A desk review carried out for this study examined the most recently available national development plans and justice sector strategies of 192 out of 193 United Nations Member States (Uganda is covered in depth in Chapter 6).<sup>67</sup>

The national development plans and justice sector strategies were assessed on two fronts – whether these advanced SDG 5 or 16, and whether they concurrently promoted both goals (overlapping commitment). As of May 2023, most countries had national development plans that committed to advancing SDGs 5 and 16. More countries had national development plans that advanced SDG 16 (164), compared to SDG 5 (134). At the same time, justice sector strategies in 165

countries advanced SDG16, whereas only 82 of those strategies advanced SDG 5.<sup>68</sup> In terms of strategies that promoted both SDG 5 and 16, 82 justice sector policies and 156 national development plans were found to include measures covering both goals.

For instance, the Lao Justice Sector Development Plan 2021-2025 has several measures to increase access to justice (Target 16.3) for its citizens, such as establishing legal aid offices in additional districts, although women and girls were not explicitly identified as beneficiaries. Costa Rica's National Development Strategy 2020-2030, which commits to strengthening programmes that promote the human rights of women, is advancing SDG 5. In Bangladesh's Eighth Five-Year Plan 2020-2025, combatting VAW is a key focus. The plan emphasizes greater investment in capacity building at the local levels to take legal actions to suppress violence, effectively handle women's rights related cases and coordinate with the police, administration, and judiciary consistent with CEDAW obligations.

As an example of overlapping commitment, the Dominican Republic's National Development Strategy 2030 aims to take measures to amend legislation to promote development and ensure compliance with international conventions, including those related to equity and rights of women and vulnerable groups. These measures could advance Targets 5.1 and 16.b.

Looking more directly to VAW, 47 countries have adopted national strategies to address VAW, while 76 national development plans and 44 justice sector strategies have commitments and/or measures to reduce VAW. For example, several European countries have harmonized their national legislation with the Istanbul Convention,<sup>69</sup> including Albania, as outlined in Chapter 5.

In Australia, for example, the federal, state and territory governments, with specific input by state and territory ministers responsible for women's safety, experts, and the community, have together developed decade long national policy plans, the first in 2010, and the second in 2022.

Box 2.1 highlights key features. The targets for reducing violence are new and a key difference as with the evaluation framework.<sup>70</sup>

### **Box 2.1 Australia's National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032**

Released in October 2022, the [National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032](#) (2022-2032 National Plan) is the overarching national policy framework that will guide actions towards ending violence against women and children for the next decade. It is designed to achieve the goal of "ending violence against women and children in one generation," and drive action beyond short-term political cycles. It will be implemented through:

- Two mainstream five-year Action Plans (the first of which has been released in 2023, and the second of which will be developed after an impact evaluation in 2026).
- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan (which has also been released in 2023).
- An Outcomes Framework, which for the first time sets quantitative and qualitative targets in relation to reducing violence against women, including reducing intimate partner homicide by 25 per cent per year.

The 2022-2032 National Plan differs from its predecessor in:

- The larger emphasis on acknowledging the various inequalities that face those who identify across multiple groups.
- The evidence base collected by national organizations during the 2010-2022 National Plan.
- The more consultative process, which relied not only on consultation of professional experts and the wider community, but also with survivors.
- Committing to the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, released in 2023, and a standalone First Nations National Plan, expected to be released in 2024. The Action Plan, already released, recognizes the unique drivers of family violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and focuses on reducing rates of such violence by 50 per cent by 2031. It will be reviewed and amended once the First Nations National Plan is released.
- Larger emphasis on targets and evaluation.

The 2022-2032 National Plan sets out four categories of action to address violence:

- **Prevention:** Prevention means stopping violence against women from occurring in the first place by addressing its underlying drivers.
- **Early intervention:** Also known as "secondary prevention," this action aims to support identified individuals who are at high risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence and prevent it from escalating or reoccurring.
- **Response:** Response means providing services and supports to address existing violence and support survivors experiencing violence, such as crisis support, financial assistance and police intervention, and a trauma-informed justice system. Its aim is to prevent the reoccurrence of violence by holding perpetrators of violence accountable and supporting survivors.
- **Recovery and healing:** Recovery is an ongoing process aimed at reducing the risk of re-traumatization and supporting survivors to be safe and healthy to be able to recover from trauma and the physical, mental, emotional, and economic impacts of violence. Recovery also relates to the rebuilding of a survivor's life, their ability to return to the workplace and community, and obtaining financial independence and economic security..

Separately, each state and territory in Australia has its own policies addressing VAW. Several states have multi-year plans to address VAW like the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027, Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026, Victoria Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020-2023, and Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018–2028: Safe, Respected and Free from Violence. New South Wales also has a specific Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027, alongside a more general VAW plan. Several states also adopted the recommendations from their publicly funded reports and inquiries on VAW as a structured plan for reform.<sup>71</sup>

# The Legal Environment

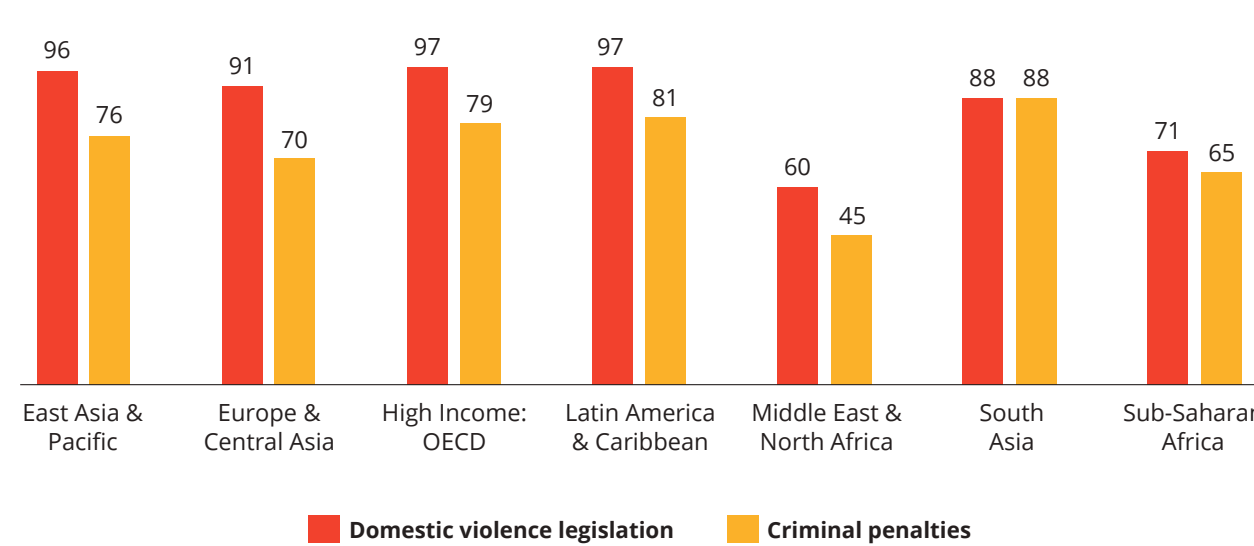
The most comprehensive and current picture of laws against VAW is provided by the World Bank’s *Women, Business and the Law*. This annual global survey, which covers 192 economies, includes one question on VAW under the marriage indicator.

The 2023 report shows that 162 countries – 85 per cent of countries assessed – now have legislation specifically addressing VAW. The Republic of Congo and Côte d’Ivoire recently enacted such legislation. In the Republic of Congo, legal protections against various forms

of VAW, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse were introduced, including protection orders for survivors. Côte d’Ivoire enacted the Law Mouebara, which prohibits physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and amended its penal code to impose strict penalties for acts of VAW.<sup>72</sup>

Figure 2.4 shows the regional variation of legislation and criminal penalties regarding VAW, with the highest shares of legislation in high income countries and Latin America, down to the lowest (71 per cent) in Sub-Saharan Africa. Few countries have criminal penalties for VAW. Less than half of the countries in the Middle East and North Africa have enacted criminal sanctions for VAW, and only about two-thirds of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Figure 2.4 Share of Countries with VAW Legislation and Criminal Penalties, 2022, by Region (per cent)**



**Source:** The World Bank, “Women, Business and the Law Data,” <https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/wbl-data>.



Tens of millions of women around the world live in countries where violence inflicted by their husbands or male partners is not legally prohibited.<sup>73</sup> The largest share resides in the Middle East, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>74</sup>

More gaps arise in the type of violence covered, and even where there are laws, enforcement may be weak due to serious gaps in national legislation, lack of protection orders, and inadequate police and judicial responses.<sup>75</sup> While the international definition of VAW is broad, encompassing financial, psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, national legislation often adopts a narrower scope. Physical violence is most commonly addressed in national laws, whereas sexual violence is less frequently covered. Not all forms of violence, particularly economic violence, are included in national legislation.

*The Women, Business, and the Law* database currently provides a yes/no indicator for whether legislation is in place, and types of violence covered.<sup>76</sup> At the national and subnational levels, the scope of protection and response varies. In Australia, for example, all seven states have jurisdiction over criminal matters, and all states have standard criminal offences that are commonly associated with VAW (like assault, rape, sexual assault, stalking) and some states treat general crimes that occur in an VAW context as an aggravating factor. Since 2014, all but one state have criminalized non-fatal strangulation, and several states are in the process of criminalizing coercive control as a standalone offence. State legislation also governs civil protection orders (a breach of which is a criminal offence) and compensation schemes for survivors of violence, while federal legislation governs family law (which includes parenting orders and property settlement), social security benefits, and paid family and domestic violence leave.

While it is beyond the scope of the present report to discuss the drivers that determine and shape legal frameworks addressing VAW, it is important to recognize the importance of social norms. A useful recent reference is UNDP's 2023 Gender Social Norms Index.<sup>77</sup>

## How are Laws Working for Women?

How these laws work for women experiencing violence varies across countries and settings. If women do not report to police or the authorities, substantive justice gaps emerge, exacerbating the denial of rights associated with the violence itself.

The justice gap facing women survivors of violence is revealed by comparing how many women experience violence to how many incidents are reported in criminal statistics. Specifically, the population prevalence rates in the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) database are compared against the official administrative data reported by UNODC for the same or closest years.<sup>78</sup> This is the first time the formal justice gap for women survivors has been quantified using this type of data. The method is described in Box 2.2. As a result of this gap, there is a vigorous debate on the efficacy of criminal laws and a quest for alternative forms of justice.<sup>79</sup>



### Box 2.2 Quantifying the Justice Gap Facing Women Survivors of Violence

The current prevalence indicator used by the United Nations SDG and WHO covers women 15-49 years old in a given population who have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the preceding 12 months. The UNODC reports two related indicators (number of cases per 100,000 population), for (i) women who experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner or a family member, and (ii) serious assault by an intimate partner or a family member. A serious assault is defined as "an intentional or reckless application of serious physical force inflicted upon the body of a person resulting in serious bodily injury." A measure of sexual and/or physical violence is obtained by adding the two indicators.

Since the crime statistics cover all sexual assault against women with no restrictions on age, marital status, or location inside or outside the home, this figure would be expected to be higher than population-based estimates of VAW prevalence. In practice, as shown below, this is not the case because so few VAW incidents are reported to the police.

For example, in France, the official data shows that a total of 137,000 cases were reported – comprising 14,200 cases of sexual violence and 122,800 serious assaults by family members. However, survey prevalence data shows that *at least* 682,000 cases occurred. This implies that the justice gap in terms of under-reporting of VAW is at least 80 per cent.<sup>80</sup>

#### France, Annual Rates of Reported Violence and Underlying Prevalence, 2018-2020

Source	Sexual Violence	Serious assault by family member	Sexual and/or serious assault	Sexual violence	Serious assault by family member	Sexual and/or serious assault	VAW, women, age 15-49	
	Rate per 100,000 women			Count Thousands			(%)	Implied count <sup>ii</sup> Thousands
UNODC	42.6	368.6	411.2	14.2	122.8	137.0		
UN SDG 5.5.1							5.0	682.0
Gap = $100 * (1 - 137/682) = 80\%$								

<sup>i</sup> Refers to the most recent year with data within the interval.

<sup>ii</sup> Implied count is obtained by multiplying the percentage share by the reference population.

Table 2.1 compares the 34 countries for which data from both sources are available.<sup>81</sup>

The comparison starkly reveals enormous justice gaps facing women in all countries for which data is available. In 23 of the 34 countries, fewer than one per cent of survivors appear in criminal

justice statistics. And in only two countries – France and New Zealand – are more than 10 per cent of women reporting. In Australia, the gap exceeds 95 per cent.

**Table 2.1 Justice Gaps for Women Survivors of VAW: Under-Reporting Rates across 34 Countries**

	Official crime data			Survey prevalence			
	Sexual violence	Serious assault	Sexual or serious assault	Intimate Partner Violence	Number of VAW cases not reported	Under-reporting rate	Share of VAW survivors reporting
	Rate per 100,000			Share of population, age 15-49 (%)	In '000	(%)	(%)
<b>Albania</b>	0.1	0.1	0.2	6.2	40.9	99.993	0.007
<b>Australia</b>	67.5	n/a	67.5	2.9	169.2	95.1	4.9
<b>Austria</b>	19.3	5.6	24.9	3.6	67.8	98.4	1.6
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	0.0	0.2	0.2	5.2	140.3	99.993	0.009
<b>Bolivia</b>	16.1	0.0	16.1	18.3	595.5	99.840	0.2
<b>Canada</b>	57.0	8.0	65.0	2.6	211.4	94.5	5.5
<b>Colombia</b>	32.9	141.0	173.9	11.9	1624.7	97.3	2.7
<b>Croatia</b>	12.2	4.3	16.5	4	32.9	99.0	1.0
<b>Czechia</b>	6.0	8.5	14.5	4.1	92.1	99.2	0.8
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	n/a	0.8	0.8	9.6	278.5	99.985	0.015
<b>El Salvador</b>	23.8	19.9	43.8	5.7	99.3	98.6	1.4
<b>Finland</b>	11.3	4.4	15.7	8.1	92.4	99.5	0.5
<b>France</b>	42.6	368.6	411.2	5	545.1	79.9	20.1
<b>Germany</b>	17.2	40.1	57.3	3	472.7	95.1	4.9
<b>Guatemala</b>	0.1	0.0	0.1	7.3	355.1	99.9963	0.004
<b>Guyana</b>	17.3	13.5	30.8	10.5	22.3	99.5	0.5
<b>Honduras</b>	n/a	0.1	0.1	7.2	208.1	99.9986	0.001
<b>Hungary</b>	3.0	43.7	3.0	5.7	130.1	99.8817	0.1
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	0.9	n/a	0.9	13.3	221.9	99.9860	0.014
<b>Latvia</b>	5.0	3.6	8.6	6.3	23.6	99.6	0.4
<b>Lithuania</b>	1.6	0.6	2.2	5.2	28.5	99.8843	0.1
<b>Mexico</b>	11.7	5.1	16.8	9.9	3397.2	99.7	0.3
<b>Mongolia</b>	0.8	1.1	2.0	11.5	96.8	99.9659	0.034
<b>Morocco</b>	0.1	26.2	26.3	10.5	996.2	99.5	0.5
<b>Myanmar</b>	0.0	1.4	0.0	10.7	1549.1	99.9998	0.0002

	Official crime data			Survey prevalence			
	Sexual violence	Serious assault	Sexual or serious assault	Intimate Partner Violence	Number of VAW cases not reported	Under-reporting rate	Share of VAW survivors reporting
	<i>Rate per 100,000</i>			<i>Share of population, age 15-49 (%)</i>	<i>In '000</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>(%)</i>
<b>New Zealand</b>	20.2	368.0	388.2	4.2	40.9	81.1	18.9
<b>Panama</b>	9.8	0.2	10.0	7.8	86.4	99.7529	0.2
<b>Romania</b>	4.4	0.1	4.5	6.9	304.2	99.8526	0.1
<b>Slovakia</b>	0.0	0.8	0.8	5.9	79.1	99.9709	0.029
<b>Slovenia</b>	5.8	21.0	26.8	3.4	14.3	98.1	1.9
<b>Spain</b>	6.3	5.2	11.5	2.9	297.8	99.1	0.9
<b>Sweden</b>	43.4	7.9	43.4	6.3	139.5	98.4	1.6
<b>Switzerland</b>	18.0	1.9	19.9	1.7	31.6	97.3	2.7
<b>Venezuela</b>	0.5	0.4	0.9	8.5	583.3	99.9760	0.024

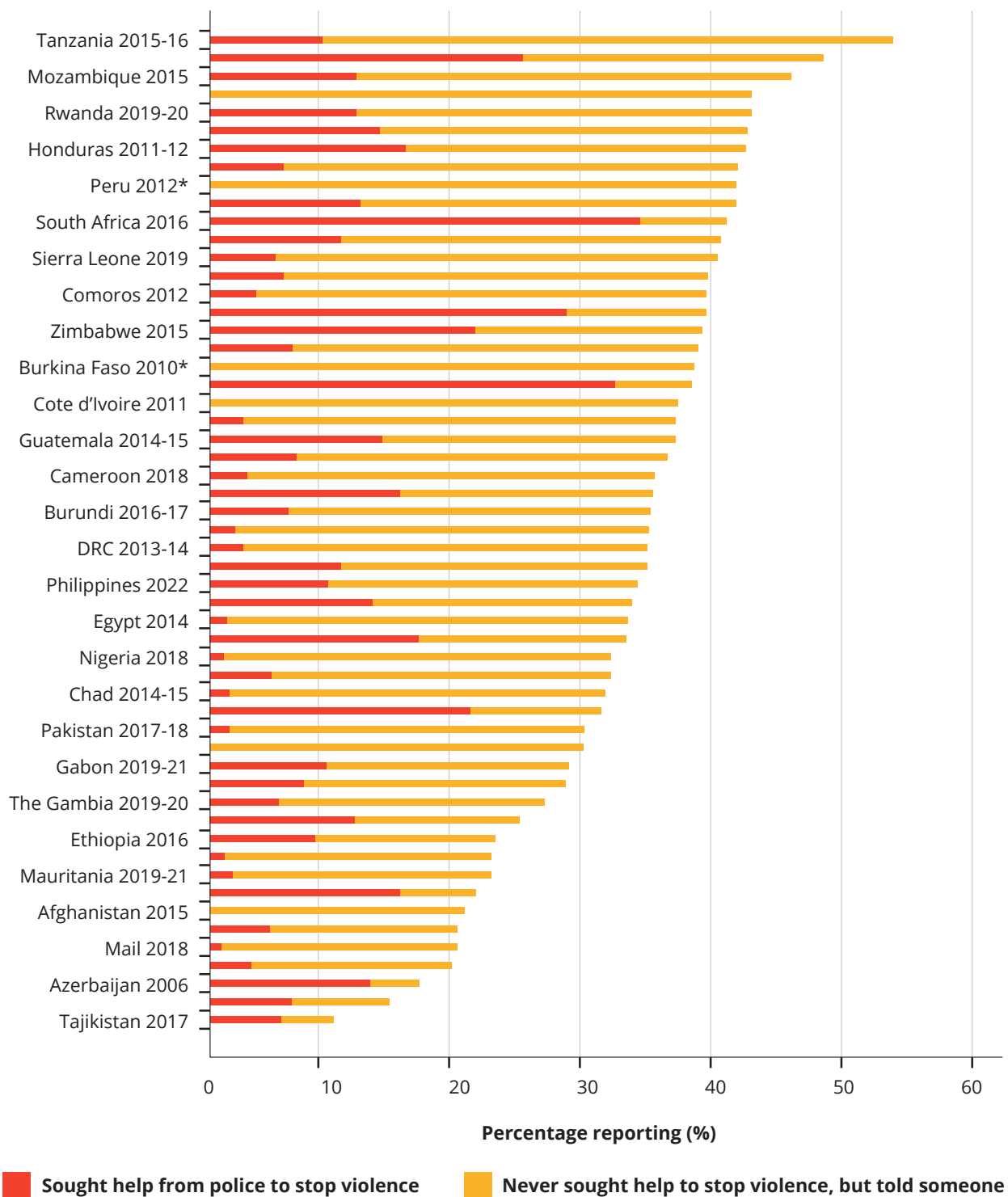
**Source:** Author estimates based on method and sources documented in Box 2.2.

Further insights arise from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), a valuable resource for data about VAW in more than 50 developing and middle-income countries (see Figure 2.5). The survey asks women who had ever experienced any physical or sexual violence about whom they sought help from to stop the violence. Options include their own family, partner, friends, family, neighbour, religious leader, police, lawyer, social organization or other. Figure 2.5 shows data for the most recent year for the 55 developing countries for which data is available – arranged in descending order from Tanzania, the only country where more than half (52 per cent) of women sought help, down to Tajikistan (below 10 per cent).

More specifically, for countries where data is available, the share of survivors seeking help from the police is very low across the board – from a high of just over 30 per cent in South Africa and Ukraine, down to rates below or at one per cent in Afghanistan, Egypt, Mali, Myanmar,

and Pakistan (0.2, 0.7, 0.7, 0.9 and 1 per cent respectively). In another 26 countries shown, fewer than one in ten survivors report to the police. These figures underline the enormous justice gaps facing women survivors of violence, since the overwhelming majority never even pursue justice. There is also low reporting of sexual assault in public spaces – which has been attributed to low trust in institutions (e.g. police) and social stigma experienced by survivors.<sup>82</sup>

**Figure 2.5 Share of Survivors Reporting to Anyone, and to Police**

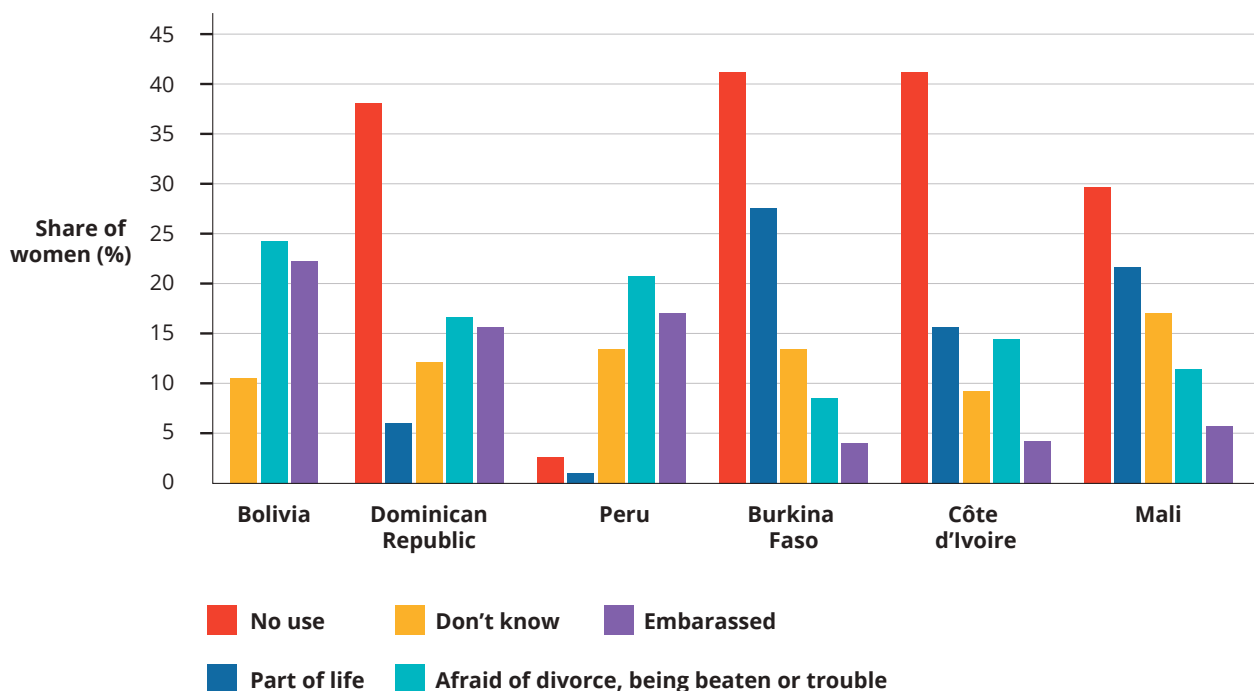


**Source:** DHS STATcompiler, 2023, <https://www.statcompiler.com/en/>.<sup>83</sup>

There are a host of sociocultural and structural barriers that inhibit women's ability to report and seek help. These barriers permeate families and communities, such as the normalization of many forms of VAW and pressure on survivors not to report.<sup>84</sup> As shown in Figure 2.6, based on analysis of DHS surveys, a large proportion of respondents view violence as part of life or do not see any use in reporting violence. A substantial number also state that they do not know how or

where to report violence. Many women suggest that they are embarrassed to tell anyone, which underlines the stigma and blame that are often placed on survivors of violence. As highlighted in recent qualitative work in the Asia-Pacific region, some women do not want to report on partners because of fear of conviction and imprisonment for various reasons, including economic repercussions.<sup>85</sup>

**Figure 2.6 Reasons Cited by VAW Survivors for Not Seeking Help, 2015**



**Source:** Jeni Klugman et al., *Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity* (The World Bank, 2014), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/8de28560-f483-588d-a221-fb5e6abd09cd>.

**Note:** Estimates based on DHS using latest available data from 2006-2012. 'No use' option not available for Bolivia.

A number of governments have recognized justice gaps for women, where women's legal rights are not fully realized in their everyday lives. For example, the Guyanese National Development Strategy notes that "the current legal situation of Guyanese women reflects a gap between de jure and de facto position equality,"<sup>86</sup> and proposes to develop education programmes on legal matters to raise awareness and promote access to justice options for women and vulnerable groups.<sup>87</sup> Similar concerns and

responses are reflected in the national policies of Cabo Verde, Eritrea, and Micronesia. The national strategies of Angola, Eswatini, the Gambia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Saudi Arabia, and Zimbabwe propose various measures to raise awareness, including translation of laws, development of education programmes, and informational materials in tribal languages and expanding the language availability of legal services.<sup>88</sup>

# Chapter 3: Budgeting for Women and Girls

# What is a Government Budget and How are Budgets Made?

A government budget is a forecast by a government of its expenditures and revenues for a year, known as a fiscal year, which may or may not correspond with the calendar year.<sup>89</sup> It is the government's central economic policy document and presents how state resources will be allocated across various priorities, programmes and services.

How are budgets made? As described by the IMF, budget preparation is a process with designated organizations and individuals having defined responsibilities to be carried out within a given timetable, normally established and controlled by a legal and regulatory framework.<sup>90</sup>

Budgets are typically prepared annually, covering one fiscal year. The responsibility for preparing the budget usually lies with the Ministry of Finance, with input from the line ministries and agencies. Given resource constraints, governments need to set priorities across the many budget requests by spending ministries. IMF guidance highlights some important points (see Box 3.1). This exercise is normally controlled by a central budget department located in the Ministry of Finance.

Traditionally, the draft budget is presented to allow scrutiny by the public and the parliament. The publication of a budget can generate accountability for the actions of government at various levels.

## Box 3.1 How are Resource Allocations Prioritized?

The allocation of resources across spending programmes is a political decision. Prioritization requires two elements.

First, a budget strategy needs to be determined at a political (typically cabinet) level, which determines the affordable total, new policies to be accommodated, and any changes in existing policy provision.

Second, each spending ministry and the budget department or planning ministry should meet to discuss each ministry's estimates. To accommodate new policies, the budget department or planning ministry must require each spending ministry to prioritize its requests.

However, "this ideal is rarely matched by the practices in many countries," and actual spending often varies from budget plans.<sup>91</sup>

## Budgeting for Women and Girls<sup>92</sup>

To understand justice financing in response to VAW, it is important to understand budgeting more generally, as well as emerging good practices.

This section reviews the status of budgeting for women and girls around the world, based on studies by UN Women, the IMF, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and leading feminist economists, and highlights key strengths and weaknesses of existing approaches. A review of the academic literature has been conducted by Polzer et al in 2023 and has enriched understanding on this issue.<sup>93</sup>

Although budgeting for women and girls began to be adopted at the country level in the 1980s, it was given impetus by the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which called for ensuring the consideration of women's needs in budgetary policies and programmes. Several subsequent international declarations reaffirm this commitment, including SDG indicator 5.c.1.

There are different ways to conceive budgeting and its purpose. For feminist economists, it was a way to challenge neo-liberal approaches to fiscal policy and cuts on spending and government services, especially those that adversely affected women.<sup>94</sup> However, the mainstream approach today, as reflected by governments around the world, the IMF and the OECD, tends to be more technocratic. It is a tool to improve performance on mainstreaming and equality objectives.<sup>95</sup>

As recently laid out by the OECD, "gender budgeting is a public financial management tool that can be used to integrate gender considerations into budget decision making ... When implemented alongside mainstreaming tools, gender budgeting can provide information about how gender inequalities have become embedded in public policies and the allocation of resources and ensure that budget decision making helps deliver transformational change that will bring social and economic gains."<sup>96</sup>

In several countries, national legislation and guidelines on budgeting can guide the budget preparation processes. For example, in Timor-Leste, the law requires that gender perspectives are considered in the planning and analysis of government programmes and related targets,<sup>97</sup> while the Organic Budget Law on State Finance and Property in Rwanda requires all government units to prepare and report on the implementation of gender budget statements.<sup>98</sup> In Austria, every line ministry must ensure that women and men have equal status in the federal budget statement, according to both the Constitution and the Federal Organic Budget Act,<sup>99</sup> and in Iceland, gender impact analysis needs to be included in all new budget proposals, and analysis of all new legislative

proposals is required to include a cost-benefit analysis from a gender perspective.<sup>100</sup> In Rwanda and Ukraine, sex-disaggregated data is part of planning and reporting on objectives, outputs and outcomes achieved in the delivery of public services financed through the budget.<sup>101</sup>

The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) programme, to which the World Bank is a reporting partner, offers an example of integrating gender in public finances. The World Bank also issued a Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Finance Management (GRPFM).<sup>102</sup> More details on this framework are discussed in Chapter 4.2 of this report.

The IMF and OECD have published useful reviews about the status of gender budgeting efforts around the world. Both examine various aspects of budget processes, rather than actual budget allocations or results – and none of these reviews have looked at allocations to prevent and respond to VAW.

Figure 3.1 usefully highlights the key elements of this budgeting, as visualized by the IMF, which is broadly consistent with the approach pursued in the tracking of SDG indicator 5.c.1. It begins with the overall legal framework, links to development plans and emphasizes the need for relevant disaggregated data. Specific aspects of the budget preparation and approval, and execution, monitoring and reporting, are laid out. The final component relates to oversight and scrutiny, including audits and parliamentary oversight – to which accountability to civil society and women's groups could be added.



**Figure 3.1 IMF Framework for Thinking about Gender Budgeting**



**Source:** Virginia Alonso-Albarrán et al., “Gender Budgeting in G20 Countries,” November 12, 2021, fig. 6, p. 12, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816>.

IMF research led by Janet Stotsky analyzed whether the fiscal processes outlined in Figure 3.1 have been adopted. Assessed by the IMF in 2016 against this framework, some 86 countries had a gender budgeting initiative at one point in time, although in only 23 countries were these classified as “prominent.”<sup>103</sup>

Prominent budgeting efforts in 23 countries are characterized in Table 3.1. This shows that this form of budgeting often originates in national development plans and strategies for the advancement of women, while external support is also a frequent driver. The focus is typically on the spending side of the budget, and rarely on revenue. In just over half of the cases, gender budgeting was grounded in national finance legislation. Tracking of financial outcomes is less common, with just under half of the countries monitoring these results.

It is notable that the most prominent budgeting for women and girls efforts also feature significant civil society participation. A 2021 IMF review highlighted that these budgeting initiatives, as well as various country-specific efforts, have greatly benefited from the work of non-governmental organizations. The IMF notes that in Australia, South Africa and Tanzania, these efforts have been spearheaded by women’s groups, while in the United Kingdom and Canada, although these countries have never adopted specific budgeting initiatives for women and girls, non-governmental entities have produced compelling analysis on the differentiated impact of fiscal measures.”<sup>104</sup>

**Table 3.1 Key Characteristics of Prominent Gender Budgeting Efforts**

Characteristic		Number of countries
<b>Origins</b>	External (donor)	13
	Tied to national development plan or gender strategy	18
<b>Legal basis</b>	Organic budget or other finance laws	13
<b>Focus</b>	Expenditure	23
	Revenue	5
<b>Tools</b>	Gender budget circular	18
	Gender outcome report or audit	12
<b>Key actors</b>	Led by Finance Ministry	17
	Subnational government involved	16
	Significant civil society participation	18

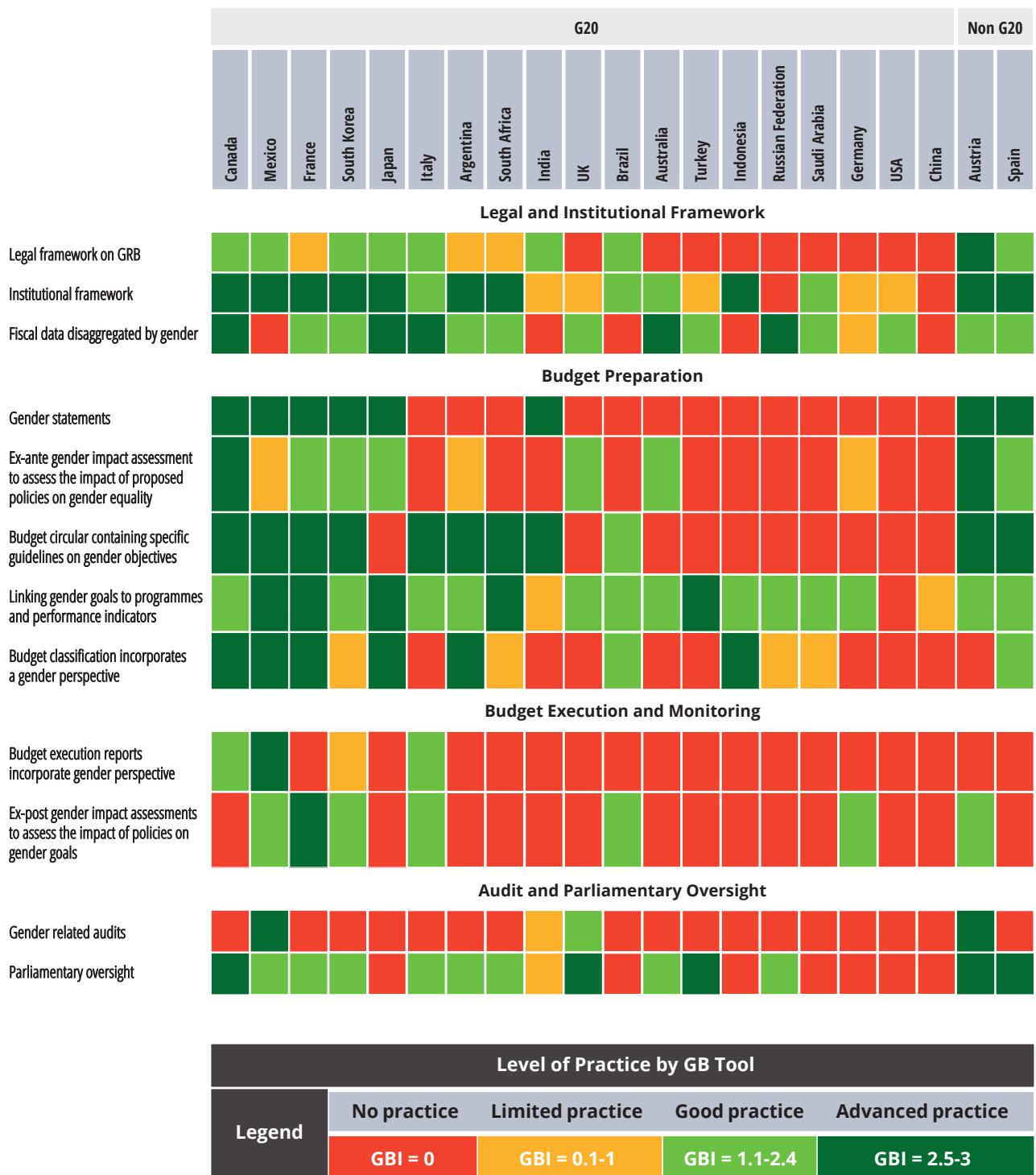
**Note:** Based on IMF regional surveys.

**Source:** Janet Gale Stotsky, “Gender Budgeting: Fiscal Context and Current Outcomes,” IMF, 2016, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2016/12/31/Gender-Budgeting-Fiscal-Context-and-Current-Outcomes-44132>.

In 2021, the IMF took stock of gender budgeting practices in G20 countries and benchmarked country performance using a gender budgeting index based on data gathered from an IMF survey.<sup>105</sup> The results are based on self-assessment surveys that were completed by government officials using a close-ended multiple-choice questionnaire in 2019. The respondents were government officials, mainly at the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Women or related relevant entities. Figure 3.2 reproduces a heat map showing the assessed level of gender

budgeting practices across the budget cycle. The overall consensus in 2021 was that all G20 countries have enacted gender-focused fiscal policies but the average G20 level of gender budgeting practice was low. More progress has been made in establishing these budgeting frameworks and budget preparation tools than with budget execution, monitoring and auditing. The majority of G20 countries do not assess the upfront nor ex-post impacts of these policies on equality.

**Figure 3.2 Level of Practices in G20 Countries Across the Gender Budgeting Cycle**



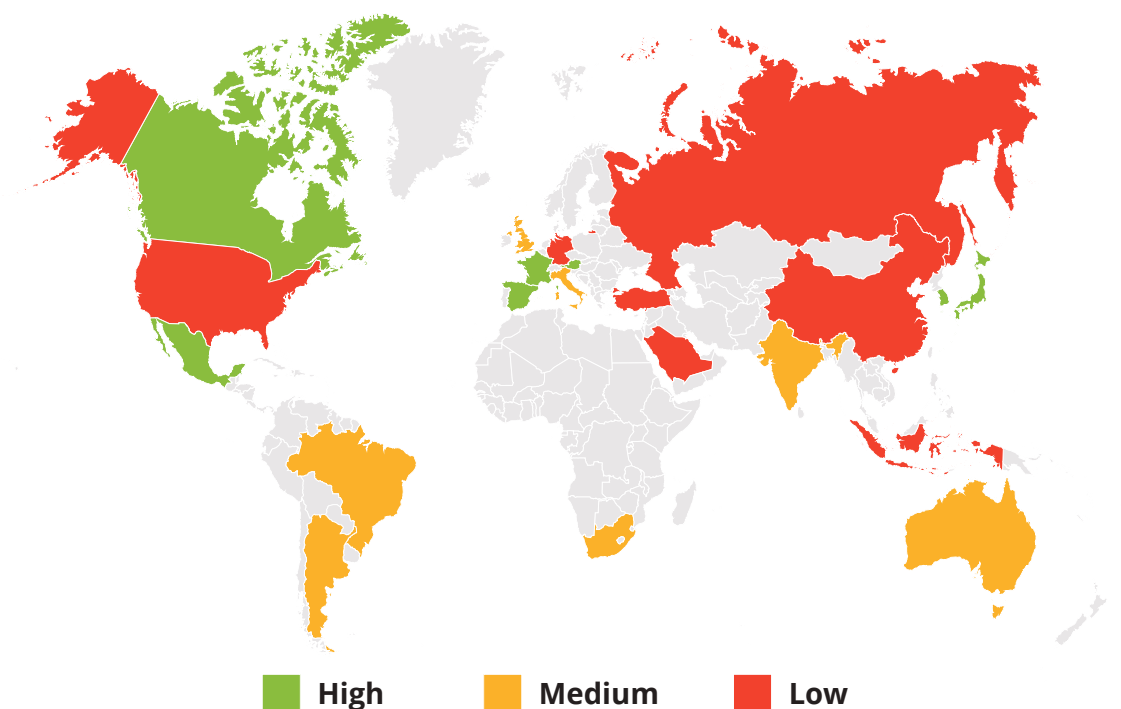
**Source:** Virginia Alonso-Albarrán et al., "Gender Budgeting in G20 Countries," November 12, 2021, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816>.

This data was used to generate a summary Gender Budgeting Index, by assigning a score (from zero to three) to the aspects shown in Figure 3.2 above. The cluster of countries with the highest scores comprised Canada, Austria, Mexico, France, Spain, South Korea and Japan. At the other end, the US, China and the Russian Federation were among the countries with the lowest scores.

budget preparation. Ex-ante gender impact assessments are applied to assess the potential impact of policies in developing budget measures. The gender statement accompanying the budget reflects the Government's efforts to understand the differential outcomes of policy choices, outlines the main gaps and provides an overview of the progress made towards achieving the Government's equality objectives.

In Canada, for example, forward-looking budgeting tools have been integrated into

**Figure 3.3 Gender Budgeting Index (GBI) Scores Across G20 Countries**

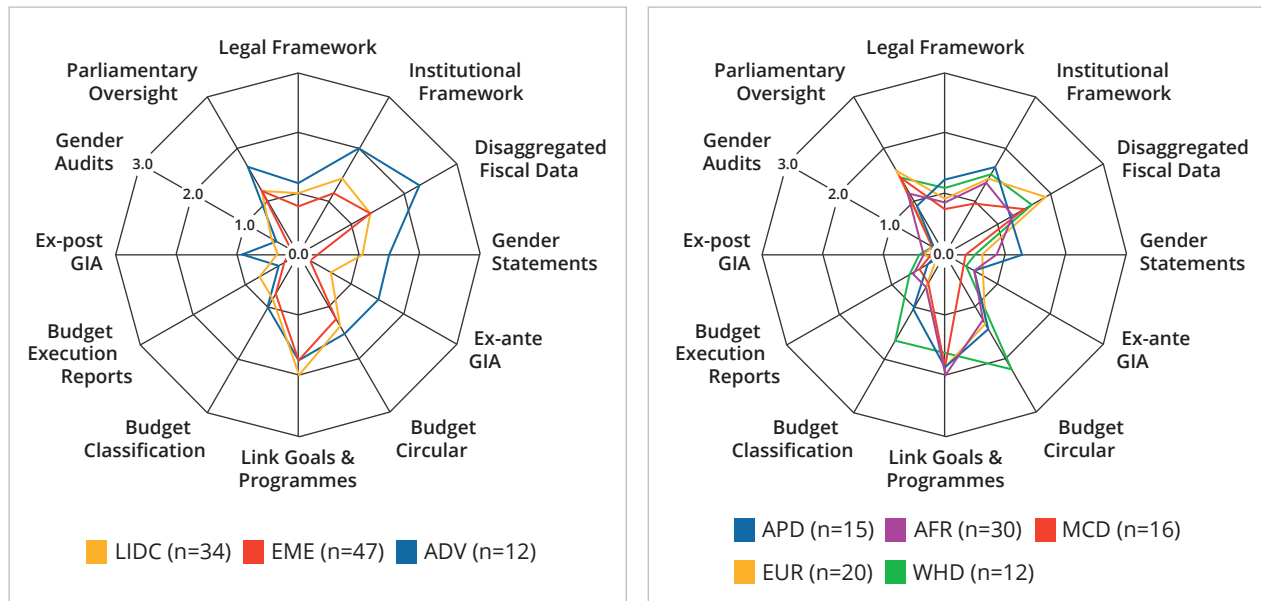


**Source:** Virginia Alonso-Albarrán et al., "Gender Budgeting in G20 Countries," November 12, 2021, [www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816](http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816).

The IMF recently conducted a comprehensive survey covering 93 countries across various regions and income groups using the methodology previously described. This includes 12 advanced economies, 47 emerging market economies, and 34 low-income developing countries. The summary scores in Figure 3.4 indicate that advanced economies perform relatively better on the institutional framework, data availability and budget statements and analysis. Interestingly, low-income countries

performed better than emerging market economies on several fronts, including the institutional framework and linking to goals and programmes, as well as budget execution reports. Across regions, countries in Latin America (the IMF's western hemisphere region) performed best on several budget instruments, including budget classification and budget circulars, while countries in the Middle Eastern region performed relatively poorly.

**Figure 3.4 Performance on Public Financial Management Tools to Support Gender Budgeting Scores, by Country Group and Region, 2021**



**Source:** Virginia Alonso-Albarrán et al., “Gender Budgeting in G20 Countries,” November 12, 2021, [www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816](http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816).

The most recent cross-country assessment is provided by the OECD (2023) which reports on the third OECD gender budgeting survey of 25 OECD countries undertaken in 2022.<sup>106</sup> Previous surveys were undertaken in 2016 and 2018. The survey covers 25 questions on several building blocks and institutional frameworks, approaches and tools, accountability, transparency, enabling environment and impacts of gender budgeting, and the results were used to estimate a composite Gender Budgeting Index. The 2023 report concludes that gender budgeting is becoming increasingly common, as the number of OECD countries practicing it had almost doubled since 2016 to 23 (out of 38 countries).

Across the OECD countries, seven achieved an advanced score (at least 0.6), with Canada obtaining the highest total score. Austria, Iceland, Korea, Mexico, Spain and Sweden also achieved advanced scores by implementing a range of measures across the building blocks.

Key results across the domains covered for the OECD countries include:

- Gender budgeting has legal underpinnings in more than three-fifths of OECD countries, with constitutional requirements in fewer than one out of ten countries (Figure 3.5).<sup>107</sup>
- Policy priorities are derived from sector-specific gender equality goals (43 per cent of countries), a national gender equality strategy (43 per cent), and less often from priorities identified in gender needs assessments (30 per cent).<sup>108</sup>
- Multiple gender budgeting methods and tools are used – the most common tools are performance frameworks and ex-ante gender impact assessments.<sup>109</sup>
- Gender information is presented as part of annual budget documentation in most (78 per cent) OECD countries practicing gender budgeting, including information from gender impact assessments of individual budget measures (48 per cent of cases),

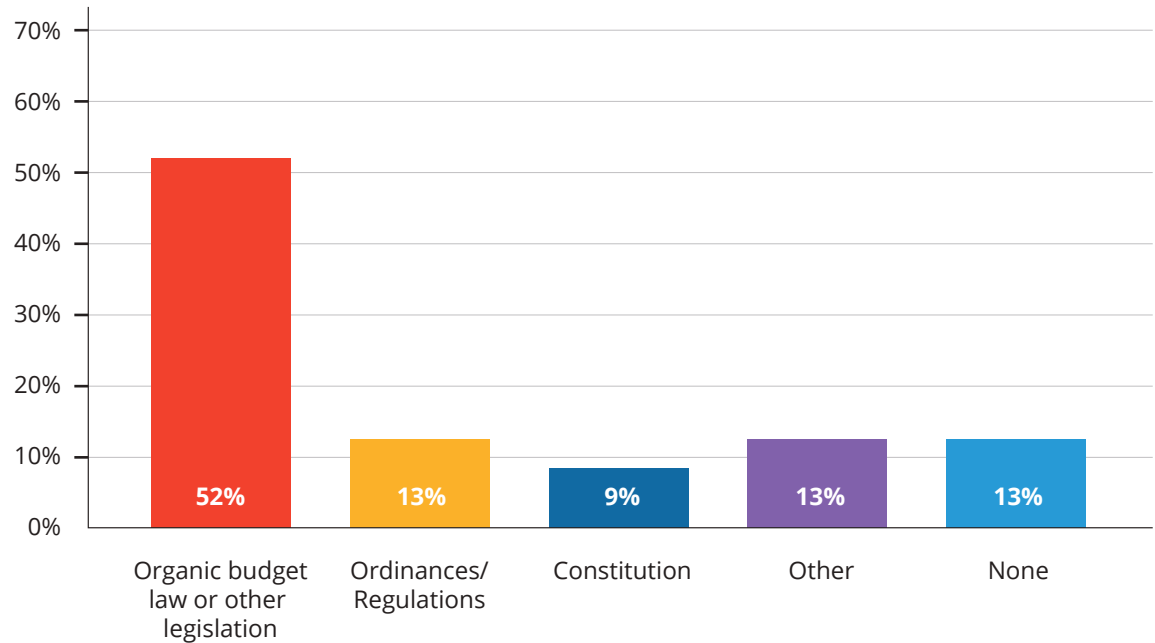
information on progress towards gender goals (39 per cent) and summary information from budget tagging (26 per cent).<sup>110</sup>

- Accountability mechanisms feature parliaments as well as civil society. In the two-thirds of OECD countries that practice gender budgeting, there is regular reporting to their legislatures and 30 per cent undertake parliamentary committee

hearings. Non-government stakeholders assess the impact of the budget in 48 per cent of countries that practice gender budgeting.<sup>111</sup>

Among the 23 OECD countries that practice gender budgeting, most have a constitutional or legal underpinning, as shown in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 Legal Basis for Gender Budgeting among OECD Countries Practicing Gender Budgeting



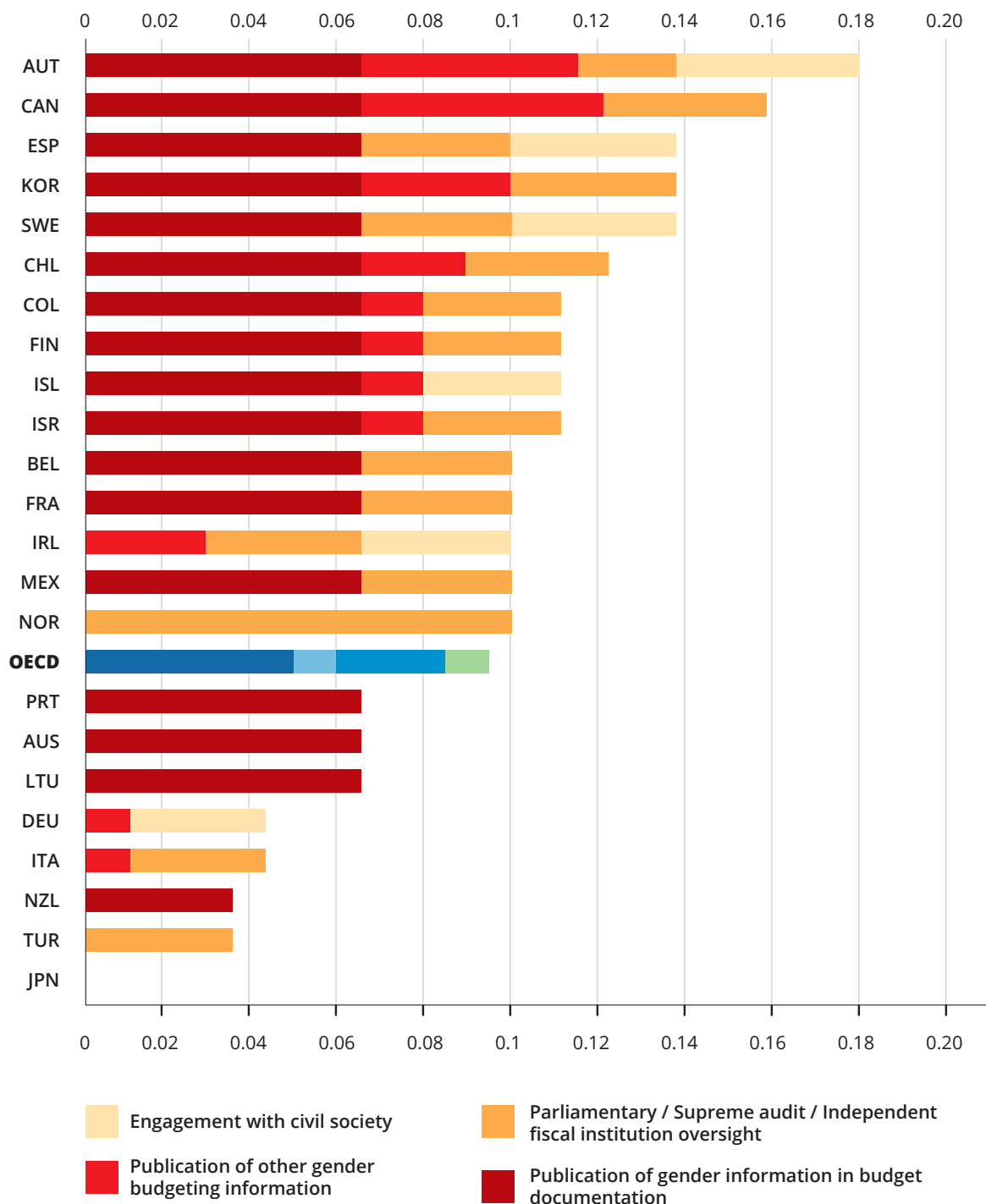
**Note:** Presents highest underpinning authority in each country

**Source:** OECD, *Gender Budgeting in OECD Countries 2023*, 2023, [www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/gender-budgeting-in-oecd-countries-2023\\_647d546b-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/gender-budgeting-in-oecd-countries-2023_647d546b-en).

The range of performance on the accountability dimension is shown in Figure 3.6. This suggests that publication of gender information in budget documentation is most common, while

engagement with civil society takes place in some countries, including Austria, Israel, Spain and Sweden.

**Figure 3.6 OECD Performance on Accountability and Transparency in Gender Budgeting, 2022**



**Source:** OECD, *Gender Budgeting in OECD Countries 2023*, 2023, [www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/gender-budgeting-in-oecd-countries-2023\\_647d546b-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/gender-budgeting-in-oecd-countries-2023_647d546b-en).

There is a growing focus on gender budgeting and accompanying assessments, which will deepen the evidence base over time. For example, a growing number of countries have

applied the Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management, which will contribute to the knowledge base.

# Success Factors and Constraints to Implementation

According to PEFA, global experience has demonstrated some high-level success factors for gender budgeting.<sup>112</sup> The factors listed for success are:

1. An understanding of inequalities to comprehend how they manifest in different policy domains and underlying structural causes of inequalities.
2. Political will and support to achieve real changes.
3. Institutionalization and integration to make sure that needs and concerns are fully embedded within the budget cycle.
4. Availability of sex-disaggregated data to identify areas that would benefit from reform.
5. A clear legal and conceptual framework and positive institutional arrangements that effectively focus discussions on the impact of policies and include all relevant stakeholders, including sectoral ministries, for example, health, economic affairs, education or interior ministries.
6. External influence, specifically the support of development partners as well as the encouragement to achieve SDG 5 and related targets.

The constraints that limit the implementation and impacts of gender budgeting are both political and technical. Some researchers have highlighted the political factors, whereas government officials and multilateral agencies like the OECD and the IMF have tended to focus on the technical obstacles, such as data and guidance. It is likely that the political and

technical factors are both important and are mutually reinforcing. However, evidence about how this specifically affects measures for integrating women's justice needs into budgets was not available.

Key constraints that prevent gender budgeting from becoming institutionalized, highlighted in a review of experience across countries, are the lack of political and administrative commitment, especially by the Ministry of Finance, and the absence of civil society engagement.<sup>113</sup>

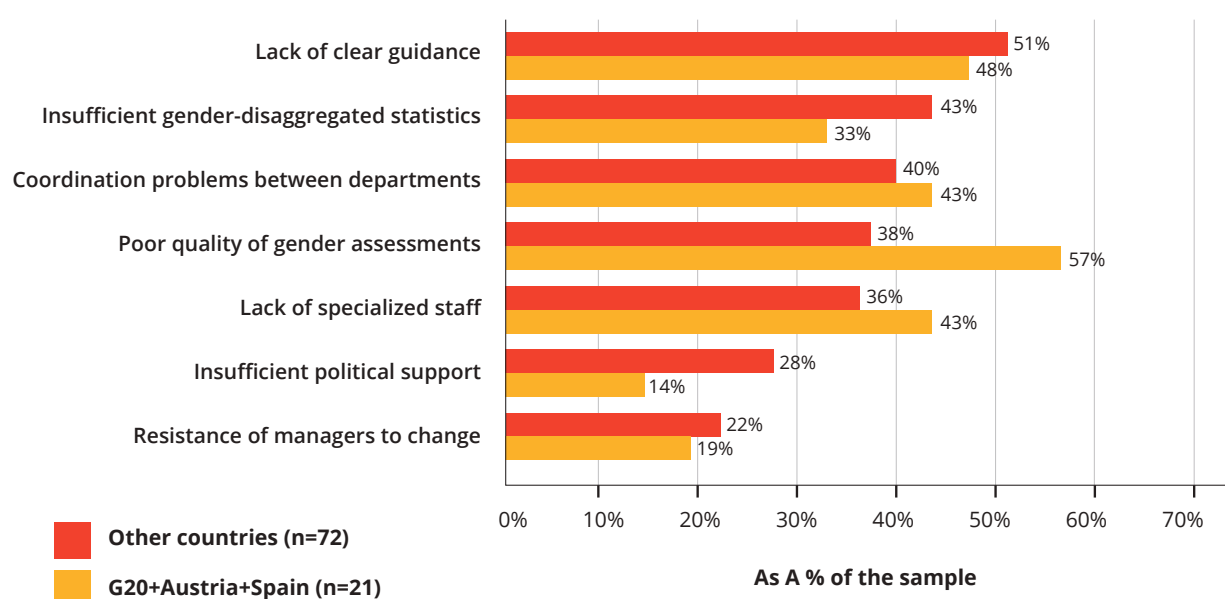
The 2022 survey of OECD countries found varied challenges limiting the implementation of gender budgeting measures.<sup>114</sup> The main challenges identified include a lack of resources (70 per cent of countries) and a lack of knowledge or technical experience (57 per cent). More than half (52 per cent) of countries reported a lack of impact on budget decisions.

Figure 3.7 presents the major challenges reported by government officials in an IMF survey across the G20 and 72 other countries. In the G20 countries, the major constraints are poor quality of gender assessments (cited in 57 per cent of countries), lack of clear guidance (47 per cent of countries) and specialized skills as well as coordination problems (43 per cent of countries). Similar constraints emerge outside of G20 countries – with a lack of clear guidance at the forefront (51 per cent of countries), followed by the lack of sex-disaggregated and other relevant data (43 per cent of countries). As documented below, available budget data also makes it difficult to track specific themes, like actions to prevent VAW.

One constraint highlighted by both the IMF and OECD reviews is the lack of relevant skills and capacity in ministries of finance.



**Figure 3.7 Major Challenges Facing Implementation of Gender Budgeting**



**Source:** Virginia Alonso-Albarrán et al., “Gender Budgeting in G20 Countries,” November 12, 2021, 28, [www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816](https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816).

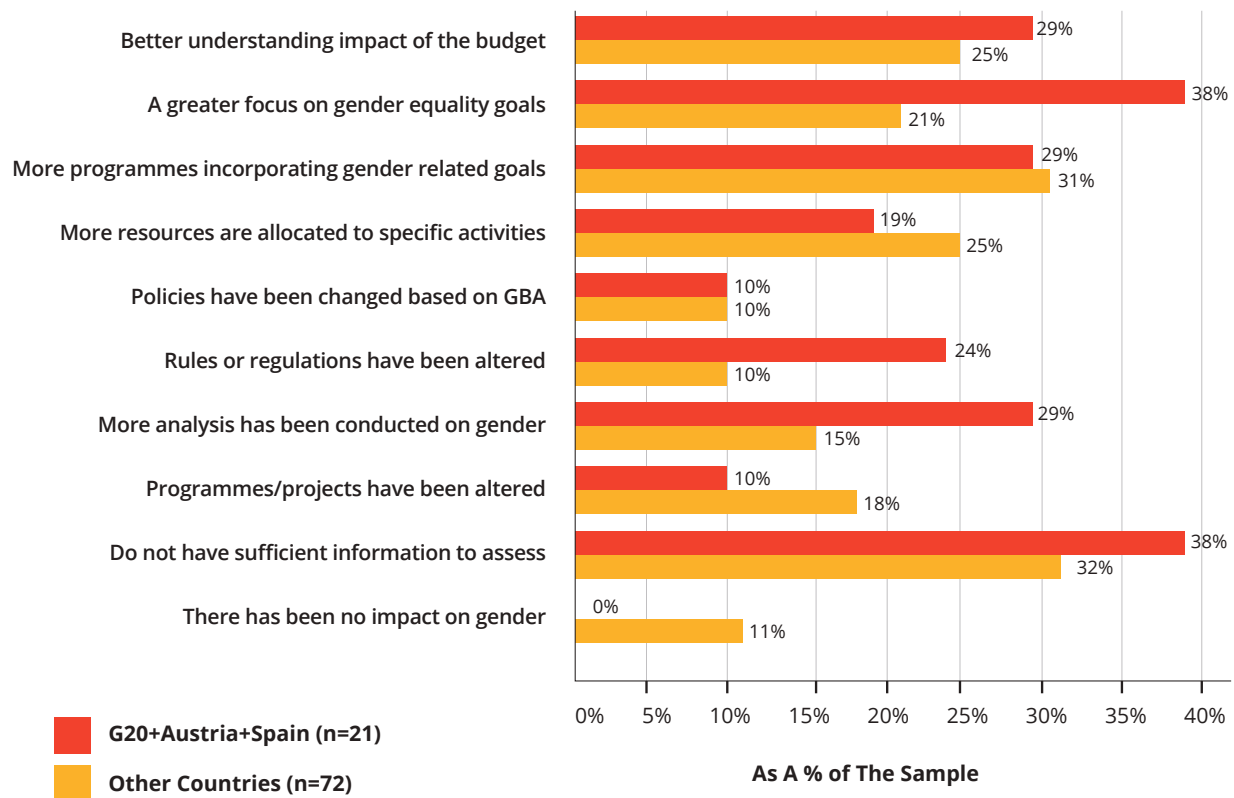
## Impacts of Budgeting

Overall, the evidence on the success of gender budgeting initiatives suggests that there have been some important gains, as well as cases where no impacts are evident. A recent review which covered 78 relevant studies concluded that “most studies scrutinize the ex-ante stages of gender budgeting, whereas less is known about the implementation and ex-post stages. Given their ex-ante focus, most studies often either remain descriptive or analyze secondary data.”<sup>115</sup>

The 2021 IMF survey of 93 countries, described above, finds that gender budgeting has “increased the awareness of the impact of policies on gender equality and sharpened the focus on attaining gender equality goals.”<sup>116</sup> At the same time, however, as shown in Figure 3.8, in the IMF survey of government officials

in 2021, fewer than one-third of countries reported positive impacts of gender budgeting, except for the 38 per cent of G20 countries reporting a greater focus on equality goals. Across the 72 developing countries covered by the survey, about one-fourth reported a better understanding of the budget, and that more programmes incorporated gender related goals, but only 10 per cent of those countries saw that policies had been changed or rules or regulations altered due to gender budgeting. An estimated one-third of officials in both the G20 and the broader set of countries felt that they lacked adequate information to assess the impacts of gender budgeting.

**Figure 3.8 Reported Impacts of Gender Budgeting, 2021**



**Source:** Virginia Alonso-Albarrán et al., “Gender Budgeting in G20 Countries,” November 12, 2021, fig. 12, p. 28, [www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816](http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/12/Gender-Budgeting-in-G20-Countries-506816).

In 2022, only 9 per cent of OECD countries reported that gender budgeting information was always or often used in decision making, 59 per cent of countries reported that it was sometimes used, and 32 per cent said that it was rarely used.<sup>117</sup>

The evidence to date suggests that budgeting can play an important role in supporting efforts to advance equality, although more evidence is needed to establish its impacts in preventing VAW. Appropriate data is often lacking, as noted in the foregoing discussion on constraints.

# Chapter 4: Financing for Women's Rights Broadly

Increasing numbers of countries have introduced some form of budgeting for women and girls, but this does not always allow insights into actual financing, nor spending on violence prevention and responses. While SDG indicator 5.c.1 measures whether a country has a system to track gender budget allocations, it does not measure how much domestic finance is allocated.

Valuable data on the volumes of external financing for gender equality is collected by

the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which brings together many of the largest providers of aid, including 32 country members as well as major multilateral agencies. The OECD DAC shows what OECD governments and various multilateral agencies spend on external development programmes for gender equality. Spending reported by the UN system is also subject to review.

## An Overview of the Proportion of Countries with Systems to Track and Make Public Allocations for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (SDG Indicator 5.c.1)

Under the SDG Target 5.c, governments have committed to “Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.”

A fiscal process indicator - 5.c.1 - has been developed to track progress and measure whether a country has a system to track these budget allocations. The questionnaire for countries has an optional question asking how much budget is allocated to gender equality, but reported data on this question is not disaggregated by sector, so that specific spending on ending violence, for example, is not reported. The 5.c.1 indicator methodology has three criteria, which are explored further below:<sup>118</sup>

1. Government intent to promote gender equality via gender responsive policies and programmes, resource allocations for implementation and budget execution mechanisms.

2. The existence of mechanisms and associated tools to track resource allocations for gender equality through the public finance management cycle.
3. Budget allocations for gender equality are publicly available.

This data has been self-reported by 105 governments and validated at the national level with various state and non-state institutions, before being transmitted to the UN. The national data is collated and presented in the UN's Extended Report and the Statistical Annex.<sup>119</sup>

The key finding is that only about one in four countries in the world - 26 out of the 105 reporting - meet all three criteria and are thereby deemed to have tracking systems in place. Regional averages range from a low of 13 per cent in Latin America up to 63 per cent in Central and Southern Asia. The current picture emerging from 5.c.1 reporting – as of mid-2023 – is shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 4.1 Percentage of Countries with Systems to Track and Make Public Allocations for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, by Region, 2021**

Regions	2021
World	26
Sub-Saharan Africa	21
Northern Africa and Western Asia <sup>i</sup>	20
Central and Southern Asia	63
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	33
Latin America and the Caribbean	13
Oceania (exc. Australia and New Zealand)	20
Europe and Northern America	29

<sup>i</sup> Regional average based on reporting from less than 50% of countries.

**Note:** The data represents information as reported by countries over the period of 2018-2021. (1) data is derived from an assessment of country systems to track allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment, based on reporting on three criteria collected through a questionnaire; (2) The proportion represents the percentage of reporting countries that fully meet the three criteria for the indicator; (3) Data is collected through the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation; OECD Secretariat; UN-Women and UNDP Country Offices.

**Source:** United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).<sup>120</sup>

While only a minority of countries have systems in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality, one third of countries with two data points (2018 and 2021) have improved their systems over time.<sup>121</sup>

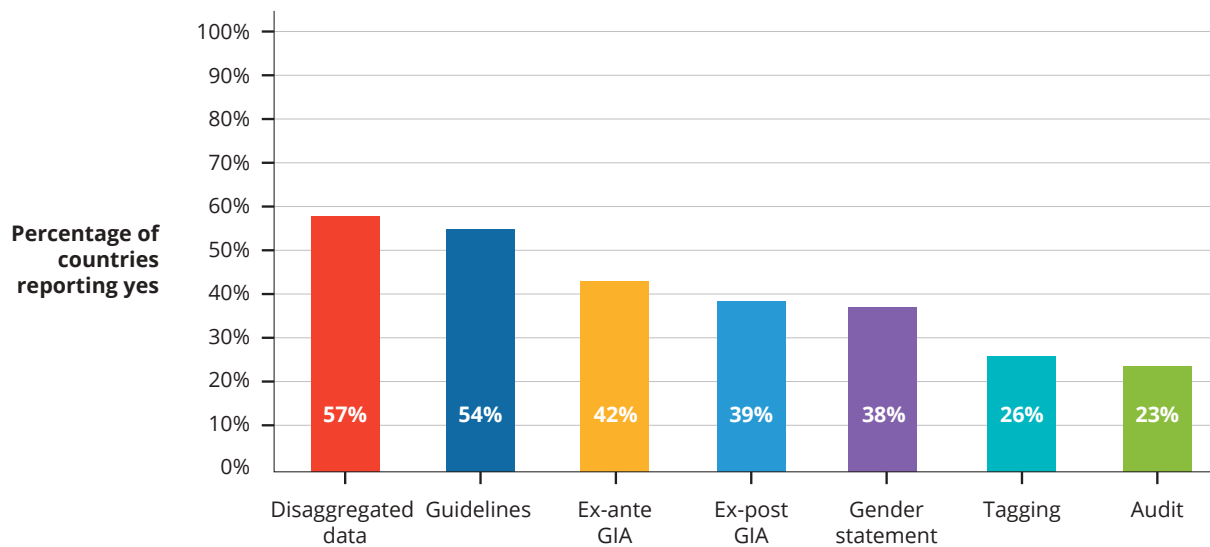
Looking at performance under each of the criteria, 92 per cent of governments state that they have policies and/or programmes that address gender equality. However, only just over half (53 per cent) report that the budget resources allocated for policies that promote equality for women and girls are sufficient.

As noted by UN Women in 2023, governments report various reasons for inadequate resources being allocated for policies that promote equality for women and girls, including "insufficient

gender impact assessments to inform budget decisions; fiscal deficits that constrain budget allocations for all policy areas; and gaps in systems to track resources from budget allocation to expenditure."<sup>122</sup>

Globally, about 57 per cent of countries have sex disaggregated data, but only 42 and 39 per cent of countries analyze the potential effects of a policy or programme on different groups, ex-ante and ex-post respectively. Only 23 per cent of national governments perform independent budget audits.<sup>123</sup>

**Figure 4.1 Share of Countries Reporting the Existence of Various Mechanisms and Associated Tools to Track Resource Allocations for Gender Equality Through the Public Finance Management Cycle**



**Note:** 2018-2021 reporting on SDG Indicator 5.c.1.<sup>124</sup>

**Source:** UN Women, “Strengthening Public Finance Management Systems for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Promising Practices and Remaining Gaps,” June 5, 2023, p. 10, [www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Strengthening-public-finance-management-systems-for-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-en.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Strengthening-public-finance-management-systems-for-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-en.pdf).

As noted above, the reporting on 5.c.1 does not provide any sense of country level spending on ending VAW. To do that, it is necessary to look at country budget information, which is not always collated as such, or available publicly. This exercise requires much more detailed effort and analysis, which this report presents for a limited set of countries in Chapter 5.

The full list of countries that are meeting the 5.c.1 criteria is not presently available. Disclosure of this information would allow an examination of selected countries in each region that are meeting the 5.c.1 target, to see whether they are reporting spending on VAW.

## Assessing Public Finance Management

Additional tools are available to assess the quality of budgeting for women and girls, its strengths and weaknesses. A key instrument is PEFA programme, to which the World Bank is a partner, which has issued a Supplementary Framework for Assessing GRPFM.<sup>125</sup> This framework includes a set of nine indicators that measure the degree to which a country’s Public Financial Management (PFM) systems recognize the different needs of men and women. PEFA’s framework also includes the need to evaluate impacts on service delivery (Indicator 8) and disaggregated performance information for justice service delivery (Indicator 5). Box 4.1 provides further details and examples.

#### Box 4.1 Assessing Gender Responsive Public Finance Management

The PEFA programme provides a framework for assessing and reporting on the strengths and weaknesses of PFM using quantitative indicators to measure performance. Since the launch of the PEFA framework in 2005, PEFA has been used in 151 countries.

PEFA is designed to provide a snapshot of PFM performance at specific points in time using a methodology that can be replicated in successive assessments, giving a summary of changes over time. PEFA identifies seven key pillars of PFM performance: (1) budget reliability, (2) transparency of public finances, (3) management of assets and liabilities, (4) policy-based fiscal strategy and budgeting, (5) predictability and control in budget execution, (6) accounting and reporting, and (7) external scrutiny and audit spread throughout the budget cycle.<sup>126</sup>

The recently developed PEFA GRPFM indicators and dimensions are listed below:

##### *PEFA GRPFM Indicators and Dimensions*

Indicators		Dimensions	
GRPFM-1	Gender impact analysis of budget policy proposals	GRPFM-1.1	Gender impact analysis of expenditure policy proposals
		GRPFM-1.2	Gender impact analysis of revenue policy proposals
GRPFM-2	Gender responsive public investment management	GRPFM-2.1	Gender responsive public investment management
GRPFM-3	Gender responsive budget circular	GRPFM-3.1	Gender responsive budget circular
GRPFM-4	Gender responsive budget proposal documentation	GRPFM-4.1	Gender responsive budget proposal documentation
GRPFM-5	Sex-disaggregated performance information for service delivery	GRPFM-5.1	Sex-disaggregated performance plans for service delivery
		GRPFM-5.2	Sex-disaggregated performance achieved for service delivery
GRPFM-6	Tracking budget expenditure for gender equality	GRPFM-6.1	Tracking budget expenditure for gender equality
GRPFM-7	Gender responsive reporting	GRPFM-7.1	Gender responsive reporting
GRPFM-8	Evaluation of gender impacts of service delivery	GRPFM-8.1	Evaluation of gender impacts of service delivery
GRPFM-9	Legislative scrutiny of gender impacts of the budget	GRPFM-9.1	Gender responsive legislative scrutiny of budgets
		GRPFM-9.2	Gender responsive legislative scrutiny of audit reports

The World Bank has recently piloted the Engendered Commitment to Equity methodology as another tool to understand the effects of the fiscal system on disparities.<sup>127</sup> The methodology approaches the effects of the fiscal system from the perspective of changes in household income, at different stages of their interaction with taxes and transfers. Pilot results have been published for Armenia, for example.<sup>128</sup> While it has not yet been applied to public spending on domestic violence, this could be an area for future consideration.

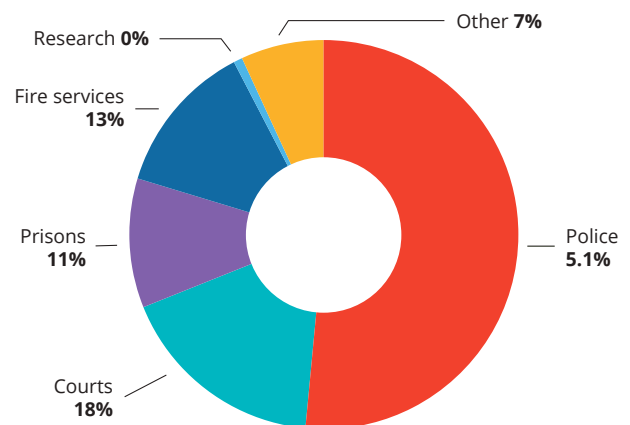
## Spending on Justice

Part of the puzzle here is the status of budgets for justice. Unfortunately, budget reporting in this area tends to be weak compared to spending on health and education, which is regularly monitored and tracked.<sup>129</sup>

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies published the first ever analysis of global levels of domestic spending on justice in 2023.<sup>130</sup> The ODI analysis uses the standard, internationally agreed definition of what is included in justice sector spending, under the Classification of the Functions of Government that was developed in 1999 and is used when countries report government spending to international institutions such as the European Union, the OECD and the IMF. Classification of the Functions of Government refers to the justice sector as “public order, law and safety,” and encompasses all major aspects of justice including spending on the judiciary, police, prisons and oversight bodies such as Ombudsmen.<sup>131</sup>

Estimates of justice spending for a range of developing countries, based on publicly available budget documents, including 34 countries that had not reported to the IMF and another eight where more recent data was available,<sup>132</sup> show that on average, spending on police absorbs just over half of the justice budget, followed by the courts and prisons – as shown in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2 Components of Justice Spending by Governments**



**Source:** Clare Manuel et al., “Domestic Financing for Justice: Who Spends Most on Justice?,” ODI, March 21, 2023, [odi.org/en/publications/domestic-financing-for-justice-who-spends-most-on-justice/](https://odi.org/en/publications/domestic-financing-for-justice-who-spends-most-on-justice/).

Looking at the amounts of public spending in developing countries, spending on people-centred justice services is very low.<sup>133</sup> Important insights from recent ODI analysis by Manuel Marcus et al can be summarized as follows, and are shown in Table 4.2:

- Government spending on justice in low-income countries averages USD 8 per person annually.<sup>134</sup>
- However, low-income countries spend relatively more of their total budget on justice than OECD countries do – on average 72 per cent more.<sup>135</sup>
- The amounts being allocated to justice fall way below the estimated costs of providing universal basic justice to address people’s everyday justice needs, which, based on current delivery models, is approximately USD 20 per person annually in a typical low-income country.<sup>136</sup>



- The budget allocations in middle-income countries are much closer to the estimated costs of basic justice per person, averaging USD 40 in a lower-middle-income country, and USD 143 in upper middle-income countries. The IMF's Government Financial Statistics data suggests a higher proportion of the budget spent by middle income countries on justice than in OECD countries (7 per cent versus 4.3 per cent of their revenues).<sup>137</sup>
- Spending in OECD countries averages 4.3 per cent of the budget, and ranges from around 2 per cent of the budget in Denmark, Finland, and Norway, to over 6 per cent allocated by the US and Slovak Republic, at the high end of this country group.<sup>138</sup>

**Table 4.2 Annual Justice Spending Relative to Estimated Costs of Universal Basic Justice, Per Person**

	Current justice spending (\$ per person)	Costs of universal basic justice (\$ per person)	Current spending/ costs as % of required
<b>Low-income countries</b>	8	20	40
<b>Lower middle income</b>	40	48	83
<b>Upper middle income</b>	143	80	180
<b>OECD DAC</b>	747	230	325

**Source:** Clare Manuel et al., "Domestic Financing for Justice: Who Spends Most on Justice?," ODI, March 21, 2023, [odi.org/en/publications/domestic-financing-for-justice-who-spends-most-on-justice/](https://odi.org/en/publications/domestic-financing-for-justice-who-spends-most-on-justice/).

As highlighted by Manuel et al. (2023), this table suggests that there is a need for development partners to provide financial support to justice systems in low-income countries, given that the

countries' own domestic financing efforts are already substantial.<sup>139</sup> The extent of external financing is further addressed in the next chapter.

# Chapter 5: Spending on Justice for Women Facing Violence

# Introduction

This chapter presents available information on spending on justice for women facing violence – through the analysis of global fiscal databases, selected country cases and an assessment of external financing. We highlight a series of country examples of how some budgets have reflected women's justice needs. The final section reviews external financing to address VAW.

We provide context for spending, especially to highlight systematic justice gaps, but not comprehensive policy details. It is important to recognize that regardless of resource allocations, if women do not report, and/or there are failures in response and access to support and services, justice gaps facing survivors will persist. For this reason, key gaps at the country level are noted, even where these are not directly attributable to resource constraints.

One key finding that emerges is that, even where systems of budgeting for women are relatively well developed, the budgets may not provide insights into the level and pattern of public investments to advance justice for women experiencing violence.

While most countries now have national laws against VAW, many do not legislatively provide for budget allocations. As underlined by the UN Women guidance on VAW legislation, this is essential.<sup>140</sup> For example, in 2018, Canada enacted the Gender Budgeting Act, requiring that the principle of gender equality be promoted in the federal budget and that it be considered in taxation and resource allocation decisions, including with respect to direct spending.<sup>141</sup> Other examples include the Mexican Law on Access of Women to a Life Free of Violence (2007), which established obligations for the state and municipalities to take budgetary and

administrative measures to ensure the rights of women to a life free of violence,<sup>142</sup> and in the United States, the Violence Against Women Act (1994), and its reauthorizations provided a significant source of funding for states to provide housing or shelter and for non-governmental organizations working on VAW.<sup>143</sup>

This study had initially sought to review several fiscal years since 2018 to examine financial commitments and implementation of measures related to VAW. However, this proved impossible due to a lack of fiscal data. The UNDP/UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker monitoring responses taken by governments to tackle the pandemic (and its consequences), usefully includes policy measures addressing VAW,<sup>144</sup> but does not show the budgetary allocations.

National spending on VAW is not available in any global financial databases. The main global source, the IMF's Government Financial Statistics, does not include this category. To ascertain spending on VAW, it was necessary to look at individual country documents. We restricted the fiscal sources to budget documents rather than more general plans, which may or may not be reflected in the actual budget. Only two years were available consistently, 2018 and 2021, as shown in Table 5.1, for up to 12 countries (five countries have only one year available).

Another key constraint is that we are limited to national-level data, and in countries with federal or de-centralized systems, lower levels of government may play a key role in resourcing justice for women.

**Table 5.1 National Budget Spending on Violence against Women and on Justice, as a Percentage of the Budget and National Income, 2018 and 2021**

Country	Spending on VAW, 2018		Spending on VAW, 2021		Spending on justice, 2018		Spending on justice, 2021	
	Share GDP (%)	Share budget (%)	Share GDP (%)	Share Budget (%)	Share GDP (%)	Share Budget (%)	Share GDP	Share Budget
<b>Albania</b>	n/a	n/a	0.002	0.30	1.70	6.10	1.80	5.80
<b>Australia</b>	0.003	0.01	0.020	0.07	1.80	5.10	1.90	4.60
<b>Bangladesh</b>	0.004	0.295	0.004	0.288	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Canada</b>	0.001	0.007	0.007	0.124	1.70	4.60	1.80	4.30
<b>France</b>	0.003	0.005	0.01	0.024	1.60	2.90	1.70	2.90
<b>India</b>	n/a	n/a	0.0001	0.004	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Ireland</b>	n/a	n/a	0.002	0.009	1.00	3.90	0.80	3.40
<b>Mexico</b>	0.0006	0.008	0.001	0.0137	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>New Zealand</b>	0.004	0.405	0.01	0.556	1.80	5.20	1.90	5.10
<b>Spain</b>	0.017	0.041	0.02	0.15	1.80	4.30	2.00	4.10
<b>Uganda</b>	0.010	0.052	0.031	0.0073	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>United Kingdom</b>	0.0009	0.002	n/a	n/a	1.80	4.40	2.10	4.30

**Source:** Consolidated data from various sources.<sup>145</sup>

It should be considered that spending amounts are difficult to interpret across countries. This is partly because results-oriented budget systems have not been introduced in all countries, as is the case in India, Nepal and Rwanda.<sup>146</sup> Another caveat is that it cannot necessarily be expected that justice spending will be commensurate across countries, as those with functioning institutions and trust in institutions may not require as much spending to ensure law abidance.<sup>147</sup>

It was not possible to establish COVID-19 impacts on budget support to prevent violence. While several studies have specifically examined the impacts of COVID-19 on violence and policy responses, including those documented by the UNDP/UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker, information about the impacts on budgets could not be ascertained.<sup>148</sup>

It is important to underline that this study does not address the effectiveness of spending. However, there is a growing body of evidence, best exemplified by the What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls Global Programme.<sup>149</sup> This programme generated findings and lessons from rigorous evaluations across 15 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East on what works (and doesn't) to prevent violence. The results show that VAW is preventable.<sup>150</sup> There are examples of excellent returns on investment; for instance, India's Rajasthan has demonstrated a benefit-to-cost ratio of 10:1.<sup>151</sup>

# Selected Country Cases: Spending on Justice for Women Facing Violence

Here we highlight the recent records of selected countries on investing to combat VAW, including Albania, Australia, Bangladesh, Bolivia and India.<sup>152</sup>

## Albania

Albania is one of the few countries globally that can quantify the percentage of budget allocated to equality.<sup>153</sup> In 2019, gender budgeting was anchored in the national policy framework and organic budget law. Gender analysis of sectoral proposals is to be included in medium-term budget programmes, with specific indicators to monitor implementation. The State Supreme Audit of Albania conducts periodic performance assessments of public institutions' budgets, including on gender equality indicators.

The medium-term budget framework is published regularly on the Ministry of Finance's official website. A Citizen's Budget provides information to support public understanding.

Albania has been recognized by the European Union for efforts to adequately fund the 2021-2030 national strategy on gender equality, stating that "all activities have been costed and the overall funding gap has been significantly reduced. Efforts are needed to ensure that all national strategies implemented at central and local level are mainstreamed and applied to budgeting."<sup>154</sup> It is also notable that in April 2020, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection designated shelters for domestic violence protection as essential services, to ensure that their operation would not be disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>155</sup>

The first national law on domestic violence entered into force in 2007. Albania developed a National Strategy for Gender Equality and

the Reduction of Gender Based and Domestic Violence for 2011-2015, which aimed to strengthen legal and administrative protection and support services for survivors of gender-based violence, as well as increase the punishment and expand training for judicial and other public officials. In 2013, Albania ratified the Istanbul Convention, and that same year, an amendment to the Criminal Code introduced spousal rape and spousal sexual violence as criminal offences, with more recent measures on protection orders and harsher criminal sentences.<sup>156</sup>

Women can only access justice if they report violence to the police. However, very few women survivors of violence in Albania do so – it appears that fewer than one per cent of the 41,000 cases of violence in the most recent year were reported.<sup>157</sup> Since 2018, the Monitoring Network Against Gender-Based Violence, established by UN Women, has monitored the legal and policy framework on Ending Violence Against Women in Albania and has made numerous recommendations for legal reforms, including on social housing and legal aid.<sup>158</sup>

## Australia<sup>159</sup>

Australia was the first country in the world to introduce "women's budgeting" in 1984, with the publication of a Women's Budget aiming to ensure that important budget decisions of the federal government would be made "with full knowledge of their impact on women."<sup>160</sup> The approach has recently gained major impetus, resulting in the National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women 2022-2032 along-side the new associated Action Plan.<sup>161</sup> Additionally, the Minister of Finance, holding the portfolio of the Ministry of Women, alongside other initiatives, has further supported this movement.

The Women's Budget Statement is an official budget document published as part of the annual budget by the Ministry of Finance. The objective of the 2023 Women's Budget Statement, which is over 80 pages long, is to outline measures to advance equality in Australia, focusing on

achieving women's economic equality, ending VAW, increasing women's representation in leadership and decision-making and improving women's health and wellbeing.<sup>162</sup>

While the Women's Budget Statement has been criticized as more political than a full analysis of how the budget measures will impact women,<sup>163</sup> it does provide an easy and transparent way to track the federal government's spending, including in relation to VAW, or the broader concept of domestic and family violence, noting that the latter concept is more commonly used and understood in Australia.

Public funding in Australia to address VAW has continued to increase in recent years, rising from about AUD 2 million annually in 2010, 2013 and 2014 to AUD 644 million (USD 438 million) by 2023 (see Table 5.2). There was a steep jump in spending between 2021 and 2022 (rising from AUD 158 to 424 million) and domestic violence has been firmly on the federal budget agenda since 2021. The share of the federal budget addressing domestic and family violence has risen every year since 2015, from below 0.001 per cent in 2014 to almost 0.1 per cent of the budget in 2023. Welcome aspects of the Australian approach include increasing political leadership and political and public consensus around the need to address domestic violence, as well as strong accountability mechanisms. Political momentum is evidenced in the growing number of state and territory ministerial positions charged with addressing domestic and family violence, and national working groups and forums enabling collaborative efforts with civil society (including those with lived experience), academics, frontline services and businesses.

In the three federal budgets since 2021, federal budgets have advanced the multiple prongs of the current national policy framework on domestic and family violence, namely prevention, early intervention, response and recovery, as well

as investing in data collection and better policy development. Budget allocation on women with specific experiences (particularly First Nations women)<sup>164</sup> and legal assistance has also increased in recent years, which sit within the broader categories of spending. It is too early to yet judge or assess impacts on outcomes, although recent trends in VAW in Australia do reveal improvements over time.

**Table 5.2 Domestic Violence Expenditure in Federal Budgets Since 2014, in Millions AUD and Percentages of Budget and National Income**

	Millions AUD	Share of aggregate budget expenditure (per cent)	Share of GDP (per cent)
2014/15	2.40	n/a	n/a
2015/16	35.80	0.01	0.00
2016/17	64.20	0.01	0.00
2017/18	49.20	0.01	0.00
2018/19	62.70	0.01	0.00
2019/20	82.03	0.02	0.00
2020/21	157.48	0.02	0.01
2021/22	424.25	0.07	0.02
2022/23	590.20	0.09	0.03
2023/24	643.90	0.09	0.03

**Source:** MinterEllison, “Financing of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Initiatives by the Commonwealth Government of Australia,” 2023, [www.minterellison.com/articles/funding-the-fight-against-domestic-violence](http://www.minterellison.com/articles/funding-the-fight-against-domestic-violence).

The October 2022-23 and May 2023-24 federal budgets are aligned with the multiple prongs of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, as shown in Figure 5.1.

Box 5.1 highlights some successful, publicly financed justice innovations in Australia, at the state and federal levels, to illustrate the current momentum in addressing domestic and family violence.

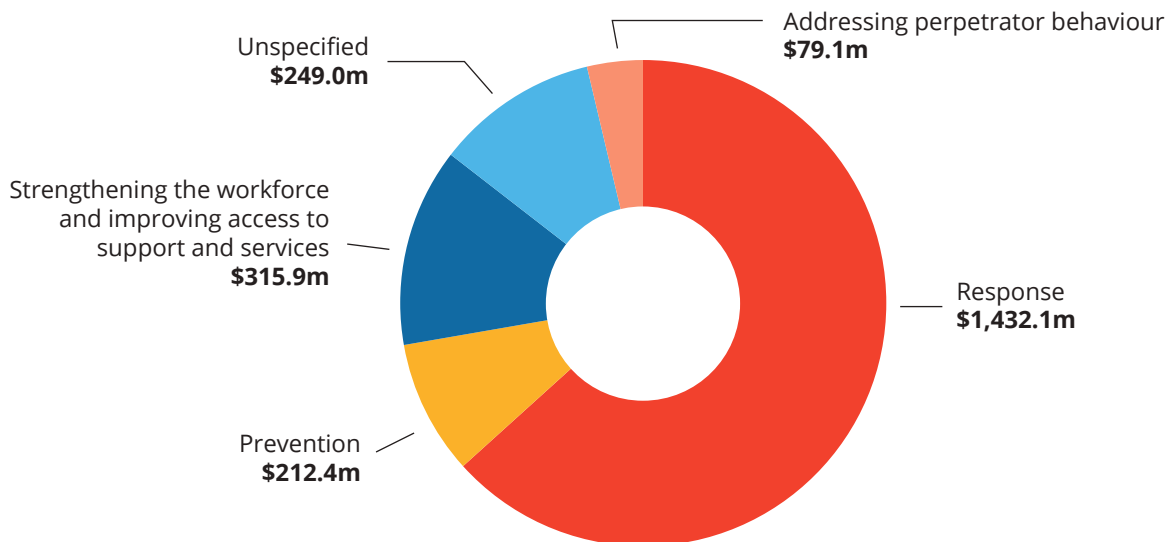
### Box 5.1 Spotlight on Recent Publicly Financed Domestic Violence Justice Innovations

Alongside innovations highlighted elsewhere in this chapter,

- The Lighthouse Project is a specialized domestic violence case management system within the federal court system which involves the court actively identifying matters that involve domestic and family violence and providing appropriate support where required.
- Specialized domestic and family violence courts in most states and territories provide an integrated approach to handling domestic and family violence matters through tailored processes and additional support.
- Online police reporting for sexual assault within some states provides a more accessible reporting option without an obligation to pursue charges.

There have also been legal reforms imposing obligations on the private sector. For example, in 2022 the Australian Government introduced a legislative minimum entitlement under the National Employment Standards to 10 days' paid family and domestic violence leave for full-time, part-time, and casual employees. This entitlement imposes a responsibility on the employer to pay this leave; it is not a financial entitlement provided by the government.

**Figure 5.1 Breakdown of Federal Budget Allocations to Address Domestic Violence, in Millions AUD, Australia, 2022-23**



**Source:** Commonwealth of Australia, "Women's Budget Statement 2022-23," March 29, 2022, [archive.budget.gov.au/2022-23/womens-statement/download/womens\\_budget\\_statement\\_2022-23.pdf](https://archive.budget.gov.au/2022-23/womens-statement/download/womens_budget_statement_2022-23.pdf).



Current priorities in domestic and family violence expenditure were laid out in the March 2022-23 Women's Budget Statement,<sup>165</sup> and include:

- A focus on addressing perpetrator behaviour, including counselling for perpetrators of domestic and family violence and development of a perpetrator referral database of services;
- Initiatives to improve data collection and policy development, including funding to establish the National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission to monitor and oversee the implementation of the next National Plan, and to establish consultation mechanisms with survivors to ensure their experiences inform implementation of the 2022-2032 National Plan;
- Strengthening capacity and skills by increasing funding for frontline community workers and supporting Lifeline Australia to continue delivering DV-alert, a nationally accredited training programme. DV-alert helps health, allied health and community frontline workers better understand and identify domestic and family violence and improve their referral and support skills. Additionally, it includes capacity-building training for the judiciary and legal practitioners;
- Significantly increased funding for trauma-informed recovery services for women facing domestic and family violence. This includes piloting a model of trauma-informed recovery care through six Primary Health Networks to improve coordination and access to services and expanding the Family and Domestic Violence Primary Health Network Pilot to enable primary care providers to better identify and intervene early in cases of family, domestic and sexual violence, ensuring coordinated referrals to support services; and
- Increased focus on addressing cyber violence, including extending the National Online Safety Awareness Campaign,<sup>166</sup> supporting the Safety Commissioner,<sup>167</sup> and other initiatives which expressly address technology-facilitated abuse as a recognized form of abuse alongside other forms of violence.

Financing for legal assistance or legal reforms was a major share of new multi-year domestic violence initiatives announced in 2021-22, with AUD 129.0 million (USD 87.9 million) over four years for women's legal centres under the National Legal Assistance Partnership. Recent major initiatives on legal assistance include AUD 26.0 million (USD 17.7 million) in the 2021-2022 budget towards a First Nations specialized legal assistance programme.<sup>168</sup> Each federal budget since 2021 has increased funding for the family courts to provide better case management for women experiencing domestic violence, including the Lighthouse Project (spotlighted in Box 5.1).<sup>169</sup> Other recent federal budget initiatives in relation to legal assistance or legal reforms include:

- Increased funding for legal assistance in family law matters, including to avoid cross-examination by perpetrators of women who have experienced sexual assault<sup>170</sup> and in relation to property disputes and mediations following separation;<sup>171</sup>
- Initiatives to strengthen criminal justice frameworks and responses to family, domestic and sexual violence, including scoping a witness intermediary scheme to support vulnerable witnesses to give evidence, a scoping study on alternative reporting mechanisms for sexual assault,<sup>172</sup> a national review of family and domestic violence order frameworks, and improving consent laws and justice responses to sexual violence; and<sup>173</sup>
- In the 2022-23 budget, funding was boosted for national training for law enforcement to effectively identify and better support survivors of all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence. Training will seek to uplift policing responses across five dedicated streams, including coercive control, sexual assault, technology-facilitated abuse, child safety and targeting attitudes and behaviours towards family, domestic and sexual violence.<sup>174</sup>

Some states and territories additionally offer more expedited support packages to survivors of domestic and family violence or additional discretionary payments. Box 5.2 highlights a relevant scheme in New South Wales. In

Queensland, primary survivors of domestic violence are eligible for a “special assistance payment” of up to AUD 9,000 (USD 6,100) in

addition to compensation for expenses, up to AUD 10,000 (USD 6,800).<sup>175</sup> These are not shown in the federal budgets in table 5.2 and figure 5.1.

### Box 5.2 Survivors’ Assistance Scheme in New South Wales

In New South Wales, a survivor of violence is eligible for two categories of payments.

In the category of financial support, they are eligible for a maximum of:

- AUD 5000 (USD 3,400) for an immediate needs support package. This is only available to survivors of domestic violence, and could cover, for example, rent assistance, household items, change of locks and security cameras.
- AUD 30,000 (USD 20,400) for financial assistance for direct economic loss, which could cover loss of income, out-of-pocket expenses, medical bills, or loss of or damage to clothing.

Under a “recognition payment,” which is intended to acknowledge that a violent crime has been committed against the survivor, they are eligible for a maximum of:

- AUD 15,000 (USD 10,200) for a financially dependent family survivor or children under the age of 18 at the time of death of the homicide victim.
- AUD 10,000 (USD 6,800) for primary survivors of sexual assault involving serious bodily injury, multiple offenders, or an offensive weapon or a sexual assault, sexual act, or attempted sexual assault involving a series of incidents.
- AUD 7,500 (USD 5,100) for parents, step-parents or guardians, current spouses, or de facto partners of a homicide victim.
- AUD 5,000 (USD 3,400) for primary survivors of a sexual assault (one incident), attempted sexual assault with serious bodily injury, assault with grievous bodily harm, or physical assault of a child that involves a series of incidents.
- AUD 1,500 (USD 1,000) for primary survivors of an attempted sexual assault without serious bodily injury, sexual touching, a robbery involving violence, or an assault without grievous bodily harm.<sup>176</sup>

The amount granted in each case depends on a variety of factors, including when the crime occurred, the extent of injuries and mitigation of loss. While these schemes are not limited to domestic violence survivors, it is notable that domestic violence survivors are not subject to the general requirement to prove injury to be eligible for compensation.

There have been important advances at the state level. For example:

- The Victorian Government has invested AUD 2.9 billion (USD 2 billion) between 2016 and 2021 to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family

Violence, spanning across reforms to improve prevention, police response, courts and legal assistance, housing, perpetrator interventions and more.<sup>177</sup>

- The Queensland Women’s Justice and Safety Taskforce invited submissions and engaged in extensive consultation with civil society to make recommendations regarding domestic and family violence law reform in Queensland. Significant state-based public funding – of around the equivalent of AUD 588 million (USD 401 million) over five years – has been committed to finance implementation.

There are nonetheless gaps relative to the scale and complexity of needs. One estimate by Full Stop Australia, a national domestic violence advocacy and support organization, is that AUD 1 billion (USD 681 million) is needed annually at a federal government level to adequately respond to domestic violence in Australia,<sup>178</sup> compared to the AUD 589.3 million (USD 401.5 million) allocated in the most recent 2023-24 federal budget – which implies that spending needs to rise by about 50 per cent.<sup>179</sup> Two areas that women's groups have highlighted as in need of additional public financing are specialized legal assistance for women facing domestic violence, and initiatives that specifically address its impact on women.<sup>180</sup>

## Bangladesh

A very high share of ever-married women – about 28 per cent – had experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months in Bangladesh, according to a report from 2015.<sup>181</sup> A recent study covering rural northeast Bangladesh found that high proportions of women of reproductive age experience physical or sexual VAW, but that women do not often speak of these experiences, especially to anyone outside of family.<sup>182</sup> Among women who had experienced abuse in the preceding year, very few pursued formal complaints and only 0.5 per cent reported to the police.<sup>183</sup> The likely reasoning is that they are discouraged by low conviction rates. According to data reported by the Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women, of the over 11,000 women who filed legal cases through one of the government's nine One-Stop Crisis Centres for women and girls in 2019, only 160 saw a successful conviction.<sup>184</sup>

This challenge has been recognized in the Eighth Five-Year Plan 2020-2025 for national development, and combatting VAW is a stated focus of justice institutions. The plan emphasizes greater investment in local capacity building, effectively handling women's rights-related cases and coordination with the police and judiciary. Recent research also points to promising directions for the prevention of violence. Cash transfers, together with nutritional support, were

found to have sustained impacts five years after the intervention ended.<sup>185</sup>

There appears to have been a steady increase in budget support to combat VAW, according to the Gender Budget Report for the Law and Justice Division. The Government reports that 97,470 women were provided with free legal aid services over a recent three-year period, including 7,885 women who received legal aid through hotline services. The compensation for lawyers providing free legal aid was also increased.<sup>186</sup> However, the share of women survivors receiving free legal aid appears to be extremely low – around 0.002 per cent of survivors annually.

It is critical to address systemic justice failures alongside increased resources. As underlined by a recent Human Rights Watch report, which included in-depth interviews with survivors, Bangladesh's criminal justice system is failing women and girls who have survived violence, because rates of violence remain persistently high and so few women report violence.<sup>187</sup> The failures in response, protective measures and services are all factors that seriously hinder the ability of survivors to access the justice system.<sup>188</sup>

## Bolivia

Bolivia is highlighted by UN Women as a case of best practices, with stand-alone and mainstreamed policy objectives for women and girls. The Budget Formulation Guidelines include a strategic goal to “implement comprehensive and effective measures to combat all forms of violence against women, girls and adolescents.”<sup>189</sup>

The General State Budget, published on the website of the Ministry of Economy and Public Finance, allows specific programmes to be identified. The Plurinational Service for Women and Depatriarchalization “Ana María Romero” was created as a decentralized public institution, under the Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency, to monitor and evaluate compliance with public policies towards the effective exercise of women's rights and promote the eradication of all types of violence and forms of discrimination against women.<sup>190</sup> The 2021

Budget and Execution Report shows that the approved allocation for this entity was just 0.0008 per cent of the total budget, of which 0.0007 per cent was executed.<sup>191</sup>

Bolivia's Comprehensive Law to Guarantee Women a Life Free from Violence (Law 348) was enacted in 2013. Supreme Decree 2145, issued in October 2014, to regulate Law No. 348, allocates 30 per cent of the Citizen Security resources of the nine Departmental Autonomous Governments to shelters for women survivors in the first fiscal year, and 10 per cent from the second fiscal year onwards. Additionally, Autonomous Municipal Governments are required to make specified allocations to address VAW.

In 2019, Bolivia's central government announced a doubling of spending on preventing VAW and transferred control of these funds to local authorities. The extra funding was to come from a profit tax on a nationalized gas company. An amendment in 2019 provided for budget resources to maintain care services for women in situations of violence and their dependents.<sup>192</sup> Resources allocated for Law 348 cannot be reallocated to other purposes.

The Tax Justice Observatory for Women (*Observatorio de Justicia Fiscal desde las Mujeres*) also publishes analysis of spending on women and girls' concerns across the 339 municipalities. Its Analysis of Municipal Investment in the Reduction of Violence Against Women shows allocations ranging between 0.05 and 0.44 per cent of the budget over the period 2017-2021.<sup>193</sup> Another recent non-governmental report notes that budget execution of allocations to women and girls is generally very low.<sup>194</sup>

The lack of budget is reflected in severe under-resourcing. As of 2020, only four of the nine departments had shelters. It has been reported that the shelters were not well-staffed, did not promise anonymity, and could not provide protection from abusers.

Justice gaps persist for women facing violence. While the law criminalizes femicide – the killing of a woman based on her identity as a woman – with a penalty of 30 years in prison, effective enforcement remains a challenge. Corruption, weaknesses in criminal investigations, a lack of specialized prosecutors and broader judicial inefficiencies have hampered convictions. UN Women and human rights groups have also highlighted the lack of training on the law and slow judicial processes, as among the factors hindering the full implementation of Law 348.

More generally, the law prohibiting domestic violence is reportedly rarely enforced.<sup>195</sup> Annual rates of VAW remain very high – over 18 per cent – yet fewer than one per cent of cases appear to be reported to the police. Even for those that are reported, the NGO Community of Human Rights found that two-thirds were closed without any action, and the conviction rate of the remaining cases was less than one per cent. Women's organizations have also reported that domestic violence survivors received poor representation from public defenders and that such cases typically took an average of three years to conclude. Once a case is closed, the survivor was often responsible for the legal fees. These lengthy judicial processes and financial burdens further discourage women from reporting abuse by their spouses.

It is notable that the need for more resources to address violence is an express demand of civil society. There are reports that the slogan "Budgets against violence, now!" has been a rallying cry in demonstrations in Bolivia. These protests highlight the alarming statistic that every day, 13 women of all ages become victims of sexual crimes, despite existing laws that guarantee a life free of violence for women.

## India

India's first Gender Budget Statement was published in 2005/06, and over the period through 2018/19, the national gender budget increased more than eightfold.<sup>196</sup>

In India, the Ministry of Finance issues an annual Budget Circular to all central ministries and departments with gender budgeting instructions and prescribes the format of Gender Budget Statements. The Ministry of Women and Child Development also issues directives and advisories to ministries and states. Programmes in which at least 30 per cent of beneficiaries are supposed to be women are called "Pro-women allocations."

Since 2014, the Ministry of Finance Expenditure Finance Committee meetings require that all proposals with a gender component include specific objectives and allocate a budget share for action. Ministries and departments must review their programmes and present budgetary allocations and actual expenditure on pro-women programmes.

The Gender Budget Statement is published annually, along with the Union Budget, and includes budget estimates for the upcoming year, revised estimates, as well as actual expenditure. All union budget documents are available on the website of the Ministry of Finance and through a mobile application.

In general, however, as highlighted by Diane Elson, it is not possible to verify "how much of the expenditure of programmes with 'pro-women allocations' goes to women and supports their empowerment."<sup>197</sup> Moreover, India does not have a well-developed performance budgeting system, so allocations are not linked to any indicators of outputs and outcomes.<sup>198</sup>

One recent study based on quantitative and qualitative data concludes that budgeting for women and girls in India remains "an elementary

exercise with limited strategic direction." It highlights limited capacity and the need for better sensitization on the needs and priorities of women.<sup>199</sup>

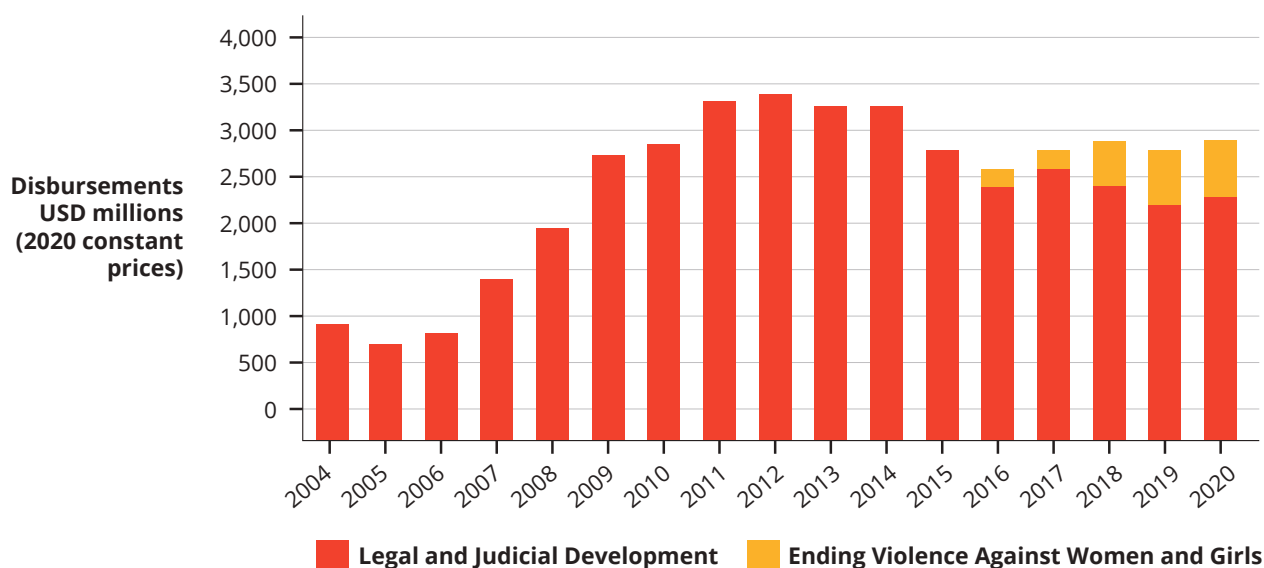
## International Aid to Prevent Violence Against Women

International aid can significantly contribute to government budgets, particularly in countries with low levels of human development and those affected by crises. Most of this support comes via bilateral programmes, followed by multilateral support, with a gradual upward trend in total financing since 2000, even though the AAAA commitments to boost support for development to the target of 0.7 per cent of GDP have not been met.<sup>200</sup>

Here we highlight key patterns and trends in external financing for legal and judicial development, more specifically, for ending VAW. For justice, a typical low-income country received just 1.5 per cent of the estimated cost of delivering a basic justice service, on average (median) USD 0.30 per person per year compared with the estimated costs of USD 20 per person per year.<sup>201</sup>

Assistance tracked by the OECD DAC to 2020 shows that all aid for "legal and judicial development" peaked in 2011-13, then fell by about one-third in real terms. This definition includes support to a wide range of justice institutions, such as the courts and the police, and includes aid given to civil society, from bilateral and multilateral donors, given as a grant or as a concessional loan. Figure 5.2 shows total aid for legal and judicial development with support for ending VAW.

**Figure 5.2 Justice Aid Disbursements (Legal and Judicial Development and VAW)**



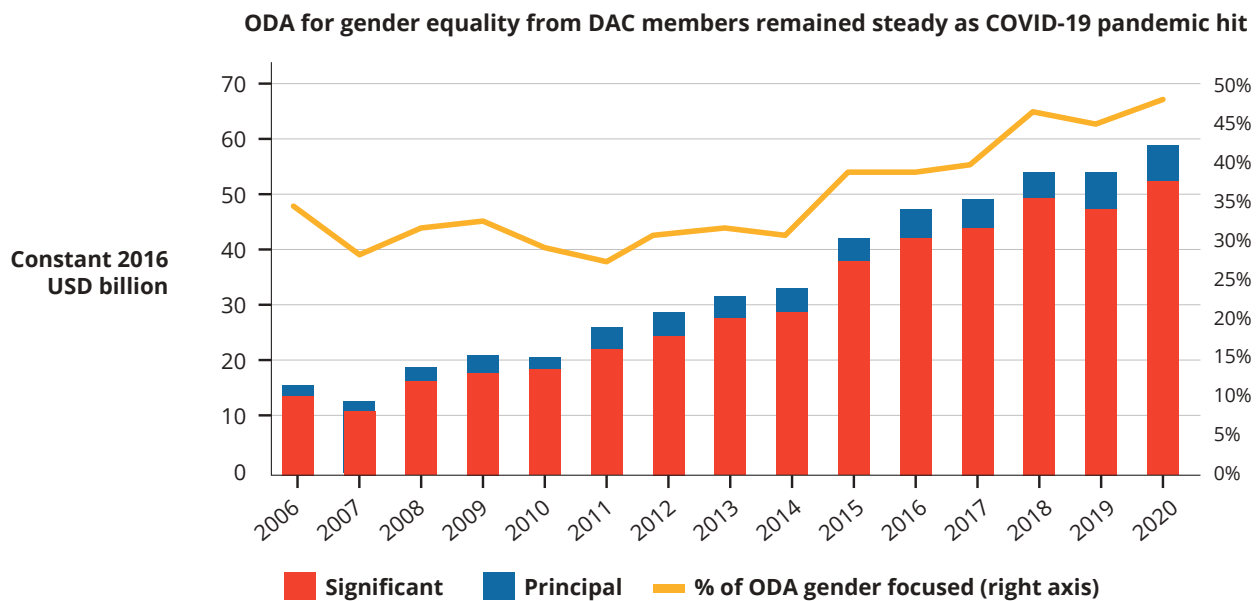
**Source:** Clare Manuel and Marcus Manuel, “Justice Aid Update and Lessons from Latest Evaluations of Donor Programming,” ODI, August 3, 2022, [odi.org/en/publications/justice-aid-update-and-lessons-from-latest-evaluations-of-donor-programming/](https://odi.org/en/publications/justice-aid-update-and-lessons-from-latest-evaluations-of-donor-programming/). Based on OECD DAC data.

Total aid disbursement for gender equality, according to the OECD DAC data, which provides the most comprehensive picture, amounted to USD 56.5 billion in 2020. The OECD Creditor Reporting System database applies the OECD gender marker, which distinguishes between screened programmes that are found not to target gender equality (score 0); those that incorporate gender equality as a significant objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme (score 1); and those for which gender equality is the principal objective, fundamental to its design and expected results (score 2). DAC members must screen at least 50 per cent of their commitments to be included in the annual OECD analyses of development aid.

Bilateral assistance from OECD-DAC members for gender equality has steadily risen over the past decade, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, largely due to the mainstreaming of gender concerns in broader development programmes. In 2019-20, OECD-DAC members committed about 45 per cent of their bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) to gender equality – a historical high.<sup>202</sup> However, as Figure 5.3 also shows, only 5 per cent of total bilateral ODA targets gender equality as a principal objective, a share that has not changed much over time.



**Figure 5.3 Development Financing for Gender Equality, 2006-2020**



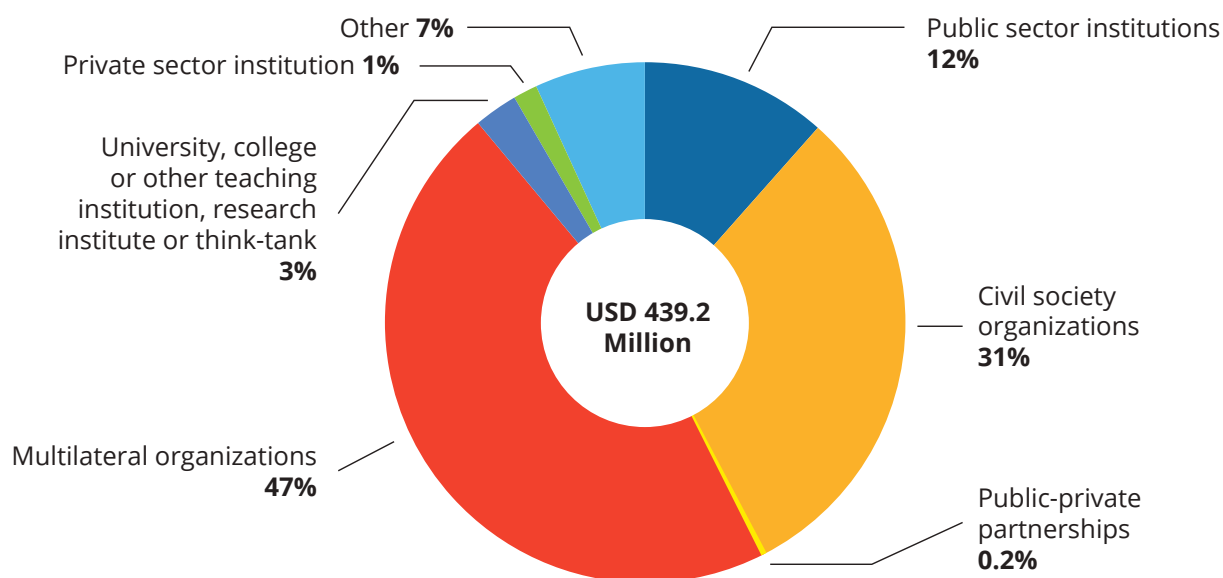
**Source:** OECD, “Development Finance for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: A Snapshot,” 2022, [web.archive.org/2022-05-05/630214-Gender\\_ODA\\_2022.pdf](https://web.archive.org/2022-05-05/630214-Gender_ODA_2022.pdf).

The shares of United Nations system spending going to gender equality are much lower. In 2017, only 2 per cent of the United Nations development system’s expenditure was allocated to gender equality and women’s empowerment; and just 2.6 per cent of United Nations personnel worked on the issue.<sup>203</sup> In humanitarian responses, only 1.7 per cent of programming targets gender equality and women’s empowerment.<sup>204</sup>

Recently published data shows that OECD DAC members committed USD 458 million per year

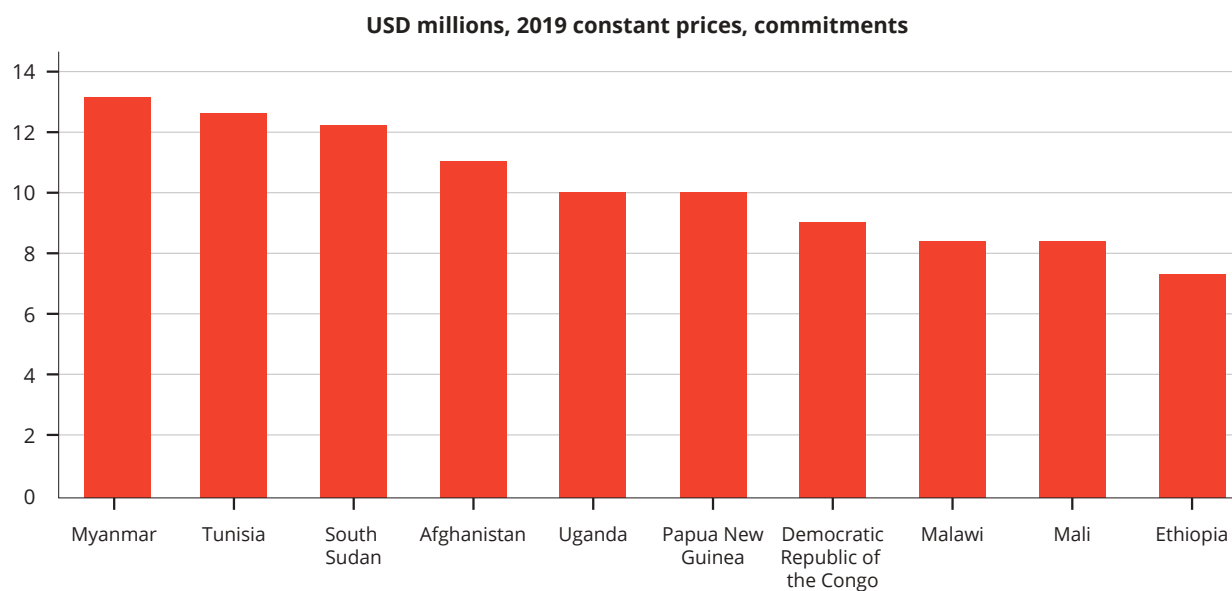
on average in 2020-21 in support of ending VAW, which amounts to only 0.3 per cent of their total ODA.<sup>205</sup> The total amount had fallen relative to the USD 531 million allocated in 2018-19.<sup>206</sup> Almost half of this bilateral ODA flows through multilateral organizations, while civil society actors and financing through the public sector are also common modalities, as shown in Figure 5.4 below. It is not known from the published data how much of this aid investment is focused on justice responses to VAW.

**Figure 5.4 Channels for Bilateral ODA to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, 2019**



**Source:** OECD, "Development Finance for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Snapshot," 2022, [web-archive.oecd.org/2022-05-05/630214-Gender\\_ODA\\_2022.pdf](https://web-archive.oecd.org/2022-05-05/630214-Gender_ODA_2022.pdf).

**Figure 5.5 Top Ten Country Recipients of ODA to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, 2019**



**Source:** OECD, "Development Finance for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Snapshot," 2022, [web-archive.oecd.org/2022-05-05/630214-Gender\\_ODA\\_2022.pdf](https://web-archive.oecd.org/2022-05-05/630214-Gender_ODA_2022.pdf).



The main development partners for VAW in 2020-21 were Canada (USD 63 million on average per year in the period) and Norway (USD 57 million).<sup>207</sup>

A recent World Bank retrospective of work on VAW,<sup>208</sup> covering the decade to 2023, reveals a major uptick in support, as shown in Figure 5.6. There has been a ten-fold increase in project work on the ground to address VAW – extending to every region and sector. These operations

are often multi-sectoral and anchored by partnerships with local, regional and international governmental and non-governmental organizations. For example, in Uzbekistan, a policy financing operation supported the establishment of referral pathways for survivors of VAW as part of reforms to create more inclusive labour markets and incentivize female labour force participation.

**Figure 5.6 Trends in World Bank Support to Addressing Gender Based Violence**

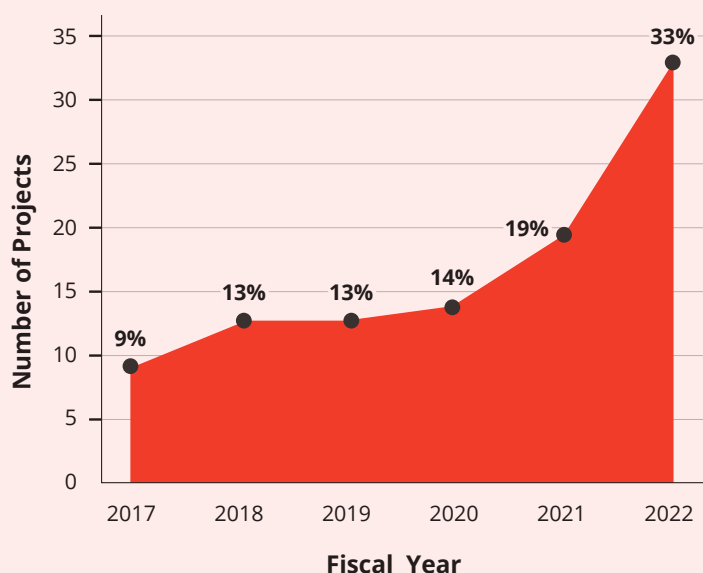
**390 operations approved during FY2017-22 address:**

- The 2013 review identified 38 World Bank operations with GBV prevention or response activities, for an estimated USD 22.5 million in investment.
- Estimated investment of USD 680 million in FY17-22 (though budget figures are only available for 4 per cent of all operations addressing GBV).

**Prevention and response are integrated into sectoral operations:**

- Only 3 projects are stand-alone GBV operations, and 11 have GBV as a Project-level priority. All of these are in FCV settings.
- 96 per cent of the 390 operations include GBV-related activities as part of subcomponents.

**Share of operations that include GBV activities (N=390)**



Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in World Bank Operations: A Retrospective (2012-22)

**Source:** The World Bank, “Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in World Bank Operations: Tak-ing Stock After a Decade of Engagement,” 2022, [openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/2d165919-0b23-4e31-a81e-c2fcaa110e8c/content](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/2d165919-0b23-4e31-a81e-c2fcaa110e8c/content).

The conclusions emerging from this analysis are constrained by the fact that so few countries publish fiscal data that show public spending against violence. In those countries where quantification is possible, the amounts being spent are small – typically far below one per cent of the budget, and a tiny share of national income. There is no reason to expect that the picture would be significantly better in countries

where data is not being reported.

The amount of development funding directed to addressing VAW tends to be better tracked and reported than domestic spending and has substantially increased in recent times. The next chapter focuses on Uganda, which is one of the largest recipients of ODA to address VAW.

# Chapter 6: The Experience of Uganda

## Introduction

This chapter is supported by a comprehensive study that examines budgeting in justice delivery to address VAW. The full case study on Uganda, including its recommendations and way forward will be published alongside this report. This chapter highlights national policies and laws that define Uganda's budget process and budgeting commitments on VAW and access to justice.

The case study was based on a desk review of literature and budget documents covering 2018-2023 capturing pre- and post-COVID-19 financial commitments towards access to justice. A major source of information used was official budget documents. This data is quite extensive, detailed and not always easily accessible. It was necessary to consult national partners to clarify data, especially budget information. The desk analysis was complemented by inputs of various officials in the Government of Uganda, particularly the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED), Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Justice, Law, and Order Sector (JLOS) Secretariat, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), the Uganda Police Force (UPF), the Judiciary, the Equal Opportunities Commission and Justice Centres Uganda. Several civil society organizations (CSOs) also provided inputs – namely, ActionAid International Uganda, Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Uganda), Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda and the Uganda Women's Network.

This chapter begins by outlining the magnitude and shape of the challenge of VAW in Uganda. It then describes the institutional commitments and budgeting arrangements, followed by an overview of available information on actual resource allocations. The final section provides a set of recommendations for the case of Uganda.

## Prevalence of Violence Against Women in Uganda

VAW is a major challenge in Uganda, as it is in Sub-Saharan Africa more broadly. The first-ever systematic review of published studies reports that more than two-fifths (44 per cent) of women aged 15–49 in Sub-Saharan African countries experienced some form of IPV and almost a sixth (14 per cent) experienced non-IPV forms of violence.<sup>209</sup> All types of IPV (physical, sexual, and emotional violence) are common experiences among women in Sub-Saharan Africa, with emotional violence being the most prevalent. The sub-region analysis showed the highest pooled estimates in Eastern Africa (38.9 per cent).

All forms of VAW stand at unacceptably high levels in Uganda,<sup>210</sup> with physical, sexual, and emotional or psychological violence as its most common forms.<sup>211</sup> As in other regions, the most reliable prevalence figures are obtained from the Demographic and Health Survey. According to the latest edition of the Survey in 2022, 44 per cent of women had experienced physical violence in their lifetimes and 23 per cent experienced it in the past 12 months.<sup>212</sup>

It is noted that this figure predates the COVID-19 pandemic, a period during which UN Women has documented that rates of VAW worsened in many settings.<sup>213</sup> The pandemic had major repercussions for risks of VAW in Uganda,<sup>214</sup> in the given lockdown enforcement.<sup>215</sup> COVID-19's socio-economic impact in Uganda reportedly included a surge in VAW, with over 3,000 cases countrywide in the early months of the pandemic, mostly in urban slums.<sup>216</sup>

**Table 6.1 Prevalence of Different Forms of Violence Against Women in Uganda**

Form of Violence	Prevalence
Lifetime Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence:	55.5%
Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence in the last 12 months:	34.6%
Lifetime Non-Partner Sexual Violence:	54.8%

**Source:** UN Women Data Hub, “Uganda Country Detail Page,” 2021, [data.unwomen.org/global-database-on-violence-against-women/country-profile/Uganda/country-snapshot#countryanpshot-datacont](https://data.unwomen.org/global-database-on-violence-against-women/country-profile/Uganda/country-snapshot#countryanpshot-datacont).

A primary root cause of VAW in Uganda, as is the case in many regions, is the prevalence of adverse norms and practices that perpetuate unequal power dynamics between women and men.<sup>217</sup> The CEDAW Committee has reiterated its concern at the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in all spheres of life in Uganda.<sup>218</sup> The Committee is concerned that such customs and practices perpetuate discrimination against women and girls resulting in their disadvantaged and unequal status across various domains such as education, public life, decision-making, marriage and family relations. Additionally, they contribute to the persistence of VAW and harmful practices, including polygamy, early marriages, and the payment of bride price. In 2011, the Committee expressed concern that the State Party had not taken effective and comprehensive action to modify or eliminate stereotypes and negative traditional values and practices.

VAW in Uganda has severe, long-term negative impacts on the physical and psychological wellbeing of survivors, their families and communities.<sup>219</sup> Survivors are often unable to participate effectively in available development programmes.<sup>220</sup> A national survey on violence against children in Uganda found similar devastating consequences.<sup>221</sup> Investing in prevention, as well as effective response, is crucial.

## Institutional Arrangements

The National Development Plan III (2020/21-2024/25),<sup>222</sup> the overarching development planning framework of Uganda, is anchored on the aspirations of *Vision 2040*.<sup>223</sup> Among other things, Vision 2040 commits to national policies and programmes that promote equality for women and girls and the National Development Plan broadly guides key development planning processes, including budget design.

Uganda’s national planning frameworks integrate Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment issues, including VAW. As noted in the most recent State Party Report to the CEDAW Committee, Uganda has enacted laws and regulations that promote and protect the rights of women and girls, including the 2010 Domestic Violence Act to protect and provide legal solutions for survivors of violence in the home; the 2011 Domestic Violence Regulations; the 2010 Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act that criminalizes the harmful practice of female genital mutilation; the 2012 Employment (Sexual Harassment) Regulations that give effect to the provisions on sexual harassment in the Employment Act; and the Public Finance Management Act 2015 which provides for gender responsive planning and budgeting.<sup>224</sup>

Furthermore, in 2011, the Government issued the Domestic Violence Regulations to enforce the 2010 Domestic Violence Act. This has been followed by Guidelines for the Prevention and Response to Female Genital Mutilation

(2012), a National Policy and Action Plan on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence in Uganda, as the Referral Pathway for Response to Gender Based Violence in Uganda (2013) and Guidelines for the Establishment and Management of GBV Shelters (2013).

Additionally, in August 2016, the Government approved the National Policy and Action Plan on the Elimination of GBV. The national policy is a framework towards the attainment of a zero-tolerance environment of VAW and a comprehensive response to the needs of survivors. The three priorities in the 2016 National GBV Policy are prevention, provision of services and ending impunity. This, alongside an institutional framework for interventions, ensures that responsible actors and sectors align with the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence. As noted in Chapter 1, the Programme identifies coordination and governance, health, police and justice, and social services, as key components.

The Government recognizes that despite this framework, the prevalence of VAW in Uganda remains high, with defilement constituting 50 per cent of all serious crimes reported to the UPF in 2017.<sup>225</sup> However, it should be underlined that the number of cases being reported to the police is insignificant relative to the prevalence of VAW cases reported in national surveys. For example, in 2022, based on the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, 44 per cent of women aged 15-49 had reported having experienced physical violence and 54 per cent of ever-married women had experienced “physical, sexual or emotional violence by their current or most recent spouse/partner.”<sup>226</sup> However, the DHS reveals that in the same year, less than 6 per cent of women victims of physical or sexual violence had sought help from the police.<sup>227</sup> In 2024, the number of cases of domestic violence reported to the police remained modest, as the Annual Crime Report found only 14,073 such cases.<sup>228</sup>

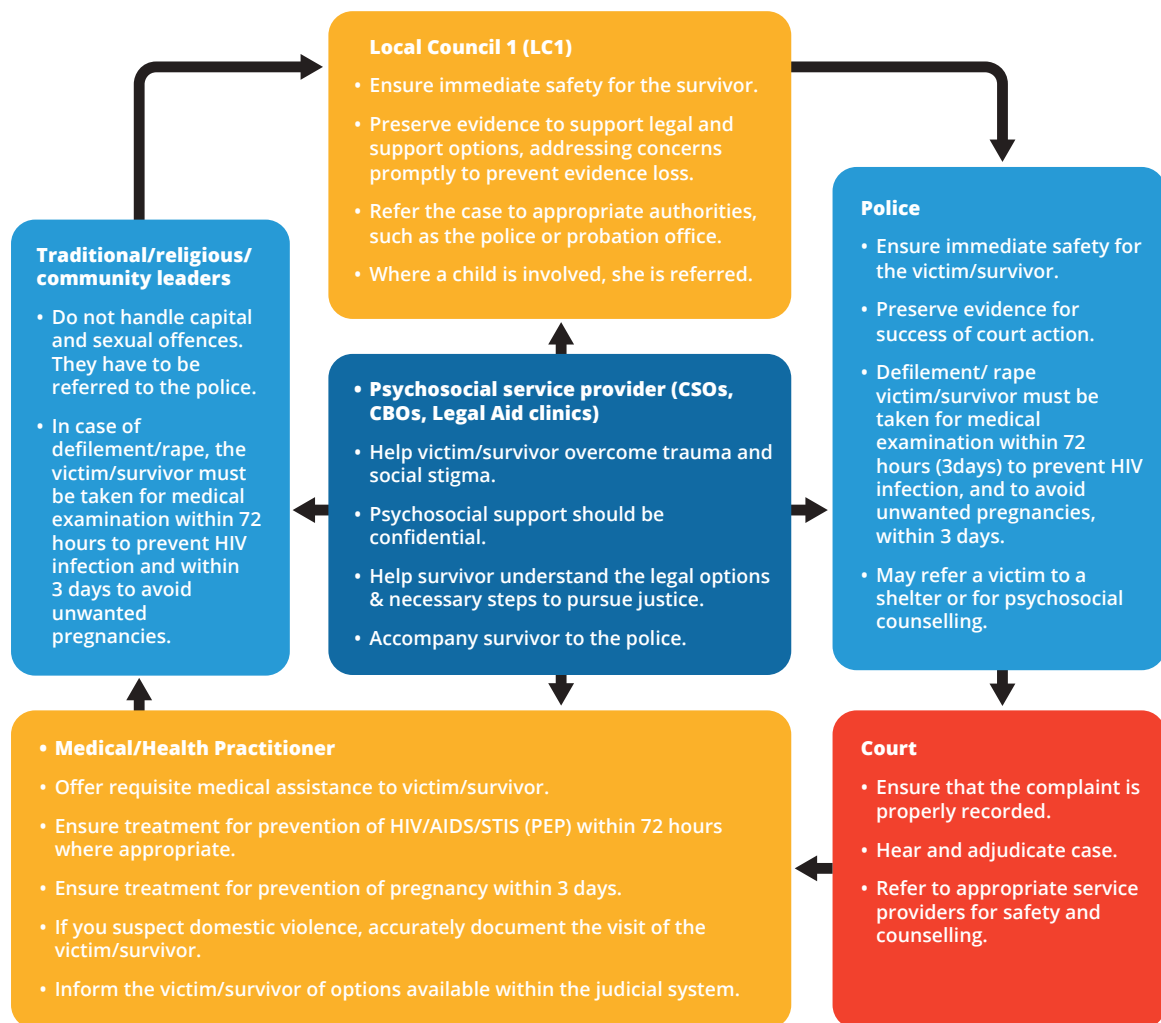
Neither Uganda’s Domestic Violence Act nor its Penal Code expressly address marital rape,

and the Domestic Violence Act does not cover cohabiting partners.<sup>229</sup> Despite favourable constitutional provisions, Ugandan law also does not expressly prohibit child marriage, bride price, and widow inheritances, all of which are risk factors for VAW.<sup>230</sup> Uganda is yet to establish specialized courts for domestic violence, resulting in revictimization and backlogs. Furthermore, police and judicial personnel often lack awareness of or the capacity to enforce existing laws, due to inadequate staffing and systematic training.<sup>231</sup> For these reasons, customary courts tend to play a greater role in the adjudication of VAW cases although their processes and customary principles are founded on patriarchy.<sup>232</sup>

The Government of Uganda’s 2020 State Party Report to the CEDAW Committee on measures being taken to implement the Convention reports the establishment of 13 shelters to provide temporary accommodation, legal support, counselling, and referral services to VAW survivors, as well as the introduction of a module on VAW in the Training Curriculum for new entrants into the police force. The Criminal Investigations Directorate of the UPF now includes a department focused on VAW. The MGLSD also introduced National Guidelines for the Provision of Psychosocial Support for GBV Victims/Survivors, which provide minimum standards for duty bearers and service providers. Additionally, an audio-visual link system has been introduced in High Courts to allow VAW survivors to sit in a different location from the accused. The CEDAW report also notes that “MGLSD has been capacitated with UGX 3,000 billion to continue the implementation of VAW programmes in FY 2018/19 – 2022/23.”<sup>233</sup>

Securing access to justice for women and girls who are affected by violence is the responsibility of various justice institutions. The referral pathway for criminal justice in Uganda is illustrated below in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1 The JLOS Referral Pathway**



**Adapted from:** Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, "National Guidelines for the Provision of Psychosocial Support for Gender Based Violence Victims/Survivors," March 15, 2018, [uganda.unfpa.org/en/publications/national-guidelines-provision-psychosocial-support-gender-based-violence](http://uganda.unfpa.org/en/publications/national-guidelines-provision-psychosocial-support-gender-based-violence).

For two decades (2000-2020), the Government of Uganda adopted a Sector-Wide Approach, known as JLOS, bringing together 18 institutions with closely linked mandates of administering justice and maintaining law and order and human rights, in developing a common vision and policy framework.<sup>234</sup> JLOS was comprised of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, which also hosted the JLOS Secretariat; the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the Judiciary; the Uganda Police Force; the Uganda Prison Service; the Directorate of Public Prosecutions; the Judicial Service Commission; the Ministry of Local Government, which oversees the Local Council Courts; the Ministry of Gender, Labour

and Social Development, which spearheads legal and policy reform initiatives that promote equality for women and girls and is in charge of juvenile justice, labour and probation services; the Uganda Law Reform Commission; the Uganda Human Rights Commission; the Law Development Centre; the Tax Appeals Tribunal; the Uganda Law Society; the Centre for Arbitration and Alternative Dispute Resolution; the Uganda Registration Services Bureau; and the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control.<sup>235</sup>

UN Women assisted in the integration of a gender audit, introducing a gender analysis



into the work of JLOS, investing in justice needs surveys and sex-disaggregated data and integrating a rights-based monitoring framework and gender-responsive budgets with earmarked funding.<sup>236</sup>

However, in 2020 there was a shift to the programme approach, as reflected in NDP III, and the JLOS was replaced by the Governance and Security Programme. The Access to Justice Sub Programme has 17 of the 18 formerly JLOS institutions, excluding the judiciary. The sub programme on Criminal Justice addresses VAW.<sup>237</sup>

## Gender Budgeting in Uganda

Uganda's commitment to gender and equity budgeting began in 1999, championed by the Uganda Women Parliamentarians Association (UWOPA). FOWODE, a women's rights organization focusing on women's political leadership, trained women parliamentarians in advocacy and budgeting, and supported UWOPA to draft a Private Bill amending the Budget Act to increase Parliament's role in budgeting. From 2003, MFPED collaborated with the MGLSD to address gender and equity issues in budgetary processes.<sup>238</sup> Gender and equity budgeting was first adopted by the government in FY 2003/04 and MFPED started to enforce Gender and Equity Budgeting in FY 2009/2010.

The PFMA (2015) sets out the national budget process and institutional framework. In 2015, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the MFPED and the MGLSD issued a Gender and Equity (G&E) Compact. The compact was approved by the national parliament. The MFED also issued Budget Call Circulars guidelines to Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and local governments, which require them to integrate a gender and equity perspective into their plans and budgets.<sup>239</sup> The Budget Call Circulars also require accounting officers to demonstrate how government funding will address gender and equity issues in their policies, plans and budgets.

The PFMA also mandates the Equal Opportunities Commission, an independent constitutional body, to assess compliance of Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) and Ministerial Policy Statements (MPSs) for G&E responsiveness.<sup>240</sup> The Equal Opportunities Commission presents recommendations to the finance minister, outlining BFPs and MPSs that comply with G&E certification. Before Parliament approves the budget, MDAs must have received a G&E certificate from MFPED.<sup>241</sup> The national Parliament, which has 34 per cent female representation<sup>242</sup> and an active women's caucus, requires all MDAs to justify their budgets from a G&E perspective. Non-state actors like NGOs, researchers and academia undertake public education, advocacy and training of technocrats and members of Parliament on these issues.<sup>243</sup>

Capacity building efforts to support the implementation of G&E budgeting have been undertaken since 2005, including in the JLOS, guided by the Gender and Equity Users' Manual developed by MFPED in collaboration with the MGLSD. The first national G&E budgeting modular curriculum short training course was supported by UN Women and designed jointly with the Uganda Management Institute, Uganda Bureau of Statistics and FOWODE. MFPED updated tools and training materials on gender budgeting in 2015 and 2022<sup>244</sup> and has invested in a core team of trainers for technical backstopping support from a cross section of technocrats in key MDAs.<sup>245</sup> Several CSOs also trained local government officials in gender budgeting.

## How Much is Being Spent on Justice for Women Experiencing Violence?

Uganda uses a programmatic structure in formulating government budgets, but does not use specific budget codes or labels that allow for the identification of activities or funding votes in

budget documentation going to VAW. There is a lack of VAW classifiers and markers to identify programmes as such. It appears that most VAW activities have been placed as budget line items aligned to the mandates of the MDAs, or under gender-related expenditure headlines to meet the budgeting compliance threshold and obtain certification.

In practice, VAW interventions and associated budget lines are dispersed across 21 different MDAs, spanning various sectors and programmes.<sup>246</sup> Yet the various MDAs implementing VAW interventions tend not to show explicit budget lines at the national level. Without dedicated budget lines, most agencies' budgets for VAW are in generic codes, while some categorize it under Gender mainstreaming/ Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. While a few MDAs like the Ministry of Lands, Ministry of Works and Transport, and the UPF categorize these interventions under "cross cutting issues."<sup>247</sup> Local government budgets often do not distinguish budget allocations for VAW, with funding typically channelled through the Community-Based Services Department.<sup>248</sup> The specific budget provisions for VAW can only be identified at the work plan and output levels, and this information is not readily available to the public. The Government of Uganda's spending on ending VAW for essential operational costs, such as wage and non-wage items, including training and infrastructure, does not show up explicitly in the budget. Other contributions include land provided by local governments for buildings such as emergency shelters, and a conducive operating environment.

As noted in a 2022 MGLSD study,<sup>249</sup> few institutions have explicitly translated interventions to combat VAW into their workplans. In the MGLSD study sample, it was only 6 out of 17 MDAs (the MGLSD itself, Uganda Prisons Service, UPF, the Directorate of Public Prosecution [ODPP], Ministry of Education and Sports, and Uganda National Roads Authority), and 8 out of 19 local governments.<sup>250</sup> As noted above, because so few MDAs show VAW budget lines, it is difficult to measure public financing to address VAW.

In this context it is challenging to quantify spending on justice for women experiencing violence. The Equal Opportunities Commission similarly encountered difficulties in determining funding amounts for gender and equity-related outputs, in both BFPs and MPSs of MDAs.<sup>251</sup> However, as outlined below, the best available evidence suggests that the funding on justice for women experiencing violence is very limited.

A 2013 study comparing the economic impact of VAW to the cost of implementing the 2010 Domestic Violence Act found the costs of interventions to be relatively low compared to the cost of violence in Uganda.<sup>252</sup> The estimated financing needs were based on the provision of the following four key services under the Domestic Violence Act:

1. Raising awareness and preventing domestic violence;
2. Developing standard procedures, guidelines, and training manuals for domestic violence duty bearers;
3. Capacity strengthening for duty bearers; and
4. Providing rehabilitation services through domestic violence shelters.

Financing both prevention and response was estimated to cost UGX 21.2 billion (about USD 8 million) over a period of three years, which is far below the economic (health, productivity, and criminal justice) costs incurred by UGX 77.5 billion (USD 30.7 million) annually.<sup>253</sup>

So how much has the Ugandan government spent on justice for women experiencing violence? The National Action Plan for Elimination of GBV (2016-2021) sought a budget of UGX 89.67 billion (USD 24.5 million) for eliminating all forms of VAW over the five-year period.<sup>254</sup>

Actual spending is far below this level, and largely donor (externally) financed. The Office of Auditor General's (OAG) Value-For-Money audit on VAW in 2022<sup>255</sup> found that of the UGX 89.67 billion budget (USD 24.5 million) required to implement



the NAP for ending violence, only UGX 10 billion (USD 2.7 million) was mobilized and further, that 90 per cent (UGX 9 billion) of this financing came through donor financing.

A 2020 assessment on financing VAW prevention supported by UN Women, under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, also revealed that dedicated funding for VAW prevention and response interventions stood below UGX 21 billion (USD 5.75 million) in 2020/21.<sup>256</sup>

The amount of budget spending has fluctuated significantly since 2018 – from UGX 17.6 billion (USD 4.8 million) in FY 2018/19, up to UGX 44.4 billion (USD 12.15 million) in FY 2019/20, then more than halving to only UGX 20.8 billion (USD 5.7 million) in FY 2020/21. Excluding the MGLSD, the share of the budget allocated to VAW by MDAs and 19 local governments analyzed by CSBAG, 2020 was below five per cent.<sup>257</sup>

The 2022 MGLSD study<sup>258</sup> found that the Government spends about UGX 15 billion (USD 5.8 million) annually to address VAW, and that another UGX 37 billion (USD 14.3 million) was spent annually by the government on state institutions like the Judiciary, UPF and the Ministry of Health to address the costs of VAW.

The UPF has established a Child and Family Protection Department within its Criminal Investigation Department. UPF was supported by UN Women to adopt and disseminate a Gender Policy in 2018. The police also induct and train Child and Family Protection Department, VAW, and Criminal Investigation Department officers, carry out public education on VAW and fund investigations for all the VAW offences covered under various laws.<sup>259</sup> However, these interventions are budgeted for under generic line items such as wages, investigations, fuel, training/induction,<sup>260</sup> transport, petty cash, stationery, office space, emergency shelters, computers, medical kits and Police Form 3.<sup>261</sup>

The ODPP has dedicated wage budget lines for its Department of Gender, Children and Sexual Offences. It has also dedicated financial support for its victim empowerment programme, food and

protection for survivors in safe and undisclosed shelters, and for rolling out its national strategy for audio-visual recording in court for witnesses. ODPP has a general help hotline, but not one specifically dedicated to VAW survivors.<sup>262</sup>

As the coordinating MDA for ending VAW, MGLSD has set up structures to implement the National GBV Policy, financed under its budget lines for wages and non-wage items. It has a department of Gender and Women Affairs whose budget is UGX 409 million (USD 112,000), with gender focal persons, and district and sub-county VAW monitoring committees. However, actual resource allocation for these local government-level structures does not cover their operations.<sup>263</sup> Spending on prevention and responding to VAW includes running the Uganda Child Helpline *Sauti*,<sup>264</sup> providing vehicles for all official work related to VAW and staffing to monitor districts on a quarterly basis (the number of districts monitored depends on the number of resources available). It also covers the training of district and sub-county level staff in applying national laws against VAW in selected districts, depending on the availability of funds, as well as community training on VAW prevention and response. Additionally, shelters for survivors, which were previously managed by CSOs, began to be included in the Ministry's budget starting in the 2019/2020 FYs.<sup>265</sup>

Funds allocated by the Government of Uganda for VAW prevention and response interventions at the local government level come in the form of conditional grants from external donors.<sup>266</sup> Most local governments depend on external financing for handling VAW.<sup>267</sup>

The Social Development Sector's mandate of managing community engagement and inter-sectoral co-ordination on ending VAW is critical. It allocated UGX 2 billion (USD 547,000) to train communities to prevent and respond to VAW and support emergency VAW shelters when donor support ended in FY 2019-2020. Social Development Sector plans and budgets for FYs 2017/2018, 2018/2019, and 2019/2020 revealed severe underfinancing for the training of the local governments, district community officers,

probation and social welfare officers (who support evidence gathering, provide psychosocial support and are witnesses in courts of law) and others. Local government VAW monitoring structures lack financial support to operate effectively. The Social Development Sector's budget of UGX 409 million (USD 112,000) is low and heavily supplemented by development partners.

The health sector had no budgetary allocations, funding nor programming associated with VAW across fiscal years examined by FOWODE - 2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 - from its BFPs and MPSs.<sup>268</sup>

COVID-19 exacerbated the risks of VAW, disrupted justice delivery and impacted budget implementation, particularly in the third and fourth quarters of 2020. Despite these challenges, an analysis of releases and expenditures for selected MDAs, including those in the JLOS, indicates that MDAs received over 95 per cent of their allocated funds and were able to effectively spend their votes.

The integration of VAW activities within broader local government programmes makes it difficult to ascertain the actual amounts allocated and spent on VAW prevention efforts. The case of Kaberamaido district illustrates that budget lines designated for mainstreaming can be used to finance multi-sectoral interventions against VAW. A recent study by FOWODE titled "Budgeting For Peace: A Cost-benefit Analysis" in Kabale and Sheema districts of Western Uganda found that budgeting for VAW is non-existent in Sheema and very low in Kabale, as well as at the national level in the sectors that have immediate bearing on preventing and responding to VAW, such as JLOS, Education, Health, and Social Development.<sup>269</sup>

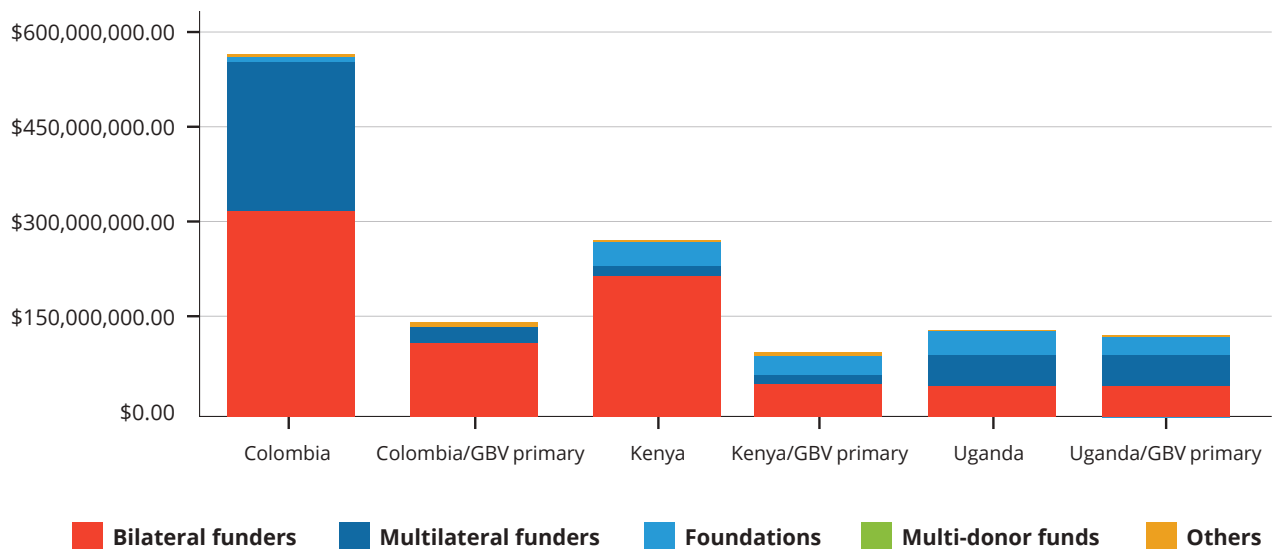
## External Financing for Addressing Violence Against Women in Uganda

External financing to support efforts to address VAW is important in developing countries. Uganda's health sector, for example, is highly dependent on budgetary support, which accounts for 76 per cent of spending.<sup>270</sup>

As noted above, the audit office report found that 90 per cent of funding for VAW prevention came from external sources. Based on OECD tracking of countries receiving bilateral support for addressing VAW, Uganda received USD 10 million in 2019, ranking fifth globally in terms of volume, and the second highest in Sub-Saharan Africa (behind South Sudan).<sup>271</sup> Funding from United Nations partners to address VAW in Uganda for the period 2018-2022 amounted to about USD 1.3 million, of which about two-thirds came from UNFPA and about one-third from UN Women.<sup>272</sup>

A recent study which included Uganda found that bilateral and multilateral aid contributed most external financing, with a small "others" category, consisting largely of international NGO and funding collaborative disbursements (see Figure 6.2), with large shares of both total VAW and VAW-primary funding going to international and regional NGOs and the Ugandan government.<sup>273</sup> External financing was mainly directed towards judicial processes; security-sector processes; policy and legal reform; psychosocial services and shelters; coordination mechanisms; social norm shifting; community-based interventions; and CSO capacity-building.

**Figure 6.2 Donor disbursements to Address VAW, 2010–2020, USD**



**Source:** Clarisa Bencomo, Emily Battistini, and Terry McGovern, “Gender-Based Violence Is a Human Rights Violation: Are Donors Responding Adequately? What a Decade of Donor Interventions in Colombia, Kenya, and Uganda Reveals,” *Health and Human Rights*, 24, no. 2 (December 2022) pp. 29–45.

The current funding architecture has not fostered coordination, resulting in short-term projects for VAW interventions heavily reliant on external funding. This points to a need for investing in strengthening the capacity of institutions charged with coordination of VAW interventions such as the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and the JLOS Secretariat including MGLSD. This will address the challenges brought on by inter-agency fragmentation of justice delivery, which is currently spread among numerous national and local actors. Streamlining these efforts would minimize complexities, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the multi-sectoral response.<sup>274</sup>

## What Does Low Levels of Financing Mean?

The lack of financing may contribute to institutional weaknesses and delays in implementing laws against VAW and in

supporting the National GBV Policy. Lack of finance has been identified as a causal factor in the relative failure to improve the status of women and girls in Uganda<sup>275</sup> and is further highlighted in the EOC's assessment of G&E compliance.<sup>276</sup>

Resources are insufficient for training all law enforcement and other officials on VAW, establishing adequate medical and psychosocial services in Uganda, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas, and ensuring cross-sector coordination. Additionally, survivors often have to cover the cost of their forensic examinations.<sup>277</sup> To date, funding gaps mean that there are no specialized courts for domestic violence or VAW, resulting in backlogs and deterring access to justice.<sup>278</sup> To address this, the Judiciary instituted special court sessions for VAW in 2017 with technical support from the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers, UNFPA, UN Women and others, but this could not be sustained.

FOWODE reports that underfunding for VAW responsiveness is a key challenge to accessing justice among survivors.<sup>279</sup> For example, the

BFP for FY 2018/2019 had several items that were not funded for the two key agencies, the UPF and the Prosecutors Office. These included UGX 1.5 billion (USD 410,500) to create a coordinating office to operationalize the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009 and expedite its implementation, including survivor welfare support and technical assistance for investigations and prosecutions.<sup>280</sup> Additionally, UGX 6.5 billion (USD 1.78 million) was needed for the publication and translation of laws to raise legal awareness of users, especially marginalized groups such as women, persons with disabilities, and children. Furthermore, UGX 0.82 billion (USD 224,000) was required for the prosecution of VAW and children-related cases, described as some of the most prevalent cases in Uganda, and UGX 1.5 billion (USD 410,500) for witness protection in VAW and other cases.<sup>281</sup>

The resources UPF provides for ending VAW include Police Form 3, specialized services from police, surgeons and a toll-free hotline for reporting VAW during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, the funds approved and released tend to be lower than what is budgeted for and some of the resources are randomly used for general policing. Health professionals who support evidence collection are funded by the police, but the amounts do not cover the actual costs of conducting medical examinations. The OAG 2022 audit report on VAW found that on average, police posts are provided with a quarterly operational budget of UGX 600,000 (USD 165), which is insufficient to respond to and investigate VAW cases, given competing demands. The report further notes that less than 10 per cent of the police posts countrywide have established family protection units, where VAW cases are primarily handled.

In terms of trends, dedicated funding for VAW prevention and response interventions for MDAs fluctuated across three of the years reviewed. MDAs allocated UGX 17.6 billion (USD 4.8 million) in FY 2018/19, UGX 44.4 billion (USD 12 million) in FY 2019/20 and UGX 20.8 billion (USD 5.7 million) in FY 2020/21. Besides MGLSD, the proportion of the budget allocated to VAW to other MDAs and 19 local governments analyzed was below

five per cent. Most MDAs with essential roles in ending VAW have funding gaps. For example, the funding gap for ODPP during the FY 2018/19-FY2020/21 cumulatively was UGX 1.35 billion (USD 368,000).

Of the UGX 89.67 billion (USD 24.5 million) budget required to implement the National Action Plan (NAP) for Elimination of GBV, only UGX 10 billion (USD 2.7 million) was mobilized and, further, 90 per cent (UGX 9 billion) of this financing came through donor financing, thereby raising a sustainability challenge.<sup>282</sup> At a local government level, the interventions financed in some years reflect donor priorities. For example, districts where the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund is funding had more child protection interventions than other areas.

Justice gaps arise for survivors who report violence in Uganda. Fewer than 14 per cent of domestic violence cases recorded by the UPF are forwarded to the office of the ODPP mainly due to inadequate resources (transport, personnel) for the police investigations, survivors not following up or losing interest in their cases or resorting to community conflict resolution structures, insufficient evidence, and case withdrawal due to community pressures or mediation, among others. In law enforcement and justice systems, the Child and Family Protection Department of the police is inadequately equipped to handle VAW cases effectively. There are reportedly insufficient resources, support systems and specialized training including for investigations. Many Child and Family Protection Units have limited facilities and skills to investigate VAW cases. An analysis by the OAG of domestic violence cases (which include VAW) registered with the ODPP reveals that the rate of conclusion of cases through conviction, acquittal or dismissal remains low (around 18 per cent).<sup>283</sup>

The FOWODE report found there is no separate budget in the ODPP for VAW interventions like VAW training, the VAW hotline, or decentralized structures. The victim empowerment programme for welfare and protection covers several offices and is insufficiently funded.<sup>284</sup> By 2020,

systems for audio visual recording of survivors' testimony were only set up in about 10 out of 135 districts.<sup>285</sup> ODPP has a funding gap of UGX 1.35 billion (USD 368,000) cumulatively for FY 2018/2019 – FY 2020/2021.

Through interviews with VAW focal persons and the review of performance reports for implementing agencies, the 2022 OAG report<sup>286</sup> found that funding was inadequate to facilitate the awareness, sensitization, protection, rehabilitation and prosecution services necessary to end all forms of VAW. The OAG observed that staffing for officers responsible for VAW interventions in local governments stood at an average of 40 per cent for the twelve districts visited.<sup>287</sup> The low number of staff engaged in VAW interventions in the districts is compounded by the fact that these few officers also hold central roles in coordinating, developing, and implementing various services, programmes, and projects within the district and urban councils. This heavy workload restricts the time available for addressing VAW issues in the districts. Outside of the Community-Based Services Department in local governments and MGLSD at the national level,<sup>288</sup> many of the staff working in various institutions lack the necessary expertise and skills to effectively incorporate VAW interventions into their budget and plans.<sup>289</sup>

Another gap relates to data collection and storage mechanisms at both central and local government levels which are not equipped to handle VAW data efficiently. This results in a lack of comprehensive and reliable information for analysis, planning and decision-making. There is limited access to ICT equipment, and multiple data sources, like the UPF and the MGLSD VAW databases, need to be harmonized.<sup>290</sup>

Furthermore, there is inadequate physical infrastructure for essential services such as police posts, VAW shelters and court buildings.<sup>291</sup> The Directorate of Government Analytical Laboratories has only five centres nationally.<sup>292</sup> The situation is more challenging at the local government level, where there is limited access to means of transporting suspects and complainants, facilities for witness protection, storage and preservation of evidence, crime scene management, as well as resources for community engagement and institutional coordination.<sup>293</sup>

Given the financing deficit in the national budget, NGOs can help bridge the gap by providing some essential services (see Box 6.1). These include training of government officials, legislators and other actors as done by FOWODE and ActionAid Uganda. Others like CSBAG play a vital monitoring role in tracking and reporting budget expenditure including on VAW and harmful practices.

### Box 6.1 Financial Contributions of Selected NGOs to VAW Interventions

CSOs play a major role in prevention and response of VAWG in Uganda, albeit with limited resources. They design strategic interventions aligned to HRBAD and victim-centred justice that complement government efforts. These include legal aid, legal education and rights awareness, research and advocacy for policies, law reform and practice change, sensitization and community education geared towards prevention, community accountability platforms, community dialogue, media engagements, capacity strengthening, provision of logistical support to duty bearers, social, legal, and medical investigations, supporting women's voice and leadership, counselling, economic empowerment and emergency shelters.

CSOs closely collaborate with MDAs and often fill programme and funding gaps. For example, FIDA-U lobbied the Judiciary and JLOS for Special Sessions for SGBV cases in 2017/18 FY and supported the judiciary leadership and female judges to organize the first session in eastern Uganda. In the four FYs of the study, two of the sampled NGOs, UWONET and ActionAid managed emergency shelters for female survivors of violence. UWONET spent UGX 1,928,075,078 (USD 531,081) to maintain two shelters and met the cost of acquiring land and constructing two shelters at UGX 274,175,009 (USD 75,540) in 2014/15. ActionAid Uganda has the largest network of shelters countrywide and spent UGX 2,224,230,253 (USD 613,011) on ten shelters that provide comprehensive services. FIDA-U spent UGX 702,794,736 (USD 193,666) on advocacy, UGX 2,530,061,254 (USD 697,203) on legal aid and UGX 697,477,544 (USD 192,252), on awareness raising. NAWOU projects largely focus on prevention, building community agency to end VAWG, and changing attitudes and perceptions. While CSO costs are largely donor funded, at times governments cost share: the cost of land valued at UGX 88 million (USD 24,000) for UWONET shelters was met by the local governments of the districts where they are located.

**Source:** Consolidated data from various sources.<sup>294</sup>

One of the best-known and most successful interventions is *SASA!*, a VAW community mobilization prevention programme developed by the Ugandan NGO, Raising Voices.<sup>295</sup> A 2012 rigorous impact evaluation demonstrated that *SASA!* helped create community-level change by decreasing women's risk of experiencing physical violence from their male partners by 52 per cent.<sup>296</sup> The *SASA!* Approach includes four phases: Start – involves learning through baseline surveys, relationship building and training of women and men in the community; Awareness – looks at analysing men's power over women as the root cause of VAW and the community's silence as key drivers for its persistence; Support – involves building momentum and community members joining their power with others to support change; and Action – requires cultivating power to take action and formalize mechanisms to reject VAW and sustain the balanced power between women and men.<sup>297</sup>

Overall, NGOs and other CSOs receive inadequate support relative to the essential services they provide.<sup>298</sup> Few donors are willing to fund national NGOs for overheads that encompass safe spaces for clients seeking services and counselling for justice seekers and providers, despite their recognition as essential services for ending VAW.

A recent study of donor funding in three developing countries, including Uganda, highlighted the disparity between funding to Global South national NGOs, despite the fact that there is a growing recognition that interventions by local actors are more effective, impactful and sustainable, than those by external entities.<sup>299</sup> Local NGOs in Uganda play a core role in the provision of emergency shelters, legal aid, representation, skills building and empowerment for VAW survivors.



# Conclusion and Recommendations

Uganda is committed to the achievement of the SDGs, including SDG 5 and 16. Member States, including Uganda, have committed to increasing transparency and equal participation in the budgeting process and promoting gender-responsive budgeting and tracking. AAAAA also recognized that high-quality disaggregated data was an essential input for smart and transparent decision-making.<sup>300</sup> Furthermore, connected to budgeting, Member States pledged to increase and use high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by sex, age, geography, income, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. This study found evidence of partial compliance with the provisions of the AAAAA by Uganda, but that existing challenges threaten to undermine both past successes and future prospects.

Uganda has made significant progress in implementing gender budgeting through policies, laws and systems, however, financing for delivery of justice for VAW is still inadequate. The multi-sectoral nature of justice delivery and the cross-cutting nature of working on VAW contribute to a complex set of arrangements, involving multiple state and non-state actors, which makes budgeting quite complex in the country. This is especially obvious in the case of justice for women experiencing violence.

The review of policy statements and annual work plans of implementing agencies<sup>301</sup> found that there were no specific budget lines for eliminating VAW, as these interventions are accommodated under mainstreaming or crosscutting issues.<sup>302</sup> This made it difficult to ascertain the actual amounts allocated and spent on the prevention of VAW.<sup>303</sup>

The financing of efforts to combat VAW is marred by inconsistency and a lack of transparency. This is evident in several key areas: there are no dedicated budget lines for VAW initiatives,

local governments receive low and conditional funding and donor contributions for access to justice and VAW programmes are uncoordinated, insufficient and opaque. This lack of clarity and coherence in funding significantly hampers the effective implementation of the National GBV Policy, particularly impacting key local actors, including CSOs. The best available evidence shows that interventions aimed at reducing VAW prevalence and improving care for survivors remain grossly under-resourced in Uganda. Budgetary shortfalls for ending VAW initiatives are observed across all government agencies responsible for tackling this issue. As a result, interventions fail to meet the global standard requirements on ending VAW as well as the three priority actions of prevention, response services and ending impunity outlined in the National GBV Policy.

There are several welcome elements associated with gender budgeting in Uganda, including:

- Investments in capacity and training resources to undertake G&E budgeting in MDAs and local governments;
- Collaborative approach by the MFPED, MGLSD and CSOs to champion gender and equity budgeting and mainstream it in budget processes;
- Legal mandate that all MDAs and local governments address G&E issues in their annual budgets. The First Budget Call Circular should include “Guidelines for addressing Gender and Equity in Sector BFP and MPSs”;
- G&E compliance assessments of BFPs and MPSs are mandatorily conducted by the EOC on an annual basis. Sector budgets and MPSs that do not obtain a G&E compliance certificate are rejected by Parliament; and
- Active CSO independent watchdogs such as CSBAG that monitor budgets and spending, which help to improve transparency and accountability.<sup>304</sup>

However, much more needs to be done. The recommendations below highlight key areas of action for the Government of Uganda, with Support from International Partners and CSOs' with 'with support from international partners and CSOs:

1. **Adopt specific budget codes or labels to easily identify activities and funding related to ending VAW in budget documentation.** Explicitly track and display spending on VAW prevention and response, as part of the budget programming, including operational costs for logistics and wages or salaries for officials of implementing MDAs. This would significantly strengthen the tracking of resource allocation to VAW.
2. **Increase funding to realize targets of SDG 5 and 16.** This is necessary to address the issue of low and uncertain funding for tackling VAW. Currently, sectors and programmes involved in addressing VAW, such as the JLOS and Social Development sector, receive less than one per cent of the national budget. These budgets need to be significantly increased to allow for effective interventions to end VAW.
3. **Prioritize prevention in gender budgeting.** Several studies, including on Uganda, showed that the cost of VAW to survivors and their families, the wider society and the state is high<sup>305</sup> and investing in prevention is cost-effective, with the benefits far outweighing the costs of investing in response to situations of violence.<sup>306</sup>
4. **Strengthen human resources capacity in data management.** Building on the fact that Uganda has a VAW database managed by the MGLSD, the government should strengthen the capacity of its human resources in data collection, analysis, storage, and dissemination to increase availability of disaggregated data to inform budget and programme decisions.
5. **Conduct regular evaluations and reviews to assess the effectiveness of interventions on ending VAW.** For example, there has been more focus on narrow output indicators like the number of people trained instead of broader outcome or impact measures such as shifting adverse norms and practices which promote VAW.
6. **Promote collaboration to effectively address VAW.** Complex, multi-faceted issues such as VAW require a comprehensive response.<sup>307</sup> Effective responses and services for survivors of violence could require that integrated multi-sectoral services under one roof are strengthened and budgeted for – including psychological, medical and legal support, as well as support for women's economic empowerment.
7. **Promote increased transparency and accountability in external funding for ending VAW.** It is recommended that the current aid architecture on ending VAW be aligned with the AAAA framework for financing the SDGs. Donors should prioritise funding towards access to justice interventions by national actors, who have a better grasp of the local context and effective, sustainable solutions rather than international ones.



# Chapter 7: Ways Forward and Recommendations

The case for investing in addressing VAW is well established.<sup>308</sup> As shown in Chapter 1, available evidence suggests that the costs of such violence are at least 1-2 per cent of national income, with much higher estimates emerging when the full psychological and long-term health and productivity costs are accounted for. It is even more clear that VAW constitutes major breaches of human rights.

This report is a first attempt to quantify current public investments in justice for women facing VAW. This effort faced major constraints, because so few governments explicitly track and report such spending.

Several major conclusions nonetheless emerge, specific to the analysis of VAW:

1. Very few countries publish fiscal data that enables public spending against violence to be tracked.
2. In those countries where quantification is possible, the amounts being spent are small – typically far below one per cent of the budget, and a tiny share of national income.
3. Women survivors face major justice gaps, across a range of fronts – from non-reporting to police to delayed responses and lack of legal assistance, which implies that they are unable to access the allocated resources.
4. There is a positive trend in increasing focus on addressing violence, aligned with the SDGs, particularly SDG 5 and 16 and reflected in national development plans and strategies.
5. There is also welcome evidence of increased allocations in development funding directed to addressing violence, which are better tracked and reported. This increase in support for addressing VAW contrasts with the decline in overall aid to the justice sector.
6. Women's groups, public scrutiny and accountability mechanisms all play a critical role in holding governments accountable for their actions and inactions on VAW.

This occurs in a context where public spending on people-centred justice services in low-income countries is very low – averaging about USD 8 per person annually, even though low-income countries spend relatively more of their total budget on justice than OECD countries do – on average 72 per cent more. This is far below the estimated costs of providing universal basic justice to address people's everyday justice needs, which is approximately USD 20 per person annually in a typical low-income country.<sup>309</sup>

A series of recommendations follows in response to the foregoing findings, some of which echo earlier reports. Given the global nature of the report, the recommendations are set at a high level, and would need to be considered and adapted to country circumstances. Specific recommendations on the Uganda case study are proposed in this regard.

Increased investments to address VAW need to be informed by evidence about what works and the appropriate balance between prevention and response efforts is critical, especially given the low numbers of women seeking a formal response. It may also be more cost effective to address community behavioural change than to increase funding in police training, family support units or legal awareness.

The recommendations are largely directed at governments, with some specific points for consideration by development partners.

## Recommendations on Fiscal Reporting and Budgeting

### For Governments:

1. Governments should work to meet their commitments in SDG Target 5.c. Currently, only one in four governments are meeting this SDG target.
2. Introduce discrete budget lines to track spending on VAW. This will likely require country-level analysis to establish spending and policies that mainstream VAW prevention, alongside directly targeted measures and programmes focused on prevention and response.
3. Define measurable objectives and benchmarks for tracking inputs and outcome indicators related to VAW. While there is currently no agreed-upon standard, further work and analysis are needed. The targets presented in national plans, such as Australia's new NAP, are often underdeveloped. The GRPFM Indicators developed by PEFA could feed into the establishment of these objectives and benchmarks.
4. Collect gender-specific disaggregated data on women's justice needs, including financial costs, to inform financial planning and decision-making.
5. Report spending and performance on VAW activities as part of regular budget proposals and execution reports. Governments could consider the use of key indicators in the Supplementary Framework for Assessing GRPFM, in particular those focusing on gender-responsive tracking and reporting (Indicators 6 and 7), evaluating gender impacts on service delivery, applied to gender-sensitive justice service delivery (Indicator 8) and collecting gender-disaggregated performance information for justice service delivery (Indicator 5).

### For Development Partners:

1. Strengthen financial tracking for VAW. The High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality was established by the Secretary-General's Executive Committee to review and track United Nations budgets and expenditures across the system.<sup>310</sup> In line with this objective, United Nations agencies should make structural and operational changes required to enable financial tracking of spending on VAW, as part of the Gender Equality Marker to track financial allocations and expenditures according to their contribution to gender equality.<sup>311</sup>
2. Bilateral and multilateral partners should expand efforts to report spending to the OECD DAC under the special code for VAW.
3. Reporting by development partners should differentiate which government agencies are being financed, and levels of support for local women's organizations working on VAW.

## Recommendations for Increasing Budget Spending on Violence Against Women

### For Governments and Development Partners:

1. Review appropriateness of current spending levels, including the balance between prevention and response, supported by evidence of what works. The collection of disaggregated information based on gender could help (i) estimate the resources required to effectively respond to VAW, (ii) identify financial deficits where budget line items are already included in the country's budget documents, and (iii) better justify the need for additional finance if current allocations are insufficient.
2. Where needed, increase budget allocations to combat and respond to VAW, and ensure that the relevant agencies are adequately

resourced.

3. Assess and, where needed, increase financial support for local women's organizations to strengthen their advocacy efforts, service provision and monitoring of government performance.
4. Review policies and laws in sectors that are complementary to the legal system that affect women's experience and response to violence. Public financing decisions should recognize the intersectionality of violence and consider potential multiplier effects associated with jointly investing in these complementary systems.
5. Invest in data systems to enhance measurement of the extent of VAW prevalence in different contexts. This could include considering the combination of high-frequency data and comprehensive survey data to better understand the scale of the problem.
6. Announce targeted levels of public investments to combat VAW, as a route to increase political commitment and public scrutiny.

## Recommendations on Closing Justice Gaps

### For Governments, with Support from International Partners and CSOs:

1. Review coverage of national laws against violence to ensure compliance with internationally accepted definitions of violence – for example, inclusion of marital rape.
2. Implement measures to increase reporting by survivors to police, and monitor progress:
  - Identify country-specific barriers and institutional changes needed to increase reporting.
  - Review protocols and support available to survivors to eliminate factors that

deter justice seeking. For example, police officers, who are often the first point of contact for survivors entering the legal system, could be trained to be more empathetic and sensitive to the needs of women who have experienced violence.

- Develop strategies to protect women and prevent retaliation from perpetrators, thereby encouraging increased reporting.
3. Develop gender-sensitive approaches to justice to close gaps between the existing legal frameworks and their practical implementation. For example:
    - Create protocols addressed to formal justice actors on how to appropriately handle cases of VAW from a gender-sensitive perspective, such as introducing different evidentiary standards.
    - Implement gender-sensitive capacity building programmes.
    - Establish specialized courts for VAW cases.
    - Ensure that efforts to close justice gaps are sufficiently resourced.

## Recommendations on Increasing Accountability

### For Governments, with Support from International Partners and CSOs:

1. Regularly publish spending plans and reports on budget execution related to measures addressing VAW.
2. Consult with CSOs, including groups representing survivors, to determine spending priorities and assess the adequacy of allocated resources.

# Endnotes

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