

Harmful Connections: Examining the relationship between **violence against women and violence against children** in the South Pacific



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Intersections of links between violence against women and violence against children in the South Pacific

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Acronyms

CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
GBV	Gender Based Violence
FWCC	Fiji Women Crisis Center
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
UNFPA	United Nation Population Found
UNICEF	United Nations Children Found
UNCSW	United Nations Commission of the Status of Women
UNV	United Nation Volunteers
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organization



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1. Introduction

Violence against women (VAW) is widely condemned as a fundamental violation of human rights and is recognized as a significant public health problem, causing enormous social harm and costs to national economies (WHO, 2013: 2). It is also widely acknowledged that such violence has an effect on children (Fulu, E et.al., 2013: 5). This report is a literature review that aims to develop a deeper understanding of what is known about the connection between violence against women and violence against children (VAC) in the South Pacific Island countries. It consolidates existing evidence from studies on the intersections between VAW and VAC and focuses specifically on Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Island, Tonga and Vanuatu. The review provided an opportunity to conduct a robust comparative analysis of the data at different levels including country-level analysis.

For the purpose of this review, the term 'violence against women' means "any act of gender-based

violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (UN, 1993). The review draws from definitions from the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children which is used as an overall framework for addressing VAC. The term 'child' refers to "every human being below the age of 18 years" and the term 'violence against children' refers to all forms of physical, mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child, by an individual or group, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity" (UNSG, 2006: 6)

2. Methodology

A systematic review of the literature was conducted on VAW and VAC in the South Pacific. While research on these subjects has increased, the literature is limited in both scope and depth. The paucity of literature influenced the decision to use data from the World Health Organisation (WHO) Multi-country Study on Women and Health and Domestic Violence Against Women, which was a quantitative and qualitative study focused on the prevalence of intimate partner violence and its association of women's physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health. These studies were carried out with a number of partners including the Secretariat of the Pacific Commission, UNFPA, Vanuatu Women's Counseling Center, Fiji Women's Crises Center, Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia.

The value of using this study:

- It provided national baselines on VAW.
- It provided rich data (though limited) on the impact of VAW on the health and wellbeing of children.
- It used one cross-sectional population-based survey across all countries making it easier to conduct analysis and compare data.

The study was carried out in Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia and was a collaborative effort with government organisations and other partners. Six country-study reports, including Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Island, Tonga and Vanuatu, were selected which reflected the diversity of the region. Women interviewed in the studies were aged between 15 to 49 with the exception of Fiji which targeted women between the age of 14 to 65. The studies followed rigorous international ethical requirements.

The standard WHO study methodology and structure of analysis was followed in all country studies, however, there were challenges that made the synthesis of the report difficult:

- Each report emphasized different aspects of VAW and VAC that was unique to their situation.



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- The Kiribati and Solomon Island reports contained more extensive data on the intersections of VAW and VAC than the other countries.
- A few countries omitted some of the questions on children on the recommendation of a previous study to avoid questions on child abuse in questionnaires because of the complex nature of the methodological, ethical and safety issues.

3. Comparative analysis of key findings

The following sections are a comparative analysis of data collected from Kiribati, Solomon Island, Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji reports. Themes are explored which show commonality as well as variation.

3.1. Lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partner

Figure 3.1.1. Lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partner: ever-partnered¹ women aged 15–49 or 18-49

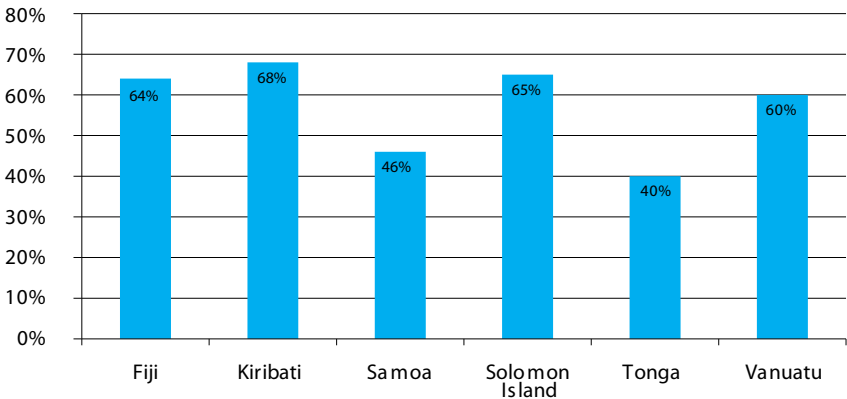


Figure 3.1.2. Lifetime prevalence of violence by intimate partner: comparison between South Pacific countries and other countries in the world² (Percentage of women aged 15-49 or 18-49)

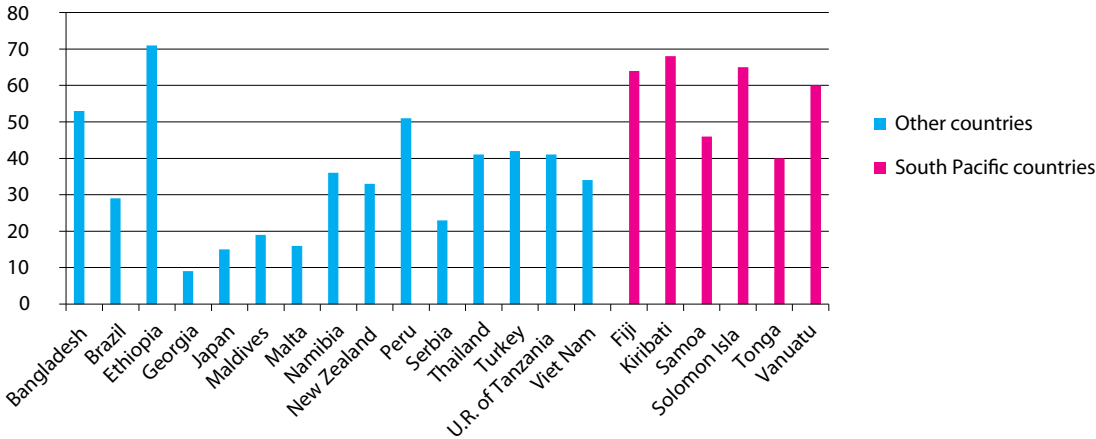


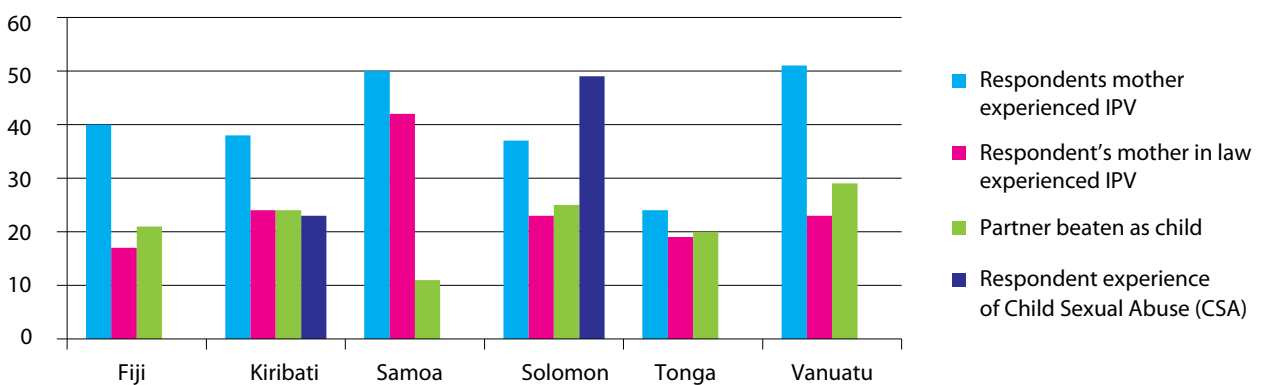
Figure 3.1.2. show that women and children growing up in South Pacific countries experience some of the highest rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the world. An inter-country comparison is made between South Pacific countries and fifteen other countries from another study using the WHO multi-country study methodology. The data reveals an IPV prevalence rate of 34 percent in other selected countries and a prevalence rate of 57 percent of women in the South Pacific countries.

¹ Ever-partnered women or men are persons who have been partnered at least once in their lives although
² From 'Violence Against Women Prevalence Data: Surveys by Country', compiled by UN Women, December 2012.

The prevalence of partner and non-partner violence is high in Pacific Island countries. Lifetime prevalence rates for physical and sexual violence by partner and non-partner among Pacific Island women falls between 60 to 80%. In Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Kiribati women report higher prevalence of partner violence than non-partner violence. In Tonga and Samoa, the reverse occurs. In addition in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji, non-partner violence is mainly physical violence while in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu sexual violence by non-partners is equally common as physical violence. Finally child sexual abuse is common in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu but relatively less so in Tonga and Samoa.

3.2. Cycle of violence: intergenerational transmission of violence

Figure 3.2.1. Exposure of respondents and partners to violence during childhood, by respondents experiences of intimate partner violence (Percentage of women aged 15-49 or 18-49)



Intergenerational violence refers to a model of domestic violence in which behavioral strategies or scripts are transmitted from parent to child and from sibling to sibling (Pollak, 2004: 311). Data in Figure 3.2.1. reveal a strong link between IPV and children's exposure to violence. It supports the notion of a cyclical pattern of violence where the perpetrator of violence could also be a survivor of violence.

Figure 3.2.2. Exposure to violence: women who have experienced IPV and who have not

Figure 3.2.2. a. Fiji

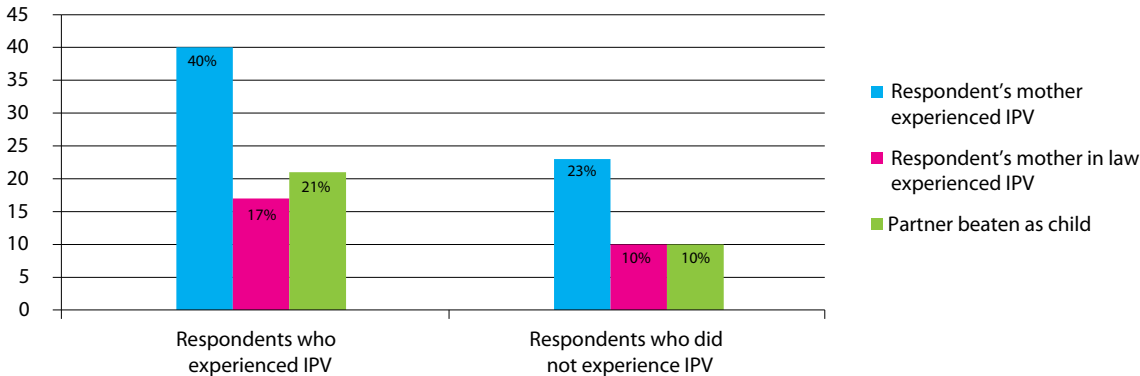


Figure 3.2.2. b. Kiribati

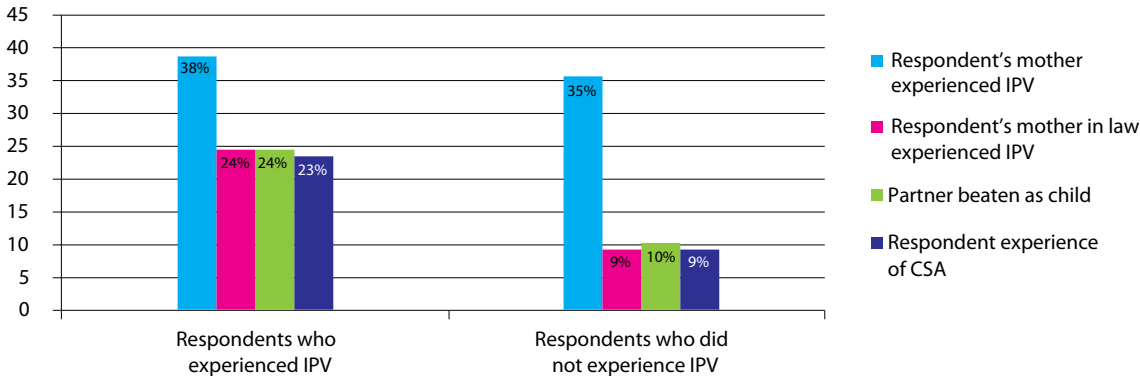


Figure 3.2.2. c. Solomon Island

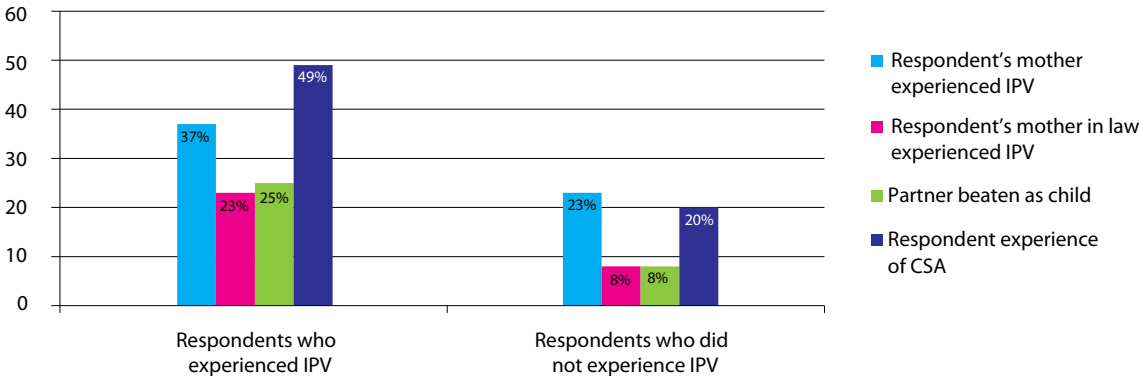
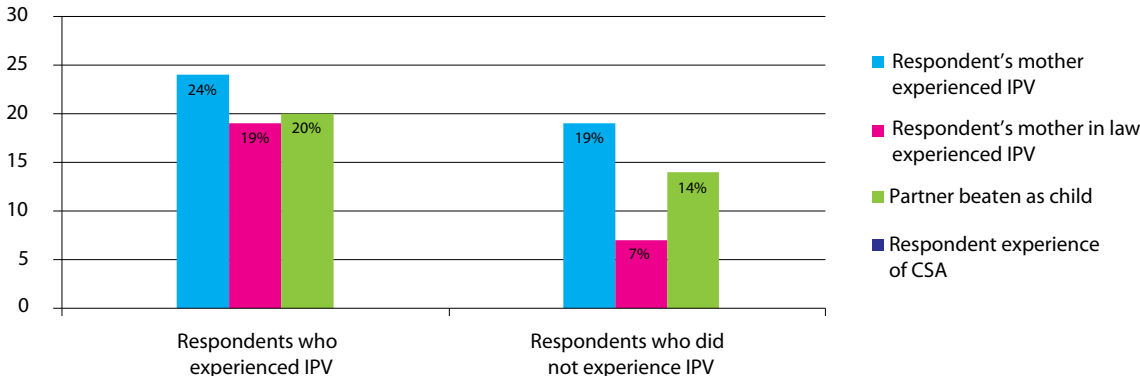


Figure 3.2.2 d. Tonga



Data across all countries indicate that women who have experienced IPV have been exposed to more forms of violence in their lifetime than women who have not experience IPV. It shows a correlation between being abused as a child, growing up in a household where domestic violence occurs and the acceptance of violence as part of life.

When comparing data across countries for women who have experienced IPV and those who have not, there were more commonalities amongst women who have suffered IPV: they were more likely to have had a mother who was beaten, to have had a partner whose mother was beaten, a partner who was beaten as a child and have had an experience of CSA.

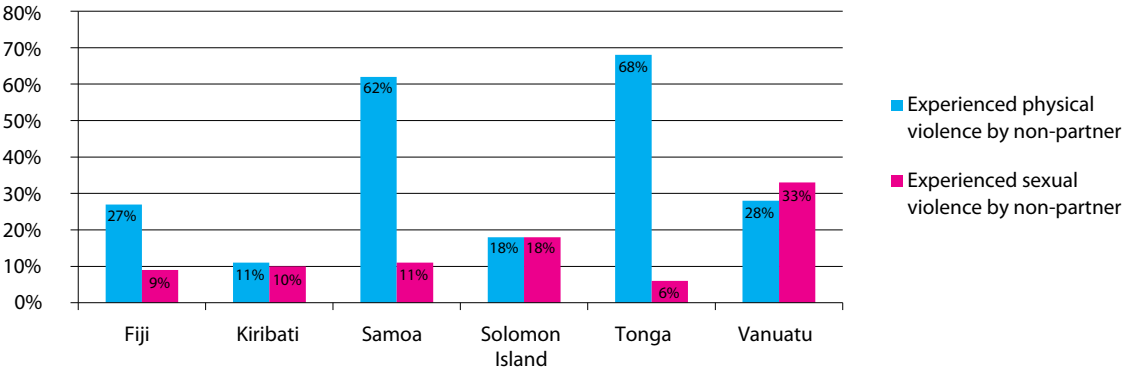
- **Mother who experienced IPV:** In Fiji, Solomon and Tonga, women who experience IPV were more likely to have had a mother who was physically abused by her partner than those who have not experienced IPV.
- **Partner's mother was beaten:** There was a trend across three countries, Kiribati, Solomon Island and Tonga, where women who experienced IPV also had partner's whose mother was beaten. Women who experienced IPV were more than 2.5 times more likely to have had a husband whose mother was beaten compared to women who did not experience IPV. In contrast, the experience in Fiji is not as pronounced as in the other three countries.

- **Partner beaten as a child:** In Kiribati, women who experienced IPV were approximately 2.5 times more likely to have had a partner who was beaten as a child, compared to those who had not. In Solomon Island, women were 3 times more likely and in Fiji, 2 times more likely. This finding is consistent with the finding in the WHO Study that men who experienced abuse as a child were 2 times more likely to be a perpetrator of IPV and supports the notion of intergenerational cycle of violence (Garcier et.al., 2005: 11).
- **Women's experience of CSA:** In Solomon Islands, of women who experienced IPV, almost half (49 percent) had experienced CSA. In Kiribati, of the 68 percent of women who experienced IPV 23 percent experienced CSA making up a quarter of the respondent population.

The data suggests that violence is a learned behavior. Children who experience violence at the hands of parents and/or witness their parent's violence towards one another learn that violence is appropriate in personal settings and may imitate these early childhood lessons in adult relationships (Franklin, 2010: 1).

3.3. Women’s experience of violence from age 15 by non-partner

Figure 3.3.1. Women’s experience of physical and sexual violence since age 15 by non-partner



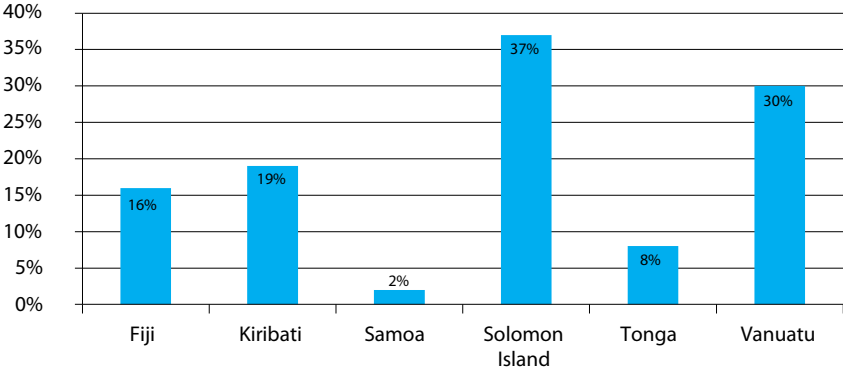
Data shows that in Samoa and Tonga non-partner physical violence and non-partner sexual violence is relatively high.

It was found across all countries that the main perpetrators of non-partner physical violence were: fathers, male and female family members and teachers. The main perpetrators of non-partner

sexual violence were strangers. These findings reflect the social and cultural norms around masculinity and gender power relationships where violence as a form of discipline and conflict resolution at community level.

3.4 Child sexual abuse before age of 15

Figure 3.4.1. Child sexual abuse before age of 15: All women surveyed



CSA indicators vary, but were generally high in the countries surveyed. Data from Solomon Island and Vanuatu show high levels of CSA before the age of 15, with at least 30 percent of women reporting a violent experience.

Of the women interviewed in Vanuatu, 55 percent who had experienced CSA reported that a family

member was the perpetrator. The study showed a correlation between CSA and the education level and socio-economic status of the survivors. The higher the level of education and socio-economic status, the lower the levels of CSA. For example, 40 percent of women with no education had been sexually abused as children, compared to 32 percent of women who had primary school education; 28

percent with secondary education; and 17 percent with post-secondary education. Economic status was also a factor: the higher the economic status the less reported sexual abuse. The study showed that 35 percent of women from low socio economic status experienced sexual abuse, 30 percent from medium socio-economic status and 15 percent from a higher socio-economic status.

The Vanuatu survey highlighted the age of first sexual abuse with 14 percent of women aged between 6-10 years old and 74 percent of women between 11-14 years. The survey points to pockets of greater vulnerability: girls between 6-14 years old with low education and from a low-medium socio-economic background were at high risk of being abused.

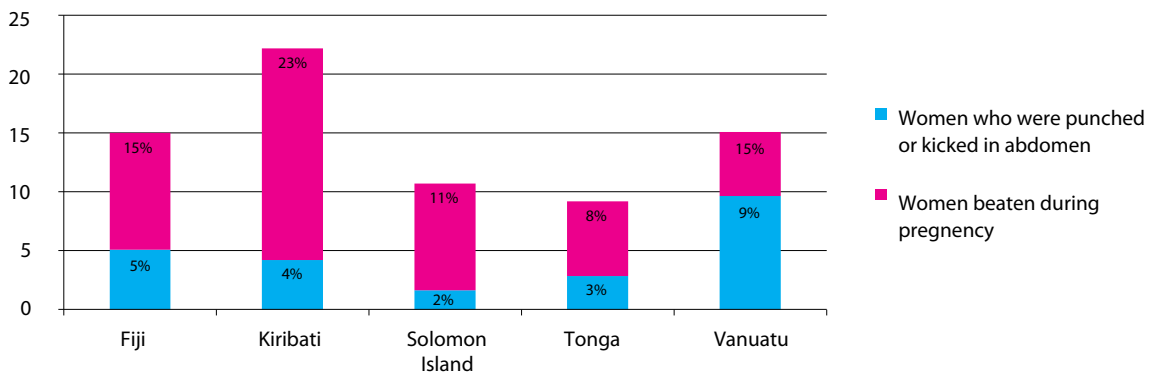
A correlation between prior abuse of the perpetrator (in this case the mother) and CSA and mother been beaten was found among the women in the Kiribati

survey. Of the women interviewed, the 49 percent who reported that they were sexually abused before the age of 15 also reported that their mother had experienced IPV.

CSA has damaging physiological and physical consequences for women and children in addition to the negative impacts on national social and economic development and the denial of basic human rights. Studies show that girls under 15 who were subjected to sexual assault were significantly more likely to suffer later in life from physical and/or sexual abuse by their partner. According to international studies on CSA, other impacts include low self-esteem, depression, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, early sex exposure, use of alcohol and substance abuse. There is also the risk of unwanted teenage pregnancy and the risk of sexually transmitted infections including HIV.

3.5 Violence during pregnancy

Figure 3.5.1 Ever-pregnant women who experienced violence during pregnancy



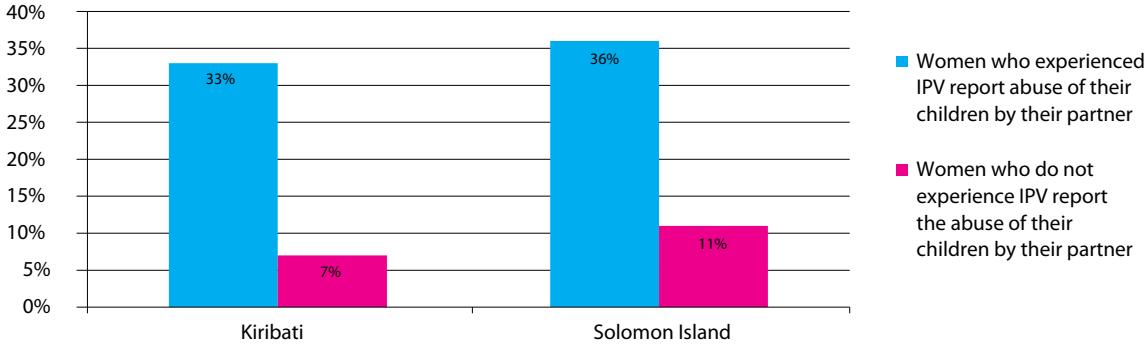
Violence towards pregnant women in the South Pacific Islands is of great concern. The study in Kiribati noted that 23 percent of women reported being beaten during pregnancy and in Solomon Island and Fiji 11 and 15 percent respectively having also been abused while pregnant.

Higher rates of miscarriage were noted from women who had experienced IPV during pregnancy than women who had not experienced IPV during pregnancy. In Vanuatu, 13 percent (more than 1 in

10) of women who have been physically abused during pregnancy miscarried. Overall nine percent of women who experienced IPV miscarried compared to 6 percent of women who did not experience IPV. This trend was mirrored in Kiribati, with women who experienced IPV particularly during pregnancy were more likely to report miscarriages, that is, 19 percent compared to 13 percent. In Vanuatu, a third of women reported that the violence started during pregnancy and continued at about the same level or got progressively worse.

3.6. Co-occurrence of violence against women and children

Figure 3.6.1. Co-occurrence of violence against women and children in the same household



In the Kiribati and Solomon Island study, the co-occurrence of IPV and child abuse in the same household unit was high. The figures also indicate high levels of child abuse by the partner whether or not there was IPV. Women who experienced IPV were more likely than those who had not experienced IPV to report the abuse of their children:

- 33 percent of women in Kiribati who experienced IPV reported the abuse of their child while 7 percent who did not experience IPV reported the abuse of their child.
- 36 percent of women in Solomon Island who experienced IPV reported the abuse of their child while 11 percent who did not experience IPV reported that their children have also been abused by their partner.

In Kiribati women who had experienced IPV were 7 times more likely to have children who are also abused than those who have not experienced IPV. In Solomon Island women who have experienced IPV were 4.5 times more likely to report their child’s abuse compared to those who did not experience IPV. In the Vanuatu study, 17 percent of women reported that their children were beaten at same time as IPV incidents occurred.

Based on global data from the United Nations Secretary-General’s Study on Violence against Children, it is conservatively estimated that as many as 275 million children were currently exposed to domestic violence. The fact that domestic violence is chronically underreported and that some countries have no data at all, makes it difficult to quantify how many children are affected. Global data also show that being in a violent household increases the risk of children being abused.

3.7. Impact of violence on children who witnessed intimate partner violence

Figure 3.7.1. Symptoms of children reported by women who experience IPV

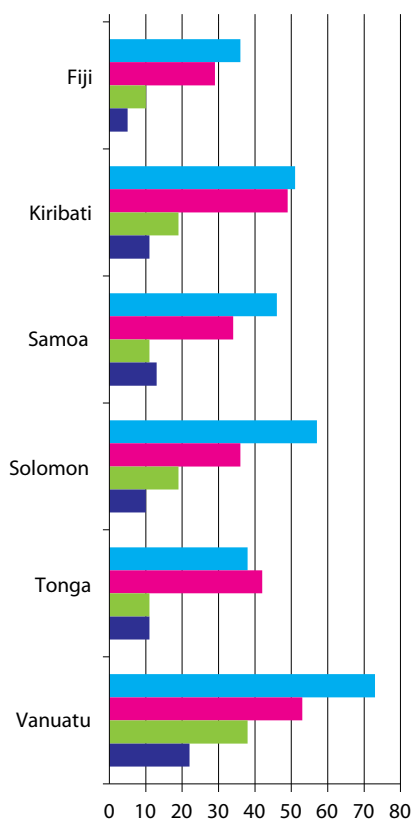
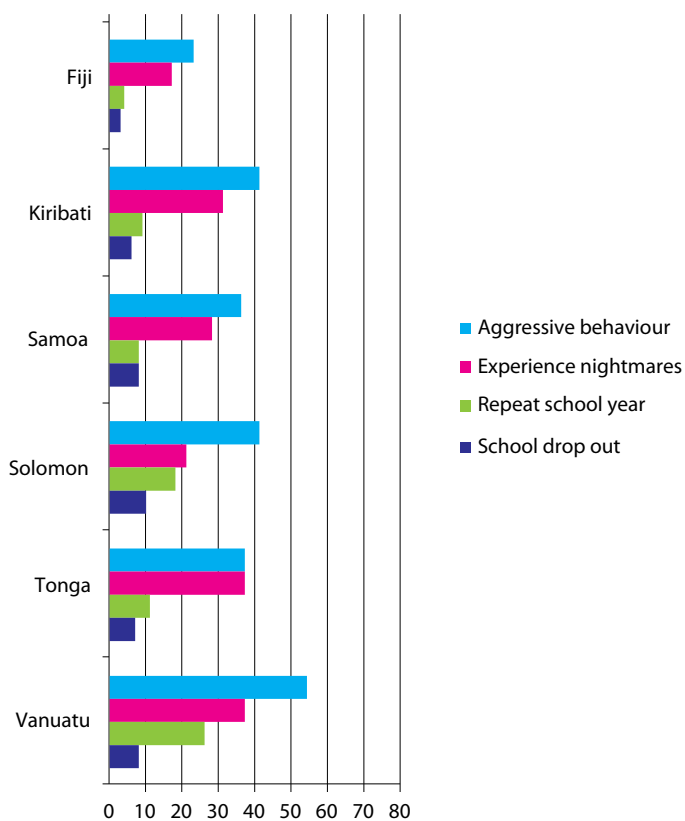


Figure 3.7.2. Symptoms of children reported by women who did not experience IPV



Children who grow up in a violent home are more likely to be survivors of child abuse than those who did not. In addition indirect victims have some of the same behavioral and psychological problems as children who are themselves physically abused.

Data show that women who experienced IPV were more likely to have reported their children having nightmares, displaying aggressive behaviour, repeating a year of school or dropping out of school compared to women who had never experienced IPV.

In Fiji and Kiribati, children whose mothers were subjected to IPV were twice as likely to repeat years of schooling or to drop out of school. These findings were consistent with findings from international studies that suggest that children from such

families have poorer educational outcomes and that the long-term consequences for these children need to be included in calculations of the economic costs of violence against women by their husbands and intimate partners. (WHO, 2013: 17).

There is also further evidence that abusive behavior is likely to be passed down through families with children of abusers more likely to become abusers themselves. Overall living in a violent environment affects the children emotionally, physical health, behavior and their schooling.

4. Findings per country: a snapshot

4.1. FIJI

4.1.1. Women's experience of physical and sexual violence by intimate partner³

- Three in five women (64 percent) who have ever been in a relationship have experienced physical or sexual violence or both by an intimate partner.
- Three out of five ever-partnered women (58 percent) have been emotionally abused by an intimate partner.
- Rates of emotional, physical and sexual violence against women by partners are higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Nevertheless, there are very high rates of all forms of violence against women across all divisions, age groups, education levels, ethnic groups and religions.

4.1.2. Cycle of violence: intergenerational transmission of violence⁴

	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experience IPV
Mothers beaten up by partner	40%	23%
Partner's mother who experienced IPV	17%	10%
Partner beaten as a child	21%	10%

4.1.3. Women's experience of violence by non-partner since age 15⁵

- More than one in four women (27 percent) have been physically abused since the age of 15 by a non-partner.
- Almost one in ten women (9 percent) have been sexually abused since the age of 15 by non-partner.

4.1.4. Child sexual abuse before the age of 15⁶

- Almost one in five women (16 percent) were sexually abused before the age of 15.
- Of the women interviewed, 5 percent reported that their first sexual experience were forced.

4.1.5. Children witnessing their mother being abused⁷

- 30 percent of women reported that their children had witnessed at least one incident of their abuse by their partner.
- 17 percent of women reported that their children had witnessed them been abused by their partner more than once.

³ Hunt, J. 2013. *Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business! National Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Fiji (2010/2011): A Survey Exploring the Prevalence, Incidence and Attitudes to Intimate Partner Violence in Fiji*. Suva: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre: pp. 37.

⁴ Ibid., p. 102.

⁵ Ibid., p. 60.

⁶ Ibid., p. 61.

⁷ Ibid., p. 100.

4.1.6. Impact on children who had witnessed abuse of their mother

Children's symptoms	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experience IPV
Aggressive behaviour	36%	23%
Experiencing nightmares	29%	17%
Repeating a year of school	10%	4%
School drop out	5%	3%

- Children whose mothers who experienced physical or sexual violence were twice as likely to repeat years of schooling or dropped out of school altogether.

4.1.7. Experience of violence during pregnancy⁸

- 15 percent of ever-pregnant women were physically assaulted during pregnancy by their partners. Of these women, one in three (33 percent) were severely abused, including being hit or kicked in the stomach.

4.2. KIRIBATI

4.2.1. Women's experience of physical and sexual violence by intimate partner⁹

- Approximately 68 percent of ever-married women between the ages of 15 - 49 experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partner.

4.2.2. Cycle of violence: intergenerational transmission of violence¹⁰

	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experience IPV
Mothers beaten by partner	38%	35%
Partner's mother who experienced IPV	24%	9%
Partner beaten as a child	24%	10%
Women who experienced CSA	23%	9%

4.2.3. Women's experience of violence by a non-partner since the age of 15

- 11 percent of women reported experiencing physical violence by a non-partner.
- 10 percent of women reported experiencing sexual violence by non-partner.

4.2.4. Child sexual abuse before the age of 15¹¹

- 19 percent of women aged 15-49 experienced CSA before the age of 15.

⁸ Ibid., p. 89.

⁹ Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 2010. *Kiribati Family Health and Support Study: A Study on Violence Against Woman and Children*. Noumea: Secretariat of the Pacific Community, p. 2.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 118.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 4.

- The perpetrators of CSA were¹²:
 - » Father or stepfather (7 percent)
 - » A family member (31 percent)
 - » A stranger (33%)

4.2.5. Experience of violence during pregnancy¹³

- 23 percent of ever-pregnant women were beaten during pregnancy,
- 17 percent of women who experienced violence during pregnancy had been punched or kicked in the abdomen while pregnant.
- 19 percent of women who experienced IPV during pregnancy were more likely to report a miscarriage, compared to the 13 percent of women who miscarried who did not experience IPV.

4.2.6. Children witnessing their mother's abuse¹⁴

- 50 percent of women reported that their children had witnessed at least one incidence of violence.
- 20 percent of women reported their children had witnessed more than one incident of violence.

4.2.7. Impact on children who had witnessed their mother's abuse¹⁵

Children's symptoms	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experience IPV
Aggressive behaviour	51 %	41 %
Experiencing nightmares	49%	31%
Repeated school year	19%	9%
School dropout	11 %	6%

- Children of women who experienced IPV have were experiencing high rates of nightmares, display of aggressive behaviour and problems at school.

4.2.8. Co-occurrence of intimate partner violence and child abuse in same household¹⁶

- 33 percent of women who experienced IPV were more likely to report that their partner had abused their child.
- 7 percent of women who did not experience IPV reported the abuse of their child.

4.2.9. Impact of Intimate partner violence on the mother's parenting behaviour¹⁷

- 5 percent of women shouted or yelled at their children
- 4 percent of women beat their children
- 9 percent of women ignored their children
- 4 percent of women were too sick or hurt to look after the children

¹² Ibid., p. 106.

¹³ Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 113.

4.3. SAMOA

4.3.1. Women's experience of physical and sexual violence by intimate partner¹⁸

- 46 percent of ever-partnered women between the ages of 15-49 experienced physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partner.

4.3.2. Cycle of violence: intergenerational transmission of violence

	Women who experienced IPV
Mother beaten up by partner	50% ¹⁹
Partner's mother who experienced IPV	42% ²⁰
Partner beaten as a child	10% ²¹
Women who experienced sexual abuse	19% ²²

4.3.3. Women's experience of violence by a non-partner since age 15¹⁹

- 62 percent of women have experienced physical violence by a non-partner.
- 11 percent of women have experienced sexual violence by non-partner.
- Perpetrators of non-partner physical abuse before the age of 15:
 - » Father: 36 percent
 - » Male in a family: 4 percent
 - » Female family member: 39 percent
 - » Teacher: 19 percent
- Perpetrators of sexual violence since age 15 were either a boyfriend and/or stranger.

4.3.4. Women reported children who witnessed their mother's abuse²⁰

- 31 percent of woman who experienced IPV reported that their children had witnessed one incident of violence.
- 12 percent reported that the children have witnessed many incidents of violence.

¹⁸ Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 2007. The Samoa Family Health and Safety Study. Noumea: Secretariat of the Pacific Community. p. 15.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 44.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

4.3.5. Impact on children who had witnessed their mother's abuse²¹

Children symptoms	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experienced IPV
Aggressive behaviour	46%	36%
Experiencing nightmares	34%	28%
Repeated year at school	11%	8%
School drop out	13%	8%

4.4. SOLOMON ISLAND

4.4.1. Women's experience of physical and sexual violence by intimate partner²²

- Two in three women (65 percent) of ever-married women between the ages of 15-49 experienced physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partner.

4.4.2. Cycle of violence: intergenerational transmission of violence²³

	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experienced IPV
Mother beaten by partner	37%	23%
Partner's mother experienced violence	23%	8%
Partner beaten as a child	25%	8%
Women experience of CSA ²⁸	49%	20%

4.4.3. Ever-married women who experienced violence by non-partner since the age of 15²⁴

- 18 percent of women experienced physical violence by non-partner. Male family members, particularly father were identified as the most common perpetrators.
- 18 percent of women experienced sexual violence by non-partner. Perpetrators were boyfriends and strangers.
- 29 percent of women experienced physical or sexual violence by non-partner.

4.4.4. Perpetrators of non-partner physical abuse²⁵

- Father or stepfather: 59 percent
- Boyfriend: 48 percent
- Male family member: 23 percent
- Female family member: 25 percent
- Acquaintance (teacher or work colleague): 17 percent
- Perpetrators of non-partner sexual abuse:

²¹ Ibid., p. 36

²² Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 2009. Solomon Island Family Health and Support Study: A study on Violence Against Woman and Children. Noumea: Secretariat of the Pacific Community. p. 3.

²³ Ibid., p. 6.

²⁴ Secretariat of the Pacific Community Op. Cit., p. 80

²⁵ Ibid., p. 81.

- » Acquaintance (teacher or work colleague): 24 percent
- » Stranger: 26 percent

4.4.6. Experience of child sexual abuse before age 15²⁶

- 37 percent of women aged between 15-49 experienced child sexual abuse before age of 15.
- Perpetrators of child sexual abuse:
 - » Father: 2 percent
 - » Family member: 20 percent
 - » Friend of the family: 16 percent
 - » Boyfriend: 36 percent
 - » Teacher or colleague: 15 percent
- Stranger: 24 percent
- Police officer: 2 percent

4.4.7 Women violence during pregnancy²⁷

- 11 percent of ever- pregnant women were beaten during pregnancy
- 18 percent of women experienced violence during their pregnancy had been punched or kicked in the abdomen while pregnant.

4.4.8. Children who witnessed their mother’s abuse²⁸

- 59 percent of woman who experienced IPV reported that their children had witnessed at least one incident of violence.
- 26 percent reported that their children had witnessed more than one incident of violence.

4.4.9. Impact on children who had witnessed their mother’s abuse²⁹

Children symptoms	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experienced IPV
Aggressive behaviour	57%	41%
Experienced nightmares	36%	21%
Repeated school year	19%	18%
School dropout	10%	10%

4.4.10. Co-occurrence of intimate partner violence and child abuse within the same household³⁰

- 36 percent of women who experienced IPV reported the abuse of their child, while 11 percent of women who do not experience IPV had reported the abuse of their child.
- Women who had experienced IPV were 4.5 times more likely to report that their children had being abused than women who have not experienced IPV.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 87.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 96.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 97.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 91.

4.4.11. Impact of intimate partner violence on mother's parenting behaviour³¹

- 59% of women who had suffered violence believed the violence had affected the way they parented their children³². The findings indicate that the impact of such violence on parenting is overwhelmingly negative.
- 10 percent of women shouted at their children
- 23 percent of women hit their children
- 42 percent of women ignored their children
- 6 percent of women were too sick or hurt to look after the children.

4.5. TONGA

4.5.1. Women's experience of physical and sexual violence by intimate partner³³

- 40 percent of ever-married women between the ages of 15-49 who experienced physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partner.

4.5.2. Cycle of violence: intergenerational transmission of violence³⁴

	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experience IPV
Mother beaten by partner	24%	19%
Partner's mother experienced violence	20%	7%
Partner beaten as a child	20%	14%
Women experience of CSA	8%	

4.5.3. Women's experience of violence by non-partner since age 15³⁵

- 68 percent of women had experienced physical violence by someone other than an intimate partner since the age 15. The prevalence rate was high across all educational levels and age groups.
- Perpetrators were mostly fathers (50 percent) and teachers (20 percent).³⁶
- Children and young people were discipline by the use of a stick or were slapped.
- Corporal punishment is still prevalent in schools even though it is illegal.³⁷
- 6 percent of women experienced sexual violence by a non-partner. The most commonly mentioned perpetrators were boyfriends and strangers.

4.5.4. Child sexual abuse before age 15³⁸

- 8 percent of women experienced sexual abuse before they were 15 years old.
- Perpetrators were strangers, male family members and a category 'others'.

³¹ Ibid., p. 95.

³² Ibid., p. 87.

³³ Ma'a Fafine. 2012. National Study on Domestic Violence Against Women in Tonga 2009: Nofo 'A Kainga. Nuku'alofa: Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc. p. xxv.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 125.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 56.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 212.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

³⁸ Ibid., p. xxvi.

4.5.5. Comparing partner and non-partner violence³⁹

- More than three out of four women (77 percent) have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime by a partner or non-partner.
- The comparative data on partner and non-partner violence show that women in Tonga are almost three times more likely to have experienced violence by non-partners than by their partners. This pattern is different when compared to other countries in the world.⁴⁰

4.5.6. Women's experience of violence during pregnancy⁴¹

- 8 percent of ever-pregnant women have been beaten during a pregnancy.
- 41 percent of women had been punched or kicked in abdomen during pregnancy.

4.5.7. Children who witnessed their mother being abused by their partner⁴²

- 14 percent of woman who experienced IPV reported their children have witnessed at least once.
- 20 percent reported that the children had witnessed more than one incident of violence.

4.5.8. Impact of violence on children who witnessed their mother being abused by their partner⁴³

Children symptoms	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experienced IPV
Aggressive behaviour	38%	37%
Experienced nightmares	42%	37%
Repeat school year	11%	11%
School drop out	11%	7%

4.6. VANUATU

4.6.1. Women's experience of physical and sexual violence by intimate partner⁴⁴

- 60 percent of ever-married women between the ages of 15-49 experienced physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partner.

³⁹ Ibid., p. xxvi.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 66.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 205.

⁴² Ibid., p. 224.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 223.

⁴⁴ Vanuatu Women's Centre. 2011. Vanuatu National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships. Port Vila: Vanuatu Women's Center. p. 56.

4.6.2. Cycle of violence: intergenerational transmission of violence

Cycle of violence	Women who experienced IPV
Mothers who were beaten by partner	51% ⁵⁰
Partner's mother beaten by her partner	23% ⁵¹
Partner beaten as a child	29% ⁵²

4.6.8. Women violence by non-partner since age 15⁴⁵

- One in four women (28 percent) experienced non-partner physical violence.
- One in three women (33 percent) had experienced non-partner sexual violence.
- 48 percent women experienced physical and/or sexual violence by non-partner.

4.6.9. Perpetrators of non-partner physical abuse since age 15⁴⁶

- Father 51 percent
- Female family member: 37 percent
- Male family member: 11 percent
- Teacher: 24 percent

4.6.10. Perpetrators of non-partner sexual abuse since age 15

- Boyfriend: 60 percent
- Stranger: 22 percent
- Male family member: 20 percent
- Male friend of family: 4 percent
- Grandfather: 4 percent

4.6.11. Child sexual abuse before age 15⁴⁷

- 30 percent of women reported sexual abuse before age of 15.
- 28 percent of women reported that their first experience of sex was rape.

4.6.12. Perpetrators of the child sexual abuse⁴⁸

- 55 percent of women reported that family members were the perpetrators of CSA
- Family member: 33 percent
- Boyfriend: 33 percent
- Stranger: 26 percent
- Grandfather: 10 percent
- Brother: 7 percent
- Stepfather: 3 percent

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 95.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 99.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 100.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 103.

4.6.13. Level of the education of women:

- Two in five (40 percent) of women with no education had been sexually abused as a child
- One in three women (32 percent) with primary education have been sexually abused as a child
- 28 percent of women with secondary school education have been sexually abused as a child
- 17 percent of women with higher education have been sexually abused as a child.

4.6.14. Socio-economic status of women

- One in three women (35 percent) with low socio-economic status experienced sexual abuse
- 30 percent of women from medium socio-economic status experienced sexual abuse
- 15 percent of women from high economic status experienced sexual abuse

4.6.15. Age of first sexual abused among women interviewed

- 14 percent were between 6 to 10 years old
- 74 percent of women reported that they were between the age of 11 to 14 years old when experiencing the first sexual abuse incident

4.6.16. Women violence during pregnancy⁴⁹

- 15 percent of ever-pregnant women were physically abuse during pregnancy by partner.
- A third of women were beaten during pregnancy where violence started during pregnancy, and became progressively worse.

4.6.17. Children who witnessed their mother being abused by partner⁵⁰

- 32 percent reported that their children had witnessed one incident of violence.
- 15 percent reported that their children had witnessed more than one incident of violence.

4.6.18. Impact of violence on children who witnessed their mother being abused by their partner⁵¹

Children symptoms	Women who experienced IPV	Women who did not experienced IPV
Aggressive behaviour	73%	54%
Experienced nightmares	53%	37%
Repeat of school year	38%	26%
School drop out	22%	8%

4.6.19. Co-occurrence of intimate partner violence and child abuse in same household⁵²

- 17 percent of women who experienced IPV were more likely to report that their partner had beaten their child.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 125.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 131.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 143.

⁵² Ibid., p. 131.

5. Conclusion

A key message from this publication is to stress the need for both prevention and response to violence against women and violence against children. Preventing violence from taking place in the first place can break the cycle of discrimination and negative social norms that perpetuate human rights violations. This requires solid policy and legislative reform, as well as community outreach and awareness raising initiatives.

Violence against children can take many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse, and may involve neglect or deprivation. Violence can also affect children in an indirect way – witnessing domestic violence between parents, for example, or between a parent and his or her partner. Violence against children is typically perpetrated by those entrusted with their care: parents or other family members, teachers and even law enforcement officials. Evidence clearly suggests that violence can affect children's health and well-being on many different levels – physical, psychological, social and emotional.

As this report demonstrates there is a strong correlation between violence perpetrated against children and violence perpetrated against adult women particularly in the home.

Violence against women and children is regarded as symptomatic of wider gender inequality in society and laws and policies need to be reviewed, changed and implemented in order to address this inequality. Governments in the South Pacific island countries should make changes to current law, policies, procedures or regulations in order to comply with international policies such as CRC and CEDAW.

South Pacific countries have high prevalence rates of violence against women and children and, for this reason, governments across all countries must demonstrate commitment to addressing this problem by devising strategies and action plans that include civil society and the voices of women and children and other vulnerable groups. Violence against women and children is not only a matter of concern for national governments and strategies and plans must include different sectors of society such as health and education professionals, legal

professionals, mass media, parents and children and other organs of civil society. The international community also has a role to play in supporting initiatives by both government and civil society to combat violence against children and women.

Governments must expand protection of women and children and must review the legislative framework of the country, particularly, the laws and policies that uphold inequality within customary law, the judiciary system, education law, and laws that govern social services and health. Policies should reinforce the message that domestic violence is a crime and perpetrators are to be punished in order to protect women and children. Criminalizing domestic violence sends a clear message that violence is not a private matter and is unacceptable. It is essential that protective laws are enforced and offenders accountable, services are available to survivors of violence and that there is greater public awareness of the extent and scope of the problem.

The challenge before governments and development partners is to address issues of violence against women and violence against children holistically and in a complimentary way. One solution lies in implementing some key Essential Services for survivors, across health, security, access to justice and psychological support. By offering Essential Services governments can help ensure greater access by women and girls to coordinated, quality care in response to the physical and mental health impacts of violence including death and disability, reproductive health ailments, chronic depression and acute physical injuries.

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