

Case study one: Egypt

1. Background and context

(a) National strategy and legal framework

Until recently, domestic violence was not considered a problem in Egypt. Just prior to the costing study, the National Council for Women developed the first National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women 2015-2020. The national strategy was developed in a participatory manner that included interviews with relevant stakeholders (ministries, national research institutes, NGOs, religious institutes, etc.). These discussions revealed the lack of accurate data on violence against women and shed light on the importance of commissioning a prevalence study that would include a costing component.

The national strategy on violence against women includes a detailed workplan and budget to cover the activities outlined, highlighting the importance of investment in gender-based violence prevention and response. As such, it was not difficult to convince the stakeholders of the importance of costing violence against women. However, according to the National Council for Women, a gap in the legal framework on marital violence persists because it continues to be seen as a private/family issue. Women experiencing violence usually seek divorce but do not make a criminal case against their husbands because there is no law criminalizing marital violence.

(b) Service provision

In 2013, UNFPA began working with the Government of Egypt to improve service provision and address the existing gaps in prevention and response. This process is ongoing, with some sectors requiring more strengthening than others. For example, the Ministry of Health has been providing training to doctors in hospitals, though not in all governorates, on understanding gender-based violence, including how to recognize survivors and their right to report violence to the police. In addition, the Ministry of Interior has established a unit to combat violence against women, with dedicated female police officers. There were approximately nine shelters in Egypt at the time of costing study. The National Council for Women complaint officers provide legal and psychosocial support to women victims of violence throughout the country. However, there is still a lack of uptake in the use of these services by women and gaps in terms of the police and health system response, including an inadequate referral system, continue to be an issue.

Fear, stigma and a belief that the issue is private mean that women who experience gender-based violence in Egypt generally do not report the incident(s). While they access other services, such as health care, they do not disclose that the injury received was a result of violence perpetrated by their husbands/fiancés. In Egypt, health services are generally available free of charge, including psychological support for women experiencing violence. At times, women request legal advice or psychological support from the National Council for Women, who also refer them to a shelter when necessary. The number of shelters in Egypt is small, and most are not suitable for children and have set regulations for women staying there. Even so, Egyptian women generally do not seek this solution, either because they are not aware or they prefer an alternative solution, such as staying with their parents or friends. The national strategy on violence against women includes a plan to improve the accessibility of shelters.

2. Rationale for costing study

(a) Initiation and study team

The costing study was undertaken by the UNFPA Country Office in Egypt which, in partnership with the National Council for Women and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, formed a multidisciplinary team. To support and oversee the team, a National Advisory Committee was created in early 2014 and consultations with the relevant ministries and institutions providing protection and response services to victims were conducted. UNFPA advised the team to conduct a national survey on gender-based violence that included a calculation of its economic and social costs.

UNFPA coordinated the research, providing financial and technical support, and an agreement was established between the National Council for Women and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics to govern the work on the study.¹ The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics was responsible for the technical issues related to the survey and the National Council for Women provided support in an advisory capacity. Discussions, including how much the study would cost, were led by the leaders of the National Council for Women and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. UNFPA and the international consultant explained the purpose of the costing exercise to the concerned ministries, such as the Ministries of Health, Social Solidarity, Interior and Justice, and trained the researchers on gender-based violence. The success of this research was underpinned by a robust multisectoral team. Each partner shared an understanding of the problem and the aim of the research.

The National Council for Women welcomed the formation of a multidisciplinary project team and the clear division of labour/skill areas: (1) The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics had the legal authority and expertise to conduct the large-scale surveys, as well as analyse the complex quantitative data; (2) the international expert had the knowledge of gender-based violence and violence against women costing research, as well as experience in implementing the methodologies and methods employed; and (3) The National Council for Women had a deep understanding of gender-based violence, especially in relation to the type of questions to be asked in the questionnaire and how to conduct research with Egyptian women who have experienced violence.

(b) Motivation for the study

The 2014 Demographic Health Survey showed a significant increase in violence against women in Egypt, with domestic violence, sexual harassment and female genital mutilation being, at once, the most common and the most underreported forms. The 2015 study was conducted to address the paucity of research on prevalence rates of violence against women and girls and its effects on the Egyptian society and economy. This research was timely, as Egypt was taking concrete steps to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls. According to Duvvury and others, “adding the economic perspective of the problem provided “a new, quite powerful, angle to view the legal, health and other consequences of violence against women and to

¹ Nata Duvvury and others, “The Egypt Economic Cost of Gender-based Violence Survey” (Cairo, UNFPA, 2015).

advocate for action to be taken.”² The Economic Cost of Gender-based Violence Survey was thus designed as the first nationally representative study to collect comprehensive data on the various types and forms of gender based violence and to estimate their economic costs.

3. Methodology

(a) Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were as follows: (1) to establish and provide accurate nationally representative data on gender-based violence and its associated economic costs and (2), to help policymakers and planners formulate evidence-based interventions to combat gender-based violence.

The survey aimed to measure: (1) prevalence and incidence of different types of gender-based violence; (2) impact of violence on women’s health, reproductive health and general well-being; and (3) consequences of violence against women and their associated economic costs.

(b) Intended audience

The research was intended for a variety of national stakeholders, policymakers in government institutions having a role in the prevention and/or response to gender-based violence and groups affected by gender-based violence:

- Society – to raise awareness of the negative consequences of violence against women;
- Relevant ministries and policymakers – to raise awareness of the greater cost of inaction compared to the cost of response; to address gender-based violence by investing in prevention and response services and to take steps toward eradicating poverty;
- Religious institutions – to highlight their role in combating gender-based violence;
- Media – to highlight their role in combating gender-based violence.

(c) Scope of the study

The multidisciplinary team working on the project sought to emulate the Danish model on costing violence. While Danish researchers supported the process, the necessary administrative data regarding investments in gender based violence services by the government was not available. The Egyptian governmental budget is not delineated in a way that provides this information and it was not possible to gather data on the cost of service provision in relation to the time consumed by personnel in addressing gender-based violence from hospitals and police stations. In addition, the service costs varied, particularly between public and private providers.

According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics and the National Council for Women, hospitals do not record whether or not injuries occur as a result of violence and women tend not to disclose the cause of injuries. Additionally, since hospitals do not register identification numbers for patients, there are no records, for example, of previous injuries so that trends could be identified. Moreover, it would have been difficult to obtain data on the salaries of the specialist police officers and the costs of service provision and training. As such, the study estimated the cost of the problem only to the extent possible, that is, for the woman and the household.

² Ibid., p. 5.

The costing study focused on violence perpetrated by the fiancé or spouse since, according to the Egyptian culture, these two categories constitute the intimate partner relationship. Indeed, examining violence perpetrated by the fiancé was a new area of investigation, as well as a new area of intervention for the team, as it had not been examined in earlier studies.

The study was designed to capture all forms of gender-based violence in the household and public spaces, with due consideration of how the Egyptian culture functions. The study used the 1993 United Nations definition of gender-based violence to refer to the physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, within the general community and/or perpetrated or condoned by the state. The study estimated the annual economic cost of violence perpetrated against women by the husband, fiancé, relatives within the immediate or extended family, other individuals within the close surroundings (anyone present in the home) and violence perpetrated in public spaces. However, the cost of economic violence, such as financial controlling behaviours, was not included.

The role of the national and international experts was instrumental in this study as they determined which costs were to be estimated and then discussed these costs with the team. The 2005 United Nations definitions of costs – direct tangible, indirect tangible, direct intangible, indirect intangible – were employed. The study included all feasible costs for the most severe incident in the previous year, as it was considered this would produce the most accurate estimates. This was based on the complexities associated with accounting for inflation and recall. The survey focused on estimating (to the extent possible) direct and indirect tangible costs.

- Direct costs borne by women, such as expenditure associated with seeking services for injuries (physical and psychological), medical care, medicine, shelter, local community services, legal and judicial litigation (police), including transportation as well as consumption costs related to the replacement of property;
- Indirect costs such as income loss due to missed work by the woman and the perpetrator (where applicable), loss of domestic work, children's school absence (missed days);
- Indirect intangible costs and consequences that the woman and children faced due to the incident;
- National estimates of out-of-pocket expenditures, lost earnings and value of missed domestic work;
- Costs calculated for the national level based on data from the sample.

(d) Method and cost calculation

Data collection took place between April and June 2015 through a survey framed as a questionnaire on the “Status of Egyptian Women”. Further information on the exact nature of the questionnaire was provided as part of the consent process when the interviewer and respondent were alone. Two questionnaires, one for individual women and one for the household, were employed face-to-face by women researchers, following a devised criterion. The questionnaire designs were based on the United Nations 2013 Guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women, the United Nations Economic and social Commission for Western Asia tools adapted for measuring violence against women in Arab countries and the experiences of other countries who conducted similar surveys (after being adapted to fit Egyptian cultural context). Each questionnaire was finalized by a validation committee comprised of local experts.

The household questionnaire gathered data on demographics (which also served to identify eligible women); housing characteristics and ownership of a variety of consumer goods (which served to identify the household wealth index, assessing the long-term standard of living in the household). The individual questionnaire focused on the characteristics of respondents and the district in which they resided; employment and income; general and reproductive health, including harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage and child marriage; violence perpetrated by husband/fiancé (including financial control); violence perpetrated by family members/persons of close relation and strangers within the surrounding environment; violence in public spaces (workplace, educational institutions, street and public transport).

The sample was designed to be representative at the governorate level (95 per cent confidence level), with urban and rural areas separated out, for five regions: urban governorates (for administrative purposes, Egypt is divided into 27 governorates), urban Lower Egypt, rural Lower Egypt, urban Upper Egypt and rural Upper Egypt. Frontier governorates were excluded from the sample as their population constitutes less than 1 per cent of Egypt's total population and accordingly does not affect national estimates. A two-stage cluster sampling strategy was employed: 21,448 households (almost the sample of the DHS) were selected and women aged 18-64 years (regardless of marital status) who were residents or present in the household for a month or more before the survey were eligible. Only one eligible woman in each household was selected at random for the interview using the Kish Grid, which had been incorporated into the household questionnaire. Sample weighting was used to ensure representativeness. The household response rate was 97.3 per cent, and the individual response rate was 99.2 per cent.

The study primarily employed the accounting methodology. Multiple regressions were used if a woman could not remember specific costs, such as health costs which were then estimated based on type of injury, service accessed and health provider variables. In cases where women were subjected to severe domestic violence and had to leave their marital homes, the costs of local community services were calculated based on the costs of existing shelters and alternative housing. The study took into consideration the fact that Egyptian women are less likely to access public shelters. This was accounted for as an opportunity cost: calculating what the woman would have spent had she used another form of shelter and was estimated by examining the average daily cost of shelter (for those who paid). The total shelter cost was thus the total number of days spent outside the home multiplied by the average daily cost of a shelter.

The Economic Cost of Gender-based Violence Survey did not provide information to calculate lost productivity. However, the survey did include questions pertaining to the absence of the victim or spouse from work. The survey also collected information on the daily wages of female waged workers, whether as regular or irregular workers, as well as current spouses and fiancés (the daily wage was calculated based on the assumption of five working days per week, 10 in two weeks, 21 for the month, with no data collected on the number of working hours). Women were also not asked about their earnings or whether they were employed/self-employed. Data related to the spouse was more difficult to estimate as the women provided this information (16 per cent missing data).

A multiple regression model was employed to: (1) estimate missing data of wages for waged female workers by regressing the wages on the job characteristics in addition to the age, the educational level and place of residency of the waged worker; and, (2) estimate the missing wage values of the spouses/fiancés by regressing the daily reported wages on the occupation, economic activity, age and educational level of the spouse/fiancé. In the private sector, individuals who miss days of work are not paid. In the governmental sector, people have 27 paid days off work and a day taken as a result of violence is not counted as a “day off”.

The opportunity cost approach was employed to estimate the daily earnings for self-employed women, employers and unpaid female workers by regressing the daily reported wages on the job characteristics (excluding the contract), age, education and place of residency. The cost was calculated as the number of lost working days multiplied by the daily wage for both the victim and the perpetrator. A small time use survey was also part of the questionnaire, with all women asked about the hours they and their spouses spent on different domestic activities during the previous week. Women who reported violence were asked about the number of days they were unable to conduct these domestic activities due to the incident. Some domestic activities are usually performed simultaneously, such as caregiving for children and the elderly, which complicated some of the calculations.

To estimate the monetary value of domestic work, some assumptions were made to address extreme values and simultaneous activities - the maximum number of domestic working hours per day was set at 14 hours in order to leave time for sleeping/eating/and personal care,³ and the maximum number of hours dedicated for child care or elderly care was set at four hours per day (for other extreme values, values above the 95th percentile took the value of the 95th percentile). A generalized replacement approach was employed to provide monetary value to domestic work by assuming that the work can be done by a working woman in the occupation of caregiver who earns an average daily wage of LE 14.7 (using the Annual Report of Wages and Salaries of 2014, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics). The calculation for each activity was based on the number of missed days for this activity multiplied by the average daily hours spent on this activity multiplied by the hourly wage. Then it was added for all activities to get the total.

The cost of missed school days for children, which parents bear in educational costs, was calculated by multiplying the number of missed days by the average daily fees of the school. For the 2014/2015 academic year, the total number of school days was considered as 201 days and the daily fee was computed by dividing the total annual fee by the number of days. As the questionnaire did not clarify the number of children who missed school or the school fees for each child, the estimate is for each family.

The cost of lost time for women forced to change their route due to harassment or violence in public spaces, was evaluated using the opportunity cost approach. This was calculated by multiplying the extra hours per day by the hourly wage (14.7),⁴ multiplied by the number of days.

³ Douaa Mahmoud and May Gadallah, “Imputing monetary value to Egyptian females: unpaid domestic and care work”.

⁴ Though wages are the same in the public sector, they are different in the private sector. LE 14.7 is the average hourly wage for a working woman in the occupation of caregiver, and LE 12.5 is the average hourly wage of a working person in the occupation of caregiver (since the gender of the companion is not available in the data). The comparison wage is lower as a man doing care work usually earns less than a woman.

The cost of extra time for a companion was also calculated by multiplying the extra hours per day by the hourly wage (12.5), multiplied by the number of days. As the survey did not provide the number of days a companion was required or the number of days the route was changed, it was assumed to be 100 days for studying women and 110 otherwise.⁵

Though the questionnaire included health-related questions, the causal relationship between violence and trauma was inconclusive. Also, the data collected did not allow for an estimation of costs associated with the impact of psychological distress on work performance and productivity, domestic work or the development of a psychological condition. The survey included questions concerning emotional distress for women based on the 20-item self-reporting questionnaire (SRQ-20) (see study for further details).⁶ A direct, simple measuring index was computed (the index is the percentage of the total number of problems reported by the woman divided by 18, the total number of problems investigated in the survey). Mothers were also asked about the effect of spousal violence on their children, whether in the last year or throughout their lifetime.

The total cost of violence perpetrated by husband/ fiancé is considered to be an underestimation of the real total cost, as it is based only on one incident in the year (the incident rate for spousal violence per 100 women is estimated to be 133 incidents). If all these incidents were considered, the total cost would have been considerably higher.

4. Challenges

(a) Data

The lack of service, budgetary or employer data presented a challenge for the research team. Though the data obtained also presented challenges, these challenges were addressed by using proxies, such as using lost wages to calculate lost productivity. As noted previously, multiple regression models were also used to calculate missing data, such as wages, and assumptions were made to account for extreme values and simultaneous domestic activities when calculating missed work days.

(b) Questionnaire design

The team spent tremendous time to extensively discuss the different viewpoints regarding issues such as the age range and reach a consensus on the final questionnaire.

(c) Accuracy of the estimates

The study provides only estimates of the costs of violence, which represent the minimum cost rather than the exact cost.

⁵ The number of days is based on the assumption that the incident happened in the middle of the previous year: half of school days is 100 and half of working days is 110.

⁶ Duvvury and others, “The Egypt Economic Cost of Gender-based Violence Survey”.

5. Key findings

Domestic violence

- The majority of respondents, (79 per cent), all of whom were women, were currently married.
- The majority of women (79 per cent) had no income from work or other sources.
- Approximately 7.888 million women suffered from all forms of violence annually, whether perpetrated by spouse/fiancé, individuals close to her or strangers in public places.
- Approximately 2.288 million women suffered emotionally due to their exposure to violence (all forms) yearly.
- Approximately 5.6 million women were exposed to violence perpetrated by husband/fiancé annually.
- The total cost for women and families due to violence was approximately LE 2.17 billion in the past year, based only on the cost of the most recent severe incident.
- The total cost is projected to reach LE 6.15 billion if the injury rate for all incidents perpetrated by husband/fiancé in the last year were to continue at the current rate.
- Women and their households incurred a cost of 1.49 billion LE due to violence perpetrated by their husband/fiancé, comprised of 831.236 million LE in direct costs and 661.565 million LE in indirect costs.
- Approximately 58 per cent of currently employed women paid in cash were covered by social security insurance through their work and a similar proportion were covered by health insurance. Some had both.
- Approximately 2.4 million women experienced one or more type of injuries resulting from violence perpetrated by spouse or fiancé.

Direct/indirect costs of domestic violence

- Approximately 1 million married women leave their homes annually due to intimate partner violence yearly.
- The cost of alternative housing/shelter for women who leave their home due to intimate partner violence is approximately 585 million LE annually.
- Women exposed to violence are more likely than women who have not experienced violence to have a miscarriage (or stillbirth), 40.1 per cent compared to 36.6 per cent, and are more likely to have an underweight child, 7.3 per cent compared to 5.3 per cent.
- Approximately 200,000 women are exposed to pregnancy-related complications due to intimate partner violence yearly.
- About 4.7 per cent of women reported being forbidden from working by their husbands throughout their lives.
- The children of 113,000 families are absent from school yearly due to domestic violence perpetrated by the husband amounting to loss of approximately 90,000 school days annually.
- The children of 300,000 families suffered nightmares and fear due to violence perpetrated by the husband during the previous year.

Violence in public spaces

- Approximately 139,600 women, 3.7 per cent of working women, were exposed to violence in the workplace during the previous year.
- Approximately 16,000 girls aged 18 and over were exposed to sexual harassment in educational institutions in one year alone.
- More than 1.7 million women suffer from various forms of sexual harassment on public transport.
- Working women and female students are more likely to face harassment and violence in public spaces (approximately 39.4 per cent of girls who were studying at the time of the survey were victims of such violence).
- Violence against women in public spaces is estimated to cost 571 million LE yearly.
- Women and their families incur a cost of 548 million LE annually for changing their route and method of transport or by having to travel with a road companion due to violence in public spaces.

Additional costs

- Of the 2.6 million women who reported injuries resulting from domestic violence or violence perpetrated by others, 2.29 million women reported psychological problems due to these incidents during the past year, representing about 8.8 per cent of the entire sample.

6. Study impact

(a) Increased awareness

As a result of the dissemination of the study findings to concerned ministers and senior officials, **policymakers** recognized the impact of violence against women on the entire economy and the importance of investing in the implementation of the National Violence Against Women Strategy. The **media** began discussing and highlighting the issue of domestic violence, which was previously treated as a taboo subject. The study represents an important first step in **combating gender-based violence**.

The findings were also used by **NGOs and the National Council for Women** to raise awareness of gender-based violence among **policymakers** and at the **grassroots level**. The importance of **supporting the national Council for Women** to improve their services, particularly the complaints office, became very clear to all relevant **UN agencies**. The National Council for Women is currently considering commissioning a national study **on violence perpetrated against women with disabilities**.

(b) Enhanced response

NGOs started utilizing the findings of the study to advocate for a comprehensive response to violence against women, including increased funding. The Ministry of Planning subsequently **increased the budget** for violence against women-related activities.

The **Ministry of Interior** also **increased the number of female police officers** and integrated **a lecture on combating violence against women into the police academy**

programmes provided by the National Council for Women. This is expected to increase the reporting of violence against women and women's access to services.

Following the completion of the study, each of the **partners** further engaged in a number of activities to **enhance the national response to gender-based violence**. The costing exercise highlighted the fact that **more work needs to be undertaken** and better coordination among the various stakeholders, particularly in relation to **advocacy** and **policies for sector-specific needs**, such as in educational institutions is required. Also, further **awareness-raising** is needed in terms of improving access to **support services** which are not available, not known about or the need for them is marked by stigma.

(C) Enhancing the legal and policy framework

Female **parliamentarians** began paying attention to the issue of gender-based violence and realized the importance of strengthening the legal framework. Both the prevalence rate and cost findings were the main source of data informing the development of the **new draft law** on violence against women currently under consideration by parliament. This data was also utilized by each **governorate** to develop **action plans** in line with the national strategy on violence against women.