



UNITED NATIONS

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ESCWA

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Building Institutional Capacity to Combat Violence against Women in the Arab region

Three Key Objectives

1. To raise awareness on the issue of violence against women and the cost it bears on the Arab region.

2. To devise a technical approach to estimate the cost of violence against women in two pilot Arab countries.

3. To build the capacity of stakeholders to advocate for policy change on violence against women in Arab countries.

Estimated cost: \$697,611

1 out of 3

ever-married women
(aged 15-49) experienced
physical or sexual violence
in most Arab countries



Background

Violence against women is a fundamental human rights violation that affects not only the victim herself, but the economy and society at large. It compromises women's dignity, security and autonomy, and has grave health consequences. It also affects their participation in public life and slows development processes.

Recent prevalence figures indicate that about 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence. In the Arab region, the figure is higher and in countries experiencing conflict, it tends to be higher still. While there is increasing recognition that this problem requires immediate attention, progress is still fragmented and disconnected. Few constitutions of Arab States contain explicit reference to it and even when legislations are in place, there are serious impediments to implementation due to the lack of procedural action and women's poor access to justice. Services and referral systems are insufficient and usually unavailable to underprivileged and vulnerable women, such as refugees or domestic workers.

Why ESCWA?

ESCWA has conducted many activities on combating violence against women, thus gaining experience and knowledge in the field. These include a report on violence in the domestic sphere in Arab countries and another on available legislation on violence against women. Studies were also undertaken on services offered by Arab States and non-governmental organizations to survivors of domestic violence, and on the trafficking of women and girls in the Arab region.

Expected Deliverables

- A model for the estimation of the economic cost of violence against women, piloted in two Arab countries;
- A tailor-made training programme on estimating the cost of violence against women in the Arab region;
- A regional report on the subject;
- An online knowledge hub to share material, good practices and lessons learned;
- National and regional capacity-building and awareness-raising meetings;
- Advocacy for policy change on violence against women.

The Project

In European countries and the United States of America, measures of the cost of violence against women increasingly serve as tools to promote legislative and policy change. To date, there are no calculations of that cost in the Arab region. The project responds to this gap and is aimed at building the capacity of ESCWA member States to use a newly developed economic model to estimate the cost of violence against women, and monitor indicators for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals related to violence against women.

The project will be implemented in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), as part of a regional project entitled “Estimating the cost of violence against women”.

Phase I

Two studies have been undertaken during phase I of the regional project: the first, developed in partnership with UN-Women and the Institute for Women’s studies in the Arab world at the Lebanese American University, will serve to examine the socioeconomic consequences of violence against women and its repercussions on the human rights situation in the Arab region. The second study will provide a model to estimate the cost of violence against women, building on previous work on costing, including the cost of service utilization, and on the value of economic losses due to lost output, and decreased productivity and earnings resulting from violence.

Phase II

Phase II, which is currently underway, is expected to last 30 months, during which the costing model will be piloted in two Arab countries, and workshops and meetings will be organized to build the capacity of member States to utilize the model in order to foster policy change.

Tailoring Training on VAW in the Arab Region

The project will include developing tailor-made training material on the importance of and different approaches to estimating the cost of violence against women in the Arab region. Workshops will be held, targeting representatives from national women’s machineries and national statistical offices. A web-based knowledge platform will also be established within the existing platform of UN-Women, to disseminate reports, methodologies and other resources.

Violence against Women

Fundamental human rights violation

Consequences on the victims

Consequences on society at large