UNSEEN, UNSAFE

THE UNDERINVESTMENT IN ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN THE PACIFIC AND TIMOR-LESTE

Save the Children

ChildFund
Australia

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World Vision

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSARY

Violence against children:

"All forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse."[1]

Physical violence:

Physical violence[2] includes corporal punishment (also termed 'violent discipline' and 'physical and humiliating punishment'), torture, cruel or degrading treatment, and physical bullying. It also includes harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, binding, scarring and branding, as well as violent or degrading initiation rites, exorcism, sex selection and 'honour' crimes. Other forms of physical violence include physical child labour, slavery, trafficking, and the use of children by armed groups including as soldiers.

Violent discipline:

Child discipline methods that rely on physical (corporal) punishment and/or psychological aggression. "Psychological aggression refers to the action of shouting, yelling or screaming at a child, as well as calling a child offensive names such as 'dumb' or 'lazy'. Physical punishment is defined as shaking the child, hitting or slapping him/her on the hand/arm/leg, hitting him/her on the bottom or elsewhere on the body with a hard object, spanking or hitting him/her on the bottom with a bare hand, hitting or slapping him/her on the face, head or ears, and beating him/her over and over as hard as possible".[3]

Sexual violence:

This covers any form of sexual abuse and exploitation including child prostitution, sexual slavery, child sex tourism, trafficking or selling children for sexual exploitation and visual images of child sexual abuse. Sexual violence also includes the inducement, coercion or arrangement of children into forced or early marriages.

Emotional violence:

This is defined as any form of psychological maltreatment, mental abuse, verbal abuse and emotional abuse or neglect. This may take a variety of forms including scaring, threatening, rejecting, humiliating, insulting, isolating or ignoring a child. It also includes the denial of emotional responsiveness or the neglect of mental health, medical and educational needs. Emotional harm is also caused by imposing humiliating or degrading conditions of detention including placement in solitary confinement.

Neglect or negligent treatment:

This is the deliberate failure to meet a child's physical and psychological needs, protect them from danger or obtain medical, birth registration or other services. This includes intentional physical neglect, psychological or emotional neglect, neglect of a child's health or education needs or abandonment.

Intimate partner violence (IPV):

"Any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship".[4]

Gender-based violence (GBV):

"Any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. Including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; honour killings; and widow inheritance".[5]

Child:

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Article 1 states that a 'child' is a person below the age of 18. There are four crucial stages of development that are pertinent when designing interventions to support children: early childhood (aged 0-4), primary (aged 5-9), lower secondary (aged 10-14), and upper secondary (aged 15-19).

Wantok (Pijin for "one-talk"):

Represents dynamic relationships grounded in historical commitments within groups having geographical, familial and traditional bonds.[6]

Kastom:

Traditional cultural matters concerning social behaviours, respected values, important artistic artefacts, religious beliefs, normal economic processes and magic.[7]

Overseas Development Assistance (ODA):

"Government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries… Aid may be provided bilaterally, from donor to recipient, or channelled through a multilateral development agency such as the United Nations or the World Bank".[8]

EVAC-specific category (projects exclusively targeting EVAC):

These are projects that are entirely focused on ending violence against children or on some specific aspect of violence against children such as child trafficking, hazardous child labour, children associated with armed forces and groups, or early and forced marriage. This would include, for example, a project funded by the European Union (EU) in the Solomon Islands aimed at protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

EVAC-related category:

a.   *Projects targeting violence against both children and adults:*

These are predominantly projects that address violence against women and girls; for example, the "Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development" project that Australia funded, which addressed equality issues and violence against women and girls in Tonga.

b.   *Child-related projects with elements of EVAC:*

Projects that are solely focused on children's issues, which target violence against children alongside non-violence-related aims. This would include the Australian-funded project in Fiji aimed at advancing the rights of children with disabilities which includes child protection activities.

c.   *Other projects targeting children and adults with an element of EVAC:*

Projects where violence against children is only one of a number of aims and beneficiaries are both children and adults, for example the Australian-funded health project in Kiribati which includes initiatives to strengthen the health system and address domestic violence against women and children.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence against children is at endemic levels across Pacific island nations and Timor-Leste. Millions of children experience exceptionally high levels of physical, emotional and sexual violence, as well as neglect.

MORE THAN
4 MILLION CHILDREN
ACROSS THE REGION
EXPERIENCE VIOLENT DISCIPLINE[9]

1 in 4
ADOLESCENT GIRLS
EXPERIENCE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

1 in 10
ADOLESCENT GIRLS
EXPERIENCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE

For the vast majority of children, this violence is occurring in a place where they should feel safest: their homes.

Through five country-level case studies, this report reveals the stark reality of the magnitude of this violence.

In Papua New Guinea alone, an estimated 2.8 million children — equivalent to over 75% of the child population — experience violent discipline in the home. In two provinces surveyed by Save the Children, 70% of children aged 6 to 8 years reported feeling 'scared and in pain' in their community. Sexual violence is also exceptionally high, with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reporting that children were the victims in over 50% of the sexual violence cases referred to their clinics.

These statistics starkly demonstrate the extent of the problem across the region. This ongoing violence robs children of their sense of self-worth, hinders their development and limits their ability to prosper and reach their full potential. Many children exposed to violence live in isolation, loneliness and fear, with nowhere to feel safe and no one to turn to for help.

Despite the clear evidence of the scale and gravity of violence perpetrated against children in the region, funders and policymakers have thus far failed to enact the measures needed to end this scourge. These children remain 'unseen and unsafe' within a system that has failed to invest in their safety.

For the first time, this report reveals the critical lack of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) invested by the Australian Government and other key donors in programs aimed at ending violence against children (EVAC).

Our analysis estimates that, in the Pacific and Timor-Leste, expenditure on programs specifically designed to end violence against children (EVAC specific) was only **AUS$1.1 million or 0.1% of Australian ODA in 2017.** Across all major ODA donors, just AUS$3.4 million was spent. Even if we take a generous view and broaden the funding lens to programs that include some activities related to ending violence against children, the proportion spent by Australia rises to a paltry AUS$55 million or 4.8% of development assistance to the region.

The key financial findings are deeply concerning. They demonstrate a lack of focus and failure to prioritise EVAC expenditure on the part of the Australian government and other donors in the region.

To put this level of investment in perspective, the Australian Government spent **more than $35 billion on defence** in 2017. Within the aid program itself, expenditure on infrastructure in the region was $200 million, more than 180 times the spend on EVAC-specific programs, while expenditure on governance-related programs was $377 million or 340 times greater than EVAC-specific expenditure.

The Australian government has announced plans for increased engagement with Pacific countries including an AUS$2 billion Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) focused on infrastructure growth in the region, and an additional AUS$250 million for infrastructure needs in the Solomon Islands. While investment in infrastructure is critical, it must be driven by a clear focus on achieving development outcomes, rather than profit or perceived geopolitical benefits. Evidence shows that sustainable economic development is not possible without investing in the basics of human development – which includes the right of every child to be protected against all forms of violence.

In making such an investment, the Australian Government and other donors should work collaboratively with national governments, NGOs, churches and community organisations across the region, who collectively have the wealth of skills, expertise and motivation to effect positive change for children in their communities, and in the wider society.

The drivers of violence in the region are complex, entrenched and inter-generational. It is certain that money alone will not end violence against children in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. But it's equally certain that, in the absence of adequate funding, progress cannot be made. To assist this process, civil society must undertake a constructive dialogue with donors on how best to prioritise and integrate interventions across the region.

Childhood violence is preventable. Indeed, emerging research indicates that not only do proven interventions to prevent violence against children exist, but there is a growing global consensus that violence against children must no longer be tolerated. This report outlines effective and evidence-based solutions and interventions that have positively influenced outcomes in the home, family, community, and broader society.

As the dominant funder in the region, and as a wealthy nation with values that support the right of every child to grow up free from violence, Australia has a unique and critical leadership role to play in this area. It is a question of priorities.

We urge the Australian government and other donors to urgently support the key recommendations below:

- The Australian government significantly increases its EVAC-specific ODA allocation to **$55 million over three years in the Pacific and Timor-Leste** (which is 1.5% of regional ODA).

- Other major donors commit to increasing their investment in EVAC-specific initiatives in the Pacific and Timor-Leste to **1.5% of their ODA**.

- All donors establish a policy platform that puts children at the centre of development. Through the development of child-centred policies and establishing dedicated resources to oversee the mainstreaming of child protection and child rights across all thematic areas.

- All donors develop an 'ending violence against children' policy marker (similar to the gender equality marker) to enable the tracking and reporting of expenditure on EVAC initiatives.

- All donors strengthen the intersectionality between violence against women and children programming in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

The findings of this report are unequivocal. The levels of violence against children across the region are shocking, having a deeply detrimental impact on society. Successive donors and governments have so far failed to address it.

This leaves us with a simple choice – if we want future generations of children to grow and prosper, then a determined and meaningful investment in their wellbeing and safety is critical. Otherwise, yet another generation in the Pacific and Timor-Leste will face the ongoing human and economic costs wrought by violence perpetrated against children.

2 INTRODUCTION

Globally, the prevalence of violence against children is staggering, with 1.3 billion girls and boys experiencing physical and humiliating punishment in the home.[10] The levels of sexual violence and sexual abuse committed against young children have also reached unacceptable levels. A global report revealed 18 million girls aged 15 to 19 have experienced forced sex in their lifetime.[11]

These statistics don't improve at the regional level. The perpetration of violence against children is an endemic problem across the Pacific region and Timor-Leste, with abuse occurring at the home and community levels, in schools, in religious institutions and in or near industrial areas and large resource and infrastructure projects (such as logging or mining sites).[12] This report outlines the range of factors that contribute to high levels of abuse, including patriarchal societies with high levels of gender inequality; social acceptance of physical punishment against children; low status in general of children; weak institutional and governance systems; and growing poverty and inequality. All of these lead to an escalation in child protection needs.

Violence perpetrated against children is a fundamental human rights violation and often has a lifelong impact on their physical, cognitive and social development. In many instances, children who suffer from violence experience poor health outcomes, impaired cognitive development and increased financial vulnerability, and also display anti-social and aggressive behaviour, continuing the cycle of violence into the next generation.[13]

Adopting a preventative approach while also developing services that respond to violence against children is important, not only for reducing the human consequences of such violence but also to tackle the related economic costs. A study that investigated the global costs of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children

estimated the economic costs ranging between 3% and 8% of global GDP.[14] A further study, which focused on child maltreatment in East Asia and the Pacific region, estimated the economic value of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) lost to child abuse in the region of some US$194 billion – an astronomical amount.[15]

While media coverage has been drawn to the more public face of violence such as children fleeing from conflict, child trafficking and exploitation or abuse in refugee camps, less attention has been paid to the 'everyday' violence experienced by children in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. This violence is present in all aspects of children's lives, with no place being safe.[16] Such violence tends to spread through communities and from generation to generation, creating wide-ranging and long-term social consequences.

In order to end violence against children, as per Target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), it is imperative for governments to allocate additional resources for prevention and response protection measures and service provision. While there is growing awareness of the magnitude of the problem, to date an international methodology to track and record financing of EVAC programming does not exist. This was highlighted at the global level through evidence from the report 'Counting Pennies',[17] produced by an alliance of NGOs and UN agencies,[18] which established that US$238 million was spent globally by all donors on projects in 2015 that fully address violence against children – this amounts to just over 0.1% of total ODA.[19]

This report seeks to interrogate this financing gap in the Pacific region and Timor-Leste. It seeks to call out the lack of resourcing and commitment in this space and **ensure that children are no longer 'unseen and unsafe'.**

3

THE SCALE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN THE PACIFIC AND TIMOR-LESTE

Determining the scale of violence in the Pacific and Timor-Leste is a complicated task for a number of reasons. There is limited nationally representative data on violence against children. Furthermore, violence against both women and children is a stigmatised and therefore under-reported issue. Finally, variances in definitions and methodologies used across national and sub-national studies make direct comparison difficult.

This report uses prevalence data from the 'Ending Violence in Childhood Global Report' (2017), which calculated the levels of physical and sexual violence experienced by children across a range of Pacific countries. Unfortunately, data was not available for seven of the smaller Pacific countries (the Federated States of Micronesia, Tuvalu, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands and the Cook Islands). The data below is also limited, as it does not disaggregate the violent discipline data by sex. There is also a lack of data available on violence experienced by particularly vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities and adopted children.

Estimated Number of Children Experiencing Violent Discipline in the Home by Country:

PAPUA NEW GUINEA
2,818,671 (75.7%)

TIMOR-LESTE
612,539 (87.4%)

Country	Estimated Violent Discipline at home % (1-14yrs)[a] Includes Physical and Emotional Violence for Boys & Girls[20]	Estimated Number of Children Experiencing Violent Discipline in the Home[c]	Child Population[b]
Papua New Guinea	75.7	2,818,671	3,723,475
Vanuatu	83.5	102,313	122,531
Solomon Islands	72	212,687	295,399
Fiji	72	239,732	332,961
Kiribati	81	41,429	51,147
Samoa	70.7	65,587	92,768
Tonga	69.3	35,028	50,546
Timor-Leste	87.4	612,539	700,845
TOTAL		4,127,986	5,369,672

Source: Know Violence in Childhood, 2017. Ending Violence in Childhood: Global Report 2017

[a.] % of children (boys and girls) aged 1-14 who experienced any violent discipline (psychological aggression and/or physical punishment) in the past month. Data from a number of sources: UNICEF global databases, 2016, based on DHS, MICS and other nationally representative surveys, 2005-2015.

[b.] Data is sourced from United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision.

[c.] Assumption made that children from 15-18 years experience similar levels of violence in the home as 1-14 year olds – this calculation is applied across all children boys and girls from 1-18 years of age.

KIRIBATI
41,429 (81%)

SOLOMON ISLANDS
212,687 (72%)

SAMOA
65,587 (70.7%)

VANUATU
102,313 (83.5%)

FIJI
239,732 (72%)

TONGA
35,028 (69.3%)

The data indicates exceptionally high levels of violence, particularly in relation to violent discipline in the home, which ranges from 70% to 87%. This means that nearly 2.8 million children in Papua New Guinea and over 612,000 children in Timor-Leste experience violent discipline.

The graph below illustrates significant levels of physical and sexual violence perpetrated against adolescent girls aged between 15 and 19. Here, the median levels of physical and sexual violence rates amongst adolescent girls in eight countries stands at 24.4% in the case of physical violence, and at 10.5% for sexual violence. Data was not available for seven of the smaller Pacific countries as noted above, and the rates of sexual violence experienced by boys or children under the age of 15 are not identified.

% OF VIOLENCE AGAINST ADOLESCENT GIRLS BY COUNTRY

■ PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST ADOLESCENT GIRLS   ■ SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Source: Know Violence in Childhood, 2017.

Violence against adolescent girls – physical violence % (15-19 years): % of girls aged 15-19 who experienced any physical violence since age 15. Source: UNICEF global databases (2015) based on DHS and MICS (2005-2015). Violence against adolescent girls – sexual violence % (15-19): % of girls aged 15-19 who ever experienced forced sexual intercourse or any other forced sexual acts (including in childhood). Source: UNICEF global databases (2015) based on DHS, MICS and other nationally representative surveys (2004-2015).

ACROSS 30 COMMUNITIES IN BOUGAINVILLE AND MOROBE, IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA, **70% OF CHILDREN REPORTED FEELING SCARED AND IN PAIN IN THEIR COMMUNITY, WHILE 27% OF PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS SOMETIMES USED PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT OVER AND OVER AS HARD AS THEY COULD**
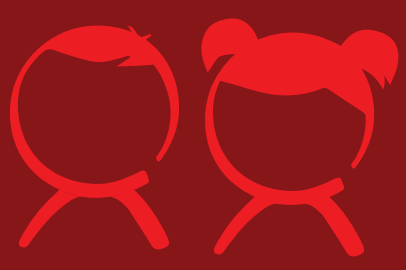
72% OF CHILDREN
IN SOLOMON ISLANDS HAD RECEIVED SOME FORM OF VIOLENT DISCIPLINE

OVER 1 IN 3 ADOLESCENT GIRLS
AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 19 EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN VANUATU

38% OF WOMEN
AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 49 IN TIMOR-LESTE HAD EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

IN FIJI, OVER
15% OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS
EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

4 THE DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE IN THE PACIFIC AND TIMOR-LESTE

Violence against children is caused by a multitude of intersecting elements, and is often driven by broader entrenched systems, practices and beliefs that provide the scaffolding for continued violence against children. By highlighting the root causes of violence, we can provide the insights that local communities need to develop the necessary prevention and response mechanisms to eliminate such violence.

4.1 Concepts of family

Child rearing in many Pacific countries and Timor-Leste sees children as an extension of the entire familial network. This has many benefits such as wider social safety nets, the familial sharing of child caring duties and protection by kin. In the Melanesian region, the 'wantok' system helps maintain community wellbeing and cohesion, and has traditionally ensured that older people, people who are sick, and orphaned children are cared for during times of hardship. This has resulted in over 22% of children living with or being informally 'adopted' by extended family.[21] As such, the many Pacific families that bring up their children well and nurture them in situations that are challenged by poverty are supported by effective socio-cultural arrangements.[22]

However, rapid urbanisation and growing poverty has seen the reshaping of the family unit and the 'wantok' network is often condensed to the nuclear family, removing many of the previous societal protective mechanisms. The practice of informal adoption has, at times, led to exploitative practices, with many children finding themselves in domestic labour, neglected or exposed to sexual abuse.[23]

> **Adopted children are abused by their parents. Parents give them a heavy workload and dirty work more than their biological children.**
>
> PNG Male

> **The word right does not exist in our culture, we only have the right of the chiefs, or men, but others don't have rights.**
>
> Key informant, Vanuatu Government

Further, in Pacific societies, social status is attained with age, resulting in children having low status and power.[24] Children are largely voiceless with minimal rights, with parents seen as the key rights holders and decision-makers. Children are expected to contribute to the family economy, complete household tasks and abide by the established cultural norms concerning obedience and family unity.[25]

This report notes that, although there are some distinct challenges that are presented by cultural factors, there is a need to respect traditions that protect. Any external assessment of problems, along with the development of intervention strategies, must be culturally appropriate.

4.2 Harmful norms and attitudes

Violence is a normalised and widely condoned part of everyday life in many societies in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. The use of violence as a form of punishment and discipline is socially accepted and considered as a 'normal' part of behaviour within many families and communities. This normalisation of violence acts as a disincentive to women and children seeking help.[26] The notion that violence is culturally accepted also reduces the likelihood of neighbours and the community getting involved in what is considered a private family affair.

> **We sometimes find it very hard to take matters of child abuse to the police or the welfare offices because most of these perpetrators turn out to be our brothers, sisters or other family relatives. Because we are families (wantok) living together such issues are resolved in the village during mediation.**
>
> Morobe, PNG Female

Gender inequality is a common problem across many countries in the Pacific and Timor-Leste, with unequal gender power relations and discrimination driving high levels of violence against women and children within these societies. Communities are deeply patriarchal with entrenched notions of gender roles developed through traditional ideologies, customary practices and powerful religious influences.

Customary practices play a central role in embedding social and gender roles, as well as expectations regarding behaviour. For example, Kastom in the Ni-Vanuatu community has strict divisions of labour which places men in an inherently superior position. According to the National Child Protection Policy, this "culturally embedded and pervasive gender inequality can be harmful to children and contributes to domestic violence".[27]

> **Some of the challenges I see is that women are seen as the weaker sex and even tradition devalues women. Therefore, in the house many roles are based on this mentality, putting girls only in the house. That is what I see and this results in a lot of abuse.**
>
> Bougainville, PNG Male

Save the Children's baseline data from its 'Safe Communities, Safe Children' program in Papua New Guinea indicated that, generally, boys were more likely to experience physical punishment than girls. This may be due to local beliefs that boys must be raised to be 'tough'.[28] While there are differences in the type of violence experienced by boys and girls, data on boys is difficult to obtain.

Gender-based violence and violence against children (VAC)

Increased research on the intersection between gender-based violence and VAC is revealing that many different forms of violence can occur within the household, and that the existence of one form of violence is often a strong predictor of other forms of violence. It is not unusual to find that a perpetrator of domestic violence is also a perpetrator of child abuse in the same family (physical and/or sexual).[29] Female victims of intimate partner violence in the Solomon Islands are over four times more likely to report that a partner had abused their children emotionally, physically and/or sexually.[30]

Child abuse and violence has intergenerational effects, with abusive behaviour likely to be passed down through families. Children who have experienced abuse or witnessed abuse between their parents are more likely to experience or perpetrate violence as adults.

♀ WOMEN IN KIRIBATI WHO HAD EXPERIENCED IPV WERE

7 TIMES
MORE LIKELY
TO REPORT THAT
THEIR CHILDREN
HAD BEEN ABUSED BY
THEIR PARTNER ♂

♀ ...AND WERE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO REPORT THAT

THEY
OR THEIR
PARTNER
HAD BEEN ABUSED
DURING CHILDHOOD

♀ ...AND WERE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO REPORT THAT

THEY
OR THEIR
PARTNER'S
MOTHER
HAD EXPERIENCED IPV

Source: DFAT, October 2018. Literature Review: Ending violence against women and girls

Women who have experienced any type of childhood trauma have a higher risk of experiencing violence by men in adulthood. In the report by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, it was noted that 64% of women in the Solomon Islands between 15 and 49 years reported they had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner.[31] Of these women, 37% reported that they had been sexually abused when they were under the age of 15. The exposure to sexual abuse at such a young age can result in young girls "seeing it as a normal part of their lives, and therefore expect it to take place when they are adults and married".[32]

> **Witnessing violence in the home or in the community will have some effect on the child. When these young boys witness it every time they will grow up to be violent — because they will think it is normal.**
>
> Morobe, PNG Girl

> **This picture is about my parents. My father gets angry with my mum. He beats her and I feel sorry for my mum and I go to her so my dad does not beat her.**
>
> **Where can you go when you see this happening? There is no other place to go.**
>
> **We feel bad for my mum.**
>
> Vanuatu, Boy 12

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4.3 Economic environment and poverty

Poverty and inequality are key drivers of instability within families. The inability to meet the basic needs of nutritious food, medical care, secure relationships, quality learning environments and responsive parenting can lead to increased vulnerabilities for children and can be linked to an increased risk of violence.[33]

Across the Pacific and Timor-Leste, the combination of economic insecurity coupled with increased urbanisation, unemployment, and a lack of cash income to meet family needs often makes it hard for families to cope. Parents are facing greater pressure to participate in the cash economy, often resulting in the neglect of children and absence of strong family structures. In many contexts, this is affecting the broader social safety nets normally provided by families, with limited economic resources to support extended family members, children and other kin who may arrive and become part of the household at any time.[34] A report by UNICEF points to other issues interlinked with economic inequality, poverty and violence. These include children facing greater pressure to work in a cash economy and being lured into exploitative work; problems with alcohol and drug abuse pervading many households and dissolving traditional family structures and protection mechanisms; and the growing youth bulge in combination with rapid urbanisation leaving many children and young adults with limited opportunities.[35]

4.4 Weak institutional systems and governance structures

At the institutional level, the establishment of a strong rule of law with effective implementation capacity, equitable and responsive service delivery coupled with clear accountability measures are essential for the protection of children.[36] A systematic review across the Pacific and East Asia found that significant progress has been made regarding the ratification of international instruments related to child rights and protection and efforts have been made to develop domestic legislation that meets these international obligations.[37]

As with many legal frameworks, gaps remain in the scope and content of the child protection laws. In Fiji, the laws focus on response structures over preventative mechanisms, while in PNG, the informal and hybrid justice structures (for example, village courts) have not been adequately incorporated into legislation.[38]

Where laws have been enacted, they often remain little more than words on paper. Across the Pacific and in Timor-Leste, there is a lack of government prioritisation of child protection issues, with insufficient human capacity and a lack of financial resources often preventing the effective implementation of laws and policies to protect children from harm. This includes a lack of awareness and training among law enforcement actors, the restricted capacity of the police and the courts to enforce legislation, minimal charges and convictions and response services which are inadequate and of poor quality.

Many countries have also adopted a resource-intensive welfare model which requires highly trained professional staff to deliver a multitude of services. Such a model would be difficult to achieve even within a more enabling institutional environment. This is illustrated in Vanuatu, where the Child Desk (responsible for child rights monitoring and coordination) has a budget of VUT 2 million (USD $18,500) allocated every year to the operation and implementation of activities. There is currently no budget for the implementation of Vanuatu's National Child Protection Policy.[39]

Where government institutional structures have struggled to provide adequate protective care and access to formal justice mechanisms, informal community-based child protection systems (at the rural and urban level) have emerged as an alternative system. Research by Save the Children in Papua New Guinea highlights the role of relatives, family elders, chiefs, church pastors, and the Peace and Good Order Committee as the first point of contact for both children and families requiring support and dispute resolution.[40] These community-based support structures are closest to the family, understand the family and social context, can provide daily care, and carry authority within the community.

5 THE HUMAN COST OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

The human costs of violence against children are immense. Abuse, neglect, and other forms of household dysfunction "are a common pathway to social, emotional, and cognitive impairments that lead to increased risk of unhealthy behaviours, violence or revictimization, disease, disability, and premature mortality".[41]

5.1 Physical and psychological health problems

Understanding the links between child maltreatment and the consequent impact on a child's individual health is complicated. Any assessment needs to incorporate the short-term consequences – such as serious injuries, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, chronic pelvic pain, mental trauma, and even death – as well as the lifelong consequences which may emerge many years after exposure, including increased vulnerability to disease, behavioural/social problems, substance addiction and intergenerational trauma.[42]

Children are more physically susceptible to injury (fatal and non-fatal) than adults as their bodies are still in development. They are also naturally smaller than those perpetrating the violence and have less capacity to seek treatment. Young girls who are faced with unwanted pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases must deal with the strain on their developing bodies as well as future reproductive ability.[43] Scientific research shows that children who are exposed to violence may develop physiological responses during critical periods of development, which can alter an individual's biology. This leaves them vulnerable to health risks later in life and with a reduced ability to mitigate such risks.

A 2013 study indicated that amongst women who had experienced one form of childhood abuse there was a 66% increased risk of premature death versus women with no childhood adversities. This increased to 80% amongst women who had experienced multiple abuse.[44] Data also reveals that non-physical and sexual violence including verbal abuse and neglect are just as destructive, having an enduring effect on a child's physical and mental health.[45]
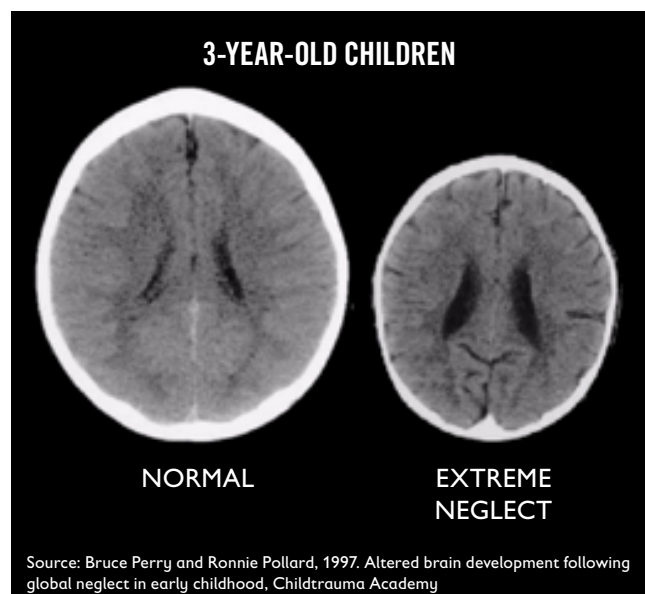
A study undertaken in the Solomon Islands with 400 men aged between 18 and 70 years revealed insights into the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on adult health. There were strong associations between tobacco smoking and illicit drug use amongst men who had experienced some form of violence. Interestingly, the findings indicated a significant link between chewing betel quid and childhood violence – showing that even highly normative social practices like betel chewing can be influenced by early-life adversity.[46] Men exposed to violence also had lower mental health scores, and reported more stressful life events and lower general wellbeing.[47]

5.2 Cognitive impairment and development

Childhood abuse has enduring effects, with evidence pointing to impaired intellectual abilities, a reduction in the child's ability to concentrate, delayed language development and an impact on other critical cognitive processes, like memory and visual development.[48] A study conducted in the USA of individuals that had experienced abuse of some form during their childhood showed reduced capacity as adults in areas of visual memory, executive functioning and spatial working memory (which helps children with letter/number recognition, reading, writing, and maths).[49]

This is particularly important during the early years,[50] when crucial phases of brain development are occurring. At this early stage, the neurons within the brain are forming new connections at the rate of 700 to 1,000 per second. This significant pace of neural development, if nurtured in a caring environment, enables positive mental and physical outcomes for children. However, for children facing adversity, these development pathways become stunted and this early deprivation is difficult to reverse later in life.

The impact on brain development is clearly shown to the right in the CT scan of a normal healthy three-year-old with an average head size (left) and that of a three-year-old who has suffered severe neglect (right). The brain of the child who suffered extreme neglect is significantly smaller with abnormal development in the cortex (which influences memory, attention and language).

3-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

NORMAL   EXTREME NEGLECT

Source: Bruce Perry and Ronnie Pollard, 1997. Altered brain development following global neglect in early childhood, Childtrauma Academy

Brain function is also highly interrelated with the need for good nutrition, health, early stimulation and protection from violence. Children who experience combined levels of abuse with other adversities such as malnutrition are often in conditions of toxic stress. This produces high levels of cortisol (the stress hormone) which impairs brain development and future learning capacity.[51] In many Pacific countries and Timor-Leste, stunting rates (when children are significantly shorter than average for their age) are extremely high. In Papua New Guinea, 50% of children under five suffer from stunting,[52] while the rates in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are also worrying, at 31.6% and 28.5% respectively.[53] The combination of poor nutrition with some of the highest rates of child abuse has lifelong effects on educational attainment, employment prospects, income levels and overall wellbeing.

> **When it comes to school, we the teachers observed that when a child is being treated well by their parents at home and when they come to school, their learning will be fast. When the child is not being treated well by their parents at home and when they go to school, their learning will be slow.**
>
> Morobe, PNG Teacher

5.3 Risky behaviour

Children who have experienced or witnessed abuse have an increased likelihood to overconsume alcohol and a variety of other mood-altering substances. International studies indicate that persistent maltreatment throughout childhood and adolescence can lead to early initiation of illicit drugs.[54] Smoking, alcohol, marijuana and other substances often become the mechanism through which survivors of abuse cope with psychological problems like trauma and stress. These coping strategies may provide temporary relief from the shame and pain associated with the childhood abuse but usually lead to longer-term health consequences.[55]

Research undertaken on the impact of family and sexual violence on children in Lae (PNG) indicated behavioural issues, particularly amongst boys. Women who were interviewed described how their sons turned to drugs, homebrew and alcohol, and committed unlawful activities such as pickpocketing. Women also reported physical and verbal abuse from their sons who model the behaviour of their abusive fathers, creating the 'double effect' of violence for many women.[56]

5.4 Emotional and behavioural consequences

Abuse has considerable effects not just on a child's cognitive capacity but also in the development of stress response systems that impact on emotional regulation, aggression, moodiness, anxiety and other stress related symptoms. Many of these children have risk of insufficient maturation and sensory capacity to regulate their emotions in personal relationships and in other contexts with peers.[57] This is seen to be higher in children exposed to multiple maltreatment. Through the experience of 'cumulative harm', these children develop behavioural outcomes such as self-hatred, disturbed attachment behaviours, lack of awareness of danger, and distorted aggression.[58]

Emotional and behavioural consequences can be seen quite early in the child's life, with mothers in the Solomon Islands reporting that children who had been exposed to violence were more likely to have nightmares, were timid and withdrawn, and, in some cases, children had run away from home.[59]

When the child is not being treated well by their parents at home and when they go to school, their learning will be slow.

6 FINANCING EVAC IN THE PACIFIC AND TIMOR-LESTE

Violence not only harms the lives of children in the immediate sense; it also undermines their ability to achieve longer-term human development outcomes, impacting their health, education and future capacity. Yet, governments have exhibited a lack of willingness to invest in this critical area of development in any meaningful way.

This was brought to the attention of policymakers with the 'Counting Pennies' report in 2017. The report estimated that of the amount spent globally by all donors in 2015, only US$238 million (amounting to a little over 0.1% of total ODA) went to projects that were directly addressed to ending violence against children.[60]

Although the level of violence perpetrated in the Pacific and Timor-Leste is extremely high, until now no studies have been undertaken to investigate how much donors like Australia, New Zealand, the European Union and others spend on EVAC programs across the region. To pursue this, agencies focused on child rights (Save the Children, Plan International Australia, ChildFund and World Vision) commissioned research firm Development Initiatives to undertake this expenditure analysis.

The key findings below are dire. They show that donors consider protecting children across the region a disturbingly low priority.

Australian government and other major donor ODA expenditure on EVAC in the Pacific and Timor-Leste (2017)

- Australian expenditure on EVAC-specific programs (solely focused on children) was AUS$1.1 million:
  0.1% of ODA to this region

- Australian expenditure on all EVAC programs (specific and related) was AUS$55 million:
  4.8% of ODA to this region

- All major donor expenditure on EVAC-specific programs was AUS$3.4 million:
  0.1% of ODA to this region

- All major donor expenditure on all EVAC programs (specific and related) was AUS$61.7 million:
  2.0% of ODA to this region

Australian government overseas development expenditure on EVAC globally (2017)

- Australian expenditure on EVAC-specific programs (solely focused on children) was only AUS$2.4 million:
  0.05% of total ODA

- Australian expenditure on all EVAC programs (specific and related) was AUS$122 million: just over 3% of total ODA

6.1 Data and method

The methodological approach used by Development Initiatives involved using keyword searches in project titles and descriptions in conjunction with purpose and channel code data to identify projects wholly or partially targeting children's issues in the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) – a database of aid activities maintained by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Keyword searches were then carried out to identify projects that potentially targeted some aspect of EVAC. The selected project records were then manually analysed to eliminate 'false positives' (such as records whose descriptions matched one or more key words but which, on further examination, were not linked to action on EVAC). The remaining records were categorised into projects that were entirely aimed at the prevention of, or response to, EVAC and projects for which EVAC was just one among a number of aims. This methodology was then applied to the latest detailed data on ODA allocations published by the OECD DAC, covering calendar years 2014 to 2017 for global Australian ODA, and 2015-2017 for ODA to Pacific Island Nations and Timor-Leste (more details on the methodology can be found in Appendix 1).

6.2 Total EVAC expenditure in the Pacific and Timor-Leste by Australia and major donors: 2015-2017

Spending by all major donors on projects with at least some aims relating to EVAC stood at almost **AUS$62 million in 2017**. This is an 11% decline from the total spend of AUS$69 million for 2016.

The largest single factor in the fall in ODA to EVAC between 2016 and 2017 was an AUS$8.2 million reduction to EVAC projects in Fiji. One project in particular aimed at combatting violence against women and girls in Fiji, funded by Australia and implemented by UN Women. It received AUS$6.6 million in 2016 which fell to AUS$1.1 million in 2017.

Only a very small proportion of ODA was spent on EVAC-specific programs – AUS$1.4 million in 2015, AUS$3.2 million in 2016, followed by **AUS$3.4 million in 2017**. Most of this combined AUS$8 million spent between 2015 and 2017 was due to AUS$5 million in Australian support for the UNICEF Pacific Child Protection Program. Additionally, most of the aid spent on such projects in 2017 was due to a single project in Timor-Leste funded by Germany.

This means that between 2015 and 2017, the average amount spent on projects solely focusing on EVAC was only **0.09% of ODA** to Pacific Island nations and Timor-Leste.

Extracting Australia's ODA expenditure reveals that only AUS$1.1 million was spent on EVAC-specific programs and AUS$55 million was spent on all EVAC programs (specific and related) in 2017.

The great majority of EVAC-related spending in Pacific Island nations and Timor-Leste was on projects that had aims other than ending violence or were focused on ending violence but with both adults and children as beneficiaries. Projects targeting violence against both children and adults rose sharply between 2015 and 2016 – though this is at least partly driven by the fact that, from 2016, donors could specifically categorise projects as addressing violence against women and girls. In these cases, it is unfortunately not possible to identify what proportion of the beneficiaries of these activities are children and what proportion are adults. While such programs are critical towards addressing gender equality, improving gender norms and reducing family violence, there is a lack of focused efforts in relation to violence against children programming.

Table 1. ODA to EVAC in the Pacific and Timor-Leste by Australia and major donors (AUS$ million)

	2015	2016	2017
Projects exclusively targeting EVAC	1.4	3.2	3.4
Projects targeting violence against both children and adults	3.8	47.7	36.6
Child-related projects with an element of EVAC	-	2.1	0.8
Other projects targeting children and adults with an element of EVAC	43.7	16.0	20.9
TOTAL	**48.9**	**69.0**	**61.7**

Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD-DAC data

Table 2. Spending on EVAC in the Pacific and Timor-Leste by Australia and major donors as a proportion of total ODA in the region

	2015	2016	2017	2015-17
All spending on projects with an element of EVAC as a % of total regional ODA	1.61%	2.52%	2.03%	2.03%
All spending on projects with a sole focus on EVAC as a % of total regional ODA	0.05%	0.12%	0.11%	0.09%

Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD-DAC data

In addition to the funds allocated to specific nations, a further AUS$17.6 million was spent on projects that were allocated by donors to the Oceania region (with no specific recipient country named). The great majority of this, AUS$15.5 million, came from Australia, including all the AUS$5 million spent on regional projects with a sole focus on EVAC.

**ODA TO EVAC PROJECTS ALLOCATED TO OCEANIA REGION
WITH NO RECIPIENT COUNTRY SPECIFIED (AUS$ MILLION)**

■ PROJECTS EXCLUSIVELY TARGETING EVAC   ■ PROJECTS TARGETING EVAC AND OTHER AIMS

	2015	2016	2017
Projects targeting EVAC and other aims	0.4	6.5	5.7
Projects exclusively targeting EVAC	1.0	3.0	1.0
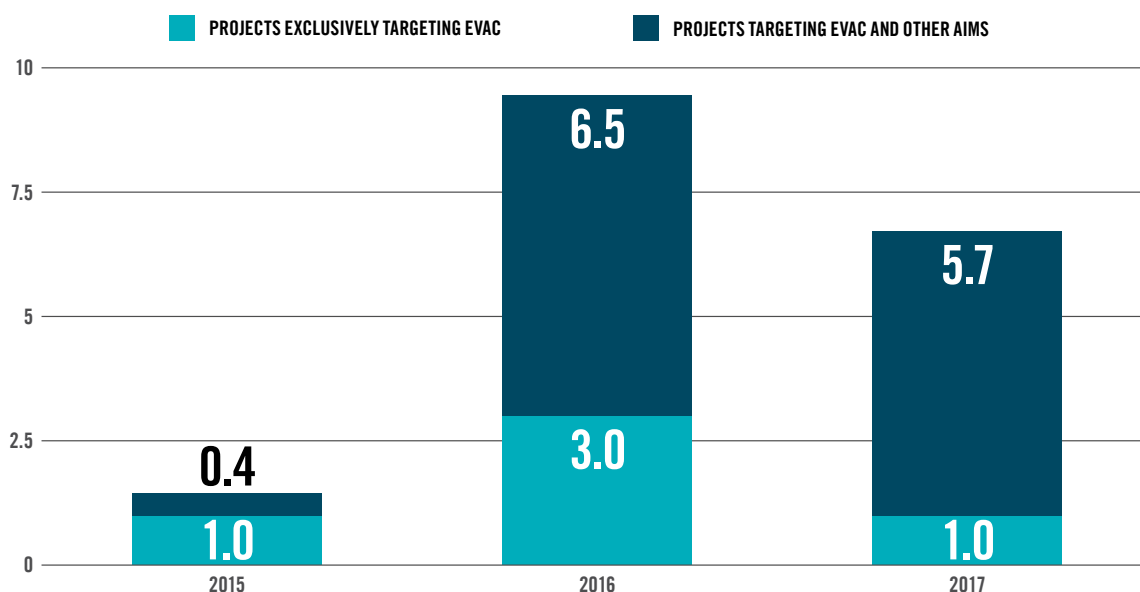
Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD-DAC data

6.3 Which donors give the most ODA to EVAC in the Pacific and Timor-Leste?

This study considered ODA from the 12 largest donors to Pacific Island nations and Timor-Leste – these donors collectively gave more than 95% of ODA to this group of countries over the years 2015–2017.

Two of these donors (the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank) did not report any spending on projects with EVAC-related aims. Of the 10 donors that did report some spending on such projects, over 90% of the funding came from Australia, the largest ODA donor to the region. Ten of the 15 countries included in this study received all of their EVAC-related aid from Australia.

Table 3. Largest donors of EVAC specific and related spending in 2015-17 (AUS$ million)

	2015	2016	2017	TOTAL
Australia	48.20	62.03	55.01	**165.24**
Germany	-	2.32	2.40	**4.72**
New Zealand	-	1.85	1.35	**3.20**
EU Institutions	0.70	1.92	0.58	**3.20**
Canada	-	-	1.13	**1.13**
Sweden	-	-	0.99	**0.99**
Portugal	-	0.33	0.25	**0.58**
United States	-	0.36	-	**0.36**
Japan	-	0.22	-	**0.22**
Korea	-	0.01	-	**0.01**

Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD-DAC data

Of the 15 countries included in this study, over 90% of the ODA spent on EVAC-related projects in 2015-2017 went to five countries: Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Fiji.

Table 4. Largest recipients of EVAC specific and related spending in 2015-17 (AUS$ million)

	2015	2016	2017	TOTAL
Papua New Guinea	36.81	11.13	17.52	**65.46**
Vanuatu	8.21	9.57	11.03	**28.81**
Solomon Islands	1.65	10.08	9.34	**21.07**
Timor-Leste	0.78	11.71	7.37	**19.86**
Fiji	-	11.63	3.39	**15.02**
Tonga	-	0.67	1.91	**2.58**
Kiribati	-	1.21	0.91	**2.12**
Samoa	-	1.55	0.53	**2.08**
Nauru	-	0.85	0.29	**1.14**
Palau	-	0.10	0.97	**1.07**
Marshall Islands	-	0.56	0.47	**1.03**
Micronesia	-	0.14	0.71	**0.85**
Tuvalu	-	0.25	0.20	**0.45**
Cook Islands	-	0.13	0.30	**0.43**
Niue	-	0.018	0.015	**0.033**

Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD-DAC data

6.4 Total Australian spending on EVAC globally: 2014-2017

This report also investigated total global spend on EVAC by the Australian government to determine if underinvestment in addressing violence against children was a systemic issue across the aid budget. The simple answer is: Yes.

In 2017, Australian government Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to all EVAC projects at the global level **totalled AUS$122 million.** This was a slight decline from nearly AUS$128 million in 2016. However, only a very small proportion of this expenditure went towards activities that exclusively target EVAC. In 2017, **only AUS$2.4 million** was spent on EVAC-specific programs globally.

Table 5. Australian ODA to EVAC by type (AUS$ million)

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Projects exclusively targeting EVAC	2.1	3.5	5.1	2.4
Projects targeting violence against both children and adults	14.9	7.5	70.3	42.4
Child-related projects with an element of EVAC	21.8	2.5	0.1	0.8
Other projects targeting children and adults with an element of EVAC	48.8	78.2	52.3	76.6
TOTAL	**87.6**	**91.7**	**127.8**	**122.2**

Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD-DAC data

Total EVAC-specific expenditure across four years of data (2014–2017) was a paltry AUS$13.1 million. The analysis reveals that Australia's global EVAC-specific expenditure focused on the following:

- 2017: AUS$1 million of the AUS$2.4 million EVAC-specific spending was for a UNICEF child protection programme in Myanmar; the rest was spent in a number of countries on a programme to protect children affected by armed conflict.

- 2014–2017: AUS$11.5 million was disbursed via the UNICEF Child Protection Program of which AUS$4.5 million was spent in Myanmar and a further AUS$7 million spread across 14 Pacific Island countries.

The data does indicate a significant increase of global EVAC-related expenditure from AUS$91.7 million in 2015 to almost AUS$128 million in 2016 – a rise of 39%. As noted previously, one factor that may explain this apparent rise is the introduction, in 2016, of a specific category within the CRS data for the tracking of actions targeting violence against women and girls. However, not all the money spent on EVAC-related projects is spent on children. In many projects targeting violence against women and girls – some, but not all, of the intended beneficiaries are children.

As a portion of total ODA expenditure, in 2017 the Australian government (at a global level) spent just over **3% of its ODA** on projects with an element of EVAC. Australian ODA has been falling in real terms in recent years and this, coupled with the rise in EVAC-related ODA, has meant that the proportion of Australian ODA spent on projects with at least some element of EVAC rose from 1.8% in 2014 to 3.08% in 2017.

However, only a tiny fraction of Australian ODA is spent on activities that are wholly targeted at EVAC – only 0.05% in 2017, declining from 0.12% in 2016.

Table 6. Australian spending on EVAC globally as a proportion of total ODA

	2014	2015	2016	2017
All spending on projects with an element of EVAC as a % of total Australian ODA	1.80%	1.97%	2.90%	3.08%
All spending on projects with a sole focus on EVAC as a % of total Australian ODA	0.04%	0.07%	0.12%	0.05%

Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD-DAC data

6.5 Additional funding sources

This expenditure analysis does not include unearmarked funding for multilateral agencies such as UNICEF and the Australia-NGO Cooperation Programme (ANCP) funded by DFAT.

For example, in 2017, Australia provided AUS$128.8 million in core funding to a variety of NGOs, via the ANCP – AUS$37.8 million of which went to Save the Children, World Vision or UNICEF Australia. A further AUS$21 million was disbursed in core funding to UNICEF headquarters. In such funding arrangements, it is up to the relevant NGO or multilateral body to determine how much (if any) of the funding should be directed to EVAC-related aims. This makes it impossible to estimate how much Australian ODA is spent on EVAC via such arrangements; therefore, this funding is excluded from the data shown in this report.

The table below provides estimate figures on ANCP expenditure by Save the Children, World Vision and ChildFund on the level of ANCP funds allocated to EVAC specific activity in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. This is a sample of ANCP expenditure to illustrate that a significant level of EVAC spend is coming from concerted action by NGOs as opposed to directional funding by donors.
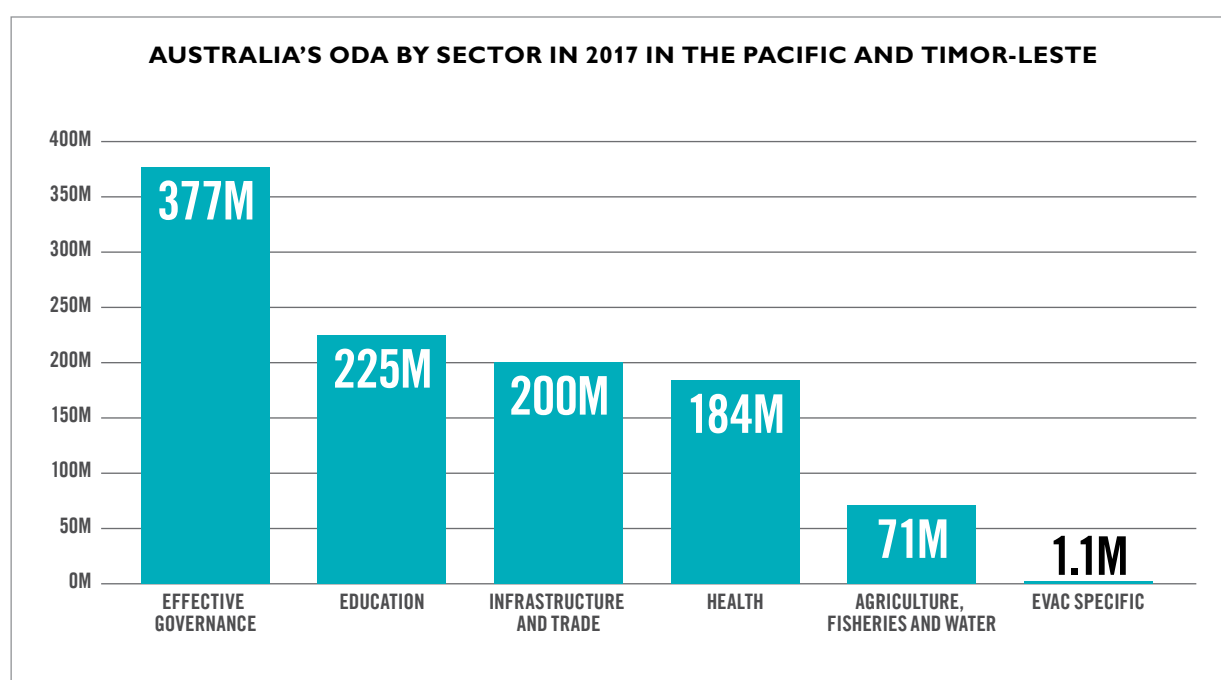
2017/18 EXPENDITURE ($AUS)	$825,168 Save the Children	$351,500 ChildFund	$1,933,000 World Vision

6.6 EVAC expenditure comparison

Spending on EVAC compared to other sectors

Australia's spending in the region on EVAC projects that solely focus on children was a mere AUS$1.1 million (0.1% of ODA in 2017) and even if the data is broadened to EVAC-related activities, this only constitutes AUS$55 million. This is in stark contrast to **Australia's spend of more than AUS$35 billion on defence**.

Infrastructure expenditure in the region was AUS$200 million – more than 180 times the spend on EVAC-specific programs, while governance expenditure was AUS$377 million or 340 times greater than EVAC-specific expenditure. While this report doesn't seek to detract from the need for effective institutions to foster stronger development outcomes, this provides a strong comparison on how little is spent on violence prevention and response programming compared to other sectors, such as infrastructure and governance.

AUSTRALIA'S ODA BY SECTOR IN 2017 IN THE PACIFIC AND TIMOR-LESTE

Bar chart showing Australia's ODA by sector: Effective Governance 377M, Education 225M, Infrastructure and Trade 200M, Health 184M, Agriculture, Fisheries and Water 71M, EVAC Specific 1.1M.

Children everywhere have the right to live free from all forms of violence.
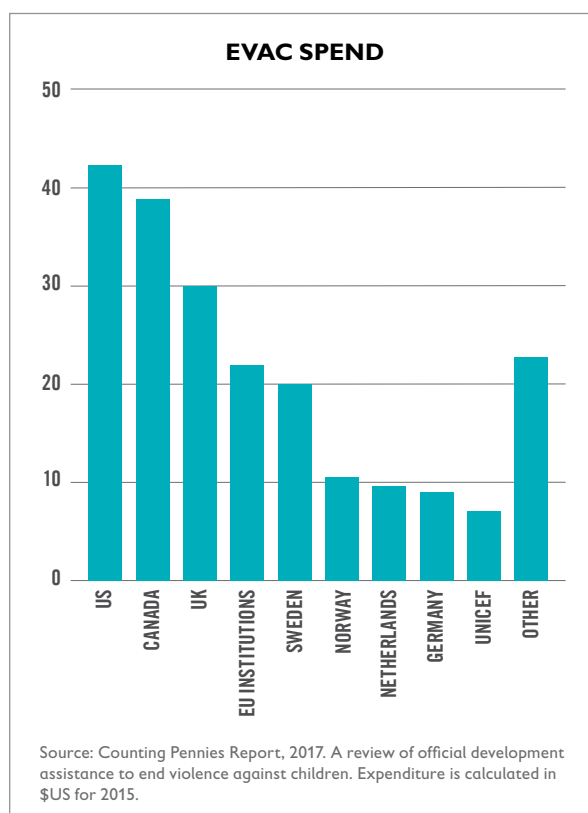
6.7 Spending on EVAC expenditure compared to global analysis

Australia does not appear in the global analysis of top 10 donors of EVAC-specific expenditure.[61] The assessment undertaken for the 'Counting Pennies' report focused on 2015 OECD DAC data in US dollars. The largest donor for programs focused solely on children is the United States (at just over US$40 million), closely followed by Canada and then the United Kingdom at US$30 million.[62] In comparison, in 2015, Australia spent only AUS$3.5 million (US$2.4 million) globally on programming solely focused on ending violence against children.

6.8 Australian government spending on EVAC in the Pacific and Timor-Leste vs domestic child protection[63]

The Australian government has acknowledged the country's high level of violence with 1 in 35 children receiving child protection services[64], and the extent of institutional sexual abuse highlighted by the Royal Commission's 2017 report – and is actively pursuing domestic policies to address the issue.

In comparison, in 2017, the Australian government spent only AUS$1.1 million on the 4.1 million children (across eight countries in the region) suffering from violence. The contrast is extraordinary and points to a marked lack of focus on this critical issue in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. Therefore, strong commitments pursued in the domestic space must be replicated through increased financing and active engagement with national governments and communities across the region.
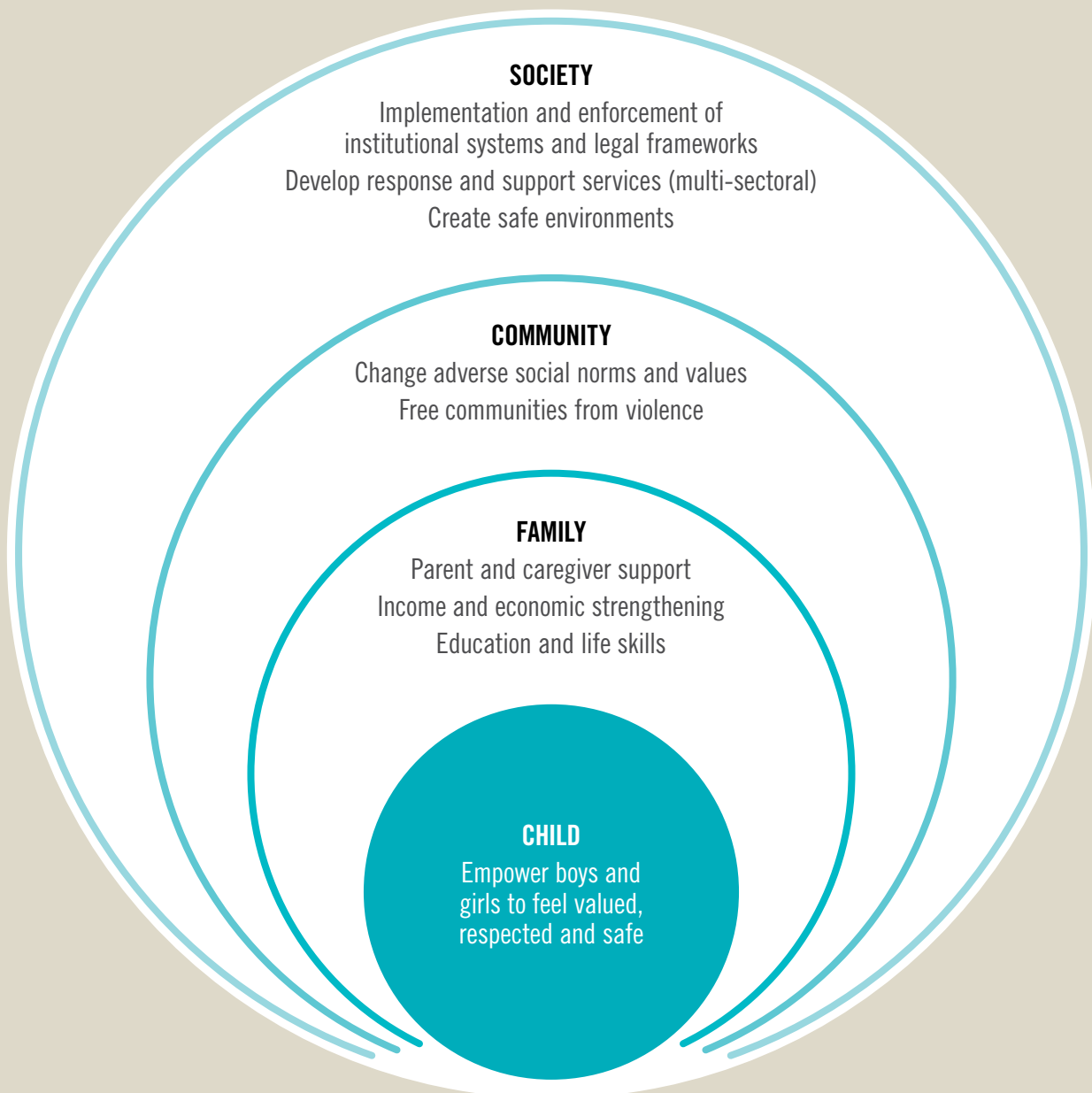
EVAC SPEND

Source: Counting Pennies Report, 2017. A review of official development assistance to end violence against children. Expenditure is calculated in $US for 2015.

7 EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Childhood violence is entirely preventable. The UNCRC's goal of "children everywhere [having] the right to live free from all forms of violence" is attainable.[65] No child should have to face the horror of ongoing violence or the cognitive, emotional and physical impact on their development, when effective solutions are known, available and implementable.

When tackling the issue of violence against children, it is important that the focus extends beyond the incidents of violence themselves. While response and protective mechanisms are critical, these must be combined with steps to address the structural drivers of violence, from investing in institutional protection systems through to transforming harmful norms and social practices. Solutions must therefore be embedded into a **'socio-ecological framework'** to positively influence risk and protection factors and drivers of violence in the home, family, community and broader society. This reflects the complex nature of interpersonal violence and the need to address the root causes across various entry points, through multiple sectors and diverse actors.

SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EVAC

SOCIETY
Implementation and enforcement of
institutional systems and legal frameworks
Develop response and support services (multi-sectoral)
Create safe environments

COMMUNITY
Change adverse social norms and values
Free communities from violence

FAMILY
Parent and caregiver support
Income and economic strengthening
Education and life skills

CHILD
Empower boys and
girls to feel valued,
respected and safe

Source: Adapted from Know Violence in Childhood 2017; WHO, 2016. INSPIRE: seven strategies for ending violence against children and Save the Children's Violence free parenting framework

This section draws on the INSPIRE approach, developed and promoted by agencies in the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. INSPIRE is a set of seven evidence-based strategies that have shown success in reducing violence against children around the world. This set of interventions has been endorsed by leading experts and organisations in the field, including the World Health Organisations and all child-focused agencies behind this report. The seven strategies are:[66]

Implementation and enforcement of laws

Norms and values

Safe environments

Parent and caregiver support

Income and economic strengthening

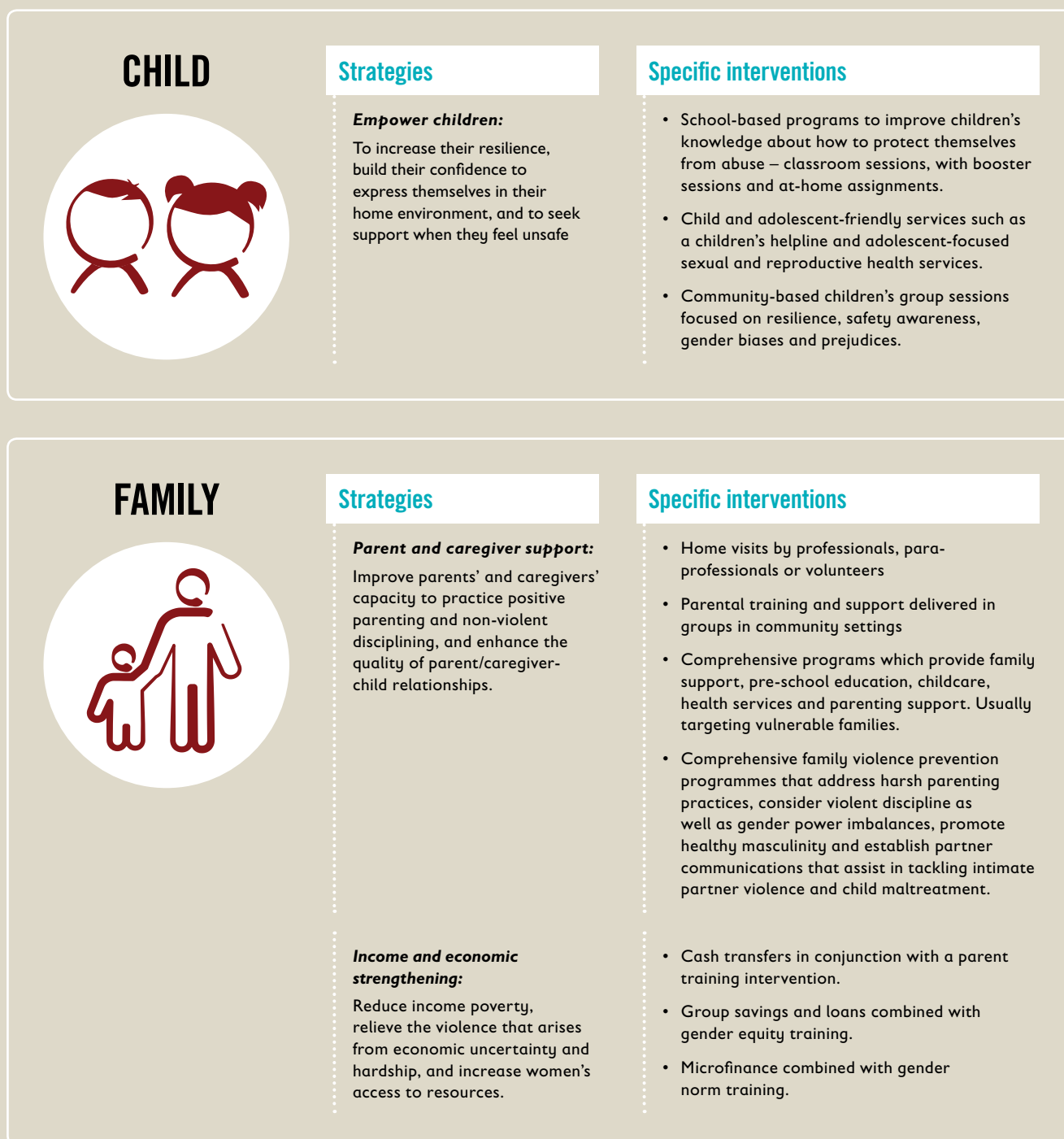## Response and support services

Education and life skills

Source: UNICEF, 2017. Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Children and Adolescents

This section also incorporates evidence from the research review conducted in the Know Violence Global Study and underpins this with socio-ecological frameworks adopted by Save the Children, Plan, World Vision and ChildFund in their EVAC programming.

Figure 1: Effective EVAC interventions

CHILD

Strategies

Empower children:

To increase their resilience, build their confidence to express themselves in their home environment, and to seek support when they feel unsafe

Specific interventions

- School-based programs to improve children's knowledge about how to protect themselves from abuse – classroom sessions, with booster sessions and at-home assignments.
- Child and adolescent-friendly services such as a children's helpline and adolescent-focused sexual and reproductive health services.
- Community-based children's group sessions focused on resilience, safety awareness, gender biases and prejudices.

FAMILY

Strategies

Parent and caregiver support:

Improve parents' and caregivers' capacity to practice positive parenting and non-violent disciplining, and enhance the quality of parent/caregiver-child relationships.

Specific interventions

- Home visits by professionals, para-professionals or volunteers
- Parental training and support delivered in groups in community settings
- Comprehensive programs which provide family support, pre-school education, childcare, health services and parenting support. Usually targeting vulnerable families.
- Comprehensive family violence prevention programmes that address harsh parenting practices, consider violent discipline as well as gender power imbalances, promote healthy masculinity and establish partner communications that assist in tackling intimate partner violence and child maltreatment.

Income and economic strengthening:

Reduce income poverty, relieve the violence that arises from economic uncertainty and hardship, and increase women's access to resources.

- Cash transfers in conjunction with a parent training intervention.
- Group savings and loans combined with gender equity training.
- Microfinance combined with gender norm training.

In developing these strategies, the following key factors must be considered:

- Specific strategies must be developed for each target country, with consideration of the various geographic, cultural, social and economic nuances within each country.
- All programming must be designed, developed and implemented with the support and engagement of local communities to ensure violence prevention and response mechanisms are endorsed by the community and sustainably implemented.
- A consortium approach should be taken in designing and executing EVAC interventions to prevent duplication, enhance collective strategic planning, enable greater sharing of resources, and collectively advocate for societal changes (for example in legislation, governance and norms).

Adapted from INSPIRE: Seven strategies for ending violence against children, WHO, 2016; Know Violence in Childhood 2017; Ending Violence against Children: Six Strategies for Action, UNICEF, 2014.

COMMUNITY

Strategies

Norms and values:
Tackle the root causes of violence through changing harmful social and cultural norms and behaviours.

Education and life skills:
Provide children and families with access to life skills training, emotional learning opportunities, gender awareness and safe school environments.

Specific interventions

- Community mobilisation programmes with men and women targeting norms on domestic violence, violence against children, gender roles, and child rights.
- Formulating rules for bystander intervention and assigning peers as educators.

- Establishing a safe and enabling school environment and developing inclusive and equitable school policies and protocols.
- School-based life skills and social and emotional training programmes.
- Training early childhood teachers in behaviour-management skills.

SOCIETY

Strategies

Implementation and enforcement of laws and policies:
Strengthen the legal mechanisms that protect children from violence and also the enforcement structures (such as the police and the judiciary) to ensure full implementation of laws.

Response and support services:
Deliver effective responses to support children who have experienced violence, such as access to high quality health and social welfare and criminal justice services.

Safe environments:
Focus on community spaces outside of the home and schools. Interventions seek to modify the social and physical environment within communities to promote positive behaviour and reduce violence.

Specific interventions

- Adoption of laws banning violent punishment of children by parents, teachers or other caregivers in all settings, including the home.
- Adoption of laws criminalising sexual abuse, child marriage, forced labour, trafficking, child pornography and other harmful practices.
- Adoption of laws that address key risk factors of violence, for example preventing youth access to alcohol and firearms.
- Sufficient government resource allocation to ensure effective implementation of laws.

- Screening combined with interventions where community workers, doctors, nurses and other professionals and para-professionals are trained to identify and assess exposure to violence for children.
- Relevant protection, safety, social welfare, providers and government authorities act on referrals and requests to investigate cases of violence towards children to protect children and prevent further maltreatment, while wherever possible preserving the family.
- Effective remedies and adequate support for children available to promote healing, recovery and long-lasting reintegration.

- Using an all hazards approach to ensure children of school going age are safe and protected from all hazards and threats in and around schools.
- Interrupting the spread of violence through a public health approach.

8

RECOMMENDATIONS: TIME FOR ACTION

Save the Children, World Vision, ChildFund and Plan International Australia have developed the following set of joint recommendations, which we believe establish the key pillars for ensuring greater protection for children across the region:

RECOMMENDATION 1:
Increase funding commitment to EVAC-specific programming

- Australia's funding of **0.1% of ODA** on EVAC-specific programming does not adequately meet the needs of children in Pacific countries and Timor-Leste.
- We recommend that the Australian government significantly increases its EVAC-specific ODA allocation to **$55 million over three years in the Pacific and Timor-Leste** (which is 1.5% of regional ODA).
- We recommend that all donors commit to increasing their investment in EVAC-specific initiatives in the Pacific and Timor-Leste to 1.5% of their ODA.

While the Australian government highlights the need to address EVAC approaches in aid investment plans for countries like PNG, aid budgets lack a deliberate focus on child-focused prevention and programming initiatives aimed at ending all forms of violence against children. This is a significant gap that needs to be addressed to ensure that investments in education and health are not undermined due to the exponential negative physical, psychological and social impact of violence against children (VAC). A failure to take meaningful action against VAC also decreases the likelihood of reaching the 2030 SDG goals. Other donors face similar limitations in their aid strategies with a limited focus on EVAC-specific interventions.

We encourage a budget focus on EVAC-specific interventions and prevention strategies in the Pacific and Timor-Leste to assist in generating benefits for children and society as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
Adopt a clear policy platform to end violence against children

- We recommend that the Australian government and all major donors establish a policy platform that puts children at the centre of development. This would involve developing child-centred policies and establishing dedicated resources to oversee the mainstreaming of child protection and child rights across all thematic areas of their development cooperation programs and to account for and help to track donor expenditure in EVAC programming.
- We further recommend that the Australian government expands its existing Child Protection and Compliance Section, to not only include a child safeguarding and risk focus but a wider mandate to prioritise EVAC programming and mainstream children's rights within Australia's aid programming.

Measures to tackle violence against children currently feature as a risk or governance issue through the establishment of child safeguarding mechanism by many donors. While this is critical, and we commend the level of scrutiny placed by donors, policies must be expanded to tackle the broader issue of violence against children.

This requires a policy platform that includes clear commitments towards achieving outcomes under SDG 16.2 on ending all forms of violence against children. Donors like Australia, New Zealand, and the European Union must take the first steps towards becoming 'EVAC champions' and push this agenda in the region and globally. Countries like Australia have shown strong leadership in the area of gender equality and women's rights – this provides an example of how strong political leadership and strong policy commitment can create positive outcomes for women and girls on the ground.

RECOMMENDATION 3:
Measuring EVAC expenditure and programming

- We recommend that the Australian government and all major donors develop an 'ending violence against children' policy marker (similar to the gender equality marker) to enable the tracking and reporting of expenditure on EVAC initiatives.

- We also recommend greater investment be made in measuring the impact of violence on boys and especially vulnerable groups (such as children with disabilities and adopted children) – who are currently invisible from most data sets.

There are currently no EVAC-focused markers to enable the effective monitoring and tracking of EVAC-specific and related expenditure by any donors working in the Pacific. For violence against children programming to gain priority placement within aid budgets, it is critical that these programs are identified, tracked and measured. The current inability to measure expenditure on such programs has led to child protection remaining an 'invisible' issue. Boys are particularly invisible, preventing a more detailed understanding of the intergenerational transfer of violence.

We encourage donors to develop an 'ending violence against children' policy marker to enable the effective measurement of EVAC commitments and expenditure. In 2008, Canada developed a children's issue policy marker within its internal systems to track expenditure, as part of its Children and Youth Strategy. While this specific marker is broader than an EVAC marker, it provides a tested case study on how benchmarking tools can be integrated into donor systems.[67] UNICEF has also developed a child protection benchmarking methodology which is being piloted to measure expenditure at the national level.[68] Focused policy markers have been developed in other thematic areas including gender and nutrition. These provide important best practices and provide knowledge-sharing opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Greater intersectionality between family violence, gender-based violence, gender equality and EVAC programs

- We recommend that the Australian government and all major donors strengthen the intersectionality between violence against women and children programming in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. An EVAC lens should be applied across the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of all gender-based violence, gender equality and family violence programs to ensure shared risk factors are addressed.

We acknowledge the commitment of donors like DFAT who fund gender-based violence programs in the Pacific and whose broader policy commitment to integrate gender into 80% of program outcomes is commendable. This should be promoted and applied across the work of all donors. However, as highlighted throughout this report, the synergies between violence perpetrated against women, family violence and violence against children are all closely linked, yet prevention programming and response services often fail to consider the rights of children (as independent actors) within this interconnected context. This includes programs that recognise the needs of children within women's shelters, training of professionals with the skills needed to recognise and respond properly to children experiencing domestic violence, improving information sharing and programs that fund joint programs between child rights and women's rights agencies.

9 CONCLUSION

In its 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, the Australian government committed to "step up support for a more resilient Pacific and Timor-Leste".[69] This has been actioned through various measures. It has seen the development of an AUS$2 billion Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific through to the expansion of the Pacific Labour Mobility Scheme and the creation of a new Office of the Pacific. Yet the White Paper itself acknowledges that "growth alone will not guarantee prosperity and stability" in the region and that investment is needed in areas of poverty reduction and towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to support human development outcomes.

Other donors, such as the New Zealand government, have announced a "Pacific Reset", including greater political engagement with Pacific Islands governments as well as a larger and refocused Pacific development programme. This includes a commitment to greater investment in areas of human development such as health, education, climate change and human rights.[70] The EU Cooperation has made sizeable investments in the region through its European Development Fund and ACP (African, Carribean and Pacific)-EU Partnership in areas of climate change, sustainability and gender equality.[71]

However, international donors (including Australia) have recently become increasingly focused on infrastructure expenditure in the Pacific. This begs the question: will increased loans and grants for infrastructure investment (as opposed to investment in 'grey matter infrastructure') reap the benefits sought by donors? Evidence shows that sustainable economic development is not possible without investing in the basics of human development – which includes the right of every child to be protected against all forms of violence.

This report calls for not only a 'Pacific step up and reset', but a priority reset – one that focuses on the future generation in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. **A future free of violence, a future filled with opportunities and a future where children are no longer unseen and unsafe.**

APPENDIX 1: DATA SELECTION AND ANALYSIS

Selection of the data

This report focuses on ODA aimed at ending violence against children (EVAC) in the 14 members of the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) which are eligible for ODA, plus Timor-Leste which is an associate member of the PIF. The full list of countries covered by this study is therefore:

- Cook Islands
- Fiji
- Kiribati
- Marshall Islands
- Micronesia
- Nauru
- Niue
- Palau
- Papua New Guinea
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Timor-Leste
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu

This study evaluates the ODA from the top 12 donors to this group of nations. Following an analysis of the 2015–2017 ODA data, the donors identified for this study were as follows:

- Australia
- Japan
- New Zealand
- Asian Development Bank
- Germany
- United States
- EU Institutions
- Korea
- The International Development Association (IDA) – part of the World Bank Group
- Portugal
- Canada
- Sweden

Collectively, these donors disbursed 95% of the ODA received by the 15 target countries over the years 2015–2017.

The study also undertook a deeper analysis of Australian government EVAC (specific and related) expenditure at a global level to highlight the total level of EVAC expenditure as a portion of ODA.

Sources of the data

The Creditor Reporting System (CRS) database, operated by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), offers the most comprehensive source of data on spending by the major ODA donors and allows direct comparison between these donors. The CRS contains records of ODA disbursed by the members of the DAC (29 donor nations plus the institutions of the EU), together with the main multilateral bodies[i] (including agencies of the United Nations and World Bank) plus major vertical funds such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Therefore, this methodology is based on the identification and selection of those project records within the CRS which record donors' VAC-related ODA expenditure. CRS data was analysed for years 2015, 2016 and 2017. 2014 data was analysed for global Australian ODA expenditure only.

Analysis of the data

No specific code or marker exists in any aid database, including the CRS, which allowed for the easy identification of all project records that are aimed at EVAC. Therefore, in order to identify EVAC-related project records, it was necessary to employ a methodology which used a combination of codes, supplemented by a keyword search of project titles and descriptions. The stages in identifying and analysing the CRS data records which referred to EVAC-related projects were as follows:

Step 1 – Identify projects with an EVAC-related purpose code

Projects targeting the prevention and demobilisation of child soldiers and violence against women and girls were identified by specific codes in the data. Any project records under either of these two purpose codes were selected for analysis without the use of keyword searches.

Step 2 – Identify other child-related project records

In the absence of any other relevant codes or markers, it was necessary to identify the remaining EVAC-related

projects through searching for keywords in the project title and descriptive fields within the CRS data. However, it was important to only apply these keywords to project records that include interventions aimed at children. So, before applying the EVAC keyword search terms, the remaining project records were filtered using the following criteria:

- Records that contain the words "child", "children", "boy(s)", "girl(s)", "adolescent(s)", "toddler" or "baby" in the project title, short description or long description.

- All records where the implementing agency was specifically or principally child-focused, for example:
  ○ Save the Children
  ○ World Vision
  ○ UNICEF

Step 3 – Keyword search to identify potential EVAC-related project records

The likely child-related records identified in step 2 were then compared against a keyword list (see below) including words and terms used in the Global Partnership definition of EVAC. This list of keywords was identical to the list developed for the 2017 'Counting Pennies' report.

Child-related project records that contained at least 1 of the keywords in their project title, short description or long description were marked as a potential EVAC-related project.

Note that unearmarked spending such as budget support was not included in this selection. This study assessed the prioritisation of donor funding to EVAC whereas spending decisions on unearmarked funds are taken by partner-country governments. The prioritisation of EVAC by partner-country governments is outside the scope of this work.

Step 4 – Review project descriptions of selected records

The project description of each of the potential EVAC-related project records identified in step 3 were reviewed and these records categorised under one of the following categories

1. 'False positive' – which is not an EVAC-related project despite the presence of one or more keywords
2. EVAC-specific – which is a project that appears to be entirely EVAC focused
3. Violence against children and adults – for example, a project targeting violence against women and children
4. EVAC and other child-related issues – this is a project that is focused on children, but incorporates both EVAC-related and non-EVAC-related activities
5. Projects that target violence against children and adults and non-EVAC-related activities

Step 5 – Cross-check against other sources

Potential EVAC-related project records that were difficult or impossible to categorise from the CRS descriptions alone were cross-checked against the corresponding records in:

- Online documentation published by the Australian government
- UN-OCHA financial tracking service[ii] (FTS), for humanitarian-related records
- The Lowy Institute's Pacific Aid Map[iii]

List of keywords used

- Abandonment
- Abduction
- Abuse
- Alcohol
- Assault /physical assault
- Beating
- Binding
- Biting
- Bullying
- Burning
- Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups/CAAFG
- Caning

- Child protection
- Child soldiers
- Chronic Inattention
- Circumcision
- Corporal punishment/ punishment
- Cruel/cruelty
- Cutting
- Cyber-bullying
- Degradation/ degrading treatment
- Deliberate over-medication
- Detention
- Domestic violence/

intimate partner violence
- Drug abuse
- Early/child/forced marriage/ECFM
- Emotional abuse
- Exorcism
- Exploit/exploiting/ exploitation
- Female genital mutilation/FGM
- Forced begging
- Forced intercourse
- Forced labour
- Gangs/gang violence

- Gender-based violence/GBV
- Gender/sex selection /gender-biased sex selection/GBSS
- Grave violations (of children's rights)
- Harm/harmful practices
- Hazardous labour/ labor
- Hazing
- Home visiting nurses
- Homicide
- Honor/honour crimes

- Humiliating/ humiliation
- Infibulation
- Injury
- Intentional harm
- Isolation/isolating
- Kicking
- Killing
- Labor/labour
- Maiming
- Maltreatment
- Marriage/forced marriage
- Mental abuse/ mental violence
- Molesting/ molestation
- Neglect/neglecting
- Parenting programmes
- Partner violence
- Physical and humiliating punishment/ abuse/PHP
- Physical neglect
- Porn/pornography
- Prostitution
- Psychological abuse
- Rape
- Recruitment of child soldiers
- Rejection/rejecting
- Sacrifice
- Scalding
- Scarring
- School-related violence
- Sexual exploitation/ abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Shaking
- Slapping
- Slave/slavery/child slavery/modern slavery
- Smacking
- Social workers
- Solitary confinement
- Sorcery
- Spanking
- Threat/threaten/ threatening
- Throwing
- Torture
- Trafficking
- Verbal abuse
- Violence Against Children/VAC
- Violence Against women and girls/ VAWG
- Violent/violence
- Witchcraft

Limitations of the data

Since the methodology used for this study relied heavily on the use of keyword searches, the output was dependent on the quality and completeness of project descriptions. Therefore, projects that have some impact on EVAC were excluded from the analysis if the reported data fails to include any mention of this fact in the project title or description.

Attempts were made to mitigate any shortcomings in the descriptive information by cross-checking estimates with other data sources and through direct contact with government representatives. However, in view of the current lack of systematic tracking of spending on EVAC, the data presented in this report can only be taken as an estimate of such spending.

The data on ODA is the most comprehensive and detailed dataset available on any form of development finance. No equivalent data exists in comparable form for other types of development finance such as non-governmental organisation (NGO) spending or the domestic expenditure of developing countries. Therefore, this study makes no attempt to estimate EVAC spending outside of ODA.

This study focuses on projects where Australia and other donors have actively chosen to fund activities which (at least in part) target EVAC. For this reason, 'core funding' arrangements that may, indirectly, be used to fund EVAC-specific and -related interventions are not included in our figures, as the decision on how much of this funding to spend on EVAC rests with the organisations receiving such core funding. These arrangements include unearmarked funding for UNICEF and the ANCP programme which provides unearmarked funding for a number of NGOs.

Many projects target the prevention of, or response to, violence against both children and adults, while other projects list violence as one of multiple aims. While it is clear that some of the resources disbursed to such projects are spent on EVAC, it is impossible to know precisely what proportion of spending on these projects actually goes to EVAC.

It is, in theory, possible to subdivide spending on EVAC into a number of sub-types such as funding for action on child trafficking, child, early and forced marriage and hazardous child labour. However, in practice, many of the projects identified in this study have descriptions that either mention child protection in general, or list more than one sub-type in their stated aims. This has made it impossible to generate any reliable data that enables the division of EVAC spending into spending on specific sub-types.

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NOTES

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UNSEEN, UNSAFE: THE UNDERINVESTMENT IN ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN THE PACIFIC AND TIMOR-LESTE