

ENDLINE REPORT

Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Networks for Inclusive and Transformative Education (IGNITE)

October 2026

IGNITE

Acknowledgment

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the CSOs who participated in this endline exercise. We greatly appreciate the time they dedicated to sharing their experiences, perspectives, and insights, as well as their openness and willingness to engage throughout the process. Their contributions were invaluable in informing this report, strengthening our understanding of the outcomes and impact reflected in the findings and formulating recommendations for future programs.

Main author: Anne-Sophie Raynaud (IGNITE M&E Coordinator)
Reviewed by: Emily Jacquard (IGNITE Director), Manon Gruner Obarowski (IGNITE Grant and Partnership Coordinator), Rosette Nanyonjo (UAF-A Senior MEAL Program Officer) Imad Abi Khalil (RMF MEAL Manager), Indu Chelliah (IRC VPRU MEAL Lead)
AI-assistance: editing only.

Contact: Emily.Jacquard@rescue.org

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IGNITE's partners

The IRC is a humanitarian organization founded in 1933 which seeks to help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster, including the climate crisis, to survive, recover and gain control of their future.

The René Moawad Foundation's mission is to promote social, economic and rural development in Lebanon and the MENA region and to contribute in building a responsible civil society that promotes democratic values, justice, pluralism and moderation.

UAF-Africa is a feminist, pan-African, rapid response fund committed to transforming power relations through resourcing African feminists and woman human rights defenders and their formations as an act of solidarity.

Summary of key findings

IGNITE at a glance 86 CSOs | 7 countries | 3 components

IGNITE
Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Networks for Inclusive and Transformative Education

1. CSOs reported positive experiences of partnership through IGNITE, indicating that the program successfully operationalized its feminist principles.
90% of CSOs were satisfied with the collaborative partnership approach within the IGNITE consortium with CSOs valuing IGNITE's trust-based, flexible and feminist partnership approach.

2. CSOs identified IGNITE's three pronged approach as its distinctive feature.
The combination of flexible grant-making, tailored capacity-sharing and advocacy support was considered by CSOs as a unique approach to strengthening their capacity.

3. Overall positive perceptions of IGNITE's communication and coordination were tempered by operational challenges, which IGNITE addressed through adaptive management.
Although 71% of CSOs rated IGNITE's communication as excellent, they highlighted challenges in coordination and reporting, while acknowledging IGNITE's responsiveness to feedback and willingness to adapt its ways of working.

4. CSOs valued IGNITE's capacity-sharing approach for its tailored, practical and diverse learning opportunities.
The combination of different learning modalities, practical accompaniment and peer-learning platforms provided CSOs with opportunities to strengthen their organizational and programmatic knowledge and skills.

5. Capacity-sharing activities broadly met CSOs' needs, although their relevance and usefulness varied by region and organizational maturity.
73% of CSOs reported that the capacity-sharing component greatly addressed their organization's needs and 66% found the activities very useful.

6. Capacity-sharing contributed to strengthened organizational systems, with greater reported impact among African CSOs than MENA CSOs.
73% of CSOs across regions (Africa: 89%, MENA: 43%) reported significant impact on their organizational capacity and 90% developed or revised internal policies.

7. Capacity-sharing contributed to positive shifts in CSOs' programmatic approaches and ways of working.
73% of CSOs across regions reported significant impact on their programmatic capacity.

8. CSOs reported strengthened advocacy capacity and confidence, supporting more strategic engagement with stakeholders and decision-makers.
65% of CSOs were extremely confident about their ability to effectively access and advocate with decision-makers, showing a 33-percentage points confidence increase from baseline.

9. IGNITE supported movement-building by facilitating CSO connections, collaboration and collective action beyond the project.
69% of CSOs joined new networks, coalitions, campaigns or feminist movements focused on women's rights and/or girls' education.

10. IGNITE increased CSOs' visibility and credibility, reflected in greater recognition and new opportunities for engagement and partnership.
93% of CSOs reported that their participation in IGNITE contributed to increasing their visibility and recognition as credible organizations.

IGNITE project

IGNITE (Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Networks for Inclusive and Transformative Education) is a consortium led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and its partners: Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF-A) and the René Moawad Foundation (RMF). Initially, the consortium was composed of four partners, but the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) exited the project in 2025. Funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) under the 'Fonds de soutien aux organisations féministes' (FSOF) initiative, the 10 million euros project ran from March 2023 to February 2027.

Throughout this project, IGNITE supported **86 feminist civil society organizations** (CSOs) in **seven countries** across sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. The project aimed to amplify feminist CSOs' voices and agency, enabling them to shift gender-related **social norms** that hinder adolescent girls' participation in **education** and to advance gender-transformative education through sustainable, locally driven approaches.

As part of its model, IGNITE prioritized **women-led expertise** and **community-driven responses** in both **humanitarian and development contexts** while recognizing that feminist CSOs are uniquely positioned to reach marginalized communities.

Centered around three key components, the project offered:

- Flexible funding to CSOs through **feminist grant-making**.
- Mutual capacity and experience-sharing, focusing on programmatic and organizational **capacity-sharing** along with peer-to-peer learning.
- **Advocacy** support along with one-on-one accompaniment and **networking** opportunities.

IGNITE's simplified theory of change

Feminist CSOs leverage amplified voice and agency to advance gender-transformative education and empowerment for marginalized girls, rooted in sustainable and locally-driven approaches

Feminist CSOs have stronger organizational and programmatic capacity and improved access to funding

Feminist CSOs have greater advocacy resources, access to evidence and access to decision-makers

Feminist Grant-Making

Capacity-Sharing

Advocacy & Networking



108,000+
girls reached

IGNITE at a Glance



10 million EUR

86 CSOs

7 countries

3 components

MARCH 2023
IGNITE project starts

JULY 2023
Inception retreat & co-creation of project design

DECEMBER 2023
Launch of the closed call for proposals (Africa)

JULY-AUGUST 2024
Selection of African CSOs
African CSOs start their projects

SEPTEMBER 2024
Launch of the closed call for proposals (MENA)

NOVEMBER 2024
Launch of the capacity-sharing component

JANUARY 2025
Selection of MENA CSOs
Organizational Development accompaniment starts (Africa)

MARCH 2025
MENA CSOs start their projects

APRIL 2025
Partnership visits in Cameroon and Nigeria

JUNE 2025
Advocacy accompaniment starts (Africa)

SEPTEMBER 2025
Partnership visits in Burkina Faso, Jordan and Lebanon

OCTOBER 2025
Partnership visit in Ethiopia

JANUARY 2026
Partnership visits in Cameroon and DRC
Advocacy accompaniment starts (MENA)

FEBRUARY 2026
Partnership visits in Nigeria, Jordan and Lebanon
Networking events in MENA

MARCH 2026
IGNITE Forward event

APRIL - MAY 2026
Partnership visit in Burkina Faso
Closing retreat

JUNE 2026
CSOs' projects end

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2026
Networking events in MENA

FEBRUARY 2027
IGNITE project ends

Methodology

Objective of the endline

The endline evaluation had two main objectives: (i) to measure IGNITE's impact and outcome-level indicators through quantitative data and (ii) to understand CSOs' perceptions of the project's approach and activities through qualitative data.

Data sources and tools

The endline evaluation mainly relied on primary data sources, collected through key informant interviews with CSOs. The key informant interview questionnaire was developed based on the MEL plan, reviewed by the IGNITE technical team and validated by the MEL Technical Working Group. The semi-structured data collection tool included a mix of closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. Quantitative questions were used to measure and report on the impact and outcome indicators, while qualitative questions provided further context to the quantitative findings. Questions focused on five themes: CSOs' projects, IGNITE partnership approach, capacity-sharing activities and their impact, advocacy support and networking. Whenever relevant, data was triangulated with internal secondary sources collected throughout the project, including organizational capacity assessment (OCA) data, learning agenda, grantee reports, satisfaction surveys, partnership visit reports, etc.

Sample size

All 86 CSOs were invited to participate in the endline evaluation. In total, **46 CSOs** participated in **42 interviews**[1] conducted with 86 key informants[2].

Number of key-informant interviews per country and grant type[3]

	# of CSOs interviewed	Response Rate
Burkina Faso	10	77%
Cameroon	5	29%
DR Congo	6	67%
Ethiopia	5	38%
Jordan	6	50%
Lebanon	8	57%
Nigeria	6	75%
Total	**46**	**53%**

	# of CSOs interviewed	Response Rate
Research & Advocacy	3	60%
Seeds	8	47%
Scale-up	35	55%
Total	**46**	**53%**

Data collection and analysis

Data collection took place over a six-month period, from January to June 2026. In line with the project timeline, African CSOs were interviewed first (January – March 2026), followed by MENA CSOs (May – June 2026). Interviews lasted between one to two hours, depending on the CSO and the number of key informants involved. All interviews were conducted via Zoom in the CSO's preferred language: English (25), French (14) or Arabic (2). One interview was conducted in both English and French and one interview was conducted with a sign-language interpreter to accommodate key informants'

[1] Some CSOs were part of a consortium and decided to participate in the interview together.
[2] CSOs had the option to invite more than one representative to the interview.
[3] The response rate is calculated against the number of CSOs selected in each country or for each type of grant.

special needs. Interview notes were transcribed verbatim in Word and validated by CSOs before analysis.

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive analysis[4]. All percentages are calculated against the number of interviews and not CSOs, as it would not have been feasible to disaggregate answers per CSOs in the case of combined interviews. When data is disaggregated by CSOs' type of grant, the grant type was determined based on the lead applicant (i.e., grantee) for consortium projects.

Endline results were calculated using the measurement methods detailed in the MEL plan[5]. Qualitative data from interviews was collated, compiled, thematically analyzed, and triangulated with relevant quantitative data. Analysis was also reviewed against secondary sources such as OCA data, grantees reports, learning agenda, satisfaction surveys and partnership visit reports for triangulation purposes. The findings presented in this report are based on the endline key informant interviews (KIIs), unless otherwise indicated.

Limitations

Over half of the 86 CSOs (53%, n=46) participated in the interviews with variations per country. Various reasons may explain this response rate, such as CSOs prioritizing project activities and/or reporting deadlines over their participation in the endline. Mitigation measures included follow-ups via email and opening additional interview slots. Despite these challenges, the endline interviews captured CSOs' experiences across all countries and grant types, ensuring a well-balanced representation and data saturation. The response rate can therefore be considered sufficient to allow for reasonably robust generalization of findings. Whenever relevant, data was disaggregated at country and/or region level. Given the smaller sample sizes in some countries, disaggregated findings should be read with caution, as a single CSO's response can represent a meaningful share of the data.

As participation in the endline exercise was voluntary, findings may be subject to self-selection bias. Initial concerns that only CSOs with the most positive experiences or those more engaged in the project would choose to participate – thus potentially skewing findings toward an overly favorable picture were offset by the fact that one CSO – whose contract was terminated due to failure to submit required reports, still took part in the endline exercise. Their answers on the partnership approach were included in the analysis but not those on IGNITE activities, as they did not attend any IGNITE-led activities. Answers on their IGNITE-funded project were also excluded, as these could not be verified. In addition, data from one CSO was excluded as they did not respond to the request to validate their interview notes. As such, findings on the partnership approach, networking and visibility/recognition are based on the full sample (n=42), while those on capacity-sharing activities and advocacy are based on 40 or 41 interviews, depending on the question.

Most indicators asked CSOs to reflect on changes or experiences resulting from their participation in the project and for some indicators baseline data was not available. Furthermore, many also relied on CSOs' self-perception. To limit bias, whenever it was feasible, CSOs' answers were triangulated with internal secondary sources[6] and indicators – where relevant, were measured using composite formulas (see MEL Plan). Due to PASGR early termination in the project, some indicators under the research and advocacy component became inapplicable and as such were not measured.

[4] Percentages in the analysis have been rounded up and as such may exceed 100%.

[5] In some cases, indicators' formulas were revised – and at times updated to count higher responses, to better reflect nuances observed in the qualitative data.

[6] See Data sources and tools section.

72 grants

86 CSOs

3 grant windows

Seeds	Scale-up	Research & Advocacy
5,000 - 20,000 USD	50,000 - 80,000 USD	50,000 - 80,000 USD



Burkina Faso

13

Seeds (3), Scale-up (9), Research & Advocacy (1)



Cameroon

17

Seeds (6), Scale-up (10), Research & Advocacy (1)



DR Congo

9

Seeds (1), Scale-up (8)



Ethiopia

13

Seeds (3), Scale-up (8), Research & Advocacy (2)



Jordan

12

Scale-up (12)



Lebanon

14

Seeds (2), Scale-up (11), Research & Advocacy (1)



Nigeria

8

Seeds (2), Scale-up (6)

EUR **69,832** average amount of grants awarded

up to **50%** of CSOs' budget allocated to organizational development

15 months average duration of CSOs' projects

12 partnership visits

99% of CSOs' received accompaniment

1,445 accompaniment sessions

Partnership approach

A feminist partnership approach

The IGNITE project followed a partnership approach guided by six core **feminist principles**: care, power-sharing, intersectionality, girl-centered approach, sustainability and collective voices. At consortium level, these principles were applied through three key ways of working: (i) **power-sharing,** (ii) **co-creation and co-implementation, and** (iii) **cross-learning** that aimed to foster trust-based and equitable relationships among consortium partners.

At CSO level, these feminist principles were operationalized through the grant-making component led by UAF-A and RMF in the African and MENA regions respectively. The grant-making component specifically targeted small and grassroots feminist CSOs. Across the project, a total of **86 CSOs** (60 in Africa and 26 in MENA) were supported through **72 grants**[7] and a total of **5.2 million EUR budget**. In practice, these principles were reflected in the following activities:

- **Two regional context mappings**, which helped understand key barriers to adolescent girls' education and identify prospective CSOs.
- **One closed call for proposal per region** along with pre-award accompaniment giving smaller CSOs a competitive advantage to secure funding. Out of the 282 CSOs identified across the two regions, 133 applied, out of which 90 received one-on-one pre-award accompaniment.
- **Three types of grants** to give CSOs the opportunity to apply according to their maturity and intervention focus. Across the project, 17 CSOs received a Seeds grant, 64 a Scale-up grant and 5 a Research and Advocacy grant.
- **Flexible funding**, including the ability to allocate up to 50% of their budget to organizational development and core costs, as well as cost and no-cost extensions.
- **Continuous one-on-one project management accompaniment**, along with onboarding sessions and reflection workshops. In total, 666 project management accompaniment sessions were held with 85 CSOs[8].

IGNITE's feminist principles



Care



Power-sharing



Intersectionality



Girl-centered



Sustainability



Collective voices

[7] Out of these 72 grants, 10 are in consortia for a total of 24 CSOs.

[8] One CSO did not participate in any accompaniment sessions or capacity-sharing activities and was later terminated due to non-reporting (see Limitations section).

From principle to practice: IGNITE consortium's feminist ways of working

IGNITE's approach to localization was two-pronged: **shifting power** from consortium partners to local organizations, while also distributing it among consortium partners by positioning them as co-leaders in strategic and decision-making processes.

This approach was anchored around **three core ways of working**: power-sharing, co-creation/co-implementation and cross-learning. These were operationalized through multiple coordination mechanisms that evolved and adapted throughout the project cycle based on needs and lessons learned.

> It's a very good consortium in which you learn, you share, you feel valued. [...]. It feels like we are working for one organization. There is a lot of solidarity.
>
> *Source: Mid-term Learning Agenda*

How did IGNITE do it?



Power-sharing was achieved by establishing co-led decision-making spaces, such as the **Project Management Unit**, comprising of senior management from each consortium partner. Such space provided agency to all partners in the decision-making process while reinforcing mutual accountability.



Co-creation and co-implementation were realized through the thematic Working Groups. At inception, these Working Groups served as a key coordination mechanism, giving partners space to actively co-create core project guidance, such as the grant-making and M&E manuals, the closed Call for Proposal and grantees' reporting templates. Throughout the implementation phase, **Working Groups** adopted a rotating co-chair approach and enabled partners to harmonize approaches, address challenges, and collaboratively adapt their work in line with the consortium's feminist principles.



Cross-learning was embedded throughout IGNITE's multiple coordination mechanisms, particularly onsite and online bi-annual **retreats, coordination meetings** and ad-hoc meetings between team members. This allowed the project to be agile, flexible and adaptive to challenges and context changes.

What does it take to operationalize a feminist partnership approach?

IGNITE's experience shows that a feminist partnership approach **takes time to build**.

As first-time partners, IGNITE consortium partners invested a one-year inception phase in clarifying roles and responsibilities, identifying adequate coordination mechanisms, refining the project's approach, and co-creating guiding documents.

Building trust, shared ownership and effective ways of working require intentionality and sustained commitment, yet it ensures a smooth implementation and shared accountability.

For more information, see IGNITE mid-term Learning Agenda

Finding 1: CSOs reported positive experiences of partnership through IGNITE, indicating that the program successfully operationalized its feminist principles.

Overall, the large majority of CSOs (90%, n=38) were satisfied[9] with the collaborative partnership approach within the IGNITE consortium. The majority of CSOs shared positive feedback, and only a few recounted neutral or negative feedback. Endline findings were consistent with partnership visits' observations.

CSOs spontaneously qualified the partnership approach as '**feminist**', '**flexible**' and cited '**strong project ownership**' demonstrating that IGNITE managed to successfully uphold and operationalize its feminist principles.

Feminist
(mentioned in 19 out of 42 answers)

CSOs praised IGNITE's feminist approach to partnership, describing it as supportive and **trust-based**. They particularly valued being considered as partners rather than 'implementers' with several respondents highlighting the **equitable and horizontal relationship** between CSOs and the IGNITE team.

Flexibility
(mentioned in 22 out of 42 answers)

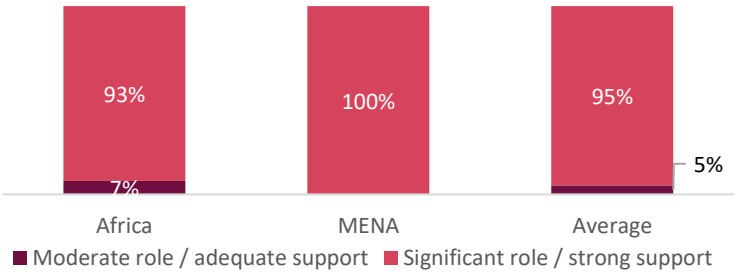
CSOs particularly appreciated IGNITE's **flexible approach** defining it as a key feature of the partnership approach. Most CSOs had to adjust their activities – sometimes several times, due to the emergence of newly identified needs or changing operational environments. They highly valued IGNITE's flexibility, understanding, and appreciated UAF-A and RMF's advisory role and prompt approvals in granting **no-cost extensions** or supporting **budget reallocation**.

Project ownership
(mentioned in 22 out of 42 answers)

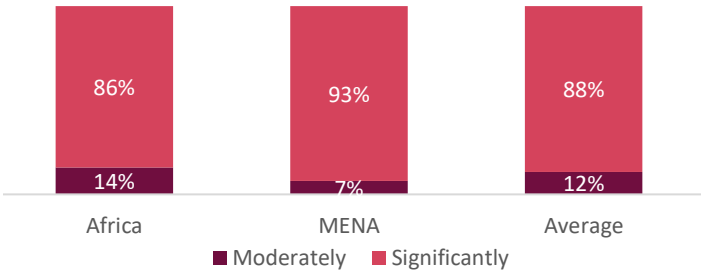
The vast majority of CSOs felt that IGNITE acknowledged and **valued their expertise** (88%, n=37) and felt empowered in their project decision-making and overall management (95%, n=40). Several CSOs further highlighted that IGNITE **gave them the space to implement** without imposing activities or approaches.

Project ownership was facilitated by IGNITE's flexible approach while IGNITE activities such as regular **tailored project management accompaniment**, capacity-sharing and peer-exchanges further contributed to strengthening CSOs' capacity and supporting them in making informed programmatic decisions.

CSOs' role in decision-making and overall management of their project



IGNITE acknowledged and valued CSOs' expertise



[9] Satisfaction was analyzed as a composite indicator based on three quantitative questions (covering communication, project management and recognition of CSO's expertise), each scored on a 4-point scale. A CSO was classified as 'satisfied' if it selected one of the top response options (e.g. significantly or excellent) on at least two of the three questions.

What CSOs Say

'IGNITE is not limited to educating young girls but also focuses on empowering CSOs. We see IGNITE as a feminist space where every idea is welcome. We feel free to express ourselves.' **Seeds CSO, Burkina Faso**



'IGNITE was an opportunity for us to gain this experience, to learn from our mistakes, which needed just to be highlighted in a good way, and to be directed without feeling shyness. For example, before I was very afraid to make mistakes but [RMF grant manager] would always tell us, "*Don't worry, it's normal. You'll do better next time. We are learning here. We are on a learning journey*".' **Scale-up CSO, Lebanon**

'It's a partnership between equal partners – not a patronizing one, where our perspective is valued. We have time to exchange ideas.' **Scale-up CSO, DRC**

'We had a lot of 1-1 meetings as well, almost every day when the project started. For MEAL, for communication, for safeguarding, for advocacy, etc. A lot of our time was spent in meetings. Sometimes, it was good and needed but IGNITE should ask CSOs what our actual needs are. We know IGNITE wanted to support us but we have a lot of experience and know what to do on the project.' **Scale-up CSO, Jordan**



'The partnership is saying, "*I support you, I affirm you, and you're important*". We find this partnership very supportive, very affirming, very transformative. Very affirming because I did not know how much we needed to feel trust while doing our work as an organization, trust that we can deliver on the objectives that we have set out, trust that we have the capacity and we are experts in what we're doing, trust that we have lived experiences, trust that we have the capacity as young women [...] What IGNITE has shown us is that trust can change the way we deliver, it can improve the way we deliver, the way that we work. With IGNITE, we feel that our voice is very important, that our work and our wellbeing are important.' **Scale-up CSO, Nigeria**

Finding 2: CSOs identified IGNITE's three-pronged approach as its distinctive feature.

IGNITE's **combination of feminist flexible grant-making**, including a dedicated budget for organizational development, **along with capacity-sharing activities and accompaniment sessions** (including project management) were reported by CSOs as **IGNITE's distinctive feature**. CSOs particularly valued the mix of theoretical (e.g. training and workshops) and practical (e.g. accompaniment) activities that offered **individualized and context-specific support** to their organization's needs. This combined and complementary support is rarely offered by other institutional donors, who are seen as more rigid, less adaptable and more focused on project implementation. IGNITE's unique approach was highly praised by CSOs as it not only **contributed to organizational growth and sustainability** but also trickled down at community level. The intra-project **networking** aspect of IGNITE, giving CSOs the ability to meet other organizations working in their country on similar thematics, was also cited as a unique feature of the project, particularly by CSOs in MENA.



What sets it apart from other partners is capacity-strengthening, which other partners don't do. With IGNITE, we learn new skills, the organization comes out stronger, and through that, the community benefits. ***Seeds CSO, Burkina Faso***



Finding 3: Overall positive perceptions of IGNITE's communication and coordination were tempered by operational challenges, which IGNITE addressed through adaptive management.

While all CSOs reported an overall positive perception on the project's communication and coordination, describing it as excellent (71%, n=30) and good (29%, n=12), CSOs also shared more nuanced experiences during the interviews. While most felt free to express themselves and listened to, many – across both regions, reported communication and coordination issues in terms of report submission, confusion over reporting templates and annexes, delays in providing feedback or disbursing payments as well as heavy reporting requirements, especially for smaller organizations.

Several CSOs mentioned **burdensome reporting and compliance requirements** with multiple templates to submit. Such communication and reporting challenges were also reported by several other CSOs through the project's feedback mechanism and during partnership visits, especially in MENA. Unlike in Africa, where CSOs were requested to submit quarterly narrative reports along with relevant annexes and information on the number of project participants reached, CSOs in MENA were asked to provide additional documentation including reports for each activity along with detailed information on project participants (such as IDs) which, at times, created trust issues. One CSO explained how these reporting requirements competed with the implementation of its programmatic activities, not only stretching its team's capacity but also putting considerable pressure on them.

CSOs also reported a **lack of foresight** and clarity on upcoming IGNITE activities and roles and responsibilities within the consortium. For instance, some CSOs mentioned being invited to attend online sessions in different languages or not knowing the objectives of the sessions while others – particularly in Africa, reported limited knowledge about the IGNITE platform[10].

Finally, with projects running for an average of 15 months, some CSOs questioned the **sustainability** and depth of impact of their intervention on social norms without long-term multi-year funding.

[10] The IGNITE platform was an online platform accessible exclusively to CSOs, featuring a calendar of capacity-sharing activities and a catalogue of internal and external resources, templates, and guidance.

Adaptive management

Learning at the core of IGNITE's partnership approach

As with any multi-country and multi-partner initiative, IGNITE was not exempt from missteps but learned and adapted its approach over the course of the project. IGNITE actively sought out CSOs' feedback to tailor its activities, whether through its grantee reports, feedback mechanism, satisfaction surveys, one-on-one meetings or partnership visits. For instance, CSOs – across both regions, reported communication issues such as lack of timely feedback on their reports, irregular communication or an overwhelming number of emails, as well as heavy reporting and compliance requirements – practices not necessarily aligned with IGNITE's feminist principles.



One thing we really appreciate is that when we give feedback to IGNITE, it is actually acted on. We always get a response, and we see changes happening. ***Scale-up CSO, Nigeria***



This feedback was relayed to UAF-A and RMF who subsequently adjusted their ways of working. Similarly, suggestions such as separating activities per language or sending weekly email reminders about upcoming capacity-sharing sessions were also promptly acted upon by IGNITE. CSOs' openness to share such sensitive feedback reflects the trust they placed in IGNITE. This adaptive management was commended by several CSOS during the endline.



At the start of the program, communication was not always sufficiently smooth. After submitting our reports, we did not consistently receive feedback, which prevented us from fully assessing whether the activities being carried out met expectations or whether adjustments were needed. This issue was raised during a meeting, and we are pleased that significant improvements have been made since then, with communication now being more regular, clear, and reassuring for our team. ***Seeds CSO, Burkina Faso***



IGNITE also strived to place CSOs at the core of the project through its funding strategy. As per AFD's FSOF requirements, more than half of IGNITE budget was channeled to CSOs. Over the course of the project, several re-allocations occurred due to the termination of consortium partners' or CSOs' contracts. IGNITE intentionally re-allocated these funds to CSOs through cost extensions. In total, over 480,000 EUR were reallocated to CSOs who used the top-up funding for programmatic activities, including advocacy campaigns, emergency relief aid in Lebanon or for organizational development. This approach exemplifies IGNITE's adaptive management and operationalization of its feminist and localization principles.

Capacity-sharing approach

Beyond traditional capacity-building: learning with, not from

In line with its feminist principles, the capacity-sharing approach prioritized mutual and horizontal learning, capitalizing on local knowledge, and providing a platform for peer-to-peer engagements and support.

IGNITE offered both **organizational and programmatic support** through a combination of theoretical learning and practical hands-on support such as trainings, workshops, one-on-one accompaniment and communities of practice (CoP). CoPs, in particular, offered regular safe spaces for CSOs to exchange, learn from each other's work and foster collaboration and networking opportunities.

In total, over the course of the project, **30 trainings** (8 onsite and 22 online), **12 workshops** (10 onsite and 2 online) and **29 online CoPs** were conducted across both regions with **503 unique participants** from **82 CSOs** and a **cumulative 1,400 participants**. To encourage experience sharing and peer-learning, **47** % of sessions were led or co-led by feminist CSOs. These were complemented by other learning and peer-sharing platforms including country and thematic-wise WhatsApp groups, a Facebook page, reflection and peer-to-peer meetings and an internal platform collating capacity-sharing resources.

One approach, two modalities: Africa and MENA

While the core tenets underpinning the IGNITE capacity-sharing approach remained the same at project level, its delivery varied across regions according to IGNITE consortium partners' expertise and time constraints.

In **Africa**, the capacity-sharing approach was led by two full-time consultants for organizational development and advocacy, supported by the IGNITE team, IRC Country Offices and IRC technical experts on inclusion and safeguarding. Over one and a half year[11], they were able to provide comprehensive and individualized support, through trainings, workshops and **sustained online one-on-one accompaniment** to CSOs. For the organizational development component in particular, this approach – and timeframe, allowed for the development of a highly individualized set of activities based on a **detailed organizational capacity assessment** (OCA) and priorities identified by CSOs themselves. Similarly, the advocacy component offered a combination of trainings and regular one-on-one accompaniment along with IGNITE-supported **advocacy initiatives** such as the 16 days of activism or the social media campaign #myrighttolearn in August 2025.

In **MENA**, the capacity-sharing component followed a **lighter-touch approach**. As in Africa, the component was supported by the IGNITE team, IRC Country Offices and IRC technical experts as well as consultants recruited by RMF to deliver onsite training and one-on-one support. While CSOs were invited to attend online activities from mid-2025 onwards, the onsite trainings and one-on-one accompaniment only started four to six months before the end of their projects. Unlike the component in Africa, the **accompaniment modality was less intensive**, not based on a detailed capacity assessment and comprised – in most cases, a single onsite one-on-one organizational development session on each of four thematics (M&E, finance, procurement and communication). In addition, because of the conflict in the MENA region, the advocacy component started in early 2026, and due to time constraints, focused on the development of one advocacy plan per CSO led by the consultant.

[11] The Organizational Development consultant supported IGNITE from January 2025 to May 2026 while the Advocacy consultant supported IGNITE from June 2025 to May 2026.

82 CSOs
attended at least one training, workshop or CoP

503 *unique* participants
1,400 cumulative participants

Organizational
Human resources, M&E, finance safeguarding, communication, governance, procurement

VS

Programmatic
Advocacy, education, inclusion, research, adolescent girls programming

30
trainings

12
workshops

29
community of practice

280
organizational development accompaniment
191 Africa / 89 MENA

409
advocacy accompaniment
326 Africa / 83 MENA

90
other accompaniment
research, communication, safeguarding

90%
gained new knowledge or skills

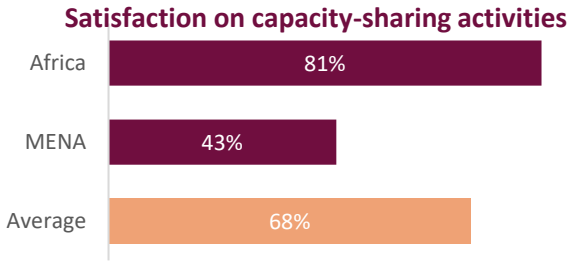
86%
learned best practices from and were able to exchange with peers

Source: capacity-sharing satisfaction surveys



Finding 4: CSOs valued IGNITE's capacity-sharing approach for its tailored, practical and diverse learning opportunities.

The majority of CSOs[12] (68%, n=28) were **satisfied** with the capacity-sharing activities[13], although variations by regions emerged with African CSOs (81%, n= 22) showing higher satisfaction than MENA CSOs (43%, n=6).



Overall – and despite regional variations, CSOs highly valued the capacity-sharing component citing it as a unique feature of the IGNITE model. They highlighted several elements setting the capacity-sharing component apart, including:

- The combination of theoretical (e.g. training and workshops) and practical (e.g. accompaniment) activities that offered individualized support aligned to CSOs' needs, maturity and context, a feature highly appreciated by organizations, especially in Africa. Examples of agile and context-specific support include the recruitment of a legal consultant by IGNITE to support Cameroonian organizations transitioning from CSOs to NGOs following a legislative status change for entities receiving foreign funds.
- The administration of an organizational capacity assessment (OCA) with African CSOs along with the provision of a specific budget for organizational development across both regions allowing CSOs to self-reflect on their strengths and gaps and to work and invest towards their self-identified priorities with the organizational development consultant.
- The provision of multiple delivery modalities (trainings, workshops, CoPs, and accompaniment sessions) on a broad range of topics, cutting across both organizational and programmatic thematics along with project management accompaniment by UAF-A and RMF.
- The provision of both vertical and horizontal learning platforms that encouraged peer-learning and experience sharing, particularly through CoP sessions, and reinforced contextualized support, motivation, accountability and the development of a sense of 'community' between CSOs.
- The access to re-usable resources through the IGNITE online platform, such as templates, external and internal guidance, thus ensuring sustainability of learning and practices.

Finding 5: Capacity-sharing activities broadly met CSOs' needs, although their relevance and usefulness varied by region and organizational maturity.

Across both regions, 73% of CSOs (n=30) reported that the activities greatly **addressed their organization's needs** while 27% (n=11) felt they addressed their needs moderately. However, notable regional disparities stood out, with 89% (n=24) of African CSOs indicating that the activities greatly addressed their organization's needs compared to only 43% (n=6) of MENA CSOs.

[12] These endline findings aligned with routine satisfaction surveys administered after capacity-sharing activities.
[13] Satisfaction was analyzed as a composite indicator based on three quantitative questions (covering needs addressed, quality of content, and confidence in applying learnings), each scored on a 4-point scale. A CSO was classified as 'satisfied' if it selected one of the top response options (e.g. to a great extent, or very useful) on at least two of the three questions.

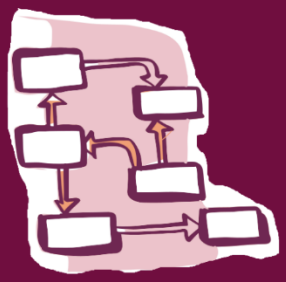
What CSOs Say

'IGNITE provided diverse forms of capacity-sharing, we appreciated that. It's not just focused on the programmatic aspect, most donors focus on the programmatic aspect only, and the operational aspect is always neglected. With IGNITE, we had the whole package, a comprehensive capacity-strengthening package, which is very relevant for young organizations like us. [...] One of the trainings that really marked us was on organizational capacity needs assessment. We did not know about it before, and even though we are not experts in filling it, it helped us develop an action plan. That's something we have never done before, and that is thanks to IGNITE.' **Scale-up CSO, Cameroon**



'[We appreciated] the participatory approach [that] is also used in both online and in-person training sessions: it's not just about imparting knowledge to us; we're actively involved, and we try to reinforce what we already know.' **CSO Consortium, Burkina Faso**

'[It had a] significant impact on organizational capacity. The organization improved safeguarding, procurement, finance systems and internal organizational procedures. Changes are expected to continue beyond IGNITE. [...] Existing informal practices became more structured and institutionalized.' **Seeds CSO, Lebanon**

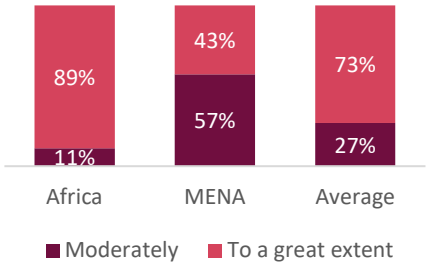


'The IGNITE project was highly beneficial to our organization. Through the ideas, practices, and innovative approaches we gained while working with adolescent girls, we were able to strengthen and further develop several of our organizational policies and procedures. These lessons learned contributed significantly to improving our institutional capacity and were applied within [another] project. The experience helped us enhance our approaches to protection, accountability, and meaningful engagement with adolescent girls and women.' **Scale-up CSO, Lebanon**

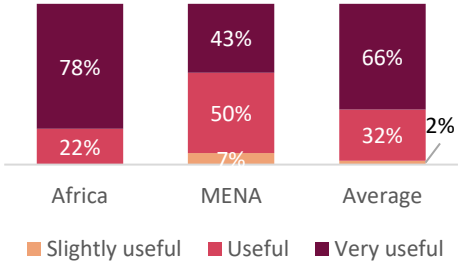
'For the onsite training, they were nice but very basic. [...] All organizations who attended already knew the information shared. It was a good space to meet other CSOs though. [...] Trainings need to be more responsive to the needs of CSOs, [you need] to do a needs assessment and [we need] to get practical accompaniment on revising our policies.' **Scale-up CSO, Jordan**

CSOs broadly rated the **quality** of trainings, workshops and CoP sessions positively; 66% (n=27) found the activities very useful and 32% (n=13) useful. This was strongest in Africa, where 78% (n=21) rated the activities very useful. MENA CSOs, however, reported mixed feedback, with 43% (n=6) rating the activities as very useful, 50% (n=7) as useful and 7% (n=1, in Jordan) as slightly useful. These disparities can be explained by MENA CSOs' experience, size and maturity levels. For instance, these CSOs often stated that the material of the activities was too basic for them and did not offer new insights or introduce new information. A few CSOs also indicated their preference for more practical CoP sessions rather than presentations of other CSOs' tools and methodologies that may not be replicable in their context.

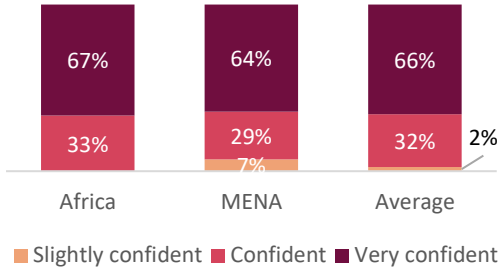
Capacity-sharing activities addressed CSOs' needs



Quality of capacity-sharing activities



Confidence in applying what was learned



Confidence to apply learnings from capacity-sharing activities was high among CSOs overall, with 98% (n=40) reporting they felt either very confident (66%, n=27) or confident (32%, n=13). Findings did not show significant regional variation. In Africa, this confidence may reflect the practical, learning-by-doing nature of the accompaniment support, which enabled CSOs to directly apply new knowledge and skills – for example, by co-creating organizational development or advocacy action plans, or revising internal policies, thereby strengthening organizational systems and reinforcing the sustainability of these gains. CSOs also now retain reusable resources (e.g. templates, guidance materials) to support future projects. In MENA, by contrast, confidence may reflect pre-existing familiarity with the topics rather than knowledge newly gained through the capacity-sharing activities – consistent with the fact that MENA CSOs, as more experienced organizations, found the content too basic to offer significant new insight.

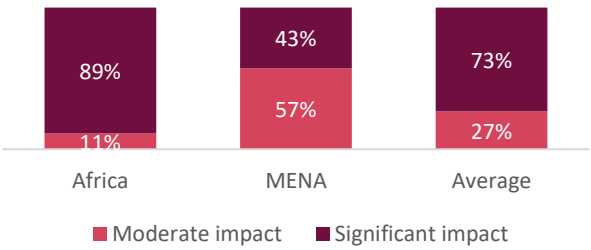
Finding 6: Capacity-sharing contributed to strengthened organizational systems, with greater reported impact among African CSOs than MENA CSOs.

The impact of capacity-sharing activities was layered, spanning shifts in ways of working at CSOs' organizational and programmatic levels.

At **organizational level**, while 73% (n=30) of CSOs across regions noted a significant impact on their organizational capacity, only 43% (n=6) of MENA CSOs reported so, dropping to 17% (n=1) in Jordan.

Impact at organizational level translated into the **development and/or revision of internal policies** as reported by 90% of CSOs (n=36), including by all (100%, n=26) African CSOs, 71% of MENA CSOs (n=10) but only 33% of Jordanian CSOs (n=2). Across regions, CSOs developed or revised policies related to human resources, project management, leadership and board management,

Impact on CSOs' organizational capacity



communication, finance and compliance, monitoring and evaluation, safeguarding and procurement. In Africa, CSOs indicated that such organizational changes were informed by the baseline OCA findings and supported by the one-on-one accompaniment (including on project management) which helped them reflect on their strengths and gaps and self-identify priorities. Endline OCA findings – administered to African CSOs only, confirmed these trends showing that 62% of identified gaps had been actioned (see OCA endline report). In MENA, however, CSOs who reported a moderate impact attributed this to their experience, the existence of strong systems prior to IGNITE, and the light-touch approach of the organizational development support. Interestingly, MENA CSOs tended to benefit more from RMF technical teams' individualized support in finance or M&E rather than the external technical experts' accompaniment, which was found to be too generic and not aligned with IGNITE's requirements.

Shifts at the organizational level were also supported by the earmarked organizational development budget, which facilitated the purchase of equipment, rental of offices or recruitment and retention of staff. A few CSOs also mentioned cascading learnings from capacity-sharing activities to other staff members and in some cases non-IGNITE CSOs. For instance, a Seeds CSO in Nigeria explained how they were planning to use their cost-extension for further organizational capacity development that would not only benefit them but other feminist CSOs.

CSOs also indicated that the strengthening of their operational procedures and ability to retain (trained) staff translated into improved programmatic decision-making and ultimately stronger implementation at the community level. IGNITE's compliance procedures reinforced this trend; while many CSOs initially begrudged these requirements, they, combined with the capacity-sharing activities and accompaniment, ultimately contributed to strengthening their organizational systems. As a result, by the end of the project, **CSOs felt more confident** in designing strong projects and more **credible** and aligned with institutional donors' compliance requirements. A few CSOs also credited the allocation of new grants to their participation in IGNITE capacity-sharing activities.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding: from blind spot to priority

As with the capacity-sharing approach, the safeguarding support followed two distinct delivery modalities. In MENA, RMF led the component, providing trainings along with one-on-one accompaniment to CSOs who identified safeguarding as a priority gap. In Africa, while UAF-A was originally expected to follow a similar approach, implementation lagged behind, compelling IRC had to assume a more active role in the last six months of the project to provide adequate support to CSOs.

Out of 41 interviews, at least 18 CSOs (44%) revised or developed their safeguarding policies. CSOs reported that the safeguarding activities – mostly delivered through trainings and CoP sessions, deepened their understanding of what safeguarding entails. It also helped them translate theoretical concepts into practical policies and procedures. Notably, safeguarding was among the most frequent and spontaneous themes mentioned when CSOs were asked about the capacity-sharing component, suggesting that it resonated as a particularly meaningful area of learning.

Regional variations: what worked and what did not



In Africa, the capacity-sharing component used a multi-pronged and complementary approach. The capacity-sharing component was successful in Africa and contributed to a higher impact at CSO level because of the **combination** of all of these mutually reinforcing elements:

- **Comprehensive organizational capacity assessment** (OCA) that supported CSOs in identifying their strengths, gaps and helped them narrow down their priorities. A document and process owned by CSOs, to which they can go back to.
- A series of trainings and workshops **aligned** with CSOs' organizational development priorities.
- The co-development of organizational and advocacy **action plans** setting the way for CSOs' accompaniment.
- The combination of **multiple delivery modalities** such as trainings, communities of practice and workshops along with intensive one-on-one accompaniment sessions at project management, organizational and advocacy levels.
- A **complementary support** between organizational and advocacy capacity-sharing topics.
- A pool of **nascent, small-size CSOs** with potential for growth and development.



While overall MENA CSOs tended to be positive about the capacity-sharing components, **impact at programmatic and organizational level was less visible** due to the following factors:

- **The lack of a detailed capacity need assessment** to identify CSOs' strengths, gaps and priorities. This resulted in **maladapted** training material, which proved too basic for most CSOs.
- MENA CSOs were often **mature and well-established organizations,** with trained and experienced staff. They therefore required more advanced training and accompaniment.
- The advocacy component and support were introduced **too late** for CSOs to integrate learnings fully into their own projects. Advocacy plans were also finalized in the first half of 2026, with many CSOs having already finished or being near completion of their own activities and without earmarked budget.
- CSOs reported variable quality across experts, with support typically limited to a **single field visit** – that served as a check-in of policies and documentation, rather than the intensive, hands-on accompaniment provided in the Africa region. Several MENA CSOs found RMF's technical support (MEAL, finance) more useful than that of external experts, noting that the latter's training and accompaniment were too generic and did not align with IGNITE's specific requirements.

Finding 7: Capacity-sharing contributed to positive shifts in CSOs' programmatic approaches and ways of working.

The programmatic capacity-sharing activities also had a significant impact as reported by 73% (n=30) of CSOs across regions including 78% of African CSOs (n=21) and 64% of MENA CSOs (n=9). Impact at the **programmatic level** translated into various **shifts in CSOs' ways of working** in relation to advocacy, inclusion and overall project design and delivery.

As with safeguarding, **inclusion** was among the most frequently and spontaneously topics mentioned by CSOs. CSOs reported being more intentional not only in their project design and delivery but also their organizational infrastructures. For instance, a Scale-up CSO from DR Congo recounted how they shifted their design approach to place gender and inclusion at the heart of their project. They explained that '*the aspect of inclusion was a relatively new concept for [their] organization, but thanks to the capacity-sharing activities, [they] have been able to integrate it in a concrete way into [their] interventions*'.

Following the programmatic capacity-sharing activities, CSOs also reported a shift in the way they implement their projects. They have deepened their **community-based and girl-centered approaches** placing girls at the core of their project design, monitoring and delivery. For example, a Nigerian Scale-up CSO shared that *'IGNITE capacity-sharing strengthened [our] engagement with parents, caregivers, and community leaders through more structured and participatory approaches. This addressed low community support and resistance to girls' education, leading to greater acceptance of girls' enrollment and retention'*. They further added that these approaches will continue to guide future programming. A Lebanese Scale-up CSO who used to focus on girls only has now integrated caregivers into their projects as well. A Scale-up CSO in DR Congo noted that the project gave them the opportunity to explore approaches when working with adolescent girls, including awareness-raising initiatives and educational discussions. They found that a community-based approach – particularly through educational discussions, allowed them to better capture the attention of adolescent girls and receive their feedback, unlike mass awareness campaigns.

Advocacy approach

As part of its theory of change, IGNITE aimed to amplify CSOs' voices and provide them with access to advocacy platforms. The project did so through a two-fold approach; (i) direct advocacy support to CSOs with a specific focus on African CSOs, and (ii) participation in national, regional or international advocacy platforms.

Direct support took the form of onsite trainings and **one-on-one accompaniment** for African CSOs and one-on-one accompaniment sessions only for MENA CSOs. Additionally, Research and Advocacy grantees across regions received one-on-one technical accompaniment as per their needs. Over the course of the project, 79 CSOs have either attended advocacy training or participated in one-on-one sessions (54 in Africa and 25 in MENA), and 6 were accompanied on their research work. As part of the original research and advocacy support plan, PASGR also organized six stakeholder forums in 2025 with a cumulative 181 participants. These were held in Nigeria, Cameroon and Ethiopia.

Through invitation or sponsoring, IGNITE also offered CSOs the opportunity to speak in external-facing advocacy platforms. Several attended **regional and international platforms** throughout the course of the project and seven were invited to the Sexual Violence Research Initiative conference in October 2026. IGNITE also facilitated active engagement of CSOs in donor calls with AFD or with IRC Country Offices. These events went beyond networking purposes and aimed to highlight the importance of CSOs' work and facilitate potential collaboration opportunities.

Finding 8: CSOs reported strengthened advocacy capacity and confidence, supporting more strategic engagement with stakeholders and decision-makers.

Due to the modality differences across regions and timing of endline data collection[14], African CSOs reported a higher impact on their **advocacy capacity** highlighting how the trainings, accompaniment and co-creation of advocacy plans, helped them better strategize their advocacy efforts, think outside the box and improve message content creation. In terms of **advocacy products**, at least 57 CSOs have developed advocacy plans, including 32 CSOs in Africa and 25 in MENA. Other advocacy products developed by African CSOs with IGNITE support include 23 intergenerational dialogues and 13 policy briefs.

CSO-level advocacy activities varied greatly, but most followed similar approaches by targeting a wide range of stakeholders to shift harmful social norms affecting adolescent girls' education. They implemented **community-based awareness-raising activities** through community dialogues, art-based approaches or sensitization sessions. For instance, a Seeds CSO in Burkina Faso explained how their community-based advocacy strategy combined with girl-centered activities started to shift attitudes and beliefs turning initially reluctant communities into active advocates. The use of different approaches such as community dialogues, direct engagement of leaders, sensitization sessions at school level along with social media campaigns, resulted in the buy-in and ownership of local leaders as key allies on adolescent girls' education.

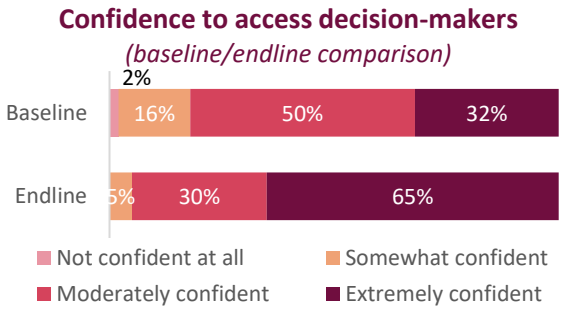
CSOs have also conducted **mass outreach campaigns** through radio programming or social media messaging. A Nigerian Scale-up CSO developed advocacy messages on girls' education, gender-based violence prevention and adolescent girls' wellbeing and disseminated these via radio programs, community dialogues and stakeholder engagements. They reported how these have begun to challenge harmful norms, increased community support for adolescent girls' education, and encouraged the enrollment, retention, and attendance of adolescent girls during their menstruation. The positive outcomes of these engagement strategies have encouraged the organization to continue using such an approach beyond their IGNITE-funded project. A Scale-up CSO from Burkina Faso recounted how they participated in the IGNITE-led #myrighttolearn campaign and disseminated their messages on various social media platforms. They explained how adolescent girls' voices were at the core of their messaging along with the testimonies of girls' education allies such as local leaders. Within a few months, they produced eight advocacy materials, including testimonial videos, storytelling and sensitization posters. These generated over 40,000 views and over 1,700 engagements. Today, following their advocacy initiatives, local leaders and teachers alike understand the importance of girls' education as part of a fight for social justice and equity. Finally, using findings from their research study, a consortium of CSOs in Ethiopia engaged different stakeholders including girls themselves, caregivers, teachers, leaders and authorities through different advocacy channels. Their radio programming reached over 200,000 auditors. They also presented their findings to high level decision-makers who expressed interest in providing technical and political support.

Many CSOs also directly advocated to **decision-makers** at various levels and reported higher confidence engaging with them. Sixty-five percent of CSOs (n=26) across both regions felt extremely confident and 30% (n=12) felt moderately confident about their ability to effectively access and advocate with decision-makers, showing a 33-percentage points confidence increase from baseline.

While some CSOs reported having already good relationships with decision-makers prior to IGNITE, many attributed their growing confidence to (i) their IGNITE-funded projects which increased their credibility and visibility to decision-makers, (ii) their strengthened capacity to engage various stakeholders and (iii) the connections and inspiration provided by IGNITE and other CSOs. CSOs who

[14] At the time of data collection with MENA CSOs, advocacy plans had not yet been finalized for every CSO.

reported moderate or somewhat confidence revealed still facing challenges related to funding, limited access to decision-makers, security context, timing constraints and the need for additional support.



In Cameroon, one CSO received support from an IGNITE-recruited legal consultant to obtain official NGO status. This enabled the organization to formalize and institutionalize its collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF). IGNITE's accompaniment helped them structure a rigorous accountability framework turning project achievements into evidence-based advocacy products and scaling up their model at the national level. Another Scale-up CSO in DR Congo helped secure a Ministry of Education circular prohibiting discriminatory exclusion of pregnant adolescent girls from schools.

Peer-learning and networking

Creating spaces to connect

Peer-learning and networking were key project pillars woven through IGNITE's three components. Communities of practice, workshops alongside WhatsApp groups and IGNITE's Facebook page served as platforms for **peer-learning** and experience-sharing. On these, CSOs disseminated their achievements and shared their tools and methodologies with their peers. In total 47% capacity-sharing sessions were led or co-led by CSOs spanning topics such as monitoring and evaluation, education, safeguarding and research.

Beyond peer-learning, IGNITE also organized several activities to foster both intra- and inter-**networking** connections throughout the project timeframe. For instance, the consortium coordinated in-country kick-off ceremonies inviting relevant stakeholders, including IRC Country Offices, to meet with CSOs. Similarly, IGNITE participated in humanitarian and international development events, inviting CSOs to speak and share their experience. Finally, IGNITE facilitated five networking events[15]; four in MENA and one pan-Africa event convening grassroots organizations, local authorities, donors, foundations, the private sector and humanitarian actors. These events aimed at amplifying the voices, expertise, and leadership of CSOs, celebrating their progress and exploring the future of community-led action. IGNITE-led advocacy activities, particularly in Africa, such as the #myrighttolearn campaign or participation in IRC Country Offices' 16 days of activism campaigns, were also intended to raise CSOs' profiles and bolster their access and visibility to external networks and coalitions.

Finding 9: IGNITE supported movement-building by strengthening CSO connections, collaboration and collective action beyond the project.

Overall, CSOs reported relatively **high levels of intra-IGNITE network collaboration** with some country and regional level variations. The majority of CSOs across regions have mentioned collaborating with one another, yet those in Ethiopia and MENA reported slightly lower levels of collaboration. The latter may be due to the timing of some activities – for instance, the first MENA networking events occurred in early 2026.

Internally, CSOs reported that IGNITE acted as a **strong connector and network facilitator** between CSOs through onsite trainings which served as spaces for organic networking. Onsite trainings were a

[15] At the time of writing, two networking events in MENA, scheduled for late 2026, remain contingent on the security situation in the region.

driving element for establishing connections between CSOs, providing the opportunity to meet face-to-face and learn about each other's work, expertise and strengths. WhatsApp groups and CoP sessions also extended opportunities for peer-learning, experience sharing and networking beyond physical spaces.

Peer-learning and intra-networking opportunities contributed to improving the quality of CSOs' interventions, introducing them to new and innovative approaches while capitalizing on other CSOs' strengths. CSOs felt that through these activities they gained a '**sense of community**', particularly at country level, describing how their peers inspired, motivated and supported them when facing challenges.

Other types of collaboration included:

- **Knowledge and experience sharing** that started during IGNITE's activities and continued outside of IGNITE's scope. Several CSOs reported examples of material sharing, peer mentoring, learning visits and overall experience sharing both at programmatic and organizational levels. For instance, two Nigerian CSOs contacted another Nigerian CSO whose work focuses on supporting people living with a disability to further strengthen their knowledge about inclusion. A Congolese Scale-up CSO revised its safeguarding policies and practices with the support and accompaniment of another DR Congo based CSO while two Lebanese CSOs also reported receiving prevention on sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) training by a third one.
- **Joint implementation and resource mobilization.** Collaboration also extended into joint programmatic delivery and project development, with CSOs pooling their capacity. For example, a Jordanian Scale-up CSO recounted how two other CSOs reached out to them for support in accessing schools due to their partnership with the Ministry of Education. While a Seeds CSO in Cameroon joined forces with another one to implement a menstrual hygiene activity with the partner CSO's girls' club participants.
- **New networks and coalitions.** Beyond one-off collaboration, some CSOs moved toward more durable, formalized structures by establishing coalitions intended to outlast the IGNITE project. For instance, three CSOs in DR Congo have set up their own coalitions through the IGNITE network and a Scale-up CSO in Jordan established the 'National Coalition for Girls' Education'.

Externally, 69% of CSOs (n=29) have **joined new networks**, coalitions, campaigns or feminist movements focused on women's rights and/or girls' education. A few African CSOs have reported participating in global initiatives such as Women Deliver, Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), Adolescent Girls Summit and Vital Voices. Endline findings, though, showed significant regional variations with 93% of African CSOs (n=26) compared to 21% of MENA CSOs (n=3) having joined new networks. Variations can be attributed to the differing advocacy approaches in Africa and MENA. For instance, the majority of African CSOs who joined new networks or campaigns did so through campaigns led by IGNITE itself (e.g. #myrighttolearn). Furthermore, CSOs in Africa tend to be less connected to national or regional networks, contrasting with MENA CSOs who are not only well-established but also often had pre-existing connections in their country or region. Out of the 29 CSOs who joined new networks and coalitions, over half (55%, n=16) cited **IGNITE as a key role player** in initiating these connections while 31% (n=9) reported that IGNITE played a moderate role.

Visibility and recognition of IGNITE CSOs

Finding 10: IGNITE strengthened CSOs' visibility and credibility, reflected in greater recognition and new opportunities for engagement and partnership.

The large majority of CSOs (93%, n=39) pointed out that their participation in IGNITE contributed to **increasing their visibility and recognition** as credible organizations, whether at the local level (e.g. community, schools, local authorities and leaders and other organizations), national level (e.g. ministries, technical working groups, state-level authorities) or humanitarian actors level (e.g. UN agencies, INGOs and clusters).

CSOs reported multiple elements that led to increased visibility and recognition. Through the grant-making component, CSOs were able to implement activities thus raising their local presence but also giving them the opportunity to demonstrate their impact at community level while showcasing their advocacy efforts. In some cases, **social media engagement and increased media coverage** (including international ones) further elevated their profile and credibility. Participation in IGNITE capacity-sharing activities and project management accompaniment also **strengthened CSOs' capacities and confidence**. By being an IGNITE partner, some Seeds CSOs were able to prove that they can manage donors' reporting and compliance requirements, in turn, **increasing their credibility as legitimate partners** to international donors.

The impact of CSOs' increased visibility and recognition was multi-pronged:

- Some became **authorities' key partners**. They are now consulted by local authorities, invited to meetings, events and activities or asked to review policies or share their experience. Several CSOs mentioned that authorities have expressed interest in replicating their activities and approaches. A Scale-up CSO in Cameroon, for instance, declared that the Ministry of Secondary Education had decided to adopt their programmatic strategy and that thanks to the baseline report they produced through their project they have been able to join the Community of Practice for Numeracy and Literacy Data and work with the National Institute of Statistics. A Seeds CSO in Burkina Faso explained how they are now considered as a reliable partner by local and national stakeholders, including schools and Ministry. In Lebanon, a Scale-up CSO reported increased exposure among community members, other CSOs, youth groups, schools and municipalities.
- In Africa, a handful of CSOs indicated that INGOs and donors have spontaneously reached out to them for **partnership opportunities**, citing their IGNITE project and strengthened systems as contributing factors. A Congolese Scale-up CSO explicitly attributed their participation in IGNITE as the reason why they are now invited to sectoral cluster meetings and have been contacted by an international organization to share their experience working with adolescent girls. Another Congolese Scale-up CSO recounted how its remedial class activities have not only interested donors but may also lead to a partnership agreement with another international organization.
- A few have **received awards or formal recognition for their work** from external stakeholders and cited IGNITE as the catalyst for increasing the visibility of their work. For instance, a Nigerian Scale-up CSO stated that they had been invited to Germany for the One Young World Fellowship under a female-led support network and scholarship and ultimately accepted into the program because of the credibility of their work showcased through IGNITE funding.

Conclusion

The IGNITE model demonstrated that strengthening feminist CSOs' capacity requires more than financial support: it depends on trust-based partnerships, flexible funding and sustained, tailored accompaniment. Treating CSOs as equal partners and experts of their own contexts, rather than implementing agencies, created space for bottom-up support and honest feedback. IGNITE's experience also highlighted the importance of adaptive and agile project management and of balancing trust with proportionate due diligence, by adapting compliance requirements to CSOs' size and maturity.

Capacity-sharing was most valuable when it was tailored to CSOs' context, maturity and priorities. Capacity-sharing was perceived as more impactful in Africa, where longer-term, OCA-informed accompaniment provided greater scope for sustained organizational strengthening than the lighter-touch modality used in MENA. Findings indicated that when CSOs are supported to identify their own priorities, access flexible organizational development funding, and are offered practical individualized accompaniment, they were better positioned to strengthen organizational systems and apply learning in their programs. Findings also highlighted the importance of pacing support so that learning can be embedded into CSOs' projects, while treating safeguarding and inclusion as foundational areas of organizational and programmatic practice.

Advocacy support and networking extended the value of capacity-sharing beyond individual organizations. Training, accompaniment and co-creation of advocacy plans and campaigns strengthened CSOs' reported capacity and confidence to engage stakeholders and decision-makers. Networking opportunities, communities of practice, peer exchange and participation in external events further supported peer-learning, collaboration, movement-building and access to platforms for influence. Importantly, IGNITE did not treat CSOs' voice amplification as a one-off opportunity to speak, but as a combination of capacity, resources and relationship-brokering that could support more sustained and locally-driven influence.

Recommendations for future programming

Future programming should retain IGNITE's core combination of flexible funding, trust-based partnership and practical accompaniment. Longer-term, adequately staffed accompaniment should be budgeted, and organizational capacity assessments used to tailor support to CSO maturity. Inclusion and safeguarding should be integrated in capacity-sharing planning from the start.

Flexible-funding should remain central to future projects along with deliberate investment in advocacy, networking and movement-building. This should include opportunities for peer exchange, communities of practice, coalition-building and connections with donors, decision-makers and wider networks.

Compliance requirements should be proportionate, adaptive and clearly communicated. Reporting and compliance requirements should be streamlined where possible and calibrated to CSO capacity, while roles, responsibilities and expectations across consortium partners should be clearly defined. Adaptive management mechanisms should be maintained so that implementation can respond to CSO feedback and changing contextual needs.

Selected impact & outcome indicators

% of feminist CSOs that believe their participation in the project has increased their visibility and recognition

93%

Target: 70%
Progress against target: 133%

% of feminist CSOs satisfied with the collaborative partnerships within the IGNITE consortium

90%

Target: 70%
Progress against target: 129%

% of feminist CSO members surveyed who agree that their capacity has been strengthened through participating in the project

83%

Target: 80%
Progress against target: 104%

% of feminist CSOs satisfied with IGNITE's capacity-strengthening sessions

68%

Target: 70%
Progress against target: 97%

% of CSO partners who report increased confidence in their organization's ability to effectively access and advocate with decision-makers

65%

Target: 70%
Progress against target: 93%

% of feminist CSOs who joined new networks/coalitions or feminist movements through their participation in the consortium

60%

Target: 30%
Progress against target: 200%



MORE INFORMATION

Emily Jacquard

IGNITE Project Director

Emily.Jacquard@rescue.org

www.ignite.rescue.org