

**IGNITE  
PHILANTHROPY**

inspiring the end to violence  
against girls and boys

**2024-2029 STRATEGY**

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**.enabling transformative  
change from local to global**

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# OUR STRATEGY

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# .our invitation to you

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## **Violence against children continues to escalate around the world, despite every country's commitment to end it.**

Global efforts to stop violence have been unprecedented. While some progress is being made, these have largely focused on treating symptoms rather than resolving causes. And they have struggled to connect to the reality of everyday life— the reality of children and youth who face violence. For them, for children everywhere, violence remains endemic.

**We believe that radically different approaches are necessary to achieve our vision: a world where violence against children is eradicated and where children and youth exercise their rights, shape their futures, and live in peace.**

*Ignite Philanthropy: Inspiring the End to Violence Against Girls and Boys* was launched in 2016 by a group of foundations committed to ending violence against children. Since then, as part of the global community, we have learned much and recognise that our efforts have not been good enough. With the creation of our 2024-2029 strategy, Ignite is committed to making changes and to doing better by children.

**Through our new strategy, Ignite will embrace radically different approaches that:**

- ▾ Refocus our efforts on the structural factors that lead to violence on the ground – including social, economic, political and environmental;
- ▾ Prioritise partners on the ground – those who best understand what leads to the violence around them – especially frontline lived experience leaders and their allies most affected by violence; and
- ▾ Continue to engage in global spaces, ensuring that our partners' wisdom and experience inform global conversation and action.

Ignite's new strategy is neither a refresh nor a tweak. It is a new response to the troubling question of why our world still allows and perpetrates violence against children. A response that centres the most critical actors in ending violence – those who are working to bring about genuine and enduring change in their communities, countries, and our world.

**Such leaders have inspired this strategy and we invite you to join us in our reinvigorated journey towards a world free from all violence against children.**

## .about Ignite and this strategy

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**Violence** includes the use of threatened or actual power against a person or group in ways that can or do cause harm.

Ignite Philanthropy is a philanthropic fund that supports bold efforts to ensure every child lives a life free from violence. Co-created by Human Dignity Foundation, Oak Foundation, and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund in 2016 to heighten their impact, what began as a modest donor collaboration quickly developed to become a creative and strategic grantmaker. We have intentionally kept an exceptionally low profile across these years, to ensure the manoeuvrability needed to play many different roles in response to shifting strategic circumstances over time. These roles range from funder, to adviser, to convener, to incubator, and more in between.

Our original strategic priorities were a robust Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children as well as a field driven by powerful grassroots voices, with a strong resource base, and informed by evidence-based solutions. These broad categories gave us unusual flexibility to engage in whatever ways our funders and we agreed upon for supporting greater progress. There was no articulated vision, theory of change, or explicit values commitment.

For these and other reasons, Ignite outgrew its original model within years, and we decided in late 2018 to enter into a strategic planning process. The process experienced unexpected delays due to unrelated donor timing needs, the COVID pandemic, as well as the Ignite Advisory Board's eventual request that the Ignite team take the lead in developing a new strategy.

The strategy drafting process was directly informed by learnings from the past 8 years of work; individual or group consultations with 100+ colleagues from children's spaces and beyond; as well as [key information resources](#). We are profoundly grateful to our current Advisory Board – Aengus Ó Dochartaigh (formerly Human Dignity Foundation), Brigitte De Lay (Oak Foundation), and Maureen Greenwood-Basken (Wellspring Philanthropic Fund) – for their deep engagement and decisive strategic feedback on the initial draft, which already demonstrated a radical departure from what Ignite was created for and had been.

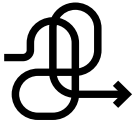
With the initial draft approved by Ignite's Advisory Board, we held a field consultation process from September – December 2023 to test the strategy and provide a space for feedback, assessing its relevance and what we need to achieve our new vision. Sixty colleagues participated in online Town Hall conversations, over one hundred comments were posted on an online platform, and hundreds of invaluable feedback points resulted from this stunning response. Following wide-ranging revisions on that basis, we held a final sense-making session with eight colleagues, invited to ensure diverse stakeholder perspectives. Their suggestions led to a last round of additions, amendments, and this final version.

To date, our founding donors plus Porticus have invested nearly \$34M through Ignite to help advance the field working tirelessly to prevent violence against children. As this strategy launches, we are in conversations with them and with other interested donors in the hope that they will continue to invest generously in a brighter future for all children.

For Ignite, this is not simply a new strategy, but a new model and way of being. This means asserting a bold vision, embracing a clear identity and position, and maximising our role as a philanthropic entity in service to the field ending violence against children.

# our guiding principles

As Ignite, our journey towards a world free from all violence against children necessarily requires an acknowledgement of our place in this strategy and the inherent power we hold. To keep us anchored to our mission, we have drawn up a set of guiding principles<sup>1</sup> that we commit to following in every future action and interaction.



## Constructive Disruption

We strive to question the status quo, convene and organise, shake up traditions and dismantle conventional power structures. We want to create the conditions for new narratives, modes of influence, and change that is driven by lived experience leaders and their allies.



## Courageous Experimentation

We create the conditions for the blossoming of new ways of building power and making change, trialling ideas several times before they achieve mainstream acceptance. We embrace the variety of knowledge sources held by our partners.

**Lived experience** is an evolving term that we use to refer to having been directly impacted by violence. Although "lived experience" does not refer to what has strictly been studied, read about, or worked on, we assume that we are surrounded by people directly impacted by violence. Some may feel comfortable disclosing their personal experience, most may not. We do not use the term or approach our work to encourage disclosure of the violence that people have experienced.



## Applied Learning

At the heart of our work is a belief in continuous learning, and that learning does not happen in an echo chamber but comes alive when applied in the field.

<sup>1</sup> More detail provided in Annex 1.



## Uncompromising Equity

We commit to embedding equity into our internal and external organisational model, knowing that the work of questioning and altering inequitable structures is never complete. We approach this work with persistence, productive rage, and openness to deep listening and change. We recognise the necessity and challenge of building trusting relationships to get there.



## Purposeful Inclusion

We commit to co-designing spaces where intersectionality and a diversity of identities, voices, and perspectives are not simply welcomed, but are part of the fabric of our organisational design.



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# .our context

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Violence against children (VAC) takes many forms: neglect, physical and emotional abuse, rape, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, female genital mutilation/cutting, sexual abuse, exploitation, trafficking and child marriage, not to mention the many violent ways in which children die during conflict. Its consequences for children, families, and communities are devastating and can span lifetimes and generations.

The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child elevated VAC to an issue of global importance and urgency. Yet it took 20 years, and considerable civil society pressure, for the UN Secretary General to appoint the first-ever Special Representative on VAC.

***Over half of all children experience violence each year.<sup>2</sup>***

Additional efforts to prioritise VAC as a global challenge followed.

In 2015, in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), all countries committed for the first time to end all forms of VAC. The UN Secretary General launched the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children the following year, while 10 international agencies issued the joint INSPIRE framework for strategies to end VAC. Many believed that international efforts against VAC had reached a critical, and positive, turning point.

Ignite Philanthropy was established in this era of promise, and over time we have built a complex network and positioned ourselves as a vital participant in the small, committed constellation of international institutions dedicated to addressing VAC.

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<sup>2</sup> Susan Hillis, James Mercy, Aداوگو Amobi, Howard Kress; Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates. *Pediatrics* March 2016; 137 (3)

Progress has most certainly been made over the past nine years, but it has proved difficult to sustain. Particularly in times of crisis, governments and institutions tend to prioritise other challenges. Perhaps because of this instability, stakeholder groups working on VAC become fragmented, with efforts aimed at individual components of VAC rather than at the bigger picture, thus neglecting the vital internal and external connections that allow for more holistic and sustainable interventions. Meanwhile, violence against children is increasing, not diminishing.

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## .our learning

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Donors and donor intermediaries play a considerable role in shaping the work to address VAC: we have achieved successes, but we have also perpetuated approaches that do not work. For full transparency it is important to recognise that we, too, have:

- ↘ Invested significant resources into strengthening various global infrastructures that have not always thrived.
- ↘ Supported top-down paradigms and solutions that have been delivered to low- and middle-income countries in place of true partnership or local ownership.
- ↘ Not consistently asserted the importance of the voices and experiences of those directly affected by violence.
- ↘ Not adequately pushed public and private donors to be accountable to those affected by violence.
- ↘ Accepted interventionist approaches and not advocated strongly enough to address the root causes of violence.

Yet we have used our position – which gives us a critical vantage point – to observe, debate, and learn from our mistakes.

We find that VAC is endemic because it is fixed to social, economic, political and environmental conditions that exist outside the individual, and that cannot be resolved by the individual alone. These include poverty, discrimination, inequality, patriarchy, and much more. These structural drivers lead to the many different situations where children are at greater risk of becoming victims of violence. And it is power that keeps these structural drivers in place.

Dismantling these structures is admittedly no easy task. Our view is that all VAC interventions should address these to some degree. More broadly, given that we are talking about structures of power, we believe that those who currently hold power bear a particular duty. Governments, the private sector, and other power holders can have a substantial impact on structures that perpetuate VAC and can reverse negative trends by being accountable for and responsible with the power they hold.

Of course, no one approach and no one group can transform entrenched structures that enable VAC. Real change at this level requires a degree of collective power that is necessarily diverse, intersectional and intergenerational. Only system changes can lead to transformative change in VAC.

In other words, our central assumption is that structural drivers set the stage for all VAC, and system changes are the only way to dismantle them. This is the cornerstone of our Theory of Change.

**Intersectional** approaches address the different forms of discrimination and oppression that intersect and combine (e.g., patriarchy, ageism, ableism, heteronormativity, colonialism) to compound inequities

**Systems change** means shifting the conditions that are holding a problem in place



# our Theory of Change

Central to our Theory of Change is our vision of a world where endemic VAC is eradicated and where children and youth exercise their rights, shape their futures, and live in peace. At the field level, the approaches that we believe hold the greatest potential to achieve this are:

**B**

**Boosting** organising by lived experience leaders and their allies, especially intergenerational organising (youth and adult), through greater support, resources and capacity.

**D**

**Disrupting** dominant narratives about the changes that are needed, the strategies to achieve them, and the leadership required.

**C**

**Cultivating** alliances by bringing together partners and coalitions, as well as intersecting and interdisciplinary movements, in trust and collaboration.

**H**

**Harnessing** lessons learned from the past and present in order to grow with a better understanding of how change can happen.

**Organising or building power** broadly refers to groups developing and sustaining an organised base of people most impacted by structural inequities related to violence against children, and engaging the base directly in processes to change related norms, policies, institutions, structures, and narratives. Such groups mobilise the base, nurture the base's leadership and holistic development (including well-being), interrogate their own internal power dynamics, build lasting external power, and escalate pressure on decision-makers to achieve the systemic change that is necessary. They build power through their progressive victories, and contributions to collective victories, from local to national/regional/global levels.

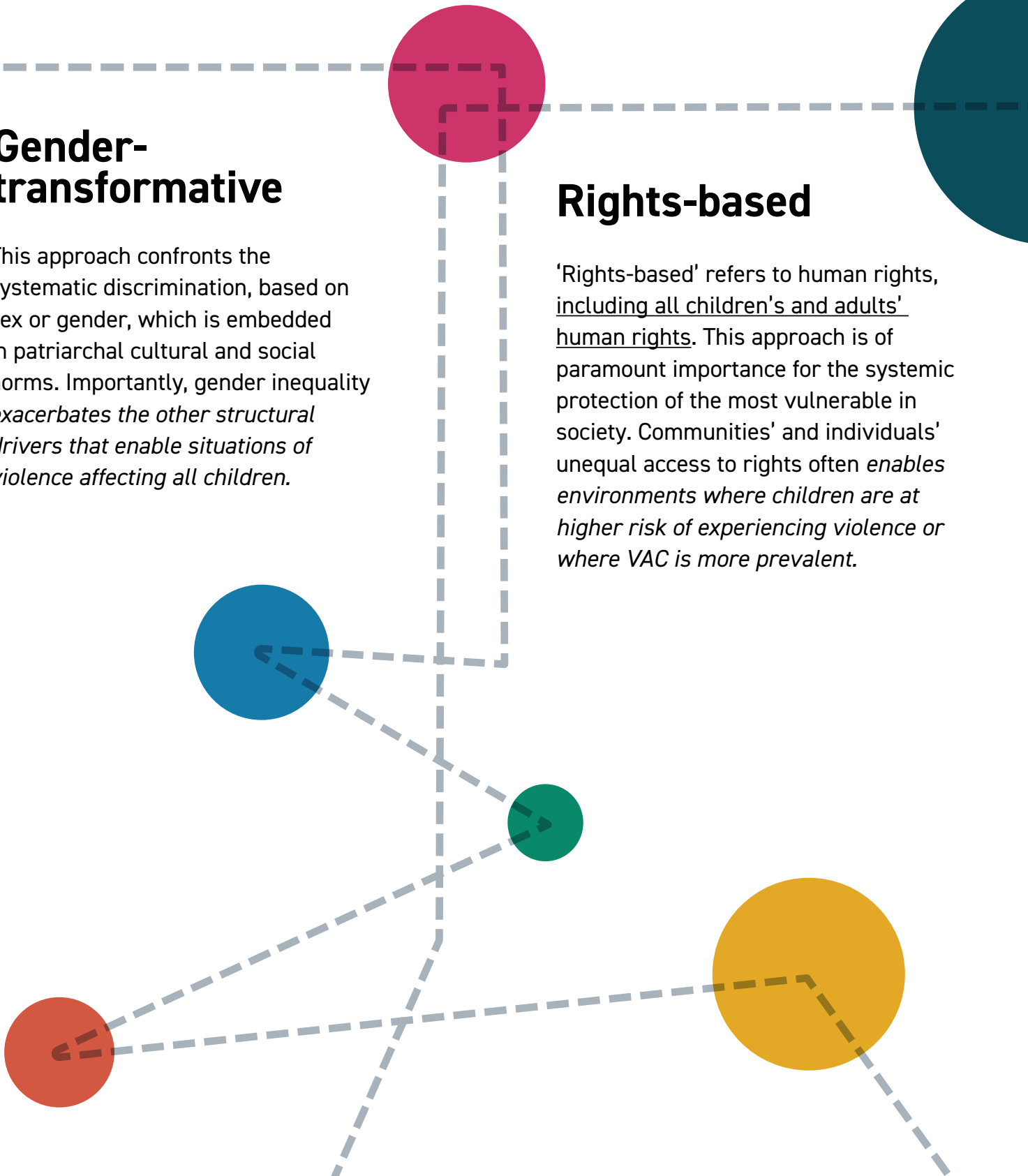
While these can be strategically deployed according to the context and desired goals, we believe that there are two cross-cutting approaches that must be used in all interventions:


## Gender-transformative

This approach confronts the systematic discrimination, based on sex or gender, which is embedded in patriarchal cultural and social norms. Importantly, gender inequality *exacerbates the other structural drivers that enable situations of violence affecting all children.*

## Rights-based

'Rights-based' refers to human rights, including all children's and adults' human rights. This approach is of paramount importance for the systemic protection of the most vulnerable in society. Communities' and individuals' unequal access to rights often *enables environments where children are at higher risk of experiencing violence or where VAC is more prevalent.*





Gender inequality and unequal access to rights are present in all societies – albeit to varying degrees – and their presence allows VAC-related risks to increase and spread. To be sustainable, efforts to combat VAC should set the explicit goal of acting on unequal gender relations and unequal rights access.

In different combinations, the above approaches will lead to the changes necessary to pave the way for our vision. We want to see:

- **Sustainable groups** within civil society with strong internal capacities that help them withstand challenges.
- **Vibrant intersectoral and interconnected** networks and movements, with a strong sense of aligned identity and purpose.
- **A committed and reliable donor community** that embraces complexity and supports approaches that address structural drivers.
- **Continuous shared learning** that informs approaches and collaborative action.
- **Equitable distribution of resources** to low- and middle-income countries, grassroots, and other stakeholders working on under-funded issues.
- **Participation and meaningful engagement** by leaders with lived experience of VAC – both youth and adults – as well as their allies.

Using this Theory of Change as our compass, we are committed to changing our work. And we reiterate *our open-ended invitation to others to join us on this learning journey in finding ways to radically reduce VAC and deliver transformative change for children facing violence.*

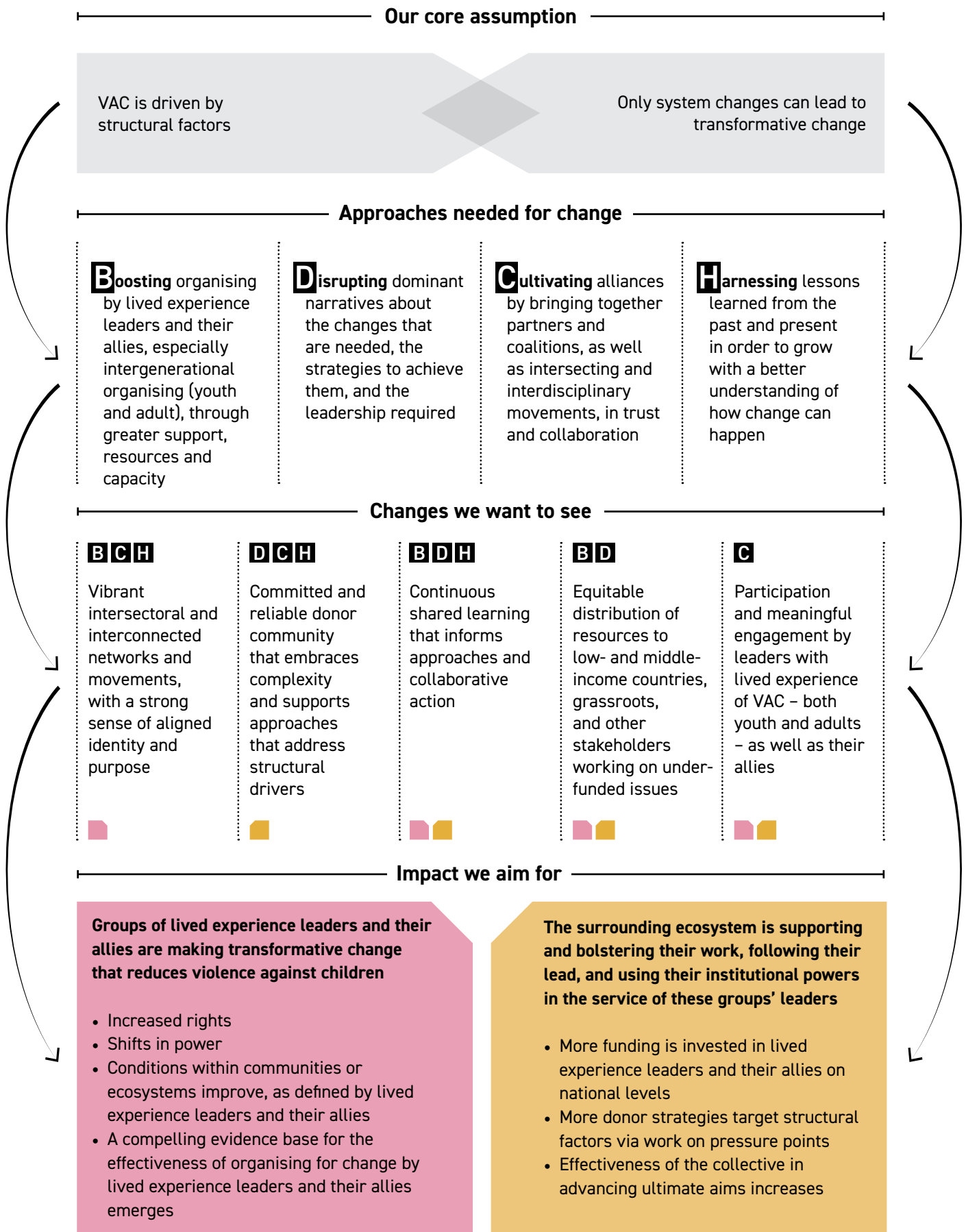


Figure 1: our Theory of Change

We will continually evolve in our thinking as we listen intently to stakeholders, and we will refine this Theory of Change as we learn. Throughout, we will hold ourselves accountable to the field as we strive to end all VAC.

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## .our partners

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Overall, our main partners, with whom we collaborate most closely, are:



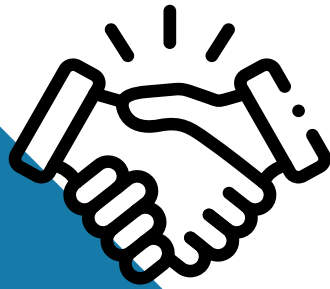
Those directly impacted by and organising for change on VAC are our principal partners. We embrace leaders who have lived experience of VAC, who are trusted by their community, and who press hardest for bold visions for change. There are innumerable ways in which leaders can be directly impacted by VAC – especially as children and young people who have experienced violence in their lives, and as adults who experienced violence when they were children or youth.

Whether youth-only, adult-only, or intergenerational, these are formal or informal groups that engage affected people in building lasting power for systemic change, while also supporting their individual and collective development. We recognise that organising to address such a structural and endemic issue comes in all shapes and sizes, and with this strategy we want to consciously capture, strengthen and elevate those energies on the ground.

We will financially support such organising groups, and together we will identify the pressure points to address VAC in context. The groups themselves will then determine their strategies, and the extent of their interface with us and our other partners. Their input will help us clarify which critical allies we should also financially support.



## Critical allies



Critical allies include those willing to share power, access, and skills that can complement and support organising led or co-led by people directly affected by VAC. Some allies' work is so fundamental that we will support it financially. Because we understand that fields and sectors shift in scope, and that broader alliances build greater power, we will partner with allies from VAC and beyond.

Critical allies also include relevant networks, organisations, advocacy groups, governments, and multilateral agencies, as well as outfits that provide services such as legal, evaluation, research, communications, and others. Wherever feasible, we will support the building of networks that include national or regionally based intermediaries and experts so as to engage with our partners with greater contextual understanding and trust, and to further redirect power and resources closer to those addressing VAC in context.

## Funder partners



We will forge trust-based relationships with funders who share our view that the structural drivers of VAC must be addressed, particularly in interdisciplinary and intersectoral ways. This includes funders who will invest in our infrastructure and partner with us as an intermediary supporting the field. Alongside these efforts, we will seek to influence other funders through our learning and networking, in order to increase their awareness and find ways for them to fund aligned organisations, regardless of whether we are directly involved with them.

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# .our 2024-2029 offer

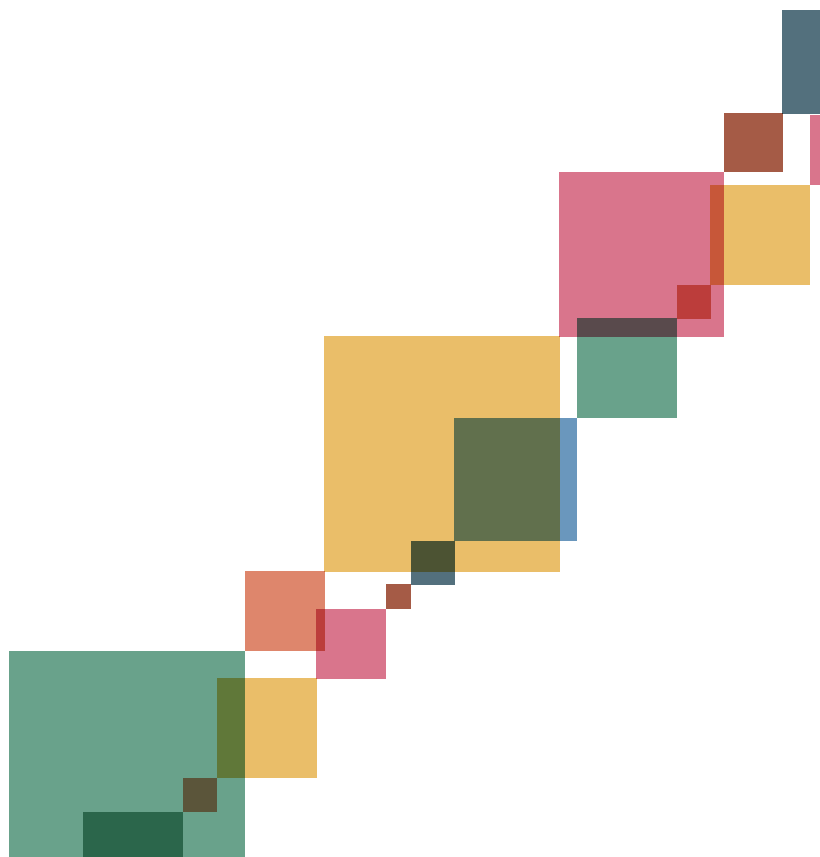
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In terms of how we will specifically pursue our Theory of Change, we will embark on a journey of learning with our partners around:

- ↳ the structural drivers that most affect violence;
- ↳ the pressure points that can be acted on to lead to change; and
- ↳ the strategic opportunities that inform and influence international stakeholders and entities.

We will do this through three intersecting and interdependent strands of work (resourcing for change, strengthening for agency, and partnering for action), along with a fourth and fully cross-cutting strand of work across the others (learning for impact).

As a philanthropic entity, we primarily create spaces and provide supports in line with our Theory of Change and in response to field priorities. Ignite “holds” these work strands in the sense that these are our essential activities overall, in which we typically play convening, co-design, and facilitation roles, with some decision-making roles as well.





## .resourcing for change

We will transform our resourcing efforts – our grantmaking – to redress the traditional funder-grantee imbalances, cultivate trust-based relationships, provide flexible and seed funding, and encourage our partners to hold themselves accountable to their base. This necessarily entails ethical and respectful funding practices and relationships. Concretely we will:

- Secure resources for all our grantmaking activities, prioritising resources that allow us to the greatest extent possible to provide flexible, multi-year, and core operating support grants to the field.
- Participate in co-creating power-sharing grantmaking approaches centred around our partners' needs. We must learn from them what makes processes more equitable, how to adapt them to different forms of lived experience activism, and how to make them more content-driven than compliance-driven. We will then use this learning to adapt to more specific calls for funding and grant-making processes. Where possible (e.g., pending any requirements placed on the source funds), we will facilitate participatory decision-making on grants.
- Ignite's role: We will secure grantmaking resources that speak both to field demand and to funders' priorities. Given that

match, we will facilitate participatory processes for grantmaking decisions with these resources. Funders' requirements and participatory decision-makers' prioritisation will determine where and how we deploy funding.

Ignite's **Thrive Together initiative** is a grantmaking and capacity strengthening program that aims to bolster the organising efforts of and emerging grassroots groups led or co-led by people with lived experience of childhood sexual violence and their closest allies. Thrive Together invests in these groups, strengthening their collective and individual capacities, expanding their connections to the broader movement working to end violence, and removing obstacles that impede their impact. These are investments in community organisation leadership, which is fundamental for proximity to challenges on the ground, adaptability, trust and legitimacy with communities, efficiency, and contextualisation – all essential for community-driven impact. Final strategic decisions on the program design and all grantmaking decisions are made by a rotating panel of lived experience leaders, who are compensated for their time and supported in terms of safeguarding and wellbeing.



## .strengthening for agency

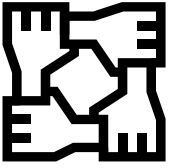
**Resilience** is “our ability to navigate hard internal and external conditions in ways that allow us to meet our political and organizing commitments” ([The Organizing Center](#))

**Agency** means having the power and resources to achieve something, including one’s own potential. Providing supports, access to knowledge, and other resources aims to increase partners’ power position and to offset the structural limitations that hinder their efforts.

We will engage closely with our partners to support their connectivity, resilience, and sustainability, and create space for them to achieve their full potential and agency for impact on the ground and beyond. This will be an opt-in opportunity for partners, where they will identify and prioritise their needs to strengthen capacity. Concretely we will:

- Co-design and deliver support and learning on resilience, sustainability, leadership, network and coalition building, and other prioritised areas (e.g., anti-oppression, collective impact, safeguarding and safety, well-being, collective understanding and voice on the funding landscape)
- Bring together those directly and indirectly linked to the field in order to enhance understanding, relationships, shared purpose and action, including through connections to advocacy opportunities at regional and global levels.
- Facilitate the engagement in and contribution to network building and the sharing of learning.
- Ignite’s role: We will secure programming resources that speak both to field demand and to funders’ priorities for a stronger field. Ignite will create and convene opt-in opportunities for partners to respectively and collectively explore and prioritise how they want to strengthen their agency, and who will be involved. Ignite will listen intently and, within the context of funding availability and requirements, will provide accompaniment and resources to help boost agency per field demand.

Ignite’s Strategic Networks initiative cultivates more effective and sustainable networks and key allies that build towards greater collective leadership, for a catalytic ripple effect in the field to end childhood sexual violence. Given demand and available resources, Ignite works as a trusted confidante and critical friend to understand and support action towards partners’ organisational and/or network development priorities, offering strategic perspective, referrals, and targeted add-on funds. At the collective level, Ignite also acts as a network-weaver among partners, supporting them – where they prioritise doing so – in identifying synergies, building connections, and forming alliances beyond their immediate networks.



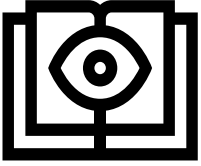
## .partnering for action

We will offer joint learning and action opportunities that nurture a community of international funders, and as a trusted confidante we will facilitate donor relationships and collaboration with our other partners. Concretely we will:

- Share intelligence that supports funding decisions and action, informed by the efforts of Ignite partners.
- Foster meaningful dialogue with our partners to promote mutual understanding, stronger approaches and equitable funding practices.
- Offer focused learning on strategic issues that help increase knowledge and impact, individually and collectively.
- Engage with the broader donor community and other stakeholders with the aim of fostering collaboration and increasing funding to the sector.
- Ignite's role: We will secure programming resources that speak both to donors' priorities and to field priorities for a stronger donor community. Ignite will create and convene opt-in opportunities

Ignite facilitated the conceptualisation, incubation, and operation of the End Violence Investors Forum from 2016-2023. As the only independent donor platform focusing on prevention of violence against children, the Forum supported a committed group of six multilateral and bilateral donors and six private foundations to deliver greater impact with their investments and to increase funding for violence prevention among the broader donor community. Thanks in part to the Forum's support, impact included donor members: making new investments; securing new donors' commitments; including new aspects of violence prevention in their portfolios for the first time; enhancing their strategies and programmes; and learning from each other and identifying areas for collaboration. We sunsetted the Forum in order to fully align future donor community support and strengthening – Partnering for Action – with the totality of this 2024-2029 strategy. At the time of this strategy's launch, an external evaluation of the Forum is being conducted. Once finalised, it will directly inform Partnering for Action program design and will be shared with all stakeholders.

for donors (whether or not they fund Ignite) around their collective priorities, and convene opportunities for engagement and relationships with field partners based around shared donor/field priorities.



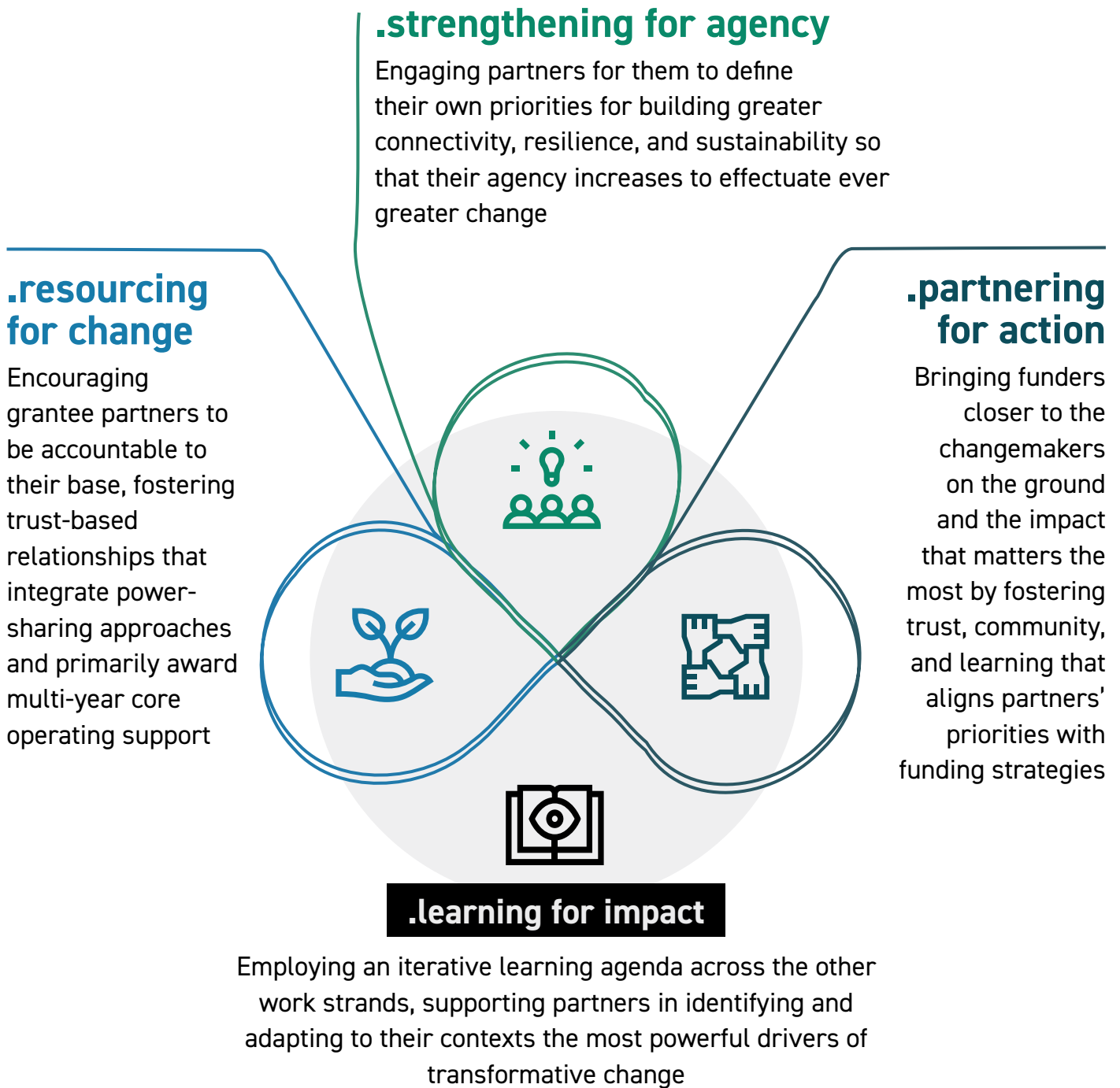
## .learning for impact

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Fully integrated as part of the three preceding work strands and everything we do, we will level the playing field and redistribute power by making space for new voices, enabling exchange and promoting a collective understanding of how transformative change can happen. Concretely we will:

- ↘ Enable and support meaningful sense-making processes on how organising works in context and leads to change.
- ↘ Complementing sector knowledge production, co-create impact frameworks and tools to understand what leads to changes in the systems that perpetuate violence against children and young people, and what can break the cycle.
- ↘ In collaboration with existing field efforts, convene our partners – lived experience leaders' organising groups, funder partners, and critical allies – to explore what we have collectively learned and develop a greater understanding of what enables change.
- ↘ Ignite's role: As a critical component of the three preceding work strands, we will create opt-in opportunities for all our partners to probe with us how organising and power building most effectively lead to change on the ground. We will facilitate learning agendas based upon our partners' experiences and priorities. We will convene interested partners to participate in a broader, ongoing community dialogue.

Ignite facilitates an active opt-in learning community, led by field actors around their own prioritised activities and emerging areas of joint action and learning. Co-design, participation, and regular feedback opportunities are central to ensure ownership, agency and collective learning. For example, the community collectively identified collaborative sector-wide impact as a critical learning area, and 15 participants from 10 partner organisations participated in Learning and Action Lab sessions over 9 months to deepen shared learning in this area, consolidating their insights and recommendations back to the field in this [inquiry report](#).



**Figure 2:** our offer

In everything that we do, we are driven by our determination to create a truly inclusive and equitable network that is courageous enough to admit mistakes, and uses lessons learned to experiment, disrupt established views, and start a whole new cycle, again. This, in essence, is our new model.

# .our 2024-2029 focus areas

For the purposes of clarity and accountability, we have set out two broad focus areas for our efforts: one representing continuity for our work (Childhood Sexual Violence) and the other representing a critical new frontier (Exploration of Structural Drivers). We recognise that violence is complex. Different types of violence are often interlinked and overlapping, if not inseparable in real life. Activists live in that complexity every day – balancing the issues that matter most to their communities with those that get traction in different places, while navigating the best entry points to push for change.

We see our focus areas as both points of entry and points of departure to explore strategic alliances across fields, sectors, and approaches for greater collective power. Our hope is to broaden advocacy ecosystems by harnessing this dynamism.

Our focus areas over these five years are:



## Childhood Sexual Violence (CSV) and intersecting areas.

We have accumulated a significant body of work in this area and much of the learning that informs our strategy derives from this experience. CSV as an issue is a big test of our core assumption and our overall Theory of Change. It is a long-standing area of work in the VAC space bringing primarily a “protection” paradigm, rather than a “protection and empowerment” one. By purposefully making CSV a focus for the next five years, we intend to lay the foundations for a new way of working, a way that connects CSV to the wider issues: the structural drivers at play, the context, and intersecting areas. In recent years, a new openness to lived experience-led groups has emerged, with bold leadership by adults who experienced sexual violence as children, but also by youth with more recent experience of sexual violence. Intersectoral engagement and ownership will allow us to invest in new and bold approaches.



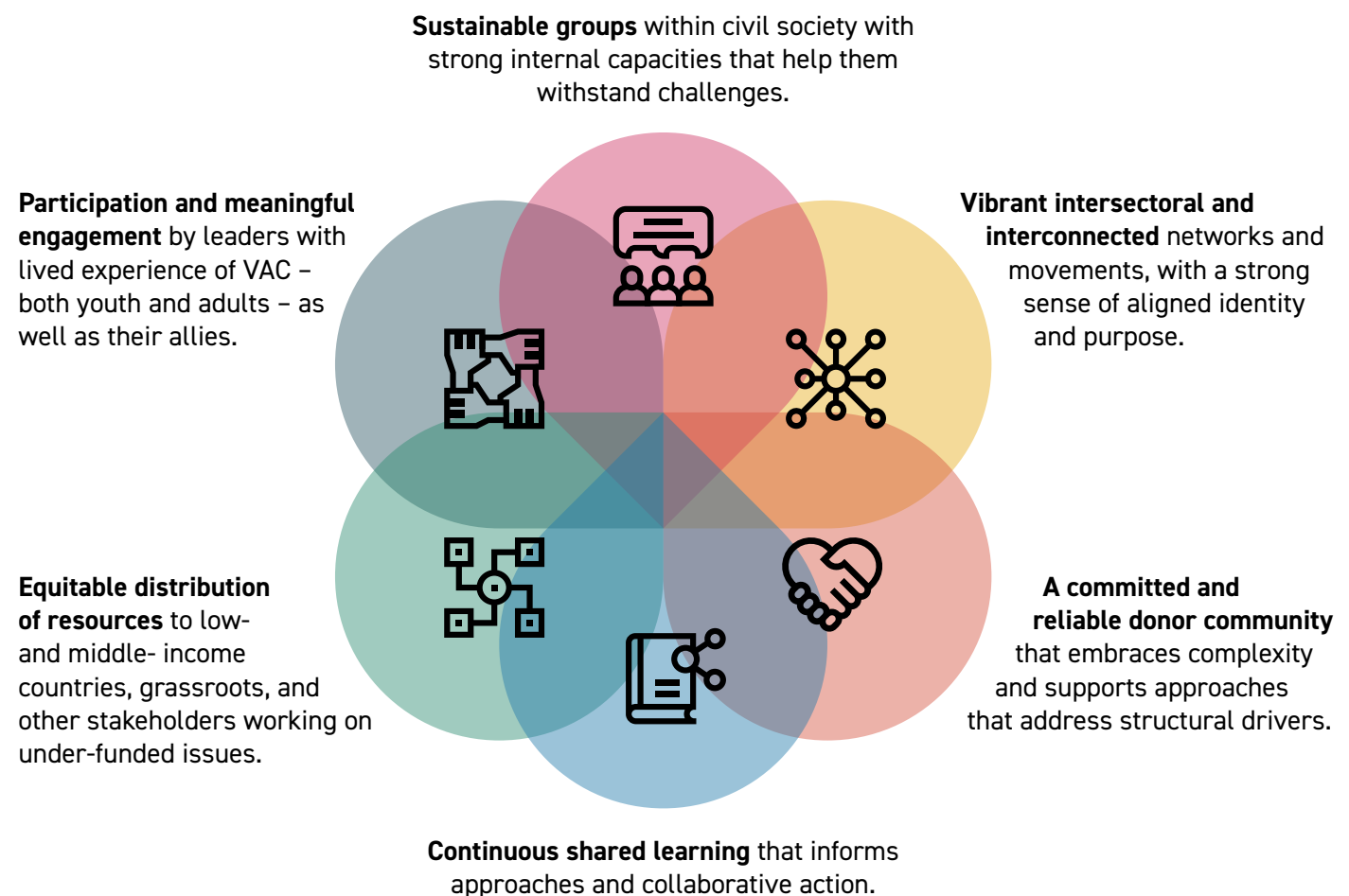
## Exploration of **Structural Drivers.**

Our Theory of Change assumes that VAC is driven by structural factors, and that only system change can lead to transformative change. Social, economic, political and environmental factors link in different ways in different contexts to enable violence. But bold on-the-ground leaders can break these chains. By identifying and confronting factors that underlie VAC, which are the same factors driving other global challenges, they can mobilise across diverse fields to achieve greater collective power and impact. Global VAC actors are also beginning to appreciate the breadth and depth of connections to violence. Our conclusion is that the VAC community must begin addressing structural drivers head on, building common cause with new allies in overlapping fields such as climate justice, peace building and transitional justice, gender justice, and anti-poverty. Over the next five years, we will convene and create space to proactively explore such connections with our partners – targeting the structural drivers that they identify as most critical in and across their contexts – partnering creatively and strategically to chart new paths for intersectoral and intergenerational alliances.

# .our accountability

Our Theory of Change is ambitious in that it aspires to finally eradicate VAC. Nonetheless, we recognise that as a donor intermediary, our achievements pale in comparison to those of our partners. We see ourselves as an engine for change: we ignite so that our partners are able to carry the torch for ending violence. Meanwhile, we remain accountable to them.

In this spirit, over the next five years, we commit to transparently monitor our contribution to the changes we hope to foster:



**Figure 3:** our accountability

We will do this by monitoring several change markers.<sup>3</sup> We will use these to gauge our contribution and hold ourselves accountable to our partners. Pending further development, including in consultation with partners to ensure that these embody a thriving learning and accountability culture, the change markers tentatively include:<sup>4</sup>

## .change markers

### lived experience organising groups



- ↘ deeper/broader scope of partnerships, alliances, coalitions
- ↘ changed/ strengthened ways of working towards a network mindset
- ↘ strengthened prospects of financial sustainability
- ↘ strengthened influence, reach and ability to amplify messaging
- ↘ strengthened accountability towards constituencies

### our donor partners



- ↘ active engagement in multi-stakeholder learning processes and discussions
- ↘ active investment in lived experience and ally organising on national levels
- ↘ increased adoption of holistic approaches to VAC

### our allies



- ↘ active engagement in alliance and coalition building with lived experience groups
- ↘ increased contribution to visibility of lived experience groups
- ↘ increased sharing of access to decision making points with lived experience groups

<sup>3</sup> Material changes measurable either quantitatively or qualitatively.

<sup>4</sup> More detail provided in Annex 3.

We will test this model with honesty and transparency. We will scrutinise the extent and nature of our model's positive contribution to ending VAC through our cross-cutting Learning for Impact activities, as well as our emergent learning and more formal mid-term and final reviews.

Learnings about the role and need for Ignite will also directly determine our longer-term identity, legal status, configuration, and governance (see below on governance details).

We will regularly report and be transparent in our reporting to our partners. We will share our failures with the same enthusiasm as we will share our successes, and we will strive to transform our mistakes into sparks for new ways to do better.



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# .our culture and governance

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We are ambitious in the change we want to see and the values we commit to live up to. At the same time, we embark on this journey with humility and understanding that we need to change our own ways of working as well as our organisational culture in order to achieve our ambitions.

We have traditionally focused on projects, individual grants and separate grantmaking initiatives. We have not devoted enough time to building the connections between these separate pieces of work. Using what we have learned we commit to:

- ↘ **Re-centre our accountability.** Our model and mandate hold that we are accountable to the field, most specifically, groups led or co-led by those with lived experience of violence. We will move beyond segmented or project-based funding that has siloed us in the past and made us more responsive to funders than constituents. Rather, we want to broaden our focus in order to confront the complexity of VAC.
- ↘ **Never lose sight of the big picture.** We will make use of each other's knowledge and expertise to forge a stronger culture of communication and collaboration. Our team time and energy will focus more on learnings and strategy and less on day-to-day matters.
- ↘ **Prioritise curiosity, openness, reflection and relationships.** We will stay open to new knowledge, perspectives, and voices, and factor in time to building relationships and identifying opportunities.
- ↘ **Serve as field connectors.** We will serve as connection brokers, keeping a bird's-eye view of the field in order to bring partners together, and strengthen connections across spaces.

For our model to work, we will make sure that we collaborate across strands of work, building in co-ownership and co-leadership in everything we do. We will strive to create external value, operate even more flexibly, and embrace change.

Our governance must also evolve to become fit-for-purpose in this new model. Currently we are a fiscally sponsored project of New Venture Fund (NVF), whose Board of Directors holds legal and financial responsibility for our work in consultation with an Ignite-specific advisory body. The Ignite Advisory Board provides strategic oversight among other responsibilities, and has historically included representatives of our three founding donors.

The new Advisory Board will be reconfigured and expanded to include broader stakeholder representation. It will be composed of seven members representing lived experience leaders and their allies. Allies may include non-partner experts who hold legitimacy in the field and who are accountable to their constituencies. Members may include scholars, researchers, activists and others with strong reach and influence, reflecting the diversity of experiences and perspectives in the field of VAC. In the near-to-medium term, we will continue our relationship with NVF, and our new Ignite Advisory Board will continue to be tasked with making recommendations to NVF.

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## .coda

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We are committed to this new path, and we hope that you will accept our invitation to join us in the coming years.

In 2029 we want to be writing to our partners to say that together we have tangibly contributed to reducing VAC.

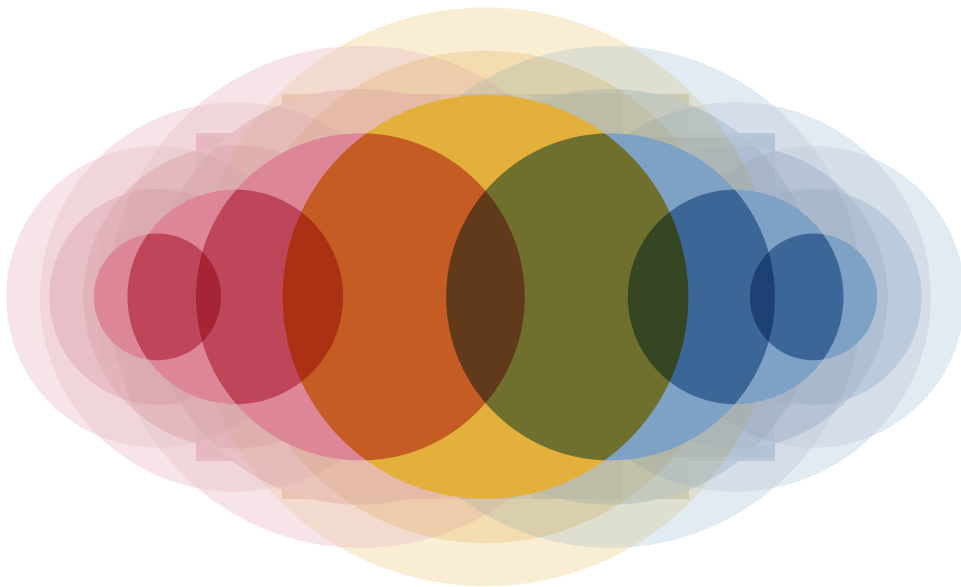
We want to be able to say that, as a result of our partnership, this field has grown stronger, more resilient, more sustainable, and better connected – a real force for transformative change.

And, more than anything, we want to be able to say that by working together our vision is becoming reality: **VAC is eradicated, and children and youth exercise their rights, shape their futures, and live in peace.**

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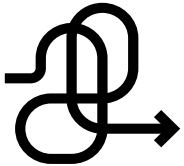
# .annexes

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# Annex 1: guiding principles

## Constructive Disruption



*We strive to question the status quo, convene and organise, shake up traditions and dismantle conventional power structures. We want to create the conditions for new narratives, modes of influence, and change that is driven by lived experience leaders and their allies.*

### belief

We believe that the way power has traditionally been wielded has excluded those with the knowledge and potential to make change and thus obstructed progress.

### practice

We adopt an approach that intrinsically recognises that change needs to come from, and be driven by, the groups and individuals it serves. We recognise that such groups and individuals have often been systematically stifled and discredited. We will ensure that lived experience leaders and their allies have the voice and power to determine social change strategies and outcomes.

We create the conditions in which organising groups and their allies can hold power; this includes by building environments and platforms for alliances and coalitions to flourish and for siloes (and traditional power structures and blockages) to be dismantled.

We do not build others' capacity – it is they who design and share the knowledge they have. We do not enter this work assuming a lack of capacity. Rather, we seek to harness and nurture the strengths, knowledge, and problem-solving skills that our partners possess. This requires action to bridge the existing chasm between their wisdom and relevant dialogues or decisions.



This means that we cannot and do not hold traditional funder-grantee relationships. Instead, we aim to reduce to the minimum the inherent power imbalance between philanthropy and field. We cultivate respectful, non-hierarchical, trust-based relationships (internally and externally) including by providing flexible funding and seed funding, encouraging accountability to the base<sup>5</sup> and proactively building resilience and sustainability. We recognise the harsh reality of requiring donor funding to sustain organisations, and we do our best to secure and offer the long-term funding that is so important to our partners and the field. We use our influence to shift the funding landscape towards long term, trust-based, ethical funding approaches. These practices give greater space and agency to the legitimate voices that matter the most.



## Courageous Experimentation

*We create the conditions for the blossoming of new ways of building power and making change, trialling ideas several times before they achieve mainstream acceptance. We embrace the variety of knowledge sources held by our partners.*

### belief

We believe that the false idea of perfection has reduced the impact of our work and prevents people from taking risks, funding those risks, learning, and adapting.

### practice

We model risk-taking, failing, and adapting. We will build this into the micro- and macro-elements of our work. Revolutionary ideas may seem untenable at first, but experimentation with and refinement of them can lead to breakthroughs for breathtaking impact and widespread embrace.

We create the conditions for our diverse community to witness and learn from our, and each other's, experimentation. We use this experimentation to inform evidence-based approaches.

<sup>5</sup> See definition of Organising or building power on Page 11

We build the capacity of funders to not abandon and instead better support lived experience groups and allies as they learn from failures.

We engage with topics and stakeholders who have been left out of mainstream conversations for being too radical or unconventional. We make space for different types of conversations, different sources of knowledge, different types of stakeholders, and different types of power building.



## Applied Learning

*At the heart of our work is a belief in continuous learning, and that learning does not happen in an echo chamber but comes alive when applied in the field.*

### belief

We believe that we can be committed to learning and its application without being beholden to carrot and stick models of evaluation and reward.

### practice

We strive to make a difference through our work, and we will continually assess the value and impact of our contribution and act on learnings. We continue to aim for clarity in our approaches and how we communicate them.

We maintain a spirit of curiosity, learning, and humility to ensure that our work and ethos remain relevant to the needs of the field. We make sure that the learning we do with partners is applied and that we support our partners in that application. We seek to ensure that our learning is always in the service of lived experience groups and their allies' power building.

## Uncompromising Equity



*We commit to embedding equity into our internal and external organisational model, knowing that the work of questioning and altering inequitable structures is never complete. We approach this work with persistence, productive rage, and openness to deep listening and change. We recognise the necessity and challenge of building trusting relationships to get there.*

### belief

We believe that the only way to end violence against children is to address the inequitable structures and systems that give rise to injustice.

Although 12.7% of all children report having experienced sexual violence, 18% of **girls** do while 7.6% of **boys** do.<sup>6</sup>

Children with **disabilities** are more than twice as likely to experience violence as children without disabilities.<sup>7</sup>

Up to 65% of children in **migration** experience physical maltreatment and up to 20% face sexual abuse.<sup>8</sup>

Roughly 45% of **lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans** youth report being bullied at school.<sup>9</sup>

### practice

We see the underlying advantages that some enjoy, as well as the disadvantages that others face, and actively take these into account in all we do. We commit to supporting those facing the greatest inequities in the context of violence, which means we must pay close attention to gender, disability, immigration status, sexual orientation and gender identity, age, and other factors.

We build equity into our work with partners to ensure that the strategies and desired outcomes address, disrupt, and overcome inherent inequity, including that which has been perpetuated by social systems, structures, and policies.

We recognise that against this background, building relationships of trust and confidence – especially from partners to donors – will require persistence, time and humility for deep listening.

When we are called upon to lead, we do so with the intention of positively influencing donors and supporting the leadership of others, to reinforce equity.

<sup>6</sup> Stoltenborgh, M., van IJzendoorn, M. H., Euser, E. M., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (2011). A Global Perspective on Child Sexual Abuse: Meta-Analysis of Prevalence Around the World. *Child Maltreatment*, 16(2), 79-101.

<sup>7</sup> Fang Z, Cerna-Turoff I, Zhang C, Lu M, Lachman JM, Barlow J. Global estimates of violence against children with disabilities: an updated systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Child Adolesc Health*. 2022 May;6(5):313-323.

<sup>8</sup> A. Jud, E. Pfeiffer, M. Jarczok, Epidemiology of violence against children in migration: A systematic literature review, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Volume 108, 2020, 104634.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Free & Equal, Fact Sheet: LGBTIQ+ Youth: Bullying and Violence at School, 2023.



## Purposeful Inclusion

*We commit to co-designing spaces where intersectionality and a diversity of identities, voices, and perspectives are not simply welcomed, but are part of the fabric of our organisational design.*

### belief

We believe that inclusion across all of our work will create the long-term conditions for more powerful power building.

### practice

We commit to proactively seeking out and applying diverse views, input, and experiences to build and enrich our work.

We commit to trying to understand and offer what is needed by our various colleagues and partners, within their own organisational realities, for success.

We adopt an intersectional approach that ensures that our strategies and activities are culturally and contextually appropriate and that our work is safe for all engaged stakeholders.

We will not be tokenistic.

# Annex 2: main activities per strands of work



## .strengthening for agency

<p><b>with lived experience groups and critical allies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ Design/coordination/delivery of organisation-level and collective-level capacity development in organisational resilience, sustainability, learning for impact, leadership, network and coalition building, and areas prioritised by partners.</li> <li>↳ Fostering network/trust-building between groups/leaders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>with funder partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ Enabling the expansion of networks and connections with lived experience groups and allies.</li> <li>↳ Facilitation of co-creation opportunities and collective action with lived experience groups and allies.</li> <li>↳ Support to individual donors and donor groups' to directly fund and build stronger relationships with grassroots stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>cross cutting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ Convening those directly and indirectly linked to the field to enhance understanding, relationships, and shared purpose and action.</li> <li>↳ Facilitation of the engagement in and contribution to network building and the sharing of learning.</li> </ul>



## .partnering for action

<p><b>with lived experience groups and critical allies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cultivation of relationships between donors and other partners, encouraging donors to support directly where they are able to/want to, without Ignite acting as a gatekeeper.</li> <li>➤ Fostering trust and shared purpose between Ignite donors, non-Ignite donors and relevant lived experience groups and allies through collective learning that helps inform approaches and investments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>with funder partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Collaboration with funders to provide tailored financial support so that lived experience groups and allies can grow stronger, more resilient, and more sustainable to better achieve their own goals.</li> <li>➤ Enabling and fostering a culture of trust and collective action among committed funder champions who support Ignite's approach, and who can sharpen their craft respectively and collectively.</li> <li>➤ In partnership with peer entities, and driven by the field, engage funders in focused learning and building of collective energy around strategic issues and key topics that help strengthen the overall ecosystem.</li> <li>➤ Fostering revenue diversification and sustainability for Ignite over an initial strategic period to test its learning approach.</li> <li>➤ Managing all aspects of donor funding to other Ignite partners.</li> <li>➤ Raising funds for lived experience groups and critical allies that enable them to take a leadership role in delivering greater impact in preventing violence against children.</li> </ul>
<p><b>with non-ignite donors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fostering and supporting a platform for donors to create a shared vision and to increase funding to holistic VAC approaches.</li> <li>➤ Providing information and offering access to relevant relationships, increased awareness, knowledge, and the points of entry to funding CSV and associated fields.</li> <li>➤ Supporting and enabling own tracking progress, lessons learned, sharing and dissemination.</li> </ul>



## .resourcing for change

<p><b>pre-calls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Formation of participatory advisory panels, comprising lived experience leaders and allies, for co-creation and review of grantmaking as well as safeguarding and well-being processes.</li> <li>➤ Facilitation of agreement in each grantmaking cycle on aspects such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ grantmaking principles;</li> <li>▫ structural drivers at hand;</li> <li>▫ model/methodology;</li> <li>▫ ways of working together; and</li> <li>▫ trauma-informed safeguarding and well-being.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Development of corresponding grantmaking templates (application, reporting, etc.).</li> <li>➤ Agreement on scoring/panel/assessment criteria and process.</li> <li>➤ Agreement on timelines and communication plan with lived experience groups and allies.</li> <li>➤ Setting up and managing tech to support grantmaking processes.</li> <li>➤ Capturing and sharing learning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>calls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Communicating decisions and issuing grants.</li> <li>➤ Receiving and assessing applications.</li> <li>➤ Tailoring, issuing, and circulating requests for proposals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>post-execution</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conducting assessments of calls.</li> <li>➤ Continuously tracking progress.</li> <li>➤ Providing tailored and ad-hoc support to lived experience groups and allies, in particular delivery and support to flexible/core, multi-year funding.</li> <li>➤ Developing trust-based relationships of all partners, connecting them into broader community and opportunities as they prioritise.</li> <li>➤ Using assessment findings and revisiting the previous process phases.</li> </ul>



## .learning for impact

### cross-cutting

- ↘ Facilitation of sharing and learning about various partners' contributions to social change, on strategies that show more potential in achieving or enabling positive change, and on how to iterate on successful approaches.
- ↘ Support to assess in real-time what approaches and strategies are working better for achieving respective partners' own strategic goals.
- ↘ Where there is demand, co-creation of impact frameworks to understand what can lead to change in the systems that perpetuate violence against children and young people.
- ↘ Facilitation of learning on the different foundational theories of change (TOCs) that can apply to partners' own work and that can better support the design of future interventions, initiatives, and projects.
- ↘ Where there is demand, co-creation of participatory learning tools and frameworks adapted to partners' existing TOCs, which can then be used across different interventions, initiatives, and projects.
- ↘ Facilitation of conversations and connections to unconventional strategic allies, coalitions, and partnerships that can bolster common and shared goals and strategies.
- ↘ Engagement of diverse stakeholders in the sharing and learning on specific strategic topics (e.g., human rights approaches, systems advocacy) and offering opportunities for improvement and further co-creation and experimentation.
- ↘ Learning from and supporting innovation and experimentation on approaches, strategies, and collective action for social change, together with our stakeholders, partners and their communities.



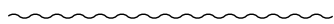
# Annex 3: detailed impact accountability matrix

Pending further development, including consultation with partners to ensure that these embody a thriving learning and accountability culture, change markers tentatively include the following:

our accountability		the change we hope to foster					
stakeholders	change markers	sustainable	vibrant	committed	shared	equitable	meaningful
lived experience organising groups	deepened/ broadened the scope of their partnerships, alliances, coalitions						
	changed/ strengthened ways of working towards a network mindset						
	strengthened prospects of financial sustainability						
	strengthened influence, reach and ability to amplify their messaging						
	strengthened accountability towards their constituencies						
donor partners	active engagement in multi-stakeholder learning processes and discussions						
	active investment in lived experience and ally organising on national levels						
	increased targeting of holistic approaches to VAC						
our allies	active engagement in alliance and coalition building with lived experience organising groups						
	enabling the visibility of lived experience organising groups						
	sharing access to decision making opportunities with lived experience organising groups						

The change markers will be assessed<sup>10</sup> in the following manner and at the following points in time:

<b>change markers</b>	<b>qualitative</b>	<b>quantitative</b>
deeper/broader scope of partnerships, alliances, coalitions	5 point scale of partnerships' scope with 1 being exchange and 5 systems transformation <i>*assessed at baseline and end of strategy*</i>	% of partners ranking 4 or above in 5 point scale <i>*assessed at baseline and end of strategy*</i>
changed/strengthened ways of working towards a network mindset	5 point scale of networking scope with 1 being ways of working within a hierarchical mindset and 5 within a network mind set <i>*assessed at baseline, mid and end of strategy*</i>	% of projects/ initiatives ranking 3 or above in 5 point scale <i>*assessed at baseline, mid and end of strategy*</i>
strengthened prospects of financial sustainability	diversity of donors in terms of types of donors: e.g. philanthropy, institutional, multilateral, high net-worth individuals <i>*assessed at baseline and end of strategy*</i>	# of donors in the portfolio volume of donors' contributions <i>*assessed at baseline and end of strategy*</i>
strengthened influence, reach and ability to amplify their messaging	documentation (process tracing) of influencing of public/ policy discussions documentation (process tracing) of influencing of legislation/ policies <i>*recorded on a yearly basis, assessed at baseline and end of strategy*</i>	social media measurements, e.g., # of social network engagement with messaging (in-context) traditional media/ press coverage # of proactive invitations for attendance in strategic fora <i>*assessed at level of selected initiatives/ projects, reported mid and end of strategy*</i>
strengthened accountability towards their constituencies		(where feasible) partner/ stakeholder feedback survey <i>*assessed on a yearly basis, reported at baseline, mid and end of strategy*</i>



**10** Change markers and their assessment are subject to revision in line with field consultation input and resulting finalisation of the qualitative scales. Ignite's performance and activity-based data will also be recorded and shared with stakeholders.

<b>change markers</b>	<b>qualitative</b>	<b>quantitative</b>
active engagement in multi-stakeholder learning processes and discussions	description of the discussions and learning processes <i>*recorded on a yearly basis, reported mid and end of strategy*</i>	
active investment in lived experience and ally organising on national levels		% of VAC/CSV funds invested directly in lived experience and ally base-building on national levels <i>*assessed at baseline, mid and end of strategy*</i>
increased targeting of holistic approaches to VAC	5 point scale on types of approaches to VAC with 1 being individual-situational and 5 structural/systemic <i>*assessed, mid-strategy at baseline and end of strategy*</i>	% of projects/initiatives ranking 3 or above in 5 point scale <i>*assessed at baseline, mid and end of strategy*</i>
active engagement in alliance and coalition building with lived experience groups		# and description of alliances and coalitions with lived experience groups <i>*assessed at baseline, mid and end of strategy*</i>
increased enabling of visibility of lived experience groups	Description of allies' support to enable visibility and leadership by lived experience groups <i>*recorded on a yearly basis, reported mid and end of strategy*</i>	
increased sharing of access to decision making opportunities with lived experience groups		# and description of participation in decision making fora at national, regional, global levels <i>*assessed at baseline, mid and end of strategy*</i>

## Annex 4: legacy efforts

While we are passionate about our new strategy, we are equally committed to honouring all previous commitments in seeing through our **legacy efforts**, ensuring that our donors' and our partners' interests and investments are protected.

Legacy efforts are already on an exit track and will continue to grow outside Ignite. In contrast, all active Ignite programming is fully aligned with this new strategy, although some activities may evolve as we engage with participating partners around this strategy and decide future directions together. Specifically:

- ▾ **The [Out of the Shadows Index](#)** (legacy efforts). Ignite hosted the Index and conducted related grantmaking from 2019. We committed to incubate and strengthen the Index over the following years, and to oversee its transfer to a permanent host. We plan to complete this transition by the end of 2024 by providing funds to the new host to cover the costs of the next two Index editions. After this point, Ignite will not have any role in guiding the Index. Our Index-related national-level grantmaking is aligned with this 2029 strategy, but due to the lack of additional dedicated resources, will also wind down by the end of 2024.
- ▾ **The Strategic Networks initiative** (continuation). All existing Strategic Networks activities are wholly consistent with this strategy. We will consult with the initiative's main donor and with participating organisations and networks to get a clear understanding of how they see themselves moving forward in light of this strategy.