

# Mapping Youth Organisers and their Allies: Insights Report

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# Introduction

## Background and purpose

Ignite Philanthropy started as a donor collaborative, founded by three foundations to maximise philanthropy's collective role to end violence against children (VAC). In the six years Ignite has been in existence, the organisation has learnt that, too often, structural drivers are neglected, intersections with related issues and fields not harnessed, and that children's lived experience and voices are marginalised in decisions that affect them.

The Ignite team are revisiting their strategy to centre these critical learnings for change. The new strategy will encompass grant-making, capacity-strengthening (for both grantees and Ignite), collective learning for action, and donor engagement aimed at delivering more investment and increased impact. Ignite engaged a team of consultants to undertake a mapping to better understand the landscape of organising on violence and related structural issues (such as climate justice, gender justice), in different contexts, with an intentional focus on youth organisers and their allies. Ignite also wants to better understand how their new strategy might need to adapt to best add value to existing efforts.

## Approach and methodology

Following a series of design workshops with the Ignite team to explore and discuss their journey and confirm the mapping's purpose, we were able to design a research approach together, with an agreement that our mapping process may take unexpected twists and turns to which we would learn from and adapt to. We began our exploration by developing a mapping tool to chart specific categories of information relating to the groups we came across. We then searched online for youth-led and centred groups, organisations and networks working on violence and climate change/justice using specific tags. Alongside our desk search, we conducted scoping interviews with a combination of funders, practitioners, Ignite grantees and youth organisers representing global, regional and national perspectives, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Palestine, Serbia, the Balkans, Latin America, Europe and Middle East and North Africa (see Annex 1). The interviews were invaluable to the process and helped us to navigate new territory, connect to more regional and national contacts for further analysis, as well as shape the mapping tool itself.

After an initial scan, we identified language and geographical gaps and hired regional advisors to guide us representing Africa, Asia, Balkans, MENA and Latin America regions. The advisors developed tailored approaches to add further depth to the map. This included leveraging their own networks, conducting online surveys and holding interviews with youth groups and their allies. Each advisor contributed to the insights and recommendations set out in this report.

## Overview

The mapping process was layered. With each scoping interview, each hour of desk research and with the outreach led by the Regional Advisors, we added more layers. Given the global and very open scope of the mapping, the process could continue indefinitely. This report accompanies a database that maps over 284 youth-led, youth-centric, girl-led and their allies (intergenerational groups, networks and organisations) that are working on issues of violence (implicitly or explicitly) and/or on climate justice. It includes insights on what we found as well as details of where we see gaps or room for further investigation. It also includes recommendations for Ignite as the strategy development process continues.

Complementing our recommendations and providing further insights into best practices and lessons learnt within the funding ecosystem for social movements/power building groups, is a [literature review](#) of over [40 resources](#) produced within the philanthropic field working with and for youth-led organisers, power building groups and social movements over the past six years. These findings may serve as helpful discussion points within the Ignite team to inform their strategy and partnerships ahead with youth power building groups.

The overall process has confirmed the unbounded nature of youth-led organising, that young people are often (unknowingly) organising with a shared goal across regions, despite having different frames, composition and approaches. This emphasises the importance of taking time to look beneath the surface to find, support and connect those harder to reach groups that show potential. Those groups who may not be an obvious connection to Ignite's focus areas may be the very ones who are experiencing and fighting hardest to address violence against children, young people and adults alike.

This mapping has been a valuable exercise, a compass, and is testament to Ignite's willingness and openness to shift power and learn from the field. The mapping shines a light on the fluidity of youth organising across issues, which steers towards a broader approach to addressing VAC. There is no one particular 'space' in youth or adult organising on issues related to violence, it is shared and embraces a common approach that draws attention to the ways in which interpersonal and community violence is underpinned and exacerbated by structural violence.

This process has confirmed that youth groups working on issues related to violence are massively underfunded, lack access to diverse, sustainable and adapted funding, and need accompaniment from funders and their peers to learn and connect, grow and flourish. Understanding what accompaniment looks like for different groups should be directed by the groups themselves and will help define Ignite's role and entry point in the ecosystem. That said, we believe that funders, if they take more of a backstage, are well placed to step into the role of convenor, sharing intel, mappings of grantees and strategic plans with each other to take the burden off youth organisers. They are also well placed to advocate in the international space on issues of civic space and open doors to decision-making and funding opportunities for youth partners.

## Accessing the Database

This report collates insights from the mapping process. It is accompanied by a mapping in Google Sheets. The mapping lists youth groups and allies in several regions. As outlined above, the mapping was developed from publicly available information and through consultations. The information is not static, nor is it comprehensive of all known groups in the region. For these reasons, we are not publicising it on the website but it is available for other funders who might find it useful to inform their own grant-making strategies and who wish to build on this initial work. We are keen to avoid others having to duplicate mappings and efforts, including when it demands time or labour from youth groups, allies and other communities. If you wish to access the mapping, please contact Ignite Philanthropy's Director [Don Cipriani](#). We ask that you don't forward this on to others.

## General Insights

This section builds on the insights from the initial mapping and the deeper mapping we undertook with regional advisors. It also includes key insights from our scoping interviews with a combination of funders, practitioners, current grantees and youth organisers representing global, regional and national perspectives, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Palestine, Serbia, the Balkans, Latin America, Europe and Middle East and North Africa regions. Below we share our insights and findings.

**Potential for donor learning.** The mapping process highlighted the potential and need for more funders to be open with their organisational and grant-making strategy processes, to share intel and intentions, data, including grantee and application lists where possible and safe, and to explore opportunities for other forms of collaboration that spark collective learning and coordination and take as much burden off youth groups as possible (e.g. around accompaniment, application processes, due diligence/referrals, pooled funding and so on). For example, in the Africa region we were told that a key challenge is the lack of harmonisation in terms of funding, laws, political frames and advocacy approaches on the same issues, which duplicates efforts and fragments and weakens youth-led groups.

**Survivorship.** Groups that identify as “survivor-led” or “lived experience” have been limited. Our assumption is that most groups form because of their deep lived experience of the issue and are more often than not survivor-led and made up of those with lived experience (or are at high risk given their gender, age, location, race etc). For example, we found young men in Honduras from an area with rampant gang violence starting an organisation focused on this (Warriors Zulu Nation) and Indigenous girls from Guatemala focused on tackling GBV and machismo related violence against girls (Red Las Niñas Lideran). There may also be stigma attached to identifying one's self as a survivor or with lived experience and importantly extreme risk for certain groups leading their own work (e.g. LGBTIQ+ individuals), especially in politically restricted, criminalising, or closed contexts and countries with already strict laws and cultural intolerance to gender issues.

**Red Las Ninas Lideran** in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, is a *girl-led network of groups born from an adult-led girls' programme, Rise Up. It is now autonomous.* Las Ninas Lideran defends the rights of girls and young Indigenous women through political advocacy, violence prevention strategies, empowerment and capacity building. The group consists of 30 adolescent girls aged 10 - 17. It is explicitly focused on tackling violence against girls (harassment, sexual and physical violence) as well as sexual health and bodily autonomy. The group organises workshops on self-esteem, manage a psychological support clinic, design campaigns on violence and use art to tell the story of what it means to be a girl in Guatemala.

**Categorising violence.** This mapping process has confirmed the broad nature and experience of violence against children, that it is difficult to attribute one 'type' of violence with its many manifestations, and that violence is experienced across the spectrum and is driven by multiple forms of oppression. Sexual violence for example, intersects with other issues such as sexual health and rights, violence during conflict, domestic violence etc. State and institutional violence, structural and cultural violence are drivers. Organisers rarely focus on one singular issue and often organise in a dynamic and evolving way, across groups and issues. Funding and accompaniment should reflect and respond to this.

**Non-age specific violence.** Young people are organising around violence issues across age groups, such as GBV broadly, femicide, consent, incarceration and gang violence. At times they have an explicit focus on children as a particularly affected age group (child marriage, child labour, consent between adolescents etc), but not always, which has made highlighting these groups challenging. In the Western Balkans for example, whilst violence against children was not identified as an issue of focus among youth organisers, their work is tackling the drivers but may not be recognised as such.

**Youth-led vs youth-centric vs intergenerational.** Young people organise in different ways across regions and countries. Some groups are completely girl-led (Girls Arise Foundation, Malawi) or youth-led (Y-PEER Asia Pacific), where girls and young people are making decisions and where there is an age cut off (18, 25 or 30 years old). Some are born from adult-led organisations and have become semi-autonomous (Youth for Change, Bangladesh). Others are adult-led, but clearly girl or youth-centric and deeply political in their power building (Palabraz Poderosxs, Panama). Others still are or seem to be intergenerational whereby there are young people in the leadership (CHIRAPAQ Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú, Peru). From our scoping interviews within the Africa, Asia (particularly India), Western Balkans and MENA regions, we were told that youth organising is starting early, but that young people tend to operate within established organisations because they lack the means and resources to thrive, that many do not know that they can legitimately organise without being registered, and that they appreciate the safety support mechanisms embedded in the system.

**Organising with a gender/girls/feminist lens and/or an anti-racism and anti-colonial political framing.** Many youth groups are addressing the structural drivers of VAC, including

power, patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial systems - all of which have a gendered dimension. Reflecting this, our search results have tended to lean towards groups led by girls and diverse young feminists, which was anticipated in the design phase. We also found that gender-based violence (GBV) is the most prominent cross-cutting focus area among groups. This likely reflects the reality that women and girls are at greater risk of experiencing certain types of violence because of their subordinate status to men and boys (globally) and that GBV work primarily focuses on them. Historically, feminist movements catalysed global efforts to address and prevent GBV and today, it is fair to say that groups working to tackle the root causes of GBV tend to be grounded in principles of feminism, even if that framing is not explicitly used. In India for example, we were told that when it comes to organising being more transformative, groups are girl and women-led, whereas boys and men were mostly organising on rescue and response on the frontlines. Whilst there were fewer boy-led initiatives found, boys are being engaged and are sharing the space and leadership with girls to end GBV, for example, in Africa (AFRIYAN - regional youth network, Girl Concern - Kenya), the Western Balkans (Perpetum Mobile - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Novi Sad - Serbia, NGO Prima - Montenegro)

**The impact of historical funding.** In the scoping interviews, we heard that funding from philanthropy and the development sector has determined the landscape of youth organising in different regions. In the mapping, we saw more formal NGO-style youth organisations in Africa with traditional structures and often self-titled as an NGO/CBO or youth group. In Latin America we mapped more fluid movements, collectives and networks with more horizontal structures. In South Asia, we saw more NGO-style youth organisations, as well as youth networks. For groups working on violence specifically, this was often via youth programmes in an adult-led organisation.

**LGBTQIA+ violence and discrimination as a form of violence against children.** We mapped LGBTQIA+ groups in every region. Most were adult-led, led by older youth or intergenerational. Some groups work with LGBTQIA+ children, but some we spoke to in the MENA region shared concerns that working alongside children would place them at greater risk with greater exposure. We also reflected that LGBTQIA+ youth and adults may have faced trauma, discrimination or harassment as children because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, characteristics or expression. As such, we included them in the mapping but at a lower priority. The interlinkages between violence against LGBTQIA+ communities (as well as in the form of intersex genital mutilation) and violence against children is one that deserves further thought and research.

**Grupo Artemisa Honduras** is a grassroots group led by young lesbian and bisexual women of the city of Tegucigalpa. Founded in 2010, with the need to create spaces to meet, connect and collectively learn about gender and sexuality, and human rights, without the fear of being discriminated against. Through education and capacity-building aimed toward lesbian and bisexual women, low-income and marginalised youth and girls, and Honduran society in general, Artemisa aims to generate changes in attitude in Honduras towards sexuality, human rights, gender equality and security of LBT girls and women. This seems to be *adult-led with girl and youth-centred initiatives*.

**Intersex rights are children's rights.** Children with multiple sex characteristics are often subjected to non-consensual, non-informed surgeries and hormonal interventions that often go on into adulthood, which can result in lifelong debilitating medical realities for children, including trauma. Policy reform on intersex issues secures the rights of children. Funding this work could be a viable path for Ignite (founders of Ignite already fund this work), and for Ignite to be a significant part of existing infrastructure working with allies of lived experience actors.

**Racism, xenophobia and white supremacy as forms of violence.** Racism, xenophobia, white supremacy and colonialism as forms of violence (or oppression) are used in framing by several Indigenous and Afro-descendent groups in the Latin America mapping, particularly in how it intersects with GBV and/or with violence against Indigenous peoples. And in the Balkans, efforts against xenophobia, nationalism and 'othering' among young people came up in the mapping.

**The Wretched of the Earth** is *an intergenerational coalition* of climate justice groups led by Indigenous people and people of colour based in the United Kingdom, representing the interests of the Global South and people of colour in response to climate change. They are demanding climate justice in solidarity with communities in the UK and in the Global South. By connecting themes of colonialism, reparation, Indigenous sovereignty, racism, and migrants' rights, they are demonstrating how tackling climate change is an intersectional challenge that must also address climate justice at its heart. They defend Indigenous communities and their territories, respecting Indigenous sovereignty and demand reparations and redistribution at an unprecedented scale, as well as a complete transformation of the economic and political system.

**Violence in conflict, post-conflict and peace-buidling contexts.** Several youth and intergenerational groups in Latin America (Vida Digna - Guatemala, Crisálidas - Colombia, Taller de Vida - Colombia) as well as in the Balkans and Caucasus (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina) focus on inherited trauma post-conflict and genocide as well as intergenerational peace-buidling. This is heightened for children living in current crisis and conflict settings, who have inherited trauma from their parents and also deal with their own on a daily basis (e.g. Occupied Palestine).

**Forgotten Children of War Association / Zaboravljena djeca rata in Bosnia and Herzegovina** is *an organisation founded by young people* who were born of war through rape or as children of peacekeepers without a father. They have successfully advocated for the legal recognition of the children born of war in BiH and continue to raise awareness on structural violence towards these young people.

**Social and economic rights in post conflict and conflict settings.** In the MENA and the Balkans, youth-led groups are less visible and they tend to focus more on basic human needs (housing, employment and food). This might result from the prioritisation of social and economic rights in post- and current conflict settings.



### **The intersection of climate change and violence against children is not widely recognised.**

Youth organisers and their allies are not naming climate change as VAC though there is wide recognition of climate change as a social justice and gendered issue, that it exacerbates GBV and gender inequality, such as child marriage and adolescent pregnancy and is strongly related to poverty. Few groups are working on this causal relationship explicitly (Green Girls Platform, Malawi), but many are working on a spectrum of issues, which include: climate justice and GBV (Comisión de Niñez y Juventud del Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas, Latin America Region); poverty reduction (African Youth Initiative on Climate Change, MAEJT, Zimbabwe Sunshine group) or on the issues of GBV (Girl Concern, Kenya, Jeunes Filles actrices de développement, Bénin, Koalisi 18+, Indonesia). In India however, no youth-led groups were found to be working on the intersection of climate and violence - climate is being addressed very separately to violence.

**GirlsCARE** is a merging of girl power, of Jamaican climate scholar activists who use their platform and voices to create space and empower young women to advocate for gender justice in climate action. It seems to be *an intergenerational ally organisation*. They bring a gendered lens to climate action, providing mentorship to girls and young women involved or interested in climate action. They use their platforms to advocate for climate actions that are gender responsive and provide training and information on climate advocacy. GirlsCARE believe that the inequality and discrimination experienced by marginalised girls and young women are amplified by climate change:

- Sexual and reproductive health rights and access are disrupted due to climate induced disasters
- Violence against girls increases in the form of sexual abuse, trafficking and other forms of exploitation due to economic losses
- Empowerment of women and girls, political and economic is crucial to building the Caribbean's resilience to climate change

**The climate movement is not the same as the climate justice movement.** The framing and response to climate change is not homogenous. Many climate change organisers are less political in their motivations and in their advocacy targets and messaging, tending to be more individualistic and environmental, focusing on recycling, zero waste, protecting oceans, planting trees etc. (Afroactivists - Malawi, Green Generation Initiative - Kenya). They often do not have the same structural and political critique of climate justice groups, networks and movements, who build decolonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist and patriarchy practices into their work from the outset (Jasy Renyhê - Bolivia, Intersectional Environmentalist - global). Because of this, we see more cross-movement, feminist, girl and women-led organising and power building within the climate justice movement. For example, many indigenous groups in Asia and Latin America or feminist collectives in Latin America or Africa frame their work around the need to survive, Indigenous sovereignty, and poverty reduction (Awer Women Empowerment - Kenya, Wretched of the Earth - UK).



**Action Femme Et Éco-Justice (AFECOJU).** AFECOJU is a *young feminist-led organisation* founded in Congo by 5 women's rights activists with expertise or interest in rural development. They fight for the recognition and access to human and environmental rights, especially land rights and water rights, of women, young feminists and other marginalised groups, including transgender people, as well as for climate and environmental justice and gender equality to combat all forms of violence suffered by marginalised groups.

**Engajamundo** is a *completely youth-led organisation* working at the intersections of climate justice, gender, biodiversity and sustainable cities in Brazil. To join the network you need to be aged 15 - 25. If you are older, you are considered an ally and asked to donate. Through training, mobilisation, participation and advocacy, Engaja focuses on empowering Brazilian youth to understand, participate and have an impact on political processes, from local to international. Their vision is for Brazilian youth to be aware of their socio-environmental impact, engaged in local, national and international decision-making processes, and enabling better political decisions. Their advocacy demands more access and representation of young people in all decision-making processes.

**Climate change is not a priority issue among youth organisers in the Balkans and MENA region.** Youth-led groups are mostly focused on social and economic rights in post- and current conflict settings and on urgent priorities like humanitarian support, defending basic human rights including right to life, right to movement, freedom of speech, assembly and expression, and advocating to ensure the protection of women and girls human rights defenders.

**Youth organising is creative, art-based and community-led.** Young organisers are imagining new ways to solve old problems, using art, music and performance to raise awareness and make change. Innovative and art-based approaches seem to be more led by younger organisers including girl activists across all regions we mapped.

**Examples of creative and art-based organising:**

**Chalk Back.** Chalk Back is *an international youth-led movement* committed to ending gender-based street harassment with public chalk art, digital media and education. They use art through local, youth-led chapters around the world to talk about street harassment. Chalk Back began with a chapter in New York and has now spread globally with locally-owned groups. Chalk Back is completely youth-led. 88% of participants are under the age of 25 and 54% are under the age of 18. Chalk Back leadership is all young women and gender diverse young people.

**Peace of Art** in Lebanon, is *a local organisation that creates groups of young changemakers* to be the future leaders in art and to transform a culture of violence, discrimination, extremism and ignorance into tolerance, acceptance, development, and freedom. They use art and culture in place of conflict and violence as tools to promote peace

through designed programs that focus on fine art training (music, theatre, photography, film making, drawing), and civil training (citizenship, acceptance toward others, leadership skills, conflict mediation and resolution).

**Girl Activists of Kyrgyzstan** is *an organisation led by 13-17 year old girls* that aims to strengthen feminist solidarity and support and protect young girls and women in Kyrgyzstan. Girl Activists focuses on empowering girls through art, workshops, music, technology, and more to understand their rights, end gender-based violence, and speak out against damaging cultural norms around gender inequality.

**Ana Taban: We are Tired** is *a campaign and movement* started by young South Sudanese creatives to support the 'taban/tired' people who are dedicated to bringing peace to the country.

**Chanua Dada (CHADALA)** is *a CBO* in Kenya, led by LBQ women who are survivors of SGBV are using creative arts as a tool for advocacy (dancing, storytelling, drama, spoken word and painting) to amplify and communicate their messages of equality and inclusion.

**Violence against Human Rights Defenders (HRDs).** Global authoritarian and far right political agendas, alongside transnational anti-gender movements are fuelling and escalating backlash against HRDs, threatening their safety and security and enclosing civic space. Across Europe, activists fighting for gender equality, LGBTQI+ rights and against domestic violence are under surveillance and experience hate speech and physical and digital attacks. In several Latin American and African countries we heard of state and private sector violence against young HRDs, including imprisonment. In Latin America, Indigenous HRDs defending their land are particularly affected. We also know that in Iran adolescent girls who are protesting are also facing harassment, persecution and death at the hands of the state.

**Reaching the hardest to reach is a contextual and dynamic term.** We heard different interpretations, including: “hardest to reach” are “hardest to hear”- those people who are most marginalised and oppressed, under most surveillance and are most exposed - they are naturally less trusting of and reliant on the state and instead rely heavily on community support. In the MENA region we heard that “hardest to reach” may be those “less obvious” - children and youth assumed to be safe and supported within the school system who have a home and carers, yet exist in a cycle of violence, which continues long into adulthood. In the West Balkans and Africa region hardest to reach were those children and young people in rural areas and small villages who are hard to physically and digitally access.

## Global

**A disproportionate lean towards large institutional, multilateral entities.** When searching for global youth-led groups and organisers, we found many are part of initiatives and programmes of larger more powerful entities, such as the United Nations, World Economic Forum and the World Bank, advocating at high-level international forums and summits. Despite the impressive work of

these youth leaders and groups, we felt that many did not fit within the scope of our search for those harder to reach groups, nor did they follow an organising approach. We have, however, included the national arms of the UNFPA's Y-peer network in Azerbaijan and Egypt, upon recommendation from our scoping interviews, as these groups are focused on violence within a SRHR frame, and are likely connected to other youth groups that are more aligned with Ignite's strategy.

**Regional and global youth networks tackling violence are often framing it as a broader gender inequality problem and SRHR issue.** They are often horizontal in membership, lifting up local activists' work and organising with very little funding (REDLAC, ECMIA, RESURJ). These collectives and networks are intentionally not replicating the adult-led NGO model and instead are organising to tackle the structural drivers of violence and oppression. They are cited in several of our regional insights.

**RESURJ.** RESURJ is *a global south-led and transnational feminist alliance* of younger feminists, committed to fostering stronger communities by building trust, nurturing solidarity, and sharing power. Founded in 2010, the Alliance is led by young feminists from the global south aged 40 and under with a focus on SRHR and intersecting issues of oppression, climate justice and cross-movement organising. They work primarily around the meaningful participation of global south young feminists in global advocacy fora, as well as on the criminalisation of activists. They also engage in COP and related climate change policy processes and advocate on SRHR and GBV, host convenings in parallel to global and regional fora, grounded in care and wellbeing, and do cross-movement organising.

**Several global climate networks are led by youth or are youth-centric.** In recent years, we have seen the growth of global youth climate networks that organise at the local levels, through national or local chapters, and also organise to advocate for global change. This includes networks with leadership from the global south. Nearly 70 percent of the groups we mapped are focused on climate change and climate justice, the majority of which are youth-led.

**Loss and Damage Youth Coalition** is a *youth-led coalition of 400 youth from 41 countries in the global south and north* who have come together to demand action on addressing loss and damage caused by climate change. They are focused on the communities most at risk from climate change and aim to be a driving force on action through advocacy, by mobilising new finance, building youth capacity as active stakeholders, and promoting sustainable and effective youth participation in national and international levels.

**Fridays for the Future.** #FridaysForFuture is *a global youth-led movement* that began in 2018, after 15-year-old Greta Thunberg and other young activists sat in front of the Swedish parliament every school day for three weeks, to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis. Fridays for Future now operates in 7,500 cities across the world and is made up of young people below the age of 25 who take action against climate change through large scale strikes

and campaigns. They recognise that countries are not taking enough action to fulfil the Paris agreement and have set out their own demands.

**There are also global ally organisations that are providing funding or non-financial support to youth groups and activists.** They have resources and decision-making access at different levels which can be leveraged and they may be a useful avenue to reach harder to reach girl and youth groups (e.g. Restless Development, RESURJ).

## Regional Mapping Insights

In addition to the overall insights, which were relevant for two or more regions, we have collated region-specific insights here based on our mapping exercises and scoping interviews.

### Africa

**There is a sense of urgency where there are higher rates of violence.** In countries such as Niger, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Guinea, Nigeria, Mali, Tunisia, where there are higher rates of violence against girls and women (e.g. GBV, child marriage, FGM) organisations and groups often lack the resources and infrastructure to prevent and respond. This, coupled with social realities such as poverty, social inequality and weak child protection systems, is creating fertile ground for violence against women and children that requires urgent response. The groups (networks, organisations, or associations) mapped are targeting marginalised children, youth and women, those living with disabilities, those living in hard-to-reach areas who are often exposed to higher risk of violence.

**Violence is intrinsically linked to cultural norms and practices.** The mapping was limited regarding types of violence because for African groups, networks, associations and organisations, violence is tightly linked with cultural norms and practices. There are many forms of violence that are faced including; sexual exploitation and abuse, child marriages, child labour, harmful practices (virginity testing, appeasement of avenging spirits), corporal punishment, financial abuse, neglect, psychological violence and sexual violence, etc.

**Girls Arise Foundation.** Girls Arise is an *adolescent girls' group* that aims to advance the rights of adolescent girls in Balaka, Malawi. The group works to strengthen adolescent girls' agency, voices and participation in the areas of SRHR and strengthen girls' education. They hope that this will allow adolescent girls to claim control over their bodies, as well as develop gender equitable social norms, attitudes, and behavioural change at community and individual levels to prevent violence against girls in communities around Balaka Township and beyond.

**Violence rises in conflict or conflict affected countries.** There is a higher prevalence of certain types of violence rises in countries currently in conflict or affected by conflict at their borders, such as Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Burundi, Congo, Rwanda, Niger,

Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Tchad, Guinea. This affects how young people organise and what types of violence they work on.

**Awer Women Empowerment.** This is an *adult-led, girl and women-focused survivor-led organisation* founded by two ex-conflict concubines who had been kidnapped and trafficked to neighbouring Somalia as sex slaves and forced labour for the Al-shabaab terror group. It is an organisation for and by the Awer Indigenous women. The organisation was founded by the indigenous Awer women, a feminist organisation that fights for the rights of Awer indigenous women with respect to violence prevention and eradication, Indigenous Women's Rights, Economic Empowerment and justice, Environmental conservation and protection.

**Understanding and utilising the justice system.** There is a great need to empower children to know their rights and secondly to stand for their rights. Despite the existence of laws and policies that protect children's rights, their implementation remains a challenge and few youth organisers are aware of the legal aspect of their advocacy. Grassroots organisations and youth-led groups require support to understand the justice system through child-friendly activities and engaging them into actions that bring perpetrators to court.

**Hawa Feminist Coalition.** Founded by *young feminists all under the age of 35* with the aim of promoting the safety, equality, justice, rights and dignity of girls and young women in Somalia. As a first feminist movement in Somalia they have created awareness raising and facilitated legal and access to services for 2,300 gender based violence survivors and also advocated improvements in legal protection for protection of women and girls.

**Some groups are taking a comprehensive approach to ending VAC.** Their work focuses on prevention, protection, education, sustainable funding, stakeholder engagement and advocacy, including with children themselves. We saw this particularly with regional networks like MAEJT in Africa.

**Mouvement africain des enfants et des jeunes travailleurs (MAEJT).** The *Africa-wide child-led and centred workers movement and registered organisation* bringing together children and young people within marginalised communities who did not have the opportunity to go to school or stopped too early for various reasons. The movement identifies problems the children face, grounded in the needs of the community. Their activities include social mapping of children and community challenges, training on violence in all its forms, participation and political advocacy and child-led social actions. The members include: Employed youth: waitresses, domestic girls; Young apprentices: sewing, carpentry, and welding; Self-employed: luggage carriers, shoe-shiners, street vendors; Others are: farmers, fishermen, girls underemployed but helping at home, students who study and work. The movement leaders are aged 14 - 17 and 60% are girls and young women.

## Asia Pacific

**Some youth groups are framing the violence they work on as violent extremism.** In Asia, there are a small number of youth-centred programmes/initiatives targeting violent extremism. While they do not follow the youth organising model as such, it is an interesting framing we had not previously anticipated and could explore further.

**FAMM - The Young Indonesian Women Activists' Forum (Forum Aktivistis Perempuan Muda Indonesia).** FAMM is *a network of more than 350 young women* from 30 provinces across Indonesia, unites rural, urban, indigenous, Muslim, Christian, and LGBTI activists. FAMM members tackle risky and sensitive issues such as the defence of land and water against environmentally damaging 'development' initiatives, rights for women and LGBTI communities, and personal and collective safety from domestic and political violence. While not faith-based, they are targeting violence derived from religious fundamentalism and bring together young women from diverse religions. The network has a strong focus on advocacy on the extractive industries and on tackling environmental damage to Indigenous lands and peoples.

**Less political climate work.** While there are one or two examples of Indigenous-led efforts, using the framing of oppression of Indigenous communities, youth organising around climate justice seems to be less political in Asia, tending to be more focused on individual behavioural change towards sustainable living and awareness raising.

**Asia Young Indigenous Peoples Network (AYIPN).** Asia Young Indigenous Peoples Network is *a regional network made up of youth-led and centred Indigenous rights groups/organisations*. It envisions an Asian community in which the youth freely enjoy indigenous culture, self-determination, environment and human rights. It was created during a regional Indigenous youth conference and while it is not legally registered, there is a clear governance structure. While they do not talk about violence explicitly, they frame their work in an understanding of a historic oppression of Indigenous peoples disguised as development.

**Violence within schools.** Despite the high prevalence of violence against children in schools in India, there did not seem to be many groups working on this. This might be partly to do with the fact that youth groups cannot access schools due to systemic complexities including trivialisation of youth leaders' capacities and knowledge to lead meaningful interventions.

**Ally-led work.** At present, most (visible) projects in India tackling violence against children are led by allies above the age of 35. A few were initiated by youth leaders who are now transitioning to the ally age-bracket.

**Yellow Streets, India.** Founded by two older youth who are now transitioning to the ally age bracket, Yellow Streets creates safe spaces for young people on the streets to learn and grow, using rugby as a channel to explore life skills. One of their programmes GullyseNikaal is



a progressive movement of young people from the streets to develop, be skilled and competent to curtail societal gaps and avoid conflict with the law.

**The role of established local organisations and youth leadership programmes.** Many adolescent girls and young women in India are tackling the issues related to GBV, early and child marriage, domestic violence, street harassment etc. though such efforts are mostly in association with established local organisations. Youth-centric leadership programmes run by already established community-based organisations focusing on capacity, knowledge and skill building of young people provide an enabling ecosystem for young people to initiate their own projects, and interventions as well as ensure their safety and mitigate bureaucratic processes. There is potential in utilising already established ecosystems to sustain youth-organising against VAC as without this infrastructure they often struggle to continue beyond a year due to a lack of sustained monetary and non-monetary support.

**Chhori.** An *registered adult-led, girl-centred organisation* in Nepal focused on girl and young women's empowerment with the aim of tackling violence against girls, exploitation and human trafficking. Chhori provides support and assistance on the capacity building of vulnerable girls and women to combat the socioeconomic barriers. It identifies victims of exploitation and the ones who are at risk of exploitation. The aim is to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into the family/society; Chhori does advocacy to prevent and protect the girls and women from exploitation; Increase the public awareness of the fundamental rights of girls and women. Activities also include trauma informed healing initiatives with survivors.

**Safety and security.** In many parts of India, directly tackling issues related to gender-based and caste-based violence has exposed young leaders to serious backlash like curtailed mobility and physical or sexual violence. Personal safety of people engaged in rescue and rehabilitation of young survivors, especially those from organised crimes like human trafficking is an even bigger concern.

**AVANI Women and Child Rights.** Led by a former child labourer, Avani is *a grassroots community organisation* that offers a range of programmes and services to support children and youth who are at risk of being trafficked for labour or sexual exploitation. Its programmes include a home for rescued child labourers, orphans, and other children in Kolhapur, India; and gender equity training for boys. Through courageous action and advocacy AVANI has motivated families and brickyard factory owners to stop sending children to work, having now reduced child labour in the region's brickyards by 95%.

**Prevalence of preventative and transformative approaches to tackle VAC.** Youth-led projects often address issues related to violence against children as a part of broader programmes/projects like Comprehensive Sexuality Education (gender-awareness, bodily autonomy, SRHR, consent, pleasure, masculinity, GBV, IPV, ECM etc) and life skills



building/leadership programmes (self-awareness, negotiation, power dynamics in relationships, decision-making around education, career, marriage etc).

**Rangeen Khidki Foundation** is *a youth-led feminist organisation* working in the space of sexual and reproductive health and rights with adolescents and young people. Through their programmes, they build knowledge, capacity, and skills of adolescent girls and young people to know about their body and rights, exercise bodily autonomy and navigate interpersonal relations in an informed manner. Their capacity building programme builds awareness on various types and root causes of violence like gender-based violence, intimate-partner violence, sexual violence etc.

**Growing prominence of mental health initiatives.** In South Asia, there is a growing focus on mental-health related initiatives (suicide prevention, emotional well-being etc) led by young people. This is largely in response to the impact of the COVID19 pandemic.

**Take a wider focus.** In India, we heard that most youth-led groups working on the root causes of violence operate within a SRHR frame, and that activism around climate change is mostly separate to violence issues with few working on the intersections. Therefore, it was recommended to look for groups working on violence within a broader framework.

## Europe, Balkans and the Caucasus

### Europe

**Social justice backlash.** There is increasing backlash against the social justice agenda, including climate denial among boys in European countries with a trend towards extreme alt-right agendas and rising school drop-out rates due to gendered expectations that education is a girls domain (e.g. Sweden).

### Western Balkans

**Youth organising is predominantly focused on peace and reconciliation.** Most youth organisations in the Balkans (and civil society) were founded in the aftermath of the war in ex-Yugoslav countries. This is primarily due to the socialist context, as youth-led organising in self-governing socialism was inspired and supported, but it was a centralised and institutionalised effort in most cases. Therefore, most youth organising was aimed at peace efforts and reconciliation, which remains a dominant paradigm in Bosnia and Herzegovina where effects of the war are still felt to this day.

**Youth organising is mostly hosted within well established, adult-led organisations.** Many groups form within adult-led structures as this is where their learning of activism originates. Youth groups often do not want to be formalised as they do not have capacity to deal with the bureaucracy, and also, often they are operating momentarily, within different groups, and they

don't last long. Many women's organisations include the perspectives of girls and their self-organising to end violence in youth relationships, families etc., In addition, many youth-led organisations set up in the 90s and early 2000s are still led by the same founders who are now middle-aged that have within them corners of authentic youth-led organising in the form of a club, or youth working group.

**Youth organising to end violence is primarily focused on peer violence and violence in teenage relationships.** As such, organisations working on violence prevention often approach working with young people by engaging youth as peer educators through different prevention or advocacy actions.

**Non-functioning institutions as a form of violence against children.** In Serbia, for example, marginalised children such as undocumented Roma children, children with intellectual disabilities, children without parental care, and children suffering complex or rare diseases often fall through the cracks of a broken system. A strong civil society is organising in response, many from the protection paradigm but some organisations are empowering children and youth to self-advocate and work holistically to help them live free from violence and thrive (Otaharin, Bijeljina in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

**Violence against children is taboo.** Violence against boys and girls, specifically sexual abuse of children is still taboo and burdened with shame - few groups and organisations are willing to take on the issue strategically.

**The hardest to reach groups.** Children and young people who are the hardest to reach were identified as children in rural areas and villages, Roma children (child, early and forced marriage is a norm within the community), refugees and unaccompanied minors, internally displaced youth from wars, street children and children with diseases.

**Work with boys.** There is little work being done with boys regarding education on violence prevention and youth activism is being led by women and girls. Unless boys are part of the process, violence will continue. Contrary to this, in Bosnia, boys are leading the change and there is a lot of work being done on violence prevention and working against toxic masculinity. Organisations have made the connection and raised awareness that one of the drivers of violence is post traumatic stress disorder, symptomatic within post conflict populations. (Vlasotince, Serbia, Centar E8, Serbia, CARE Balkans)

**The importance of healing and collective care.** The mental health of children, young people and adults alike is hugely compromised in a region still fragmented by conflict and displacement. Addressing the mental health and basic needs of activists who experience different trauma (economic, social, sexual, discrimination etc.) is critical to the cause.

**Divisions exist within the women's movement.** In Serbia, for example, these divisions relate not only to polarising issues, such as trans rights but also a political divide sparked by the state's co-optation of human rights language and principles, which are enshrined in policy and frameworks yet in reality are attacking democracy and human rights. Cooperation with the state has created

division across organisations - some groups are more pragmatic and understand that some level of cooperation with institutions is necessary for a systemic response to violence. Other groups believe that any cooperation with the current government is doubling down on values and endorses harmful government politics and practices.

**The need for safe spaces and infrastructure for youth organisers.** In the W. Balkans youth-led organising is informal with many pop up initiatives that are short lived and in the moment, mainly because the situation is always changing. These organisers don't have time to apply for grants so it is important to provide resources for youth centres and other places for youth to gather and organise themselves.

**Dealing with violence is dealing with the past.** History relates to violence against children - teenagers are dealing with nationalist sentiment, xenophobia and othering. Some youth-led organising is addressing this and different types of violence through workshops, theatre and performance art for teenagers dealing with these issues (Helsinki Centre for Human Rights).

## MENA

**A complex region often overlooked.** The conglomeration of the MENA/SWANA region is diverse and there are deep and complex sensitivities between Arab states related to levels of progression within laws and cultures and how movements respond to, and organise on, certain issues.

**Youth organising is still fresh in the region.** There is a new generation of youth who are organising much younger - they are stepping out from their taboos and exploring their potential. Compared to previous generations, these young activists are more independent, have more access to information and people and are more visible. There is a lot to learn and youth and girls and to free themselves from chains of patriarchy, establishing their own movements and collectives that express their priorities and issues.

**Children live in complicated contexts and face different forms of violence.** Prevailing social norms encourage violence against children and deprive them of their safety and wellbeing. This includes violence at home, violence at schools, attacks on schools in conflict and occupation contexts, child employment, early marriage, and inability to access basic services. Girls are the most impacted by these forms of violence, given the patriarchal structures and lack of protection.

**Nada foundation** is *a youth-led organisation* that is unique and inspiring. The idea behind the establishment of this foundation came from a girl who escaped early marriage twice in her life at a very young age. After experiencing this, she decided to dedicate her efforts to help other Yemeni girls especially in marginalised areas. Through her work, she supports girls to discover their power through awareness raising programs, capacity-building programs, campaigns against violence, and advocate for girls' rights at different levels. The Safe Havens programme supports girls who were forced into marriage and victims of domestic abuse and the foundation also works with authorities to rescue underage girls and place them in safe locations. This foundation is an example of an initiative led by children with lived experiences.

**Lack of legal protection for children.** In many countries there is no clear definition of violence in national laws, with a lack of protection mechanisms and referral systems to protect children and adolescents, especially girls from violence. Reported femicide cases of women and girls are usually overlooked by judiciary systems, and in many countries are still perceived as “honour crimes”. There have been legal reforms in several countries introducing punishment for rape, sexual harassment, femicide and early marriage, however, the implementation of these laws has been subject to bias of courts, giving impunity for perpetrators.

**Violence against children in conflict and crisis settings.** Crises and conflict continue to inflict the region, such as the recent earthquakes in Turkey, Syria, and parts of Lebanon. This adds another layer of oppression and violence against children, adolescents, and youth, depriving them from their basic human rights, access to services, having open and safe spaces, and enjoying basic freedoms. For example, in Palestine children were used as human shields during military operations in refugee camps by Israeli forces, hundreds of Palestinian children are in Israeli prisons experiencing torture, ill-treatment, and solitary confinement, schools have been demolished, girls prevented from going to school out of fear for their safety.

**Few organisations, collectives and movements focus explicitly on violence against children.** However, emergent youth-led groups, collectives and organisations are often the main respondents to the issues related to violence against children, adolescents, and girls. Many examples of girl and youth-led groups and organisations included in the mapping organise campaigns, work on advocacy for girls and children's rights, and are mobilising resources to provide children affected by conflict and violence with needed services and support. Some organisations stated that they need additional resources to include VAC in their mandate, as this requires more specialisations, a different working approach, and experienced staff.

**Intergenerational work is still emerging but shows potential.** Younger groups still need some guidance, mentoring and support from the experience and wisdom of older generations to let them know what is possible. Many for example, don't know it's possible to organise politically and form a movement or organisation without being registered. Working across generations is still considered a new approach however with leadership of groups working against violence still exclusive to the older generation. Lack of trust in the capacities and capabilities of young people,

gap in priorities and needs, communication gaps among different generations, competition for funds all contribute to this generational divide.

**Examples of intergenerational organisations:**

**Karama Girls Initiative (KGI)** is *a network for adolescent girls* inspired to support girls' leadership and decision-making in and across women's rights organisations and platforms in the Arab and North Africa region. Its innovative intergenerational approach has seen girls, young women, and older women's rights activists partner to listen, learn, and design new strategies. Since 2019, when the network was formed, the network has grown with young women from 10 countries across the Arab region working together on joint advocacy initiatives representing a transnational movement across the Middle East and North Africa. KGI is hosted within Karama, a regional NGO leading a growing movement to end violence against women and girls and promote women's participation across the Arab region.

**Free to Run Iraq - Free to Run** is *a youth-centric NGO* working with marginalised women and girls in Iraq between the ages of 15 and 25, the majority of whom have experienced trauma related to war. Using sports as a platform, Free to Run works towards the development and expansion of a widespread grassroots network of young women with the right skills to lead their communities through change and towards peace.

**An intersectional approach to organising.** There is an intersectional approach to organising in the region because young people's basic needs are not being met (jobs, housing, food etc.), coupled with a lack of tools of the global north, such as protective and decriminalising legislation and policy for children, LGBTIQ+ and abortion issues, which pushes individuals and groups to work together - this is a strength and holds potential.

**Amna Initiative, Sudan** is *a youth-led NGO* working to end all violence against women and girls in Sudan. AMNA means safe in Arabic, and it's also a female name - it represents any Sudanese girl who has faced violence, and their goal is to make any Sudanese girl Amna "safe". Amna mobilises individuals, diverse communities and agencies to create safer environments for women and girls in Sudan and empowers women and girls with the tools needed to tackle the mechanisms that condone violence.

**Youth-led groups and activists working on violence issues are not visible.** More often than not, girls are included within women's services and prevention strategies and boys are included within men and boys engagement strategies of more formalised, larger entities, such as INGOs and registered groups..

**Shoruq Organisation in the Occupied Palestine Territories** hosts thriving *youth groups*, such as Shoruq Rap Girls Group and Ettijah - the former is a local Palestinian hip-hop group

that consists of 8 girls between the ages of 12 and 15, who are passionate about rap music and its significant impact in affirming a particular statement surrounding social justice, including violence against girls and other relevant topics.

**Youth-led and girls initiatives face huge threats and intimidation from different sources, including state actors, religious groups, and societies.** For example, youth-led movements in many countries received threats and attacks (on ground and online) for advocating to end child marriage, and to demand ending violence against children at home and in schools, claiming that this is a western agenda and against the social norms.

**Girls' groups and young feminist-led groups are not receiving the funding and support they need to thrive.** Most of the girls' initiatives included in the mapping receive the least support from national and international organisations. They are working with small grants of \$5,000-10,000 and are not given the opportunity to develop their work and extend their mandate. Many girls and young women work on a voluntary basis, which hinders sustainability and limits the impact of their work. Because of safety concerns, they are not able to be more public about their work, hindering their ability to raise the funds they need (FemiHub, Egypt).

**Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) *is a youth-centric NGO*** working to protect women and girls facing violence and discrimination, including tribal misogyny, sex trafficking, and sectarian violence. Its shelters provide critical refuge and healing spaces for women, young women, and children who are survivors of kidnapping, trafficking, rape, and abuse. OWFI also builds power: providing training and peer networks so that more women can act as bold advocates for gender equality while also building support among the Iraqi public for women's human rights. OWFI represents a non-compromising feminist voice to challenge the growing patriarchal, tribal, and religious institutions gaining ground in Iraq, and to combat the rise of the misogynistic groups like ISIS.

## Latin America and the Caribbean

**Laws about funding youth groups.** In some countries youth groups find it hard to access funding due to local laws that limit the funding that can reach informal, unregistered groups or place high fees on the transactions. Not all young people have bank accounts so other forms of moving money, such as through supermarket money transfer systems in Mexico, need to be explored.

**The exclusivity of youth organising.** Much youth engagement and advocacy at the national or regional levels is led by young people holding relatively high social and economic privilege, and may not be rooted in local organising. This might partly be due to other privileges they hold: speaking English, digital access etc. This results also in the exclusion of Indigenous youth from these spaces as well as young people from rural areas or under privileged socio-economic backgrounds.

**Issues of GBV, including femicide, are prevalent across the region.** Femicide and other forms of GBV, particularly affecting intersecting populations including Indigenous, migrants, LGBTQIA+

communities, and women in urban areas are prevalent. Indigenous femicides are less investigated by the police, thus demonstrating the intersection of institutional violence with interpersonal violence. Girl and youth collectives, networks and groups across the region often include an explicit or implicit focus on GBV, whether through education workshops or political campaigning. #NiUnaMenos is an example of a movement born from local organising against femicide that grew across the region.

**Colectiva Feminista Akelarre.** A *youth-led feminist collective* focused on SRHR, gender based violence and feminism(s) in El Salvador. Their work takes an intentional power building approach: they organise trainings, workshops and organise direct actions such as protests and marches. Their social media campaigning focuses on police violence and femicides, including of girls.

**Youth are organising in girl, youth and intergenerational feminist collectives and networks.**

Latin America has a long history of civil society organising for social justice and winning the recognition of human rights through large scale protests. For example, in countries such as Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico, feminist activism has prompted more leftist governments to implement progressive public policies that promote education, housing programmes and stronger public health care systems. Colombia also now has its first black woman Vice President with an activist and domestic worker background, showing some promise after a long period of militarisation in the country. Perhaps because of this history of organising, alongside an increase in movement funding (as opposed to development aid), there is abundance of feminist organising in the region, particularly among informal and horizontal networks and collectives. Examples include: Colectiva Feminista Akelarre (El Salvador), Colectivo Iranu (Mexico) and COINCIDIR (regional).

**Indigenous groups are making the connection between environmental protection and violence.** Groups are working on GBV and recognise this is grounded in an understanding of Indigenous territories, where the land is seen as an extension of one's body (Jovenas Rompiendo el Silencio, Comisión de Niñez y Juventud del Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas, IDEAS Ch'ieltik) and they are providing support to HRDs who are "survivors/victims" of violence (Mano Vuela).

**Indigenous groups are still present and resisting in the region despite voracious and powerful extractivism from the Global North alongside corrupt governments as a form of neo-colonialism.** Indigenous-led organisations are fighting to defend their land, particularly in South America (Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile) where extractive mining is one the most destructive forms of environmental violence, violence against ancestral communities and the murder or incarceration of environmental activist leaders as a form of coercion. Support is needed to protect the security of activists, strengthen ancestral community care practices as a form of restorative justice, and for strategic litigation to enforce international laws, such as ILO's Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal peoples, as well as utilise international platforms, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.



**Newer organisations are learning from the ancestral approaches of Indigenous peoples, black communities and communities of Afro-descendant groups how to sustain human life and the life of the planet.** These learnings adopt transgenerational and collective care approaches and strategies based on ancestral spiritual practices and the use of plants for healing transgenerational trauma caused by structural violence and colonialism. When it comes to organising, there is a true exchange of knowledge being passed on to younger generations by elders in the community. These learnings are rooted in the understanding that reimagining new realities lies in the power of the collective, whereby every individual and their capabilities are important to the survival of the collective and that everyone must be taken care of by the group. Coletivo Ileras from Sao Paulo, Brazil have created an intergenerational community for collective healing and to take action against gender violence and police violence in their neighbourhood.

**A political approach to tackling violence.** One ecofeminist group (Jasy Renyhê) explicitly recognises the link between environmental destruction, capitalism and violence against girls. Another has a similar intersectional approach, though without the ecofeminist framing (Tejiendo Pensamientos). A third, in Brazil, intentionally focuses on building the power of young people to engage in political influencing processes to tackle environmental degradation. Aside from Africa, this was the main region where the links between violence and climate were explicitly recognised and lifted up.

**Engajamundo.** Engajamundo is a Brazilian *youth-led organisation* working at the intersections of climate justice, gender, biodiversity and sustainable cities. To join the network you need to be aged 15 - 25. If you are older, you are considered an ally and asked to donate. Through training, mobilisation, participation and advocacy, Engaja focuses on empowering Brazilian youth to understand, participate and have an impact on political processes, from local to international. Their vision is for Brazilian youth to be aware of their socio-environmental impact, engaged in local, national and international decision-making processes, and enabling better political decisions. Their advocacy demands more access and representation of young people in all decision-making processes.

**Abortion rights as a form of violence.** Abortion access and laws within Latin America provide an interesting area to explore and understand the intersections between GBV, state violence, and institutional violence with the police and healthcare systems. Strict abortion laws themselves are a form of violence against adolescent girls. Strict abortion laws result in the criminalisation and persecution of girls and women, as well as high prevalence of unsafe abortion and health challenges for those who are forced to carry an unviable or unsafe pregnancy to term. Many of those affected are adolescent girls e.g. in El Salvador, several of the Las 17 are under 18 (La Agrupación Ciudadana / Las 17, El Salvador).

**Long term efforts to decriminalise abortion have sparked a particular interest for sexual and reproductive rights among younger generations of feminist organisers.** In the Dominican Republic for example, young feminists are fighting for sexual and reproductive rights within a racial justice lens, including the ever present xenophobia against people of Haitian descent.

**Salud Mujeres.** Salud Mujeres in Ecuador is *a young feminist-led collective* that provides information and support for girls and women to conduct safe abortion at home, advocates to decriminalise abortion and organises direct actions on abortion rights and related issues of violence, persecution and oppression.

**A long and fierce history of racism in Brazil has created powerful and particular forms of resistance.** Brazil has a long history of organising and resistance from the Afro-Brazilian population, which makes up more than half of the population. As the last country in the western hemisphere to abolish slavery in 1888, collective injustice is still very much present in the racism embedded in society, which has led to strong and particular forms of organising. Rural communities called quilombos represent historic and cultural reference points for the black movement, pioneering organising strategies based on the nurturing of community and sustaining each other through solidarity practices. Also, the presence of African matrix religious practices (as it is called in Brazil), has very much shaped organising and is built around spirituality, connection to the divine, nature and its elements. The latter comes with great resistance from powerful neo-pentecostal influences in the country over the past decades, including hate speech from authoritarian president Jair Bolsonaro, which has sparked further religious racism and deeming African spirituality as ungodly.

**The impact of mass incarceration on VAC.** There are nuances when understanding the violence against incarcerated women (Colectivo Teia, Brazil), as well as how this relates to violence against their children as a result e.g. emotional trauma as well as risks of institutional violence by ending up in the care system (Elas Existem- Mulheres Encarceradas (They Exist- Incarcerated Women, Brazil)).

**Art is widely used as a creative approach to social and political change both on violence and climate change.** This includes a diversity of approaches including art, music, drama and cinema. Caravana Cine in Colombia is a group of young activists who offer audiovisual and cinematographic education to promote innovative and captivating social critique. Warriors Zulu Nation in Honduras uses hip hop to prevent gang violence. IDEAS Ch'ieltik in Mexico is an Indigenous-led environmental group that incorporates art-based learning.

**Violence against refugees and migrants.** Both migration to the US and Venezuelans seeking asylum have brought organisations to focus on racism, xenophobia and violence against refugees and migrants, some with a specific focus on children (Brigada Migrante Feminista, Chile, Comisión de Niñez y Juventud del Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas, Regional). El Derecho a No Obedecer ("The Right to Not Obey"), Colombia is led by Venezuelan youth.

**Vida Digna Colectivo.** An Indigenous Mayan organisation focused on migration and culture. It aims to unify families and support children and young people who are on the move, detained or returning to Guatemala. The organisation itself is *adult-led or intergenerational* and they have a youth council made up of Indigenous youth. They do national and international research and

advocacy on the rights of migrants, with a specialised programme on migrant girls and young women. They provide direct support to migrants and their families including reunification services.

## Gaps in the mapping

This section outlines several gaps in the mapping, either by language, geography or issue area as well as an explanation to why we believe this gap exists. With regard to geographical gaps, our limitations were largely attributed to the scope of work and our time capacity for this mapping process. The gaps should not be ignored, but may provide an opportunity for further research later on.

### Information gaps about the groups we found:

- **Affiliation with other groups, networks or associations.** It was not always easy to find this information (and perhaps not clear enough criteria for what was meant).
- **Funding and budgets.** Barely a handful of groups shared their annual reports from which we could draw an estimated budget. In fact we were told by our regional advisers that there is reticence to discuss a groups' budget and funding due to a combination of shame and risk in terms of sustaining activities with communities.
- **Leadership and make-up.** Where there were social media channels or websites, these rarely had enough information on the leadership and make-up of a group. Very few explicitly listed this (e.g. we are an Indigenous group of girls aged 13 - 17).
- **Types of violence.** It was difficult to attribute a single type of violence because it is experienced across the spectrum and grounded in multiple forms of oppression. We therefore, marked 'a combination' to acknowledge this. For those groups working on climate change, rarely was it attributed to violence, therefore we marked 'state' and 'structural' for the purpose of the mapping category.
- **Religious affiliation.** No groups have identified as faith-based online, but this does not mean that their work is happening outside of a religious context. This was raised during our scoping interviews, that even if a group is not explicitly faith-based, everything they do, who they hire and how they operate will be determined by the religious context. For the purpose of this mapping, because this information was not available, we marked 'secular' in the tool.
- **Informal, community-based projects.** In India, it was not possible to reach out to the non-formalised, community-based projects who are not visible online, even when leveraging networks and contacts.
- **Understanding the landscape of school-based interventions in tackling VAC.** This was a clear gap in the India mapping as there did not seem to be youth-led groups working on violence against children in schools. Further investigation could look into interventions targeting parents and caretakers.

Much of the information asked for in the mapping is also quite significant for a group to share or put together e.g. leadership, budget etc. In terms of respecting time and managing expectations, this information could be sought once Ignite has more clarity around the next phase of its strategy.

### **Geographical gaps:**

- **Europe, the Balkans and Caucasus.** The initial desk scan confirmed the diverse breadth of countries, cultures and languages across Europe and especially within the Balkans, which we needed more time for, as well as regional support. In the Balkans, our findings are mainly operating in the west of the region, where our regional adviser has a network of connections working on violence. Within Europe, we picked up a handful of regional networks and organisations though many were more established, less marginalised or 'hard to reach' and those that were more aligned with VAC were more service providers, on the surface at least. Within the Caucasus we included groups from Georgia only. Due to time/budget constraints we found that we could only skim the surface without seeing what is actually happening on the ground.
- **Haiti.** Limited time and capacity meant we did not have enough time to meaningfully delve into youth organising in Haiti.
- **Nicaragua.** Very few groups surfaced in Nicaragua and those captured in the mapping were through other funders and are in a separate mapping document not to be shared publicly. This could be to do with the extremely restricted political context there and closed civic space in the country.
- **North America.** The initial desk scan and review of nation-wide youth organising-focused funder collaboratives in the US showed there are potentially hundreds of groups that could be mapped. This is particularly large given the focus on climate justice, gun violence and GBV. An alternative approach will be suggested for North America.
- **Southeast Asia.** We identified Hindi as a language gap in India, but did not have time/budget to invest in language-specific mappings in the rest of South Asia and in Southeast Asian countries. Those we did find, that operated in English, might be more established or exclusive.

# Recommendations to deepen and strengthen

## Recommendations to further shape Ignite's strategy

**Look beyond political framing and identity but towards those who are resisting patriarchal, capitalist and colonial violence.** Apply an intersectional feminist lens to power building, activism and advocacy to end violence against children. This allows for a broad, inclusive and collaborative approach and supports recognition of the different and intersecting forms of oppression and inequality experienced by children and young people. It is oriented explicitly towards transformation, building coalitions between different generations and among different groups working towards social justice.

**Expand language around “lived experience” and “survivor-led” when reaching out to groups.** There may be stigma attached to identifying one's self as a survivor or having lived experience that prevents moving on to a life free from violence and with agency. There is also a huge amount of risk involved to self identify this way. For example, when approaching LGBTIQ+ groups, Ignite was advised to widen up language around youth-led and lived experience to create space for these groups to step into. The risks for LGBTIQ+ groups and individuals to openly lead their own work are often too extreme, especially within restrictive states - they are harder to find. A different strategy is necessary to connect to these groups that requires working in partnerships with funders who have existing relationships.

**Partner with diverse groups of youth organisers and assemble advisory circles to feed into Ignite's strategy, messaging, communications and outreach.** Youth groups and organisations need to fully understand where you are coming from and your theory of change. For example, sharing the mapping and strategy and inviting critical reflection among specific groups could generate synergies and would also give increased visibility to those harder to reach. Young people in all their diversity are using various communication channels and have different narratives to adults - their input would be valuable to articulate Ignite's role and purpose.

**Support a participatory process to understand which groups are legitimate.** Engage youth organisers and their allies in participatory strategy design and grant-making as Ignite further defines the scope of its grant-making around violence and climate justice. This will help ensure that youth organisers are those that define what type of organising and work to tackle violence is legitimate in different contexts.

**Context-specific analysis of priorities and needs should be conducted,** especially with the variations in challenges and priorities across regions, and in terms of the intensity of violence against children. For example, refugee children and girls, and those living in conflict and occupation countries have different needs than other countries.

**Focus on a national and regional level.** Based on this mapping and ongoing conversations with those in the sector, consider going deeper and narrower e.g. focusing on a smaller number of regions to pilot a participatory grant-making approach. Hold conversations with groups in the

mapping in one region or a small number of countries to add substance to their leadership, funding and accompaniment needs. Consider focusing support and partnership on regional networks as an avenue to racing national and local groups.

**Consider the diversity of organising.** Take time to explore how different youth groups and their allies are organising in practice around violence and climate change issues. For example, understanding the landscape of organising on VAC and climate justice from hard-to-reach, youth-led groups in villages/rural areas in India and parts of Africa would be valuable. These groups experience both issues first hand and are often invisible, given the lack of access to the internet, human and financial resources, equipment and even channels of communication with larger NGOs and INGOs.

## Recommendations on funding practices

**Provide activist-led accompaniment.** Work with youth organisers to understand what accompaniment needs they have and develop capacity building actions together with different groups. This is strategic and complementary to support, creates conditions for the group's autonomy, and provides a set of tools and knowledge for them to grow as institutions and collectives. Any direct accompaniment by funders (capacity strengthening, wellness and safety support, mentorship, legal advice and convening etc) should depend on their strengths and any outside support well considered by the groups themselves. Mentorship and guidance through capacity building programmes must be provided to youth-led groups and collectives to increase their ability to mobilise resources and to ensure impact of their work.

**Provide flexible, core, long term funding and mechanisms in place for rapid response.** The work of youth-led organisations needs to be flexible, to enable them to adapt to emerging crises. The funding mechanism must ensure the protection of basic human rights and freedoms for youth, children, and girls, while providing enough humanitarian support to ensure quality education, access to information, protection, and safe spaces.

**Check for authenticity and tensions within the social justice movement.** Be mindful of movement conflation and co-option of feminist and climate justice language within civil society and state policies and frameworks and ensure groups' values and principles are aligned, authentic and being played out. Also take time to understand if there are any existing tensions within the movement and across groups, including intergenerational.

**Build mechanisms to ensure adult-led partners are meaningfully sharing decision-making power with children and young people.** Consider building questions into the application form and having it be something that partners report on. A participation audit or assessment may also help groups and organisations identify gaps and opportunities when it comes to participation.

**Practise true collaboration not competition.** Work in partnership with existing funders, intermediaries and practitioners who understand and work with children and youth groups in different contexts. They have established direct trusting relationships with groups, which is a multi-step process that takes time, and have safeguards in place already. They have also done the

mappings, know the gaps and where potential partnership, collaboration and resources are most needed.

**Engage in learning and strategy sharing spaces with other funders.** Having the support of a community of peers builds the groundwork for a range of funding models capable of supporting the diversity of youth-led organisational structures. Funder collaboration also reduces burden on youth groups and organisations, avoids duplication of efforts and increases their access to resources.

**Grantee-centred advocacy at the global level.** Donors and international organisations should work on promoting accountability mechanisms to different duty-bearers accountable for VAC practices. They can use their international position and power to advocate on opening civic space and on VAC issues, grounded in the needs and priorities of grantee partners.

**Be a convener - connect groups for national/regional/international collective organising.** Many youth are working on the same issues but are not connected in their work. They tend to access small pools of funding rather than joining forces to incite big change. Funders can create fertile ground for groups to flourish into a movement by strategically convening people or offering support platforms that help different groups connect with one another and build trust, and for learning and advocacy at the national, regional and/or international level.

**Consider the need for capacity building models for young groups.** Youth organisers have less experience managing funds and limited access to many resources. Horizontal capacity building models related to finance and other identified needs are crucial to the success of youth organisers. These models must include paid time for activists as they have other jobs to sustain their lives and their work is voluntary, which often leads to burnout and unsustainable activism.

## Potential funding gaps to invest in

**Fund different types of youth organising, including nascent groups born from adult-led programmes.** Provide funding and non-financial accompaniment to support youth-led initiatives emerging out of the leadership programmes of the established organisation.

**Invest in and promote intergenerational work and dialogue.** Given the complexity of organising on VAC and violence more broadly, including tensions and divides within movements at the intersections of age and identity, a unique value add would be to strengthen intergenerational and cross-movement work. Youth organisers and adult allies have an essential part to play, together, to prevent violence against children, therefore nurturing a learning space to work together, learn, adapt and synergise would greatly strengthen efforts.

**Provide funds for healing and collective care.** Respect healing justice and trauma-sensitive practices. This involves long term funding and considering wellbeing in a holistic sense, starting with rethinking how Ignite promotes self-care and collective care internally and integrating mental health components as part of their programmes. Given the sensitivities of working on violence and the propensity for trauma, consider providing flexible, emergency funding for immediate needs e.g. counselling or partnering with wellbeing practitioners.



**Invest in safety and legal support.** Incorporate strategies to counter backlash against youth organisers. Strengthen connections and access to legal support and protection for youth organisers whose lives are under threat and intimidation. Identify ally organisations such as women's funds, local legal organisations and others that are well equipped to provide direct support to young people.

**To tackle VAC in schools, support a multi stakeholder approach.** Explore and support multi-stakeholder collaboration projects between schools, community, government, and youth. Given the lack of youth organising on school-based VAC, consider whether this is a suitable area for funding under Ignite' new strategic focus on youth organising.

**Fund girls and other marginalised groups.** There are several groups working on issues of violence that are severely under-funded and face other barriers to their political participation. Consider identifying and investing in these groups specifically, for example adolescent girls working on violence against girls, groups working on violence against intersex people, young people working on conflict and post-conflict settings.

**Leverage the role of organisations that are already working with and supporting youth-led initiatives, including regional youth networks.** Explore the models of support to youth-led initiatives that are hosted through adult-led, registered organisations, as well as the ways that youth are organising within them. Youth-led groups have lived experience but not enough resources. It's important to explore how to utilise well established organisations and their mechanisms to get resources to youth-led groups. Ignite could help relieve the power imbalance through unrestricted funding to youth groups (with adults administering the efforts).

**Consider transformative justice as an approach to reach harder to reach groups.** Many oppressed groups and communities are targeted by the state, are therefore not trusting of it or outsider support. They are under the radar and rely heavily on community support in every aspect of their lives - this is particularly important to consider when trying to access Indigenous children and adolescents, children from immigrant communities, children with disabilities and children within queer and trans communities, who are often the most targeted. Approach those working/living within communities who have built trust and are supporting oppressed and marginalised children and adolescents and promote community-based change.

**Fund communications work to create new narratives.** Explore which actors can help break taboos and create different narratives around violence against children, including child sexual abuse. Violence against children is too often a silent issue due to social norms and notions of shame. Going beyond the usual suspects and partnering with journalists, communicators, educators and those similar is advisable to bring the issue out in the open so that people can start organising and creating change.

**Research is needed on youth and youth organising in the MENA region.** There is a lot to learn about youth organising, to understand specific contexts and where the funding gaps are.

For example, there is still no trans network in the region and among adolescent girls, there is insufficient research specifically on their lived experiences of violence.

**In the Balkans, work with social media influencers as allies for outreach to children and young people.** There are some inspiring and well connected influencers with high quality content who are educating children and teenagers on recognizing forms of violence, who could be very relevant allies to the cause.

## Closing remarks

In conclusion, we commend the Ignite team for their transparency, openness and willingness to bring on board different skills and expertise to sense-check, map and make sense of the environment of youth organising on violence against children. Ignite's approach has allowed this process to take us on a journey, to build layers and be iterative. It should continue to be live and adaptive as more groups are added to the mapping and as funders collaborate to share strategic approaches and learnings.

It has been a pleasure to be part of this process and we look forward to future opportunities to contribute to Ignite's work and collaborate on the vital work of moving more and better resources to young organisers and their allies.

We particularly want to extend thanks to the Ignite team, those who participated in interviews and the regional advisors: Amani Aruri (MENA), Pamela Akplogan (Africa), Pooja Singh (Asia), Nataljia Simović (Balkans) and Xiomara Carballo (Latin America).

## Annex 1: scoping interviewees

- Pamela Akplogan, young feminist organiser and consultant, Francophone Africa (Benin)
- Amani Aruri, young feminist organiser and consultant, crisis contexts (Palestine)
- Ramatu Bangura, CRIF (Global)
- Laxman Belbase, MenEngage Global Alliance (Global)
- Oumaima Dermoumi, FRIDA, and founder of Nassawiyat (Morocco)
- Reem Elshafaie, young feminist organiser and consultant (MENA)
- Elvira Pablo, Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA) (Latin America)
- Victoria Forsgate, Asia Pacific Refugee Rights (Indonesia)
- Nina George, Oak Foundation (Global)
- Mohamed Harby, Consultant (MENA)
- Matty Hart, Global Philanthropy Project, (Global)
- Marija Jakovljević, young feminist organiser and consultant (Serbia)
- Will Lawrence, Sunrise Movement (former) (N. America)
- Pooja Singh, young feminist organiser and consultant (India)
- Sofia Strive & Lena Wallquist, MenEngage Europe
- Shahriar Sifat, young feminist organiser and consultant (Bangladesh)