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## The IGNITE Journey: Catalysing Change in Mainstreaming Gender and Nutrition



**A Case Study by IGNITE**  
July 2024

**The Impacting Gender and Nutrition through Innovative Technical Exchange in Agriculture (IGNITE)** project was a technical assistance programme, implemented by Tanager and its learning partners, in four African countries from 2018–2024. The project supported 35 African agricultural institutions across 18 countries to integrate gender and nutrition into their business operations and agricultural interventions.



## The IGNITE Journey: Catalysing Change in Mainstreaming Gender and Nutrition

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Gender equality and women's empowerment, along with the provision of food for households, have a significant impact on people's right to food, which is a crucial component of their right to a decent standard of living<sup>1</sup>. Tanager implemented the Impacting Gender and Nutrition through Innovative Technical Exchange in Agriculture (IGNITE) mechanism to increase women's empowerment and nutrition outcomes at the household level.

This case study highlights some of the interventions by IGNITE and the effectiveness of its technical assistance, based on the feedback received from its client institutions.

### Methodology

This case study used the contribution analysis method to track the project's progress. This approach is commonly used in monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) to understand how interventions and specific efforts contribute to desired outcomes<sup>2</sup>.

The case study utilises data from three client diagnostics, a meta-analysis of lean data client feedback surveys, and an evaluation of technical experts' experiences in providing technical assistance to clients. The study addresses the project's learning agenda on improving the effectiveness<sup>3</sup> of IGNITE's technical assistance and service provision.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO, AUC, ECA and WFP. 2023. Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and trends. Accra, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8743en>

<sup>2</sup> Health Systems Strengthening Practice Spotlight. December 2021. Contribution Analysis: Capturing the Effects of Complex Health System Strengthening Activities. Washington, DC: USAID. Available at: [www.LHSSproject.org](http://www.LHSSproject.org).

<sup>3</sup> Learning agenda defines effectiveness as having the intended outcome of mainstreaming gender and nutrition-sensitive agriculture approaches at the target institutions.

It answers the following questions:

1. Which IGNITE services were most effective in driving the observed changes?
2. Which environmental or institutional factors were important in facilitating progress?

IGNITE's Theory of Change (ToC)<sup>4</sup> recognises the potential complexity in the agriculture ecosystem that may hinder improved gender and nutrition outcomes. This complexity limits the ability to make definitive conclusions from the study on the attribution of impact and causality. The ToC also acknowledges that the journey to institutionalise gender and nutrition may go beyond the six-year project, as maintaining and applying good policies and practices is an ongoing and long-term process.

## IGNITE diagnostic assessment

This section seeks to identify the most effective activities or sequence of activities for encouraging clients to adopt and comply with gender and nutrition-sensitive agriculture policies and approaches at the institutional level.

To ensure that IGNITE services were customised to the unique needs of each client, a diagnostic assessment was conducted as an essential first step. IGNITE conducted the assessment to identify institutional capacity gaps and opportunities, and to evaluate the client's capacity at baseline, and determine their goals and aspirations for technical assistance. It also identified activities that could support agricultural institutions in progressing along their journey of gender mainstreaming and nutrition integration. The process was collaborative, with IGNITE facilitating the assessment based on the client's inputs, allowing for mutual understanding of improvement areas.

The assessment focussed on six domains (see **Box 1**), each consisting of sub-domains that contribute to the overall score of the domain. If an institution incorporates gender in its operational framework but does not focus on nutrition, it is considered to have met the minimum standard for gender but not for nutrition in that specific sub-domain. The score for each domain is determined by averaging the scores of its sub-domains. Each sub-domain is assessed on a binary scale, with a score of 1 indicating that the minimum standards have been met and 0 indicating

they have not been met. Most sub-domains have separate minimum standards for gender and nutrition. For example, if a domain has four sub-domains, with two meeting the minimum standards and the other two not meeting them, the average score would be 0.50 (i.e.,  $[1 + 1 + 0 + 0] / 4 = 0.50$ ). The domain score is then converted into a percentage score, which is used to position the institution along the nutrition and gender spectrum (refer to **Figure 1 below**).

The spectrum has five levels namely: Nascent ( $\leq 26\%$ ), Emergent (27%–53%), Expanding (54%–79%), Advanced (80%–89%), and Institutionalized ( $\geq 90$ ) (Figure 1.3). With a domain score of 0.50, an institution would be considered Emergent (50%).

IGNITE worked with 35 clients in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Tanzania, providing both institutional capacity building and programmatic intervention support. These interventions were tailored to each client's specific needs and goals related to gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and improved nutrition.

Over the course of the project, IGNITE successfully conducted diagnostic (baseline) assessments for the following eight client institutions.

- African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF)
- Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA)
- Solidaridad East and Central Africa
- Advancing Local Dairy Development in Nigeria (Sahel-ALDDN)
- Association Professionnelle des Systèmes Financiers Décentralisés (APSFD)
- Promotion du Développement Industriel, Artisanal et Agricole (PRODIA)
- Caisse Mutuelle Du Burkina Faso (CMBF)
- Caisse Baitoul Maal (CBM)

End diagnostic assessments were only conducted for SAA, Solidaridad, and AATF, the only clients that IGNITE had engaged for at least three years.

A mix of activities were identified during the baseline stage. These included institutional development,

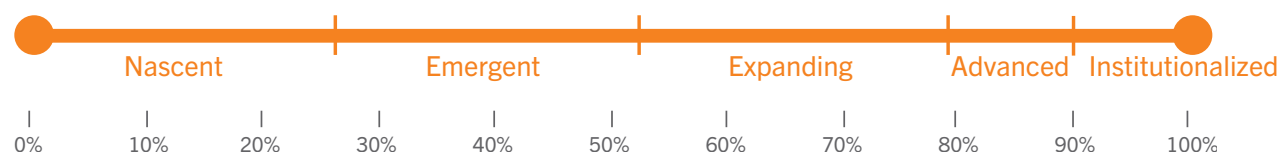


Figure 1: Nutrition and gender spectrum

<sup>4</sup> IGNITE (Impacting Gender & Nutrition through Innovative Technical Exchange in Agriculture) program Theory of Change, Draft document, 2020.



Figure 2: Series of interventions

gender and nutrition analyses, audits and assessments, skills development, and generating evidence through research, monitoring, and evaluation support as outlined in **Figure 2**.

IGNITE identified local service providers (LSPs)<sup>5</sup> and trained them to promote sustainability and develop local capacity for providing technical assistance to different clients in their respective countries. The LSPs, using their knowledge of local contexts, supported IGNITE to build institutions' (Clients) capacity for gender and nutrition-sensitive agriculture programming.

## IGNITE services most effective in driving observed changes

The following sections describe the changes observed through IGNITE's technical assistance.

### Changes reported in end diagnostic assessments

The first set of changes is derived from the end diagnostic surveys conducted with the three clients (SAA, Solidaridad, and AATF). The changes are presented according to the domains evaluated for each of the three clients as follows:

Domain:1	Adopt a Gender Equality Policy and a Nutrition-Sensitive Approach
Domain:2	Organizational Culture and Capacity for Gender Equality and Nutrition-sensitive Approaches
Domain:3	Budget for Nutrition-Sensitive Approaches
Domain:4	Evidence Collection for Gender and Nutrition
Domain:5	Analysis and Use of Gender and Nutrition-sensitive Evidence
Domain:6	Do No Harm

### Changes observed for AATF

The initial diagnostic assessment primarily focused on the integration of nutrition, as this area showed the most significant changes for AATF. The end diagnostics results show that overall, training activities aimed at transforming organisational culture and capacity for nutrition-sensitive approaches were most effective for the AATF. For nutrition, there was only a slight movement from the emergent stage (0.43) to the expanding stage (0.67) reported in Domain 1.

The most change was observed for Domain 4, with scores progressing from the expanding (0.73) to the institutionalised stage (0.9), indicating substantial improvement in AATF programming. In Domain 2, AATF had moved from the emergent stage (0.40) to the advanced stage (0.89). This was followed closely by changes in scores for Domain 3, which improved from the emergent stage (0.29) to the expanding stage (0.75). However, low scores were recorded for Domain 5, with a movement from the emergent stage (0.38) to the expanding stage (0.75). The lowest score was recorded as nascent (0) for Domain 6.

Gender integration was not assessed during the initial diagnostic phase because IGNITE had recently completed a gender audit that identified key areas of support. To avoid duplication, the domain scores for gender were only evaluated during the end-diagnostics (**Figure 3**).

Regarding risk mitigation, the diagnostics assessment revealed that AATF has a risk mitigation plan in place for project operations to guide staff members, demonstrating its commitment to managing potential risks. However, there is currently no evidence of a risk mitigation strategy for AATF's implementing partners and target beneficiaries. This presents an opportunity for AATF to develop a comprehensive risk mitigation strategy that considers all stakeholders involved in their initiatives.

Fortunately, the AATF strategic plan can provide guidance for future programs in integrating gender and nutrition. Additionally, the existing gender and nutrition strategies present a great opportunity for all AATF initiatives to prioritise the integration of gender and nutrition, ensuring that these important aspects are incorporated throughout their work.

<sup>5</sup> The LSPs, were local NGOs or local consulting firms, who received training and support from IGNITE, with a view to scale up the similar technical support to IGNITE clients.

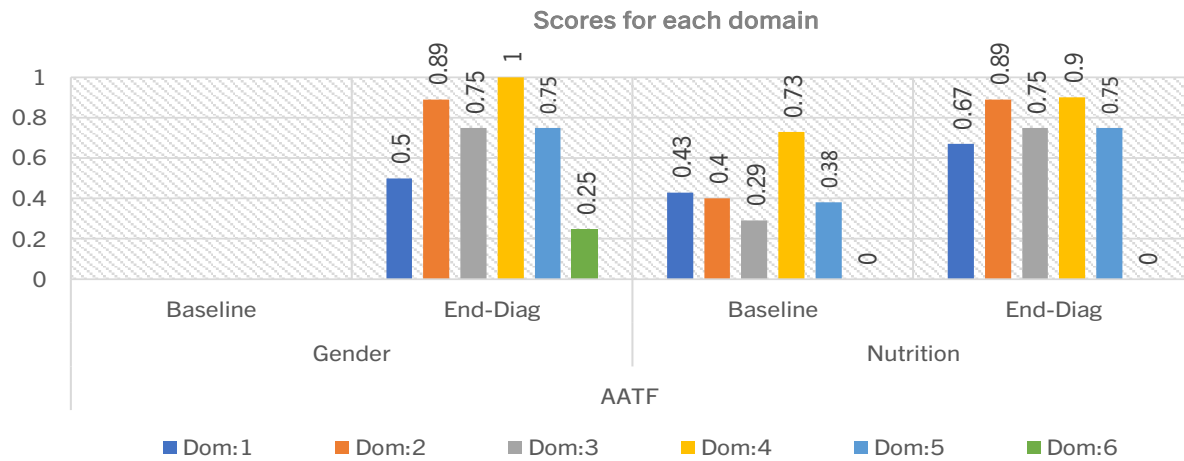


Figure 3: Domain Changes in AATF

### Changes at SAA

The greatest change at SAA was observed in Domain 2 (Organisational culture and capacity for gender equality and nutrition-sensitive approaches) for scores of both gender and nutrition. The scores moved from ‘emergent’ (0.27) to ‘expanding’ (0.67) for gender, and from ‘emergent’ (0.36) to ‘advanced’ (0.89) for nutrition. Scores for Domain 4 have also attained ‘institutionalised’ state (score of 1) for both gender and nutrition. This shows that training activities focusing on organisational culture and capacity for gender equality and nutrition-sensitive approaches were the most effective, followed by support in tools development for evidence collection for gender and nutrition.

There was no change noted in Domain 6 which points to the huge gap in the level of awareness by staff regarding the ‘Do No Harm’ strategy for both gender and nutrition domains. While a staff risk mitigation strategy exists, there was no clear ‘Do No Harm’ strategy for SAA engagement with its stakeholders. Similarly, gender and nutrition are not mentioned in the organisation’s core values and mission, despite nutrition being one of the core pillars of its 2021–2025 strategic plan.

### Changes for Solidaridad

The diagnostic assessments indicate that Solidaridad had made noticeable headway in refining its policies for gender integration (Domain 1). This was supported by an existing institutional strategy for 2021–2025, which already identified the need for gender inclusion in programming. Integration of nutrition approaches also demonstrate major improvement on Domain 6 — the ‘Do No Harm’ strategy — indicating it had been institutionalised at endline. This change connects to an existing risk register, which helps the client to track operational risks for both gender and nutrition programmes. This view is supported by qualitative information, which reported that Solidaridad had a risk assessment budget catering for all program activity lines, including gender and nutrition domains.

During the end diagnostic assessment, it was noted that Solidaridad had successfully implemented a digital learning platform called JiFunze to support continuous learning and organisational training for their staff. However, the reports did not specify if any specific activities by IGNITE contributed to the improvements in Domains 1 and 6, which relate to gender and nutrition respectively. It is important to highlight that Solidaridad had already developed internal strategies and instruments for these areas, with minimal technical assistance from IGNITE.

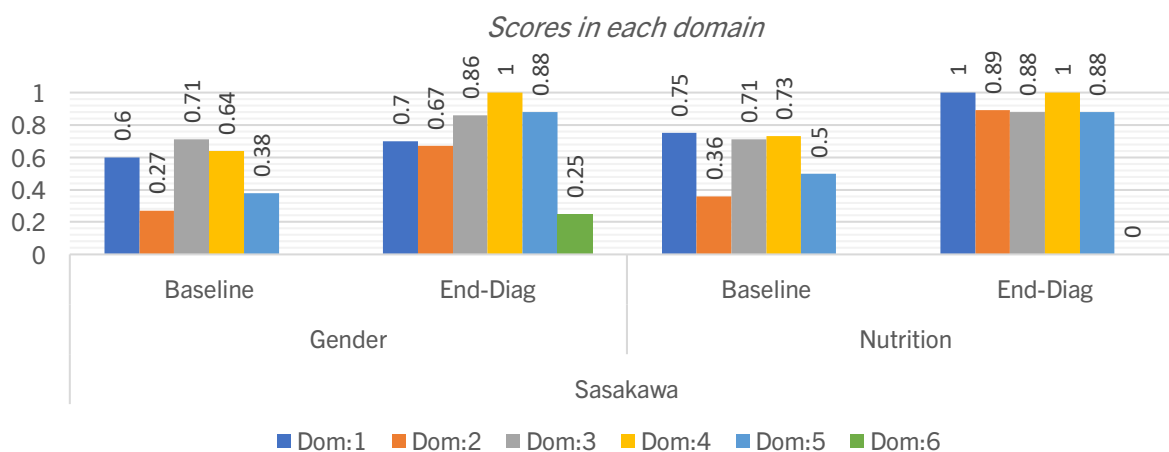


Figure 4: Domain changes in SAA

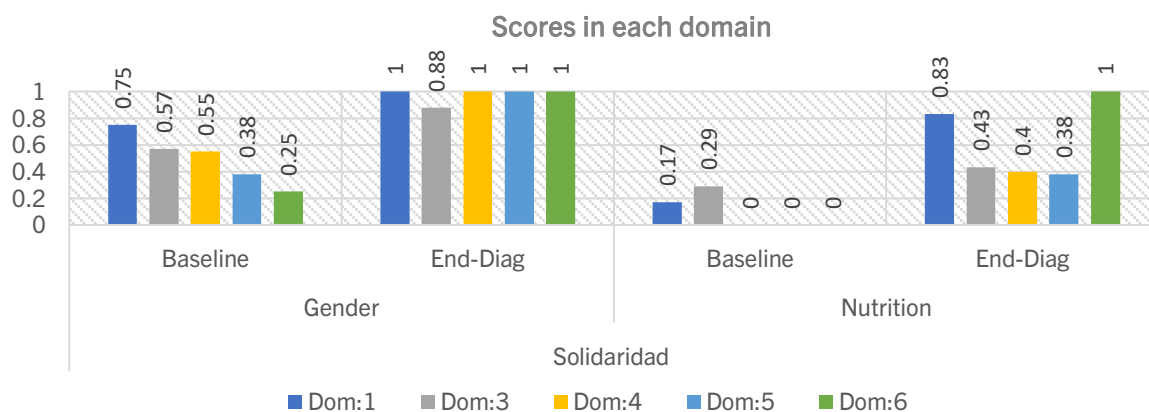


Figure 5: Domain changes in Solidaridad

## Changes reflected in the client feedback surveys

The IGNITE client feedback surveys were conducted annually between July and August each year to gather feedback and insights from clients about their experiences working with the project. The surveys assessed clients' satisfaction with IGNITE services and gathered evidence of IGNITE's impact and contribution<sup>6</sup> to their organisations. The data was collected through interviews and surveys conducted by IGNITE's learning partner, 60 Decibels. The survey participants included the key individuals responsible for gender and nutrition and senior management staff from the client institutions. The total sample size for the surveys was 86 participants, selected from 17 out of the 20 client institutions over a four-year period between Year 2 and Year 5. **Table 1** provides

information on the frequency (number of times) of participation in the surveys by the different clients.

Five clients — AATF, Solidaridad, Digital Green, Sasakawa, and Sahel-ALDDN — participated in all four years of the survey. Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) dropped off in Year 4, while the African Union's – Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) entered the study in Year 3 and had respondents through Years 4 and 5. The Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) and Association Burkinabè d'Action Communautaire (ABAC) joined the survey in Years 4 and 5 only. Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) was interviewed in Years 2 and 3, and Heifer only in Year 3. The rest of the clients, especially those who joined the partnership late in Year 4, participated only once in the survey. Below are some key highlights of changes reported on the IGNITE client feedback surveys.

Client Institution	2020 (Y2)	2021 (Y3)	2022 (Y4)	2023 (Y5)	Total Data Points from Client (Y2–Y5)
AATF	5	2	3	3	13
Solidaridad	4	3	3	2	12
Digital Green	3	4	2	1	10
Sahel-ALDDN	2	2	3	3	10
Sasakawa	2	3	4	2	11
AGRA	1	2	1		4
African Union – PACA		1	3		7
PRODIA				1	1
CMBF				2	2
APFSD-BF			1		1
Silverlands (Former APMI)				1	1
ABAC			1	1	2
TADB			2	1	3
Amo Farms				2	2
Heifer		2			2
Baitul-Maal				1	1
EIAR	3	1			4
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>86</b>

Table 1: Sample size for client feedback surveys

<sup>6</sup> Attribution in these findings refer to direct claims made by the client staff regarding any change recorded.



### Allocation of budget for gender and nutrition

Many respondents believed that leadership buy-in had contributed to the changes in budget allocation for gender and nutrition experienced in some institutions. They attributed this to the training provided by IGNITE, especially the training of board members, which is believed to have played a crucial role in increasing awareness among top management.

‘I would say there are two primary changes we have observed from institutional strengthening by IGNITE. One is that now nutrition and gender have a budget.’ — Focal point person, AATF

Respondents from other institutions, particularly the microfinance associations in Burkina Faso, Association Professionnelle des Systèmes Financiers Décentralisés Burkina Faso (APFSD/BF), also emphasised that their organisations were actively incorporating gender and nutrition as integral components of their project design and implementation strategies.

### Improved gender policies and nutrition approaches

Across the project years, the percentage of institutions who reported to improve gender policies and nutrition approaches was higher than those reporting ‘No change.’ For example, in Y5, there is a significant percentage of respondents who reported that policies and strategies for gender and nutrition had ‘Very much improved’ (52%). In contrast, the percentage of respondents reporting ‘No change’ in the intervention strategies decreased from 31% in Y4 to 22% by Y5.

‘We have developed proper indicators for policy implementation that are being monitored in the project. These are great changes because our intervention has shifted from just being an individual team effort, to an institutional effort whereby all the projects now have indicators.’ — AATF

These views were shared by respondents from other client institutions (like SAA, Sahel-ALDDN, ABAC, Digital Green, Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank TADB, Amo Farm Sieberer Hatchery (Amo Farms), and PACA) who reported that strategies, plans, and accountability measures in their institutions had ‘Very much improved.’ Most of these respondents attributed the changes to the support offered by IGNITE through the development and review of strategies, feedback mechanisms to ensure accountability, and indicators to track performance.

### Staff capacity on implementing gender and nutrition

Between Y2 and Y3, there was a significant increase in the proportion of participants reporting that staff capacity had ‘Very much improved,’ from 35% in Y2 to 60% in Y3. Similarly, Y5 recorded the highest percentage of respondents reporting staff capacity as ‘Very much increased,’ at 74%.

‘Within our department at the African Union (AU), I would say we have seen a significant increase in consideration of gender as part of our programming because of IGNITE training. Now our staff have seen how to go about gender mainstreaming, whereas before it was just rhetoric.’ — Programme Officer, PACA.

Respondents reported that their organisations were developing new tools and guidance, or reviewing existing ones, to integrate gender and nutrition, following support from IGNITE.

‘IGNITE provided continuous training to our team on the ground in reviewing all of the various tools that we use including the training document and curriculum that we’re using to build the capacity of farmers.’ — Sahel-ALDDN.



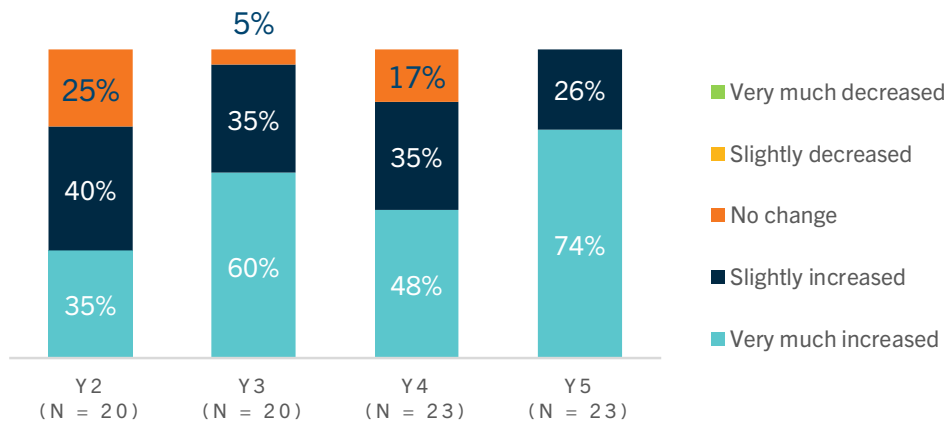


Figure 6: Changes in staff capacity

In Burkina Faso, some point persons reported that they have since started to develop their own tools CMBF, for example, acknowledged the support they received from IGNITE LSP PanAfricare, which it believes will enable the institution to incorporate gender and nutrition topics in planning and strategy development for the future.

### Program design and implementation

From Y2 to Y5, the proportion of respondents reporting changes in program design as having ‘Very much improved’ tripled, from 20% in Y2 to 61% in Y5, as illustrated in Figure 8 below. The main reason cited for the changes was an increase in the level of importance their staff put on integrating gender and nutrition in programmatic activities after they were trained by IGNITE.

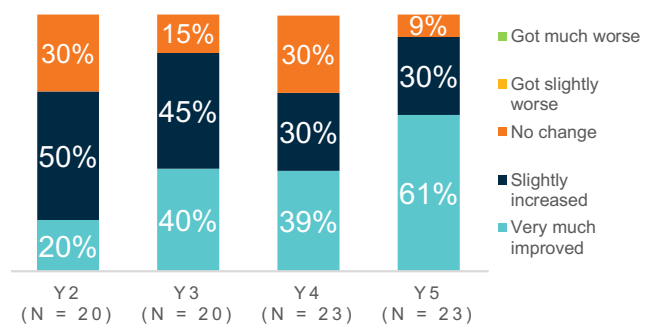
For example, Digital Green reported a new focus on gender programming, which improved over the period of engagement with IGNITE. Gender considerations were also integrated more often into quality assurance checklists and project design for new initiatives. Similarly, TADB singled out the training by IGNITE on a proactive approach for collaboration and comprehensive data collection, highlighting commitment to impactful change in gender and nutrition models for interventions. Qualitative evidence supports with these findings.

‘Through IGNITE’s guidance and support, we have been able to incorporate gender perspectives into our TI3P project, ensuring that we address the specific needs and challenges faced by women. This has led to the development of more targeted activities to promote gender equality. IGNITE also trained our staff on nutrition programming including on SBC.’ — TADB

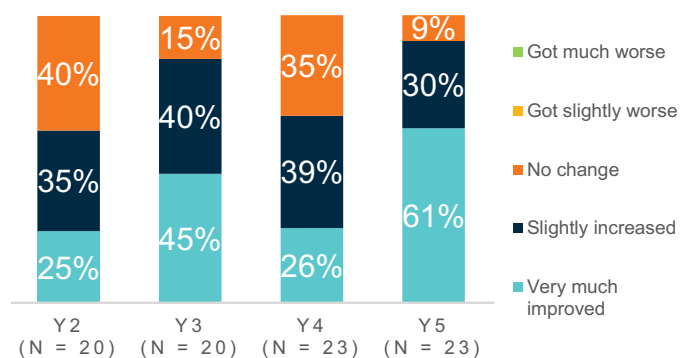
These sentiments demonstrate institutional commitment to mainstreaming gender and nutrition integration through strategic changes, which include defining precise objectives during programme design. These changes show that many institutions have adopted mechanisms for aligning their funding decisions with sustainability and business approaches for positive outcomes.

### Institutional leadership buy-in

Leadership buy-in demonstrates willingness by the institutions to mainstream gender and facilitate integration of nutrition approaches into their respective project activities. Ninety-one per cent of respondents across 13 client institutions reported buy-in by their institutional leadership. Among these, 65% reported that they had witnessed changes in their organisations due to capacity building on gender mainstreaming by IGNITE technical experts.



Changes in Gender & Nutrition in Programming



Inclusion of Gender & Nutrition in Program Design & Implementation Due to Working with IGNITE

Figure 7: Changes reported on programming by clients

Overall, the feedback survey showed that staff awareness and capacity were the major changes reported by the different institutions across Y1 and Y5. Other changes reported in Y2 and Y3 include a spike

in adopting new strategies, plans, and accountability measures alongside staff awareness. Similarly significant milestones were achieved in the design of programme activities to adopt the gender and nutrition approaches. Clients also reported achievements in tools and guidance.

capabilities. IGNITE provided tailored technical assistance and capacity building services to its clients, including strategy development, formative research, training, sensitisation, and the development and dissemination of tools and guidance documents. Clients reported that these customised packages of services were effective.

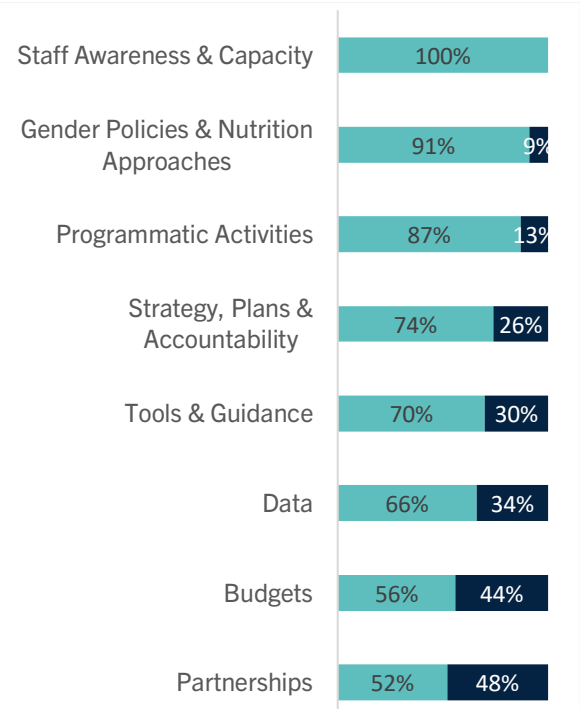


Figure 8: Areas of institutional improvement

One key factor that influenced institutional environments was the different goals and objectives of private sector partners, compared to NGOs and government organisations. Private sector players often prioritised profitability over integrating gender and nutrition approaches, while government organisations and NGOs focused more on securing programme financing from donors. Furthermore, while NGOs had experience working on gender as a crosscutting issue, nutrition goals were not always central to their missions. Government and private sector organisations also did not always prioritise gender and nutrition as key goals.

Availability of client staff also affected the delivery of technical assistance. While clients, especially government and private sector organisations, may express enthusiasm for assistance, it does not necessarily mean they are available on agreed-upon timelines. This challenge led to trade-offs between achieving long-term sustainability and maximising the short-term impact of integrating gender and nutrition. Overcoming long-standing trust issues, whether related to politics, history, or cultural and social undercurrents, also took considerable time and effort.

Finally, decision-making processes were often more protracted in government agencies and the private sector, compared to NGOs. Once a decision was made, the private sector clients sometimes expected quick implementation without consideration of the constraints of project-based funding. IGNITE staff frequently experienced delays in delivering technical assistance, as government clients and focal point staff were sometimes unavailable for meetings or planned activities.

### Institutional factors affecting IGNITE gender and nutrition mainstreaming interventions

This section responds to the learning agenda on factors that affect gender and nutrition mainstreaming, and what types of technical assistance are most appropriate for different institutions?

IGNITE worked with various agricultural institutions, such as non-governmental organisations (NGO), government entities, and private sector institutions, each with its own unique context, mission, and



## Lessons and Recommendations

### 1. Managing different expectations by IGNITE clients

A notable insight derived through IGNITE's work is that agricultural programmes implemented by various institutions often lack a specific focus on meeting gender and nutrition objectives. Instead, these programmes may prioritise productivity and income generation as their primary goals. This observation became apparent in the course of IGNITE's provision of technical assistance, as it became evident that institutions' plans were heavily influenced by the availability of funding, and whether or not gender and nutrition mainstreaming was a prerequisite for funding approval. It is important to note that simply having funding for these services does not automatically result in a clear pathway for integrating gender and nutrition-sensitive support.

'Most of our demands usually feel like it is IGNITE-driven because we (IGNITE staff) are the ones to identify the gaps for the institutions, and then we take the client through a process to understand why, and what it takes for them to address those gaps' — Winnie Osulah, Gender Expert.

The discussion with technical experts also suggested that IGNITE played a significant role in generating demand for its services. Further, the source of funding can unexpectedly impact client commitment and expectations. For instance, clients referred to the IGNITE partnership by a donor were more likely to come with predefined expectations of guaranteed services. On the other hand, technical experts noted that clients who approached IGNITE voluntarily often had a good understanding of what IGNITE could offer and what they (clients) needed to contribute to the relationship.

### 2. Adopt an iterative approach with critical junctures

Developing any tool requires continuous learning. IGNITE thus benefitted greatly from its iterative approach<sup>7</sup> to tool development, which included critical junctures<sup>8</sup> that provided clarity and allowed the IGNITE team and clients to move forward with key interventions. **Figure 4** illustrates the components of the iterative approach used by IGNITE for tool development.

According to a diagnostic case study developed in 2020, IGNITE's iterative approach benefitted greatly from two critical junctures:

- (1) an early kick-off meeting and
- (2) a pilot implementation.

The kick-off meetings proved highly valuable as they provided external opinions on designing methodology and content of interventions, validated assumptions in the ToC, ensured the interventions aligned with all stakeholders' requirements, and instilled confidence in the client. The piloting or validation process was highly valuable in illuminating gaps and assisting the technical experts to re-consider terminologies, presentations, and framing of intervention packages. It also allowed the client teams to gain further confidence in their work and on the IGNITE approach.

### 3. Take a proactive and structured approach to interventions

To work successfully with LSPs, it was necessary to identify opportunities for improvement by the respective organisation and to focus on supporting clients, as well as to act proactively when pursuing any opportunities identified from diagnostics assessment. IGNITE technical

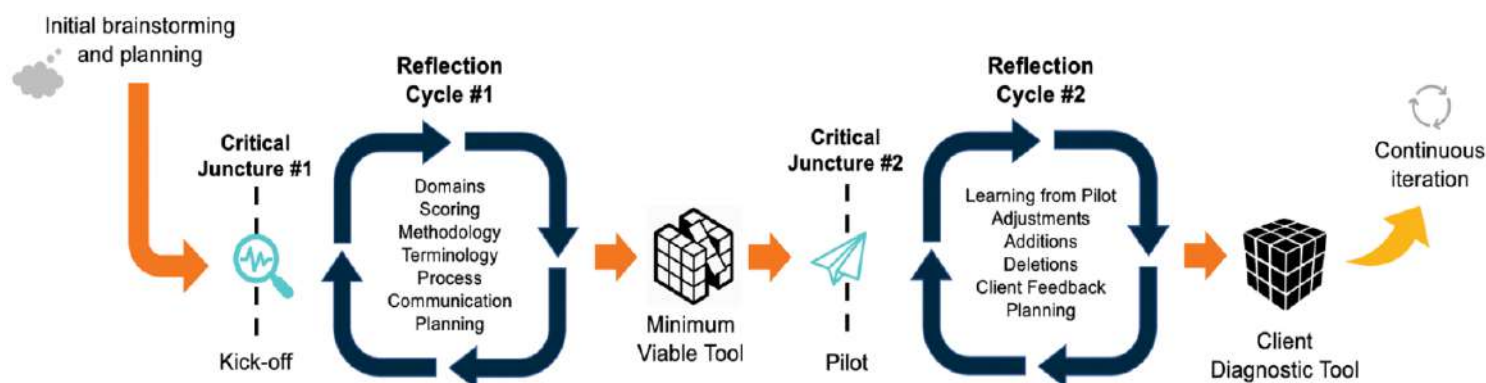


Figure 9: Iterative Process for Tool Development

<sup>7</sup> An iterative approach allows a team to make mistakes, learn from those mistakes, and make improvements based on what works and what does not.

<sup>8</sup> Critical junctures are turning points that alter the course of evolution of, or changes in some processes. This includes events and developments in the distant past, generally concentrated in a relatively short period, that have a crucial impact on outcomes later in time.

observed that taking a proactive and strategic approach to action planning helped to ensure opportunities were addressed in a methodical and prioritised manner and that momentum was not lost. Categories of opportunities included:

- (1) opportunities where a client needed external assistance by IGNITE;
- (2) opportunities where clients could handle interventions by themselves; and
- (3) backburner opportunities, where there was disagreement, lack of consensus or goodwill, or lack of resources.

This categorisation made it clear where the client is responsible and where a partnership could be forged for better outcomes.

#### 4. Ensure clarity of engagements

Experience from diagnostic assessments demonstrated that many institutions often lack clarity on mainstreaming gender and integration of nutrition approaches, especially with respect to institutionalising<sup>9</sup> their operations and culture (their ‘way of doing business’). This gap bears great impact on their interventions and expected results from internal programs. Feedback from the learning workshop with IGNITE technical experts (Oct 2023) indicates that the diagnostic assessments were particularly helpful in raising institutional consciousness about the gender and nutrition model of interventions ‘because, [for example,] institutions often ‘think’ they’re doing gender, whether they actually are or not’ [...] These assessments were helpful to letting the institutions ‘see’ [understand] the gaps they have in programming’ (Sokhna Gaye, IGNITE gender expert).

#### 5. Have adequate human resources

Feedback from IGNITE technical experts indicated that it was important for the project to have adequate human resource capacity if it was to strengthen agriculture institutions, some of which may not have diverse skills in their

staffing. For the success of planned activities, it was imperative to have thematic expertise in gender, nutrition, and MERL. Additional skills needed for the delivery of most activities included conducting interviews, basic data analysis, and project management.

Different skills were also needed at different phases of the IGNITE project through creating, implementing, and conducting Technical Assistance and capacity building, based on the findings of diagnostic assessments. **Figure 9** illustrates the various skills that were most critical for IGNITE. These considerations would be particularly important for LSPs in the transition of the technical assistance and capacity building service provision to clients in the future.

### Conclusion

The IGNITE journey presented a mix of challenges and learning through the six-year period. The changes noted in the levels of client satisfaction, which was higher in Y5 compared to Y4, are likely to be attributed to some clients having seen tangible results from the engagement with IGNITE. It could also be due to new clients, whose interaction with IGNITE had transformed their approach to gender and nutrition issues. Activities that were most effective in driving observed changes can be linked to Activity 1— Strengthening African institutions.

A key mechanism, which enhanced institutional expertise and professionalism, was co-creating products and services with clients. This helped to foster client ownership and built their capacity to undertake the activities in the future. Nonetheless, knowledge transfer through the LSPs took longer than anticipated. Only one LSP, PanAfricare, based in Burkina Faso, somewhat managed to integrate the entire technical assistance support package to the client institutions, with minor support by IGNITE technical experts. Another LSP — Fair & Sustainable, based in Ethiopia — gradually picked up, but still needed significant support of the IGNITE technical support to operate.



Figure 10: Resourcing the team with necessary skills

<sup>9</sup> By institutionalised, IGNITE means gender policies, nutrition approaches, and the systems that support the adherence of those policies and approaches, are established as a norm and a part of the culture within an organisation.

This case study was written by Dr. Samwel Oando, Research Manager, Tanager

## IGNITE Partners

**Tanager**, an ACDI/VOCA affiliate, is a global development organization that empowers people to realize life-changing economic and social opportunities. We have 30 years of experience implementing gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive agriculture approaches, connecting actors across the production supply chain, fostering knowledge and access for women and other marginalized groups, and unlocking sustainable, climate-smart economic opportunities for all.

**Laterite** is a data, research, and advisory firm dedicated to providing high-quality research services for social impact in East Africa. We provide technical advice on the design and implementation of research projects, development interventions, and socio-economic policies. We strive to deliver impactful research that helps decision-makers find solutions to complex development problems.

**60 Decibels** is a tech-enabled social impact measurement and customer intelligence company, spun out of Acumen. We make it easy for companies and organizations to listen to the people who matter most. Using our Lean Data approach, we collect social impact and customer feedback data through phone surveys and other methods.

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