Stakeholder engagement underpins ARK's programming model; from conflict analysis and programme design, to implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, ARK is committed to partnership and inclusivity. This commitment is based on the fundamental belief that the effectiveness and impact of programme interventions will only be secured if local stakeholders own and drive those efforts. This is especially the case in conflict and fragile settings, where state breakdown means that local governance, security and all aspects of community life are being managed by various, frequently informal, local stakeholders. Three examples demonstrate this approach.

Civil Defence

ARK's Civil Defence programme was initiated in response to a request from local governance actors in Syria. Having consulted the Government of Turkey on training modalities, ARK engaged Turkey's urban search and rescue NGO, AKUT. The programme has developed over the past 12 months, bringing together external and internal stakeholders. Externally, ARK has mobilised UK, US and Japanese funding to provide life-saving support to over 600 Civil Defence personnel forming over 50 teams. ARK worked directly with team members, local and provincial council stakeholders, and in conjunction with the National Coalition and Interim Government, the Assistance Coordination Unit, and the Ministry of Local Administration, Relief and Refugees, to galvanise international attention on the issue of protection of civilians, mobilising social media, the international press, global advocacy partners (Purpose/The Syria Campaign) and private entrepreneurs (The Asfari Foundation).

> **Tenets of stakeholder engagement in conflict**
> ✓ Be inclusive; engage all stakeholders as partners, not just beneficiaries
> ✓ Maintain positive engagement with all actors
> ✓ Keep a neutral distance; ensure programmes do not adopt political positions
> ✓ Communicate constantly; keep all partners informed
> ✓ Be responsive; listen

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

ARK undertook CVE activities in Yemen during 2011-2012. ARK was able to identify (using qualitative research) and then network a diverse range of Yemeni NGOs to create a national CVE platform (the Civil Peace Movement) that endures today. This network, initiated and run by Yemeni partners, was able to contribute to the national debate on CVE in Yemen, redefining what extremism means to different communities within the country.

Policing and Justice

Since 2013 ARK has, on behalf of the governments of the UK, Denmark and the US, implemented a community policing and justice programme in northern Syria, the Integrated Community Security Programme (ICSP). ARK's approach has been to act as a bridge between Syrian and international stakeholders. Syrian members of ARK's delivery team lead three core components: Police Development, Justice, and Community Engagement (delivered in conjunction with another implementer). ARK has acted as a convener and enabler of internal, external and international stakeholders, facilitating joint problem analyses and needs assessments, which resulted in agreed Principles of Implementation that informed programme design and delivery. Embedding staff members of the Syrian beneficiary organisation within the ARK programme team also aided ownership and coordination. ARK's highly committed, majority Syrian and Turkish team, augmented by international expertise, has worked a rotational seven day week over the period of implementation, to effectively communicate and coordinate with key stakeholders, such as the chiefs of the Free Syrian Police, ahead of all activities, ensuring their participation in strategic decision-making, and reinforcing partnership. Detailed analysis, careful security planning, risk mitigation and vetting, accompanied by compliant and transparent financial and procurement procedures, and a fully bilingual (English/Arabic) country management team, have helped ensure an integrated, research-informed and evidence-based approach to innovative, active partnership programming.