

1.2.7 Describe your approach to **sustainability**, including consideration that funding may not be available beyond Year 1 of the project (given the project break clause and nature of CSSF Funding). Your response should include a clear exit strategy.

ARK approaches sustainability by embedding change amongst key stakeholders through the use of accepted change management processes.¹ Firstly, ARK will use the evidence base created under previous iterations of Take Action programming and built on during the inception phase (and throughout the course of the project) as a tool to demonstrate and persuade beneficiaries among youth and governance actors of the value of political engagement, accountability, and cooperative approaches to community solutions. As the ARK team will work collaboratively with beneficiaries and local partners to design interventions, these will combine effective best practice with the most contextually appropriate ways to create sustainable engagement mechanisms between youth and elected officials, ensuring that beneficiaries clearly understand the value of, and fully buy into, these approaches from the start.

Through the capacity building components of this project, the project team will identify and work with key youth and governance officials, supporting them to act as champions of constructive youth engagement in their communities to gain buy-in and support for project activities and objectives, namely town halls and other forms of community engagement created. The project team will work with leaders of beneficiary groups to develop vision or value statements that embed and reinforce the value of youth political engagement and governance accountability.

Principles of sustainability are embedded in the design of all project activities:

Take Action platform: The Take Action platform will serve as a repository for all training materials, giving beneficiaries the ability to access tools and information after the completion of the project, such as the road map to political engagement created under the Take Action pilot. Likewise, linking the project to the Take Action brand, which is supported by other funding sources (specifically the U.S. State Department) ensures that the platform will be able to sustain engagement through regular content production following the end of the project. Beneficiary youth groups will also be trained on content creation and encouraged to share content on the Take Action platforms on an ongoing basis.

Train the Trainers: By providing young people with the skills to deliver political engagement training to other youth in their communities and engage them in community-led engagement mechanisms, the project will enable beneficiaries to continue promoting project values and knowledge within their communities during and after the close of the project, as well as latterly, taking full ownership for the implementation of all activities. The ARK team will also work with beneficiary youth groups to find cost neutral ways for them to continue implementing activities beyond the end of the project, such as meeting in existing university or municipal spaces or charging small participation fees to cover costs.

Supporting a national network of youth activists and women engaged in politics: By connecting trained youth activists into a national network and also creating a network of female activists and connecting these young women with female mentors, the project will build social connections and networks that will be directly owned by beneficiaries helping them to endure beyond the life of the project.

Training established groups: Working with already established local groups allows the project team to reinforce and build on existing capabilities and coordination mechanisms. ARK will support them to grow local and national recognition of their efforts, connecting them with other initiatives and opportunities for funding, and helping them create and identify options for self-sustainability after the end of the project.

¹ Primarily a version of John Kotter's eight-step change management process, Kotter, John P., *Leading Change*, Harvard Business Press, 1996

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Connecting with other programming: When relevant, all project activities will be linked to other social stability programming, included other programming conducted by ARK under the Take Action brand, which includes political engagement training, workshops to identify community needs, constructively engage political actors, and community town halls. Engaging youth in other programming that helps them build a network and cooperative relationships with other community members will help connect them to opportunities for engagement outside of and beyond the life of the project.

Exit Strategy:

ARK's exit strategy is based on the progressive handover of responsibility for implementation to project beneficiaries. Training throughout year one of the project is geared towards existing youth groups, with a focus on them assuming responsibility by the end of the year for a majority of project activities. This includes training other youth, conducting town halls, and developing other mechanisms for sustained community engagement with governance actors. Handing these responsibilities over to trained youth by the end of year one will ensure that if funding is no longer available after Year One, project beneficiaries will have the ability to sustain and reinforce youth political engagement and governance accountability. Furthermore, linking beneficiaries and project activities to other social stability programming, including under the Take Action brand, will ensure that beneficiaries remain connected to other opportunities supportive of the project objectives should funding no longer be available.