

# SUSTAINABILITY DISCUSSION OUTLINE

*(3-5 minutes)*

Key issues/questions raised by grantees (consolidated)

- Assessing what to sustain
- Creating, building, sustaining, and leveraging partnerships
- Building community support
- Funding strategies

*Note that the approach will be interactive, to learn from one another, more Socratic than didactic.*

First discussion question: *How would you define sustainability? (10-15 minutes with ease!)*

Word association: *What words come to mind when I say the word sustainability?*

Possible responses:

*“Continuation, money, grants, success, support, endure, expand, scaling up, change, etc.”*

*Thinking of your own project, what is it exactly, that you hope endures or continues.*

Possible responses:

*“Individual healthy behaviors, organizational partnerships, change, staff, funding, outcomes, etc. “*

*As people respond individually, we ask why... what is the value or the impact of your project and to whom?*

Possible response:

*“Outcomes, impacts,” etc. – i.e. not staff, funding, programs, etc.*

*First conclusion drawn: “We need the money”, is not a compelling argument for sustaining your effort. It’s going to take some work to develop a sustainability plan.*

With funding from multiple national foundations the *Finance Project* conducted research on successful sustainability efforts and developed a framework for supporting organizations working on sustainability issues. Here's a key quote to begin our discussion:

***Distribute Hand-out here: "Sustainability depends on developing a clear, sensible, and convincing plan for putting in place and keeping in place the key elements that make an initiative successful. It inevitably requires adequate funding to keep it going. But it also requires an array of other resources: political, technical, and administrative. Figuring out what resources you need and how to marshal them is what sustainability planning is all about."*** (Sustainability Planning Workbook, Module I: Building a Sustainable Initiative, p. 1).

The Finance Project has focused on eight key issues that need to be addressed in developing a sustainability plan. These include:

VISION

RESULTS ORIENTATION

STRATEGIC FINANCING ORIENTATION

BROAD-BASED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

KEY CHAMPIONS

ADAPTABILITY TO CHANGING CONDITIONS

STRONG INTERNAL SYSTEMS

A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

*For discussion, we begin by asking whether anyone is actually working deliberately on a sustainability plan at this point. If people respond positively, they are asked to state what it is they are trying to sustain and try to fit their actions within one of the above domains, using the respective self-assessment tool to help expand the discussion.*

**Miscellaneous questions and concerns (15 minutes).**

*In final segment we ask what would be helpful to spend more time on in the coming months (via calls, website, etc.).*

*Back-up discussion topic: Should CIAIP continue as an AoA initiative and if so, why and/or what should be continued. What would you say to your Congressperson if you had the opportunity?*