Fostering citizen support and trust for democratic processes and institutions
• As a process—extraordinary opportunity to galvanize attention and mobilize international action;

• Significant goodwill and engagement from civil society globally—demonstrating there is trust in the US and energy for democratic renewal;

• Our data from the S4D website and social media analysis also indicates real breadth of participation in these conversations—in non-democracies and much as more democratic countries;

• But at the same time the S4D process itself must build trust by ensuring transparency, inclusion and meaningful engagement with—and support for—civil society in invited countries.

• The Biden administration’s progress on anti-corruption is particularly heartening and encouraging for those of us pushing for accountability and trust elsewhere.
CIVIC ACTION TEAMS AS A TRUST BUILDING TOOL
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• Opening up government—ensuring a shared basis of understanding between local decision-makers and citizens and providing support to those in power to act and communicate those actions effectively (in relation to COVID-19 efforts, emergency response and service delivery);

• Labor migration—ensuring democratic inclusion through working with marginalized populations to solve local challenges and make their voices heard as part of community decision-making;

• Gov-HER-nance—co-creating gender inclusive policies and practices at the local government level through mobilizing young people to create feedback loops;

• Key elements: deep relationships built over years, solutions-orientation, building on local assets (asset mapping, not needs assessment), and co-creation and localization to ensure sustainability over time.

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Corruption as THE central challenge that undermines democracy. Years of trust building can be undone through one corrupt act—either at the individual level or the system level;

The challenge is that internationally driven anti-corruption reforms generate pushback that can actually harm democracy. The politicization of corruption can undermine liberal goals;

We have reached the limits of anti-corruption messaging in countries like Nepal—we need to reframe the process and the narrative. Integrity Icon as an example of an effort to create the right conversations but in a different way;

Just as criminal networks protect each other, we need to create and protect networks of reformers who can push collectively for greater accountability. Work with young, incoming change-makers in particular.
BUILDING TRUST REQUIRES...

- Creating “unlikely networks” – we can’t trust each other when we work in stovepipes. Democratic renewal means bringing together governments, activists, artists, media-makers, academics, entrepreneurs and others;
- Inter-generational approaches – the age gap between the PM and the average citizen in Nepal is 50+ years. We need to put young people front and center of efforts to renew our systems;
- A fundamental re-think of which elites we support and why – the upper-caste, male decision-makers in Nepal speak English but simply cannot democratize systems in which they are entrenched;
- Harnessing multilateral processes that work – OGP for example. Evidence shows overall that OGP commitments have led to better progress against key democratic goals in participating countries.