

## **Civic Space is essential to fighting inequality**

At the Ford Foundation, we are working to protect and expand civic space around the world. We know from history that when people participate in the political, social, and economic systems that affect their lives, they have the potential to create big movements and hold leaders and institutions accountable. It is essential for everyone to have access to civic space in order to create a fair and equitable future for all.

### **Transcript begins.**

[Darren Walker, a Black man wearing glasses and a blue suit, President, Ford Foundation.]

**DARREN WALKER:** Imagine the world today without this moment.

[The Berlin Wall is torn down as elated spectators cheer.]

**DARREN WALKER:** Or without this moment.

[Nelson Mandela and his wife, Winnie, walk among a crowd of excited citizens on the day of his release from prison.]

**DARREN WALKER:** Or this moment.

[Greta Thunberg, at 16 years old, challenges politicians about climate change.]

**GRETA THUNBERG:** We children are doing this to wake the adults up.

**DARREN WALKER:** So what connects these moments, these movements, these transformations? A thriving and open civic space: a space to advocate for ideas and to hold leaders, institutions, and the private sector accountable.

[Rosa Parks addresses U.S. television audiences during the 1956 Montgomery bus boycott, followed by footage of other major historical events when human rights have been enhanced.]

**ROSA PARKS:** Well, we hope to achieve equal rights.

**DARREN WALKER:** Throughout history, the only way we've expanded rights is through collective action, through people power. Today, movements around the world are asking hard questions about sustainability, inequality, and the violence and oppression that still exists.

[Women around the world protest for their rights.]

**Protesters [in Spanish and then English]:** *Patriarchy is our judge.*

**DARREN WALKER:** At the Ford Foundation, as part of our long-term commitment to protecting and expanding civic space and democracy, we are listening.

[A Black woman at a protest holds up a sign with the text “I can’t breathe.”]

**DARREN WALKER:** We all create civic space. Together we can keep it alive and vibrant and ensure an equitable, democratic, and prosperous future for us all.

[For more information, visit [FordFoundation.Org](https://fordfoundation.org)]

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