

Democracy For the People with Noorain Khan

Noorain Khan is the chief innovation officer of the Ford Foundation, where she drives Ford's innovation strategy and commitment to accelerating the foundation and social sector's impact.

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I'm Noorain Khan, and I'm vice president and chief innovation officer at the Ford Foundation. I'm a Pakistani American woman with medium length brown hair and brown eyes, and I'm wearing a black and orange printed dress.

A healthy democracy needs a thriving civil society, and a thriving civil society needs strong and resilient organizations and a strong nonprofit sector. Nonprofit organizations in this country really drive our democracy because they help our communities and our civil society flourish.

Civil society desperately needs these organizations because they're how we associate. It's how, in many ways, we experience joy and recreation, it's how we advance collective action. But it's also incredibly important for us to be able to pursue shared causes, to find people who really think something matters and are able to work together to advance that. As powerful as individuals are, that power is amplified when we're able to act and associate in groups.

Organizations in the American nonprofit ecosystem range from things like youth sports leagues to civil rights organizations. They support all parts of American life. And they're not just things we do every day, but they're actually contributing to the flourishing of American communities: how we desperately need each other, how we share time, how we advance our common causes and interests, and how we're all bigger than any one individual.

The nonprofit sector and its strength are critical to our democracy.

[The Ford Foundation logo is stacked in a bold black serif font, then transforms into a single letter "F" set inside a black circle.]

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