

Coast to Coast Ep. 20 - English

[00:02:55] Hi, welcome, welcome to Coast to Coast. My name is Lily Weinberg. I'm here joined by my colleague Raul Miles. How's it going? Hello. So enjoy yourself. Doing well. So we are on month six of this pandemic. How far along we are.

[00:03:13] And it only feels like year six.

[00:03:17] That's right. And as you know, the purpose of Coast-to-coast is really to look at, you know, how our communities are changing during this really dynamic time. We've looked at all sorts of topics from how public spaces can be leveraged during pandemics to mobility. We really did a deep dive during the racial reckoning that's occurring in our country. And so we've looked at all different types of topics. Of course, we have something really major going on in November.

[00:03:55] As you know, we have an election, and that's only completely obvious that we should be doing some we should be examining voting and civic engagement, which is really Knight Foundation North Star.

[00:04:11] So I'm really excited about our topic today. And can you tell us a bit about what we're going to chat about?

[00:04:16] Yeah, absolutely. I think that's exactly right. In some ways, I think the election has gotten souped up in the fact that there is a public health crisis and there's so much happening in our country this year. But it is less than 30 days away. And so I think to your point about talking about the trends that are effectuating the lives of citizens and communities. One of the things that that we've picked up on and we wanted to to to dive into today was how did these different kind of tensions and trends around civic participation manifest? Right. And in the context of engaging communities in promoting civic participation, voter turnout, particularly where it seems to be periods of rather high distrust, lacking trust in the institutions of this country, we're also seeing a lot of engagement on the civic front in terms of folks demanding racial equity. But folks locally made, for example, in August, we had record turnout for the primary. And so there is these these these different indicators that tell us different things about the health of our democracy and the health of civic participation and engagement. And so for that, we want to invite Joanne Goodway, who is the executive director of Radical Partners and a dear friend of ours to join us in conversation. She's leading some really fascinating work around a project called Vote Miami, being tricked out and Vote Miami that board. And we wanted her to give us her insights and her learnings from what can. Other communities around the country learn about civic engagement in times of disruption, in times of turmoil that might help kind of get us through. That's right. That might be exactly the medicine we need to get us through this process. So investing in our democracy, investing in voter participation to get us through the noise and the challenges that we're living through this or that. Joanne, thank you so much for joining us and being with us today.

[00:06:12] I mean, why not for the invitation? Oh, I'm very excited.

[00:06:16] Fantastic. I'll see you guys in 15 minutes or so. OK.

[00:06:19] Bye. See you in a bit. And so it's a little early to join it. I'm going to go back and forth for a bit just to kind of set the scene and set the table.

[00:06:26] As with other Coast-to-coast episodes, we really are predicated on an all pretty good on your involvement. And so if you have any questions for Joanne, please feel free to drop them. You can either drop them right here into the Q&A feature within the chat or on Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag nightlife. And our team will scrape them together and we'll put them to Duin at the end. We'll do about 10, 50 minutes Q&A towards the end. Welcome. Really good to see you. And glad that you're you're doing well and able to spend this time with us. Could you give us a quick overview of those radical partners and more specifically, what is built Miami? And how did it come about?

[00:07:08] Yeah, totally happy to. Thank you again. Well, so Radical Partners is a Miami based social impact accelerator. So for those of you who are familiar with the business concept. Right. We kind of take it and own it so that we can not only identify who's already doing and leading social impact initiatives in town, but also scale the impact and make it grow. Right. So so we have three pillars of work. One is that we invest in leaders. Two is that we activate and engage locals, which we'll be talking more about today. And the third thing is that we try to design innovative solutions to solve and collectively confront. I would say that issues that we all care about. So in those lines of work, we have several programs, including Vote Miami, which is the one that we're going to be talking to. About today, and this is basically an initiative that started a year ago, thanks to the support of night actually and in partnership with the Miami Herald and the Miami Foundation as well. And the idea was, how can we make it easy and accessible for everybody to not only care about voting, but doing something about it? So that's how the platform was born. And back then it was an online assemblage of tools that people could use to register, learn and mobilize. And this year, it has grown to be so much more right that I'm going to pause there because I'm sure we're going to dove in later on.

[00:08:31] Yeah, I love. I love the way you're going to describe what radical parties just investing in people, investing ideas, neutering them all. That happens within a context that happens within the current setting. Could you give us a bit about kind of the relief, the background against which you're pure? You're doing this work in Miami. Tell us what you all kind of assumed or saw or concluded about Miami that led you to this point to say we need this kind of a kind of aggregation of resources and tools and then how you kind of design Miami in response to that?

[00:09:03] Yeah, happy to. So I think there's nothing new. When one looks at the numbers, right. Miami, unfortunately, has one of the lowest turnouts. When you compare it to other cities in the world. So. So we started doing like what? What is happening? Why is this happening? And we found certain trends. Right. One of them is that for those of them who care about civic engagement and voting already, it is hard and it's time consuming for you to understand what is happening. When where should I go? Oh, where should I register? So even if you're interested, it takes you a while to navigate a system that might be built with good intentions. But it's Abqaiq in a way. So you have to navigate a lot of Web sites, calls, et cetera. So it takes time. So that was one. And then the second one is there are some people that do not care. Right. And you and I have talked about this role. Miami, in the end, is one of the cities that has more foreign based locals. So we all come, including myself, with some traumas of what we've dealt in our countries, what how we perceive democracies, et cetera. So we are kind of disenfranchized and lost hope in those systems, which has led us to not really care or to not really have hope that our vote and our voice matters. And the third one is that some people really don't know. Right. Like some people that have two or three jobs, having to take care of dogs and kids, et cetera, like they just do not have the time or the brain space to care and learn about all these things.

[00:10:40] I think that you're hitting on on this country that we touched on before the multiple Miami. It's great that from the outside, I think a lot of folks, especially from the American kind of world view, would say that Miami is very diverse and that has a very strong Latino community or what have you. But when you get really close to Miami, you realize it's it's it's 10000 shades of gray in some ways. And there's nuance to the nuance, to the nuance. And so I'm curious in terms of the advice that you may be able to impart on other folks in other communities across the country, how should we be thinking of meeting people where they're at? In Miami, it's it's really the multiple Miami's and it's meeting each of those communities that you just beautifully kind of delineated, meeting them where they're at in terms of what do you need to further you're engaged. And so what were the basic concepts or precepts that you found in the work thus far that others in other cities could say? All right. We really got to get nuance. We got to meet the customer, whether or not we should follow these principles when designing an intervention around civic participation and voter engagement.

[00:11:40] So many things to share there. Right. But I think the first thing that we all not only could would have to do is to really do some research. Right. And try to understand what is our community and what do our communities look like. Right. So so in Miami, yes, we have the high rises. Yes, we have the yacht clubs and the golf clubs, but we also have the lowest salaries in the countries. So it's understanding how Miami fits in. When you compared to the United States, but also understanding what Miami looks like for a Latin American country and countries and how we're kind of like stuck in the middle of these several realities. So. So that's definitely the one thing that you need to do. Zuman to understand who's living in your cities. Where are they? What are they looking towards? And also where are they having these conversations. Right. So once you understand who's out there is what is it that they're doing? What do they care about? And where are they having these conversations? And I think that's a very important thing, that that will Miami twice to fill that gap in terms of. Yes, there are plenty of conversations out there. Yes, there are plenty of platforms. The reality is that is hard to understand also what Miami is. How can we make it simple in plain English and Spanish and Creole? To make sure that people can access that information and whatever level they have, right, so so access is definitely a thing. And that may look different in its city. And the third thing is, how do we make it a 20, 20 thing? Right. Like, how can we just make it modern and exciting and celebratory, just like it was hundreds of years ago to make sure that will not only keen to engage, but actually acting and doing something about it.

[00:13:23] You're such an interesting kind of. That's an interesting point that we don't really talk like. I think engagement, voter participation today is definitely being has been absolutely leading politicized on our fronts. And there's this kind of really this huge moral imperative. I think fewer and fewer folks in this election cycle. And I've spoken about kind of the excitement of voting from an optimistic perspective, necessarily, because we're living in times of such massive change and disruption. And so I'm curious about this this this element of of of emotion. Right. Like a sentiment and sentiment, again, might mean different things for different folks. What what are you what are you seeing? What sort of sentiments and emotions are you trying to tap into to kind of really kind of coax folks to step up or to be more active weather and whether that's voting or if you're not able to vote because you're not a citizen engaging in civic participation a different way. Are there certain sentiments? Is it is an emotional kind of response. Is it a call to it, to it and a responsibility? What sentiments are we tap? Are we using to get folks kind of in the door, so to speak?

[00:14:35] So I would say that's kind of like that. The M.O. at radical point is and we try to replicate it with Miami. And one of the sentiments is collaboration. Right. How can we make everybody believe that this is this is a thing of everybody. Right. So so vote Miami is not the only movement definitely here. So instead of competing with other organizations who are definitely registering folks that are mobilizing leaders around as as an issue instead of competing with them, we try to leverage what they're doing and uplifting the work that you that you're doing. So in a tangible way, that means either having public dialogs on social media. That means showing their content, using their content, adding it to the vote Miami Web site so we can create like this family in the celebratory sentiment towards to watch what we're doing. And the second one, well, is, is how do we make everybody own this and be excited about this? So if you look at our social if you look at our content, it's not about like radical partners here. What my aim here is, look, stop scrolling. We just want you today to take the census and register to vote. And what we want is for people to look at that and say like, oh, this is so cool. I want to share with my friends and family so that they make it their own and they make it their own thing. So definitely nonpartisanship is key. We're not pushing for any candidates for anything. We just want whomever is watching and waiting to own this and to understand that this is their process, too. This is their city, too.

[00:16:06] One particularly kind of noxious and toxic element, I think, of our rallies today is mis and disinformation. And so folks using technology and platforms to spread information that's intentionally meant to keep folks out of the democratic process, to keep folks away from participating, whether it's in the census or in an election or what have you. Could you give us a bit of context in terms of how you all have approached this, this challenge of missing disinformation? Again, I think we're dealing against the relief of massive distrust rated in polling that night and others have done. Trust in American institutions is at its lowest level since the Vietnam War and missing disinformation, a definite contributed to that. And so with that kind of reality in play, how do we kind of how do we manage and rebuild and redesign interventions that navigate around that? Mm hmm.

[00:17:04] So I go back to what we you and I were discussing earlier, like, it's all about listening. Right? And instead of ignoring or fighting that, how can you join those movements and meet people where they are? So for the census, for example, we know there are many organizations doing significant efforts to get people out and take the census. So, yes, we uplift and we try to win hands in that message. But the reality is that people who aren't U.S. citizens or who do not have papers in this country are afraid of that. Right. So instead of fighting and just pushing more of them, more and more of those PSA is in typical messages, how can we then create something simpler? How do we can hop on the on the phone? How can we send text messages and. People in the communities that they trust more than us to tell them what this is about and why this matters. It said so in the end. It goes back to active listening and leveraging those movements and those fears and that information and tackling it with something that they already trust and that they will be listening to.

[00:18:13] I love to kind of. Before we hand this off to the Q&A portion. And let's do two things. One is by Ivan was joining us today live to drop your question, either on Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag nightlife or right here into the chat on the Q&A feature. You can pop your question in there and we'll kind of bring them to the forefront. I'd love to kind of, if you will, kind of does the transition kind of on a more optimistic note, if you will. And then a second. There's also opportunity. Right. I think there's a massive amount of disruption. Disruption. There is kind of at this moment in time, the calls to our to our

conscience, collective consciousness as individuals, but collective conscious communities and as a nation are deeper than in recent memory.

[00:19:00] Both are on economic justice and inequality as a result of the pandemic, racial inequality, injustice that has been kind of part of America's fabric for forever. Those are all really large and big and heavy kind of things that to confront. And they're changing the way that we even get together. We're having this conversation in this format because of some of that. That kind of disruption also brings about opportunity. It brings about renewal and creation and and and new beginnings. And I'm curious what opportunities you're seeing. Right. What gives you reason for hope? Gives you kind of cautious optimism that out of what's happening right now in our communities, be it in Miami or nationally, we're designing, building something better, a better democracy, a better sense of attachment to place, a better sense of solidarity and camaraderie. What are the things that you're seeing that say that give you kind of radical partners, a kind of a guiding light to say there's opportunity in this direction?

[00:20:04] I love that question. I always say I'm an idealist by choice. Right. Despite all the news and despite all the things that we see, I choose to stay optimistic and do something about it. So whomever is watching, I encourage you to do the same. And some of the opportunities that I see role is, as you were saying, there was chaos. Right. In chaos has a negative connotation, but kids means change. And every time something clashes, we have an opportunity to transform things. And there was chaos not only in this country, but in the world this year. So one of the things that I think we can transform is who is holding those positions of power? What are the conversations that we're having and how can we make decisions moving forward? And to give specific examples. We are seeing models that were old and worked centuries ago, decades ago, and it kind of like those platforms and those processes continue to be. But then we're also seeing a large movement of younger generations taking the streets. Right. And wanting change. So I'm starting to see this two generations, these two groups willing to talk to each other. Because now the older folks who have been in those positions in these processes understand the relevance and the activation and the energy that the younger people can bring. But then the younger folks are realizing that if they don't permeate, if that's a word in English, the structures, the changes that are going to be sustainable. So that's definitely one. The second one, and I think it's especially relevant for this country is technology. Right. And how we can democratize knowledge because technology exists and use it to our advantage. Just as we're seeing many negative messages, we could use it to an advantage and organize people in it. Click with a click. We could do it very, very fast. And then the third one is that there's been this opportunity to just humanize ourselves. Again, you and I have talked about this before, and it might sound cheesy for some, but it's like in years like this, we realize that sometimes we just need to bet on connections, that we need to bet on relationships, that we need to bet on people, even if we can measure the impact, even if the money might not be there. It just reminded us that that that human solidarity in doing something in community about the things that we care about might be the best way to go.

[00:22:39] I love that you kind of brought that point and elevate that point up. A lot of talk about systems change these days and rightly so, fairly so can absolutely imagine a renewal and a redesign of the systems that we have in our communities, in our country for the times that we live in.

[00:22:56] But systems ultimately kind of live or die and succeed or fail based on the people that have become and that used them. And so that that conversion that you're talking about, that that renewal of being committed people to people, that's critical, critical

to what we're talking about here. I'd love to bring Lily back into the conversation. Really has been screening the questions, fielding the questions from a lot of folks. And we've got a good number stacked up. So, again, try to get to as many as we can and then we've got to. Lily, if you can help us understand kind of what are the common themes, your questions recommended from the audience.

[00:23:26] Sure. Sure. And I and I and I love the human solidarity point. So, sir, thanks for four for ending on not in your end, your conversation, Jaran.

[00:23:35] So the first one is is around the vote.

[00:23:40] Miami. And how can one and our community leverage vote Miami to activate their community to the polls?

[00:23:51] That's a great question. So for those of you in Florida that are watching. Yesterday was the last day to register. So unfortunately, you cannot do that if you're in Florida. But if you are in other coasts, please find out about that and register. But then there are two ways in which you could leverage vote Miami. One is to learn as many things as you can. So in the Web site, you will find links to voter guides to, I would say, like as many resources as you can that are being built in the community for you to learn about the candidates. So the most important tool that people could leverage is a ballot ready widget that we have there. So once you enter your address, it filters that information for you based on your party and your address. And it tells you who could you vote for. How can you learn about these candidates and actually prepare your ballot printed or mail it your way so that you can understand and make the elections in an informed way? Right. That's what we're looking for. And the third one is, if you can vote or not like myself, you can mobilize your people. So in the vote Miami Web site, you will have images and resources that we want you to download and make. Your own post share. Call, text, whatever you can do to mobilize you people. That's definitely the most effective thing you can do.

[00:25:10] And that's so incredibly valuable because what we're finding and and and communities across the country, including in Miami, with local news decreasing, with legacy media decreasing, there's really a gap. And this information around who to vote for, of course, to eat. You probably have in your mind who you want to vote for, for president, but for judges or for other, you know, officials that are on the ballot. So that's that's incredibly valuable for a voter. One of the things, John, that I really liked and there was a question around this is around kind of issues and and kind of linking what you care about two, to understanding the vote. And so let me be a little bit more clear. So. So when you go to vote Miami, there are questions like, do you care about mobility? Do you care about parks? And it's making that link that the things that that we have around us are there because of our local officials. But one of the things that we found in Miami and across the country is that for many young people who actually value their parks or transit or are, you know, are not showing up to vote. And so tell me, I want to dig a little bit deeper. You know, how does Vote Miami make that clear around kind of the issues that that you might care about, whether it's like mobility or walkability and really getting to the ballot and voting?

[00:26:42] Mm hmm. That's a great question. And I left. Right, because when I moved to Miami four years ago and they told me, oh, there are 30, 30 plus mayors and then there's another mayor you like, what is this struction? Where can I learn? The reality is that there was no real one place where I could understand that structure. So what Miami has the government one to one page and it's basically going back to your school and doing that

civic education back again. And it tells you from the federal level to the local level, who are these representatives and what are they doing? What's good blog. Right. What are they deciding for us? So that's definitely a way in which people can not only understand the structure, but try to take that local and up approach. Right. Yeah. You don't really care about the precedent or the national level stuff. You care about the hole in your street. You will understand who's the person in charge of that. So that's the only one. And then the other way is we ourselves don't really endorse or promote any candidates. But when you use that ballot ready tool that I'm telling you about, that's an in Spanish, Creole and in Portuguese as well. When you look at the candidates, you could look for endorsements based on the issues that you care about. So there are definitely tags and filters that you could use. If it's transportation, you click on transportation and it will tell you what the candidates have been saying. Fantastic. What they care about.

[00:28:11] Fantastic. I mean, that is that's incredibly valuable to be able to make that link. These are the things that impact your life. Right. And making that link to that, the local official, that's.

[00:28:25] That's great. And so so roll.

[00:28:28] And you talked a little bit about disinformation and how that is a major pain point and across the country and our community and and and I would also there's a major pain point is around trust.

[00:28:43] So there's a couple of questions around this information and trust. And there's fear, actually, you know, there is fear in our community around whether it's a census or are voting or there's fear that there could be chaos.

[00:28:58] So so can you. Can you talk a little bit about how we as community leaders can support our community and, you know, staying calm and getting out the information, but then also empowering folks to feel comfortable to to vote? Can you talk a little bit about that?

[00:29:21] Yeah. So I think.

[00:29:25] If it's OK not to stay calm. Right. In terms of OK, some of the things are alarming. Like some of the things one reads, you're like, why is this out there and how can this be, too? But then what you do with that sentiment, I think, is what matters. So I would suggest two things. And that's kind of like the approach that we take. One is if there's a community and certain fears that are around that you just want to bring more information to them. I would say if you're not close to that, that community, don't do it yourself. Fine leaders and fine organizations that are already doing that work and have a conversation with them. What is happening? How can I help you, etc. for them to be the ones that deliver the message? Because that's definitely important when it comes to trust. And the second thing is we just have to then fight that information with positive things. Right. And the reality is that, unfortunately, the kind of the economy and the financial bets are on the Coca-Cola ads of the world and the partizan ads of the world. So if we can come together and just fight that negative noise with positive noise on social, because that's where people are, we just got to do it and we just got to try. There's there's an article I once read that said the bad people win because they're noisy, because they're loud. So how can we the good people that are not really pushing for anything but just to bring power back to the people, be as loud and as noisy as we can?

[00:30:56] That's really powerful. That is really powerful. A reality jump in here.

[00:31:01] I just want to frizzle plus one. Kudos to that. And I wanted to add that just before we came on, about a few minutes before we came on live on the show, Florida secretary of state did reopen voter registration until 7:00 p.m. tonight because of the technical difficulties on the voter registration Web site yesterday. So if you're listening live or you're listening some point today, October six in Florida, you and to you're going you haven't yet. You have until seven p.m. today to do so.

[00:31:28] Yeah, I saw that. But there are some technical I literally I was like one minute before that. There's technical issues. So. So thank you for that. The live update around that.

[00:31:37] We've got a breaking news show here breaking. Let's. We have to go then. Yeah. Yeah. That's great that there is a bit more time. And on that note.

[00:31:49] Joanne, I would love to invite you to end on any final thoughts that you have around voter engagement and Miami civic engagement and just that you want to leave with our audience.

[00:32:02] I have so many things to say, but I think for those of you who can vote, just register if you haven't. You can make decisions in this next three weeks and figure it out. In a country like the United States, I think your voice matters more than in others where maybe voting cannot be safe. I would feel as hopeful as it does here. So leverage that right and use your right. And for those of you who cannot vote and live in the U.S., there's something for you to do. Right? Learn what these people are. Talk to you. People have these conversations with respect and love. It's enough about saying like, oh, let's not talk about politics. Yes. Let's do talk about politics, because that's literally what's shaping our context. And we can hold people accountable. Right. So voting and in civic engagement does not stop. On November 3rd, it actually starts. So so let's just think of civic engagement, about understanding the issues that affect your city, caring about them and acting in the way that you can act according to your to your needs and wants and impossibilities and understanding, understanding, caring and acting powerful.

[00:33:16] Thank you. Thank you so much for joining us. Joann Roll.

[00:33:21] Thank you for cohosting. We also are we filmed this in Spanish and Creole.

[00:33:30] So for our various audience, our diverse audience in Miami and across the country, you can listen in multiple languages, which I think is incredibly important for this really, really timely, critical topic around civic engagement.

[00:33:46] So thank you again. And we'll see you next Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. Eastern. Take care. Q Thank you. Thanks, Ryan.