

C2C Ep22 - English

[00:01:09] Welcome, welcome, welcome to Coast to Coast. My name is Lilly Weinberg, and I'm here joined by my colleague Raul Moas the Miami program director from Knight Foundation.

[00:01:21] Hi, how are you doing all yourself?

[00:01:24] Doing well, how's the family, how's everyone doing?

[00:01:28] OK, we're good. We had a really nice Christmas break where we kind of disconnected from everything. And then that first zoom in January reminded us that we're very much still in covid work from home. But thankfully, we're all good. You all.

[00:01:42] We're all good over here, and one of my New Year's resolution is actually to do a little bit less Zoom's to pick up the phone sometimes. So. So we'll see if that if that works. But but listen, I as you know, coast to coast, we started Knight Foundation talking about really the future of cities when covid hit and March. And we talked about all sorts of topics from the future of public spaces to mobility to technology and everything in between. And today, I'm really excited to talk about entrepreneurship. We know that that covid has disrupted everything. And and I see many articles almost every day all coming out about Miami and entrepreneurship. You know, we go back and forth with this and kind of the mobility of talent.

[00:02:35] And but I think there's a real question of how do we make this? How do we build an entrepreneurial community that's inclusive and accessible to all? And so I'm really excited about this topic. Would love for you to tee up what we're going to be talking about and who our special guests are.

[00:02:53] Absolutely. So thank you so much. Work for the space, for always grabbing amazing folks to go into the nitty gritty and into the hard questions. So I think today will be no different. We've got two amazing, incredibly accomplished people with us today. So the interest will be very short because we're a very short time. I'm not naming all of our accomplishments, our roles, maybe just the headlines. But today we have with us Felecia Hatchard, who is the executive director and founder, co-founder of the Center for Black Innovation, and Rosabeth Moss Kanter, founding chair and director of Harvard University Advanced Leadership Initiative. And what we want to get into today is this question of how is it that communities across the country, especially in light of co-ventures, think about rebuilding and building forward and can ensure that that building forward happens in a way where all can participate? We're talking about building prosperous entrepreneurial ecosystems, prosperous entrepreneurial communities that meet people where they're at, and give them the opportunities to build companies that improve livelihoods, that improve community well-being and ultimately make them more resilient. And so, Rosabeth. Felecia, thank you so much for being with us today. Hello.

[00:04:06] So we wanted to kick off this with a general kind of calendar, prompt us to say when when we think of the work that you all are doing and the theories around how we can build inclusive and accessible entrepreneurial communities, oftentimes the conversations are maybe a little bit feel good or they're values based. But we don't get into the nitty gritty of what are the real hard sticking points and what are the frameworks that we can use to kind of measure against the values, measure against the progress we're making progress, values and those desired outcomes. Rosabeth, probably can start with you. Could you

give us some context of your framework when you think of what do you measure for when you're looking at a community and asking whether it is working for all startup community? And if you can maybe give us a little bit on the full end? And how does the community can use that framework to measure their progress?

[00:05:04] Well, let me let me start with the forums. And I also want to say thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. And I'm a particular fan of delicious work. And I think this will be an exciting conversation. So the four and four things that you have to watch out for, and if we don't get them right, we're not going to be inclusive. The first one is numbers. And by numbers, I mean how many people of a particular kind are in leadership circles or not? Because if we only have a few token entrepreneurs of color or are of a different gender, that means women, then we're not going to break through, particularly because if you're small in numbers, you have extra burdens to carry, you have to represent your group. You have to show up at every meeting or else there won't be anybody from your group. Your difference is always there in front of you. So we have to get rid of tokenism. What we need is balanced groups of people of many kinds together. And so any program needs to make sure that we don't just have a sprinkling a few tokens here and there. It just starts with that fundamental second. And is narratives. The narratives can't be deficit narratives. Oh, let's help those poor people. Let's give them an opportunity. They should be instant narratives that say there are people with talent and how are we going to put those people with talent together? So another thing every effort in this should do is to elevate the stature of people in underrepresented representative groups and show off their talents, not show off their complaints. I mean, let's vent if there needs to be authentic, but not too much of it. The third thing is networks. Networks are incredibly important. Networks are the way you access all the resources needed to build and grow business. You access capital through networks, whether it's banks or venture capitalists. You've got to know the people. They have to know you. You access expertise through networks. And that might include mentors. But mentors have some limitations because it's really sponsorship that matters. You access through networks legitimacy that you're at the table and therefore you're not willing to be reckoned with. And unless the networks are inclusive themselves and balanced, unfortunately, people can have support networks. They can even have a mentor, but it doesn't take them anywhere. They need networks that give them access to resources they wouldn't otherwise have. Networks have to be wide open to the world outside one's particular neighborhood or particular group. And the fourth and is new institutions, because one of the things that holds people back are the structures, the institutions that we have today, like how long is the commute from your part of the city to where the incubator happens to be? What kind of transportation is available? How about access to health care or child care? How about even bike sharing? It turns out bike sharing is more prevalent in more affluent communities and not in communities of color. Interesting, because that should be an easy one. Marketing platforms, I mean, there, woman entrepreneur in my area who is building a marketing platform for businesses of people of color. Where do those exist and is the narrative positive where we get them in enough numbers to hold the. Will that help build networks? That's the challenge.

[00:09:15] To the founding executive director and of the Center for Black Innovation, which is its new newish, but it's a long time coming. He's also a past long time and recent Migrant for that work. Felicia, could you give us some some history, some background on the work you've been doing over the last decade that led to the creation of the institution that is the Center for Black Innovation? And what it is that in terms of kind of market positioning, what is the Center for Black Innovation is aiming to do what gap is it filling in the institutional landscape or continuum to the point of there being institutions that meet folks where they're at?

[00:09:55] Right, right. But what I'm excited to be having this conversation with you guys over, like innovation is a rebrand to the work that we've been doing for the past six years. And so largely, people are familiar with code fever and also black tech. We all of our work for the past six years has really been around our reading black communities from being innovation deserts. And so most of us are really familiar with food deserts. Are people having to travel, miles, oftentimes to get access to fresh fruits and vegetables? Well, the same thing was happening from the access point, largely this conversation, access and entrepreneurship for tech professionals, for businesses and our small businesses overall, but specifically as it relates to black communities being able to be active participants and financial beneficiaries of the innovation economy. And so the rebrand as a as a name really just came from having kind of clarity to the work that we've been doing for the past six years, but then also really being able to take that that forward. Right. And so some of the things that Rosabeth mentioned was around data and networks and knowing that there's a huge disconnect and a huge gap for entrepreneurs, period.

[00:11:04] But when you're talking about technology entrepreneurs, that gap is even wider. Right. And so for us, it's really we are largely a think tank now. So really tackling the research component from an area and in a way that we have not seen anyone do that responsibly from an asset framing standpoint as opposed to the same framing standpoint or another disparity study. Right. And then the other part of that is black innovation, ecosystem building organization. And our understanding is that, you know, smart cities and communities are formed by cultivating great leaders, great entrepreneurs and real capital pathways that value black culture and communities as a greatest asset. And so when we talk about media and what that can do to drastically increase the social capital, to get more eyeballs on entrepreneurs, specifically those that can accelerate what they're doing, we don't see irresponsible storytelling and black entrepreneurs in that way. And so pushing the needle forward with that, but then also giving them the right kind of data to do better. Storytelling is one big aspect of our think tank, Center for Black Innovation. The other part about networks, networks are important. We always hear people say you're what your network is your net worth. But if your network or the networks are hard to access or harder, hard to penetrate, it doesn't mean anything for you. And we have so many people that are building kind of have their head down, building really great companies and solutions that don't have a network or disconnected or largely not trusted by their cities. And so the introductions aren't happening. And that's what we've been doing over the past four years with VCs and residences giving entrepreneurs largely their first connection point to a VC where our organization can make that warm introduction for them and then hold that relationship accountable. So it's not this thing where they go to the entrepreneur, but they actually help them do what they said that they're going to do and better position them. And then aside from that, is creating better capital pathways for black entrepreneurs through that program, through an angel investor accreditation program that we're adding to that. And then just space in general. Right. So we have a 10000 square foot space in the historic Overtown area of Miami that is a beacon for entrepreneurship and innovation and is literally the only center for black innovation across the globe.

[00:13:25] So, Felecia, you've hit on a couple of things. I'd love to get to kind of the nitty gritty, the hard truth, the uncomfortable truth sometimes that that get overlooked. A lot of communities, a lot of individuals are seeking to live out their values of building inclusive, accessible, entrepreneurial communities. But that journey is is not going to happen overnight. It's happened even in a couple of years. Right. It's a long, long journey and there's going to be pitfalls and bumps along the way. Could you highlight for us maybe two or three of the most common kind of pitfalls of common missteps or ways that folks kind of

veer off the path and kind of distractions, if you will, that that don't let you kind of get to where we want to get to. And Rosabeth, afterwards, I love your reaction to these situations as well.

[00:14:14] Yeah, I mean, and we've had a lot of conversations around this over the years. Well, I think the first part of that is actually doing an honest assessment of your city. What is the marketing shiny stuff? And then what what are the real reality?

[00:14:31] And prior to the beginning of twenty twenty was a whole other conversation where we were still trying to map out the best resources to move things forward, being able to measure that and then duplicate that and then covid happen. And there's been a bunch of studies that have talked about 40 percent of black businesses have closed and may not reopen again. And so whatever we were trying to do before then is now further been exacerbated by covid. And so one is definitely having an honest assessment.

[00:14:59] And then to I think it's really looking at the sheer amount of resources that are needed that are truly needed in order to start even be. Beginning to tackle systematic like generational trauma in those communities, distress in those communities, and then a lack of resources.

[00:15:19] And so I'm always going to center about like, let's have real conversations about where we are, move away the marketability of what we need to do sometimes to sell things so that we can actually start having conversations. What are the right type of resources that are needed specific to every city that we are talking about. And there is no one size fits all around that.

[00:15:37] And Rosabeth, your thoughts?

[00:15:40] So I think very wise. I think that the institutional structural problems have to be tackled somehow. First of all, there are people who would like to start and grow businesses. They may enroll in courses. They can get training. On the other hand, they also have to hold the job. They have family responsibilities. They have impossible commutes. So unless there are enough social supports and it looks like the current the new administration in Washington is thinking about those social supports, they're not going to be able to get it. So what you have is more people dropping out of community college programs where they would be getting skills and they would be getting contacts because they don't have the social supports around them. And then I just want to underscore the networking connections problem and that there are incredibly savvy black, for example, business people, and they are not in the social circles with all the bankers in town. They start to be, but it stops at a certain point. And again, partly that residential patterns. So we have to stimulate the incubators, for example, in places that are equally accessible to affluent and left behind populations. That's incredibly important. And we have to. So that's going to make sure that they're inclusive. I know that in Miami there's one that's doing green tech and it's located at a heavily black area. So it's a threat, but it's green tech, which is a very hot field. So it's attracting people to that incubator in a black neighborhood because of the green tech. So I think that black and brown communities have to have resources and assets to offer other people rather than only being the recipients of help. So maybe grants that they get to give out the money to somebody else. I mean, if you want to see somebody texturize an organization or a community, let them control the budgets.

[00:18:03] So that's where we're two things that if I could do.

[00:18:06] One, I'd like to remind folks who are participating with either via Facebook you to live through here or Twitter, we have a kind of a Q and a kind of alternative. So feel free to drop in questions if you have a question or feel free to drop it in.

[00:18:26] And can you hear me right? Yeah, perfect.

[00:18:30] Just making sure we're testing out a new system. Folks, I appreciate you all sharing with us. And then the second thing I want to do is kind of kind of flip this a bit and and discuss opportunities. It's been a cluster of a year challenging on so many levels for so many different reasons that has also unlocked opportunity. Are there a silver lining or there are genuine opportunities, systemic opportunities that you're seeing in communities on the national level. But I want to bring it back on the local level. These commitments have happened locally to Felecia mentioned being honest with what's happening in places where is the opportunity today and where we're seeing kind of things that give us hope or optimism for there being more access, more inclusion, more equity in the outcomes of of of entrepreneurial communities.

[00:19:18] So the thing that gives me the most hope, but it isn't accessible yet to everybody is tech because like they say, the old joke that on the Internet, no one knows you're a dog that is supposedly tech. If we get rid of biased algorithms, tech is color neutral. And if you have great tech, you can sell it lots of places if you get it. And many people would like to get access to that tech. Child care is a huge problem and it's why women are dropping out of the labor force. I think women and women of color are probably the hardest hit and that's not around entrepreneurship. That's in general because of being in sort of. About broadband connections into homes, and we have to do a lot of reinventing of things now, that reinvention, including how we deliver health care, neighborhood clinics, barbershops and hair salons, should be delivering some basic services, health services. Those are opportunities. If you think entrepreneurial and you reinvent where and how. Imagine if every barbershop in every hair salon could take blood pressure and get into a system. We would solve a health problem and we would provide more income and more opportunities for the people that own those neighborhood businesses.

[00:20:52] Yeah, yeah. I think we're seeing some opportunities that have kind of come out of covid or silver linings and we're able to talk about silver linings. One was the heavy adoption and accelerated better understanding of the utility of technology for those that are not in the technology. Feel like we saw that in a way that I think largely that conversation, that activity has been kind of swept under the rug. We felt like we were at a level where we were OK and we realized that we had a huge infrastructure problem. But in those moments, like you get more solution driven entrepreneurs out of that. Right. And so I think kind of given e-commerce became really huge and not that it was a big thing anyways prior to but the reliance on on e-commerce in order to get products and services, the kind of insurgent of black entrepreneurs that were using platforms like Shopify without having the heavy technology skills in order to get their product to to the market, essentially to people really fast with something that we've seen grow dramatically over the past year. I mean, even if you talk about kind of the food and tech scene. Right. And so we people kind of laugh at like Trappe kitchens, which are largely just people cooking out of their homes and selling plates or selling whatever the product is on Instagram. Well, actually, a lot of our big established food businesses did not understand that utility. Right. Or did not have that kind of understanding. And then from a marketing or artistic standpoint, that, quite frankly, a lot of black and brown businesses did understand that because they were running these businesses largely underground inside Hustle's and they were actually ahead of the game in March, you know, February, March, April, May, the beginning of the

pandemic. And so what other resources do they need to further grow that? Because they have a better understanding of how to quickly kind of pivot and utilize digital in a way that some of our larger organizations and corporations just did not. We've also seen growth in health and beauty, which is a high growth area, low entry point for for black businesses, specifically around female entrepreneurs that actually did not dip under the past year. People were still taking care of themselves, but getting them directly to the consumer was something that we saw strength in this past pandemic. And then I think just people starting businesses that are micro businesses really to either help them because they lost their job during the pandemic or to just kind of give themselves the safety net financially just in case something does happen. We people getting really creative. But I think we always see that kind of moment happen in major economic downturns or instability. But I think we've seen in a lot of ways the black community has been affected. But in a lot of ways, we've seen kind of this insurgent of of creativity in businesses that I hope will be here to stay and kind of help us get back to recovering from that 40 percent dip in black entrepreneurship businesses that have closed.

[00:23:57] So I think that it's absolutely true that a lot of creativity comes out of that, and we hope those businesses are sustainable. But it's hard for them to be sustained when they're really small by themselves and they're vulnerable to every downturn, every change. So what we need is more partnerships. And on the one hand, the fact that we're working remotely, we can talk like this coast to coast means that you can connect people. On the other hand, you can't do the face to face making a relationship. So we need more collaboration. We need to have those small neighborhood beauty and health businesses, for example, connected with others in their city and beyond their city because then they have marketing clout. Then they can like cooperatives. I mean, some of our food in America comes from farmers cooperatives, where small farmers band together in a cooperative for marketing ocean spray, cranberries and blueberries and other things is a cooperative. So. We need more cooperative's, capitalism needs cooperatives.

[00:25:14] Yeah, no, I definitely agree. I think kind of measuring this, what are the actual collaborations that makes sense. We're doing collaboration from intention. I think that we throw around very easily the term as ecosystem builders, like everyone needs to collaborate with collaboration, look like what are the outcomes of that collaboration so that we don't just have outputs and we feel like we're doing something. But when we look at the hard numbers, we have actually not moved anything forward. And we saw that under 20, 20 of the pandemic and the social justice unrest like we saw that. Right. So for us with Center for Black Innovation, like we're measuring that right. Like our framework of how you measure the health of a black tech and startup and entrepreneur ecosystem comes out next week. Right. It's looking at 13 key areas in which not only are we scoring Miami is our first city, but like hopefully other people in other cities use that exact same framework so that they understand where the gaps are and then be very intentional about what the collaboration is, what their resources are, what what funding is is needed. Because I don't think we ever get really granular in that aspect when we're talking about communities and when we do it.

[00:26:27] What it was to say, like when kind of like white America gets a cold, black communities get the flu right as it relates to how they are largely affected when these kinds of things happen. And so looking at measuring density and fluidity and actual connectivity, what does culture actually look like in the city? When we say specifically in Miami, like everyone for the past six weeks has been talking about how diverse our city is, and then you see an article come out about like, welcome to Miami.

[00:26:57] And here all the places it did not list, like one black community as a community that you should live in if you're looking to relocate to Miami. It did not list one black restaurant that you could frequent. And we have some really amazing high growth black restaurants that that are here. It didn't list one black neighborhood, one black museum, one black author that you should read to get a better understanding of Miami as. So what we're talking about is inclusive innovation and we're talking about communities. But when we market our cities, we're literally not almost erasing, what, 17 percent of the population and 70 percent of what your lived experience should be, how you should contribute or just go about the city. Like that's that's a problem because those are missed marketing opportunities for those businesses that could be strengthened by either just that commerce or those investments. And so looking at talent, of course, mentorship, infrastructure investment, really the regulatory environment here, not just South Florida, but throughout the state and then incubator and accelerator and spaces. We have 13 targeted urban areas here in Miami. We we have four coworking spaces that exist in black neighborhoods. I actually think only three. And so when we're talking about even all the activity of the past, what, six weeks on Twitter, we're only talking about the city of Miami. We're not talking about the county. And so if you're not talking about the county and bringing that those resources or those resources to the to concentrate on the county, you're actually not talking about the black community at all because not the majority do not live in the city. And so when we talk about mobility and then, of course, everyone measures of their ecosystem by the workforce, a generation of that, and then exits like we have to have a much broader conversation, how we measure things so that we know where to align and put resources.

[00:28:52] Beautifully said tons of folks commenting. So I don't you can see it on your screen there. You got a ton of love coming your way. We're coming up on time, which is crazy. These things always fly by. You hit on something, you hit the cold kind of flu analogy. And and there's a question I comment that Senator on trust and actually we're going to go to a different public health healthier. But the ask the question, how can businesses promote trust, especially as it relates to kind of COVID vaccination in black communities of color? There's a lack of trust or mistrust or distrust around that. So really hot takes quick 30 second hotfix rosevelt information on how businesses can build trust in communities that don't have it. As it pertains to our current context of covid, ask the community and listen to them.

[00:29:42] I think it only goes part way to show the vice president of the United States getting the COVID vaccine or another person of color getting the vaccine. OK, that's not me. You have to ask the community. You have to get trusted opinion leaders in the community to tell you what the barriers are and then work with them, their voices that matter. I'm working with an organization in Chicago, I do collaboration serving five hundred and fifty thousand people in largely black and brown areas, and having the community at the table as an equal partner and letting them lead is really important.

[00:30:27] You know, quickly, just second, what Rosabeth said, right, and so it is definitely asking the community, I think it's also, you know, when we're talking about distrust of the Kovik vaccine, everyone immediately points to Henrietta Lacks or the Tuskegee experiment that have happened decades ago. Right. But what we're talking about is that the day to day experience of black people in the health care system today, there's mistrust that's happening today. And so the fact that doctors and health care professionals aren't giving black people pain medication because they feel like they are, they don't experience pain like these are real studies and real experiences that are happening today. You see the the death rate of black women giving childbirth like these things are real realities to

today. And so it's not to be like forget about Tuskegee and to forget about Henrietta Lacks. It's like we're asking you forget about your experience last week at the doctor's office. And so it has to start there of fixing that. I think it also has to start with a more equitable like marketing around this as well, which we have not seen really addressing those pain points other than just kind of forget about this thing. Trust us in the in this moment where you have kind of been, you know, not have the best experience in recent times, but that's definitely say starting there their Roosevelt.

[00:31:56] Thank you. Thank you, so sorry to cut you off. Thank you both so much for the real talk. The hard truth, the optimism, inspiration, the orientation of what we should be thinking of and looking to as you think about building better, more prosperous equitable communities. I want to acknowledge a couple of things. One, you both are amazing individuals. I highly encourage our our viewers and our participants in our audience to check you out. Your social tags are there. You can Google as well. And you'll find more about the work that Dr. Canter leads at Harvard and the work at the center of black innovation. Also want to thank you for being with us and any technical issues we might have had as we test out this new system. My my colleague, Lilly Weinberg, who I think had some glitches as well. So thank you for that. And lastly, before we break for the afternoon, we'll be back every 20 minutes. We're doing this once a month and going to the issues that are shaping our community today. And so we hope to see you again February. Twenty fifth, we'll announce kind of the topic and our guests in order. We hope you'll be part of the conversation that that really is about living in the moment, taking the long view and building more engaged, better prosperous communities across the country. Thank you so much for the time. Hope to see you all soon.

[00:33:08] Take care.