

Hello and welcome to our Good Place Podcast

that is run by good place innovators.

A team of researchers,

educators and student fellows passionate

about transforming communities with

an extra sensitive eye for our place.

Context and true Community needs.

Our goal is to inspire educators

to connect to their place and

transform their curriculum.

Enabling students grow into responsible

citizens with curious minds and

a greater sense of belonging.

My name is Rita Newton.

I'm a senior teaching fellow in

strategy and innovation at Lancaster

University Management School.

I'm also an education service designer and

elite of good place innovators project.

Funded by the Enterprise Educators UK,

our project demonstrates the

importance of why the understanding

of enterprise in the social context.

Through this project,

we aspire to develop a design like

collaborative enterprise mindset

in our students and introduce

the concept of Co design.

To entrepreneurial learning,

if you love what we do,

leave a comment for the podcast and

help us understand the relevance of our

discussion and any other opportunities

for the themes to cover in the future.

In this episode,

I speak with my colleague Dr.

Ed McKeever,

a lecturer and a researcher at

Lancaster University Management

School whose research focuses on

exploring ways in which entrepreneurs

engage with place and community.

Ed welcome.

And has had very special role in

his research as he returned to a

place of personal significance.

Ed could you share with us the context

of your research and your inspiration

for this rather personal inquiry?

Thank you radka.

Yeah,

you probably can hear from my my accent

that I'm from the North West of Ireland.

So really,

during a period of of globalisation
when a lot of companies where
we're moving jobs offshore,
if you move 3000 jobs offshore,
you leave a community without 3000.

Jobs,

and so really what I started
to witness was a community that
was in a state of despair.

It was a in a state of almost depression
and where people had lost their way.

Community had lost their way
and really after a period,
people and particularly local
entrepreneurs started to seek ways to
actually put the economy back together again.

And they did this with with a range
of of both private and public private
partnerships which saw the the the
development of of golf courses of
of different types of initiatives
that were designed to create.

Employment to stem immigration
and to really work on people's
employability who've been in the
factory and where is your place at?

Can you places in the North West of Ireland?

It's on the border between
what we would consider Derry,
stroke,
Londonderry and in a show on in Donegal.

So really,
it was a it's on the North
West Coast quite far away from
major centres of population,
but really which was at one time a big
producer of textiles of knitted goods.

And of quite bespoke products like linen,
well,

what a beautiful place as well
it is isn't it?

And quite similar to Lancaster
in many ways in many ways.

In your research that you talk
about place being enabling as well
as constraining for entrepreneurs,
can you give us some examples from
your findings that relate to this
concept of place as a resource?

When we talk about place as a resource,
we're actually talking about
in the mainstream about people
and what people will do for you
because you're part of a community.

So when you're part of a community,
when you're part of a collective
that comes with benefits,
and that they'll support you,
but it also comes with expectations that
you're actually going to give something back.

So what we found was that
entrepreneurs were very aware that
local people were shopping local.
They were hell bent on supporting
local business,
but local businesses were actually very
aware that they needed to do these things to,
for example,
sitting on the Board of Governors
of a local school.

Sitting on the board of directors of
the local community led Golf Club,
so really, they were.

They were being involved in sport.

They were.

They were donating to local
charities so really there was there.

Was this awareness that it was
about joining in and participating
beyond the boundary of their
company and using maybe their their

entrepreneurial knowledge to maybe
take these community groups community
enterprises to the next level.

And do you see any constraints?

As well, in this sort of concept of a place,
yeah, so when we talk about constraints,

OK,

so you can have your constraint
of where you are.

You can be isolated geographically,
but you can also be constrained
in terms of mindset.

Very often in rural and
peripheral regions really,
there's there's a pressure to
blend in to not be too flashy,
for example not to be driving a
Mercedes around when everybody
else is is is struggling.

So really,

what we we found was that it
was a bit tempering ambition.

And really what we found was in
terms of overcoming this mindset.

Entrepreneurs were actually quite
delicate and how they broached these topics,
they didn't say.

Come on, let's go.

They were actually saying, OK,
so how can we work together to
make this better?

So it was a very as you were,
you you said in your in your
introduction collaborative.

So almost collaborative leadership.

Leadership from within leadership.

Pushing people to lead themselves.

So really we we get the notion
of community entrepreneurship
which is facilitating others to
be more ambitious and to start
and run their own business.

That leads really nicely to the next
question. I'm going to ask you.

So how do you end the parents navigate
their relationship with the place
and you know how are they actually
able to understand the dynamics the
needs of the community around them?

Well,

I think that stems from your previous.

Question when we talk about
the notion of being embedded
when you're embedded,

you become part of something.

You're part of the process is.

You're part of the networks

you're giving and receiving.

So really you've got that reciprocity,

and that's how reciprocity that

plays out every day of a week.

So it's not something where

it's this month and next month.

This plays out in slow motion

every day of the week, the giving,

receiving the doing of favours.

And really,

what we start then to see is this

building of an understanding,

and I think we had a previous conversation

where we talked about embeddedness

takes time and it can't be rushed.

And really,

it's really about taking that time.

And sometimes it's these entrepreneurs

who've been around for quite a while,

maybe born there who really have

that deep knowledge and that deep

interactive understanding and you know.

And I will challenge you

on this because you know,

we've been talking about this stuff.

Many of your entrepreneurs

were really indigenous,

weren't they weren't native

in in this community,

so you see,

even possible you know to develop the

same social capital and local knowledge

of a place if you are not from the place.

If you are not born and bred.

Is this even possible?

It's possible,

but it's very time consuming.

There's a man in the research who

was manufacturing the T shirts and

he had been there for 25 years and

he was still considered a newcomer.

However,

they named a road after him because

of his achievements locally.

So maybe how how you get labeled.

I also think about local.

You think about it,

an entrepreneur almost in terms of of

a footballer who comes from another team.

They come,

they may not be a local,

but they can be an adopted son or daughter.

So really I wouldn't be too concerned

about trying to become indigenous,

because that's probably impossible.

It's really then you want to

become an adopted son or daughter

where they see you as somebody

who's valuable and somebody worth

integrating into their community.

That's a wonderful metaphor, isn't it?

And one of your entrepreneurs in your

research said you have to cherish the place.

Where you do business so you

know for us the objective of our

project is really just that,

you know,

we just really want to help students

develop higher sensitivity to the

place of their business and in your

paper you mentioned how entrepreneurs

are were constantly crossing the

boundaries between business,

politics,

community and you know she takes some skill,

some emotional intelligence,

confidence, even, you know,

I think it's a real craft here.

Is this something that can be learned?

Do you think we can do more in
our entrepreneurship education
to help students develop into
such mindful entrepreneurs?

So maybe.

And we've had this conversation before,
so sometimes in business schools we
very often just focus on startup.

Taking a new product to market.

But really maybe what this
these papers and this research
shows is that maybe we need to take
a broader view of entrepreneurship
and to see it almost as a not just
a business role but a civic role.

And if we see ourselves as civic and
in terms of giving and receiving and
participating in the world around us
as a way of integrating the business
into the Community and the place at
the end should come quite naturally.

And maybe what we need to be making
students aware is that participation
needs to be seen in the broadest sense
and and that maybe this is where
the emotional intelligence comes,

is that that we that we broaden

our interpretation of.

The role of the entrepreneur.

And one interesting thing at the.

I just want to pick pick on with you.

Was your research method about

how you went about researching,

and I think this is very much

connected with what we are trying to

do and achieve with our students,

which I think it's quite unusual

and might be useful just for us

to understand how you went into

that community to research what's

going on and can we adapt.

Maybe that approach to.

Our entrepreneurial learning.

I struggled a little bit at the beginning.

I struggled because people were trying to

figure out what I was trying to achieve,

what I was trying to find.

So really what I did was

I found a really trusted.

I found a really trusted entrepreneur,

one that I'd known for years,

and I explained to him what it was I

was trying to achieve and he basically

set in motion a snowball sampling.

Where he made a call and says you know,

Eddie from Lancaster.

He's trying to find out and and

find ways to improve the place.

Then one of the people that

I interviewed said,

you know,

because I got a phone call from John.

He said I am addressing the interview

with a different heart.

I'm doing it in the spirit of I'm

doing it because John phoned me

and so really that to me was a

really powerful way of thinking.

OK, how can I get quickly?

Into the inside and how can I

get talking to these people on

a level where they trust me?

Because what I find is that trust

is transferred between people

and if somebody refers you,

you get a much different reception.

You get a cup of tea, you get you.

Don't you get that warmth automatically.

That report.

And really,

I think that once students
learn this technique,
the technique of of using
people to introduce you almost,
we also use the notion of.

Humility that very experts and
you're here to learn from them.

So really, that's that's the
experience that I had with her.

And that's wonderful.

And I think you know,

maybe for us as educators,

we are the ones who take the

role of the introducers,

you know and we can be here

for our students to introduce

them to the community.

So thank you so much and we're

coming to the end of our first

episode and this is, you know,

there is so much more we can talk about.

But what's your next research?

Assignment what can we look forward to from

that place based entrepreneurship domain?

So what we're starting to work on now

is is looking at how these places,

how local communities can use their history.

A lot of places want to redefine
themselves places like close to
Lancaster and Morecambe Bay,
Morecambe Bay or Markham Town
is trying to reinvent itself,
trying to regenerate itself.

And really what what postmodern
consumers seem to have a real
appetite for is is nostalgia.

And heritage and their past
and where we come from.

So really what we've started to
find is that a lot of places and
a lot of entrepreneurs are mining
the past for old brands,
for old identities,
for old products,
for old company names that we
can then claim that heritage and
weave that into the narrative of
the place that we want to places
like Morecambe to become so.

It's really quite exciting.

Well,

thank you.

We're looking forward to your next
research publications and we will be

sharing the links to your research
on the portal of our podcast,
so thank you very much for your time.
That's all for today,
and I hope you enjoyed our debate
about the physical and emotional
impact of place on entrepreneurship
on the embeddedness on the Community.

And if you are interested in this topic,
stay tuned and we will continue this
debate with other guests of rake,
a wide range of lenses on this
very important topic.

Of entrepreneurial process enacted in
context, feel free to drop us a message,
comment or recommendation of a resource,
initiative or ideas for our
project until next time,
take care.