

Hello and welcome to our Good Place Podcast that is run by a good place innovator.

A team of researchers, educators and students flows passionate about transforming communities with an extra sensitive eye for our place local context. And true community needs.

My name is Sasha and I'm lakhna and we are students in the entrepreneurship and the strategy department at Lancaster University Management School and research flows of a good place innovators project, which is funded by the Enterprise Educators UK.

Previously in the podcast, we have heard a lot of different perspectives from educators who have incorporated place based pedagogy to their curriculum, designs and entrepreneurs who have impacted the place to make a commitment to the place making agenda.

We as a team are on the journey to making an impact in the society and bring about a sense of awareness amongst the students and the local businesses to work towards making Lancaster a place we can all call home today.

We welcome a key member of our project, Doctor Radka Newton, who's a senior teaching fellow in strategy and innovation at Lancaster University Management School. She's also an education service designer and the lead of the Good Place Innovators Project.

Hi radka.

So to start with could you share with us how you came up with the thought of the good place innovators? And what role do you play in this team? Thank you so much for having me today, so I suppose over the years over many years I've been collecting these stuff. Pieces of puzzle about practice based learning about experiential learning, but also about the role of students in Co creating the curriculum.

I've been experimenting with our students over the past five years with doing projects in the city and I guess the most transformational event was when. One of our students was a son of the Asian supermarket owner who actually brought the issues that they are facing

in the business to the classroom.
So as a team with the other students,
we helped him address how to bring more
diverse audience to the supermarket,
how to enhance their services.
And at that point I thought, you know this,
this really matters our place.
Lancaster is a fantastic resource.
For our learning.
So and when the call came out
to apply for some funding,
I thought now is the time to do it.
I think that's great.
We all visit the Asian supermarket
ourselves now.
Yeah.
And there are a lot of additions
and people leaving the team.
How did you cope with the constant changes?
Well, yeah.
It has been a challenging journey
and you know,
it was meant to be and it was a
multidisciplinary project and.
Our.
Lancaster Institute of Contemporary
Arts colleagues they really contributed
to the core of the project,
you know,
so they really brought the
design into the center of the project.
So I cooperated with them for
a long time before
and I really wanted them
as part of the project.
It just happened that they found new roles,
new exciting roles in other universities.
So we have had a lot of
people coming and going.
And it took me out of my comfort zone
a little bit and helped me understand
how to really deal with uncertainty.
So something that I'm telling
my students to be able to do,
deal with uncertainty,
navigate this ever changing world,
I had to do myself throughout the project,
but I felt that I always
had that core vision.
I knew what I wanted to achieve.
And actually, you know,
as people are coming and going,
it brought some fantastic new
people that we didn't work with.
At the beginning,
and they really massively enriched

the project like Doctor Katja Rindt,
who really helped me think about the
project in more systematic way in more
grounded way in a in theory as well.

So you know,

these things happened and here we
are with some fantastic outcomes.

So I think we managed definitely.

So initially you had like a name
and an objective for this project,
but how do you think it's turning out now
that we're almost to the end of the term?
How is it all turning out for the project?

So yeah,

the the project was originally
written sort of still in the
middle of the pandemic in a way,
So what was really on my mind was
to bring a digital resource that
would connect design enterprise.

Place and people.

And I was quite narrowly focused
to be honest.

At the beginning I I thought we'll just
produce this digital thing that will
the enterprise education
and help other people engage with this idea.

But honestly,

you know,

as the project grew and we stuff
meandered and met new people,
new partners of the project as well.

When we did the community engagement events,
things started evolving.

And you know,

maybe coming back to the the puzzle metaphor.
I had the pieces of the puzzle.

Then I thought I bring them in this project.
The puzzle is definitely still not complete,
so the digital outcome will be there,
but the project has just been so much more
profound in our learning about Lancaster.

About our place.

I learned a lot about students passion as
well for the place students as citizens.

But I also learned a lot about how long
has the community maybe feels disconnected,
so there is so much more than
the digital outcome talking about
the city and the university.

While working on this project
place based project,

what initiatives and measure is
the team taking to bring the
university closely to the city?

So I think you know at the beginning
we were very keen on being in the city,

so we were saying,
you know.

We need to bring the students to the city.
We wanted to learn through
using this sort of design
principles, observing, sensing the city,
talking to the citizens.

But I think the big moment was when we
ran the bit event with Tony Johnson,
who was one of our guests on this series
as well, and when he actually brought.
The local businesses to the campus,
I actually didn't expect their reaction.
I also didn't expect them saying that
they had never been to the campus before.
So it created these two way stream, isn't it?
It's not just us in the city,
but it's also the city on campus
and I think this is sort of this
sort of knowledge transfer,
mutual learning and in the event
that specific event you as students.
You were the knowledge holders,
you were passing knowledge to the business
leaders which was fascinating I think for,
for all of us.

So I think definitely the project
demonstrated that it is a partnership,
it's a two way stream and that you
know it's important to facilitate
this two way exchange.

I think it's really fantastic how
you observed that we needed the
opportunity to get in contact with
the business in order to express
our views so I could help them.

And I was at the same time.
So it was a great idea.

Now coming to the next thing
I want to ask you,
what kind of a place is Lancaster?
We're all new here.
You've been here for quite a while.
And apart from this,
what are the current challenges that the
Lancaster city is facing in terms of
point of view with respect to the university?

So,
you know,
I think about this a lot about what
kind of place is Lancaster and it's
sort of my view of Lancaster is
probably very different from from your view.
I I absolutely love Lancaster,
but it took me a long time to
move to Lancaster.
I did.

I lived in Manchester before and again as an immigrant you tend to fluctuate, maybe to bigger cities because you feel a bit more accepted in Manchester. Nobody ever asked me.

Oh where is this accent from whilst in in a smaller place you you always feel on the spot all the time?

And it's tiring.

And and you probably, you know guys, what I'm talking about, but Lancaster is, you know, it's it's a very beautiful place, very well connected.

It has a lot to offer, but I think it's quite modest and it's like just like the university, almost like the best hidden secret in the UK so I think the challenge is for Lancaster to maybe get a stronger identity so that we know how to talk about ourselves about.

Who we are, what we can offer.

I get excited about Lancaster now, but I don't know what about you guys.

Initially when we did come, we did not know what to expect out of the city.

But with time, we got comfortable.

And as you said, we started appreciating the small things that happened around.

So it just gets more exciting with time.

Absolutely. And I think, yeah.

So that's I think we, we need to be probably more vocal about how fantastic the place is, how diverse.

As well, we have beautiful nature around us.

We have industrial history here.

So we have a lot to learn from the place and I think maybe bringing it to the curriculum will give it a stronger brand.

Yeah, definitely.

And I want to mention our project in our first module after exploring the city, we felt that bonding strong into bonding with the city, it was so important for us, you know, and thank you for that.

And was it wonderful to learn in the castle?

No. You know which university has a lecture theatre in the castle?

Yeah, definitely.

And who, who knows about it?

Not many people actually know know about it.

So coming to the next question, we've had so many renowned people

who have come and sat opposite
to you here at this podcast.
So we were really wondering if you could
tell us what are the key learnings
that you picked up while hosting
all of these people with which side?
So how is it then?
Well, you know.
I never intended to do so
many sessions as well.
And Phil,
Phil has been really encouraging me.
And every guest then recommended another
guest and it just became almost like a
for me, like a an education program.
You know that I went through,
I mean gosh, where to even start?
What I learned from these people,
I learned as soon as you
mentioned the word place,
the concept place, everybody's eyes.
Lit up.
This concept attracts people's attention.
We all want to be in good place.
We all want our place to be good.
We want to have nice environment around us
that that was so clear from every guest.
The passion for the place,
and I thought this is quite fascinating.
How this concept of place
basically is owned by everybody,
you know we we are the guardians
of this here in this project,
but it's not a discipline so everybody
felt really free to talk about it,
to talk about their experience
with the place.
I mean the local entrepreneurs.
Which is fascinating.
You know how they go about
the community engagement,
how they think about their impact.
They don't, they didn't speak
about design or code design.
You know,
they entrepreneurs,
they they don't have the vocabulary,
they they do it.
But the researchers they
brought these concepts,
so I think it was a fantastic mix of people,
from policymakers,
researchers to entrepreneurs,
and I think that plurality of
opinions really enriched my
understanding of what place is.
So hopefully it's not the end as well.

I'm I'm hoping to take this podcast and create some sort of learning material from from it, because I mean the richness of of knowledge and information would just be too good to miss for the future generations as well. Definitely. I also think you should start another season next term. Well, there is a challenge, there is a challenge, challenge accepted. Yes, they're speaking about the future. What's the, what's your plan for the future and expanding this program and this learning atmosphere and what's your plan for the future expansion of the project and upcoming years? Well, great question. I mean the project formally is coming to an end this July and that's just from the funding point of view, nothing is stopping us to. To continue and we can feel great energy from Lancaster Business Improvement District to continue with us, I think from the students I I hope that you know you. You enjoyed you. You've seen some impact on your yourselves as well, and I I definitely want to take this concept to our partner institutions abroad. So when we presented at the Lancaster University Conference there was a colleague from Sunway University. Malaysia with a very similar concept, actually of our Community service module, so we are not the only ones thinking about it. There are other partners around the world, maybe experimenting with similar concepts, and I wonder how transferable might be what we've achieved here in Lancaster is to Kuala Lumpur, which is a totally different scale. So I think that that's one of my aspirations and. Other one is really to contribute somehow theoretically to more conceptual thinking around pedagogy. And I've started researching this and and, you know, this is not a new concept at all. So this, this came from very, very long history of people like John Locke in the th century, people like John Dewey, who was an American philosopher and he was

really promoting this regenerative education,
progressive.

Education, which is very much about.

Learning with the society,
learning inside the community.

So this is not new.

This was in the s for example,
this sort of regional the
progressive education movement.

So these concepts have been around,
but maybe they haven't been around in
connection with enterprise and design.

So I think maybe we have something
to contribute and advance
maybe this concept as well.

And I just want to continue
learning with the students.

Because I think every generation of
the students brings new challenges,
new perception.

So this is a never ending story I
think is like like an in any design.

You are never a finished product
because the context changes.

People change the needs of
people change as well.

So I think we are here to stay
and be from good, maybe to better.

And hopefully the best, yes.

Looking forward there.

Coming to kind of a finish overall.

How was your experience with
the good place innovators team?

Well,

I've absolutely loved every
moment with you guys, with the,
with the research fellows.

You've worked really independently.

Sometimes I'm thinking, oh,
what are these guys doing?

But ultimately, you know,
you you really,

I think somehow bonded as a team as well.

I loved working with Phil,
so Phil really always pushed me,
you know, with this stuff.

Digital, but not only with digital.

Phil is very experienced educator
himself and he has a very subtle way
of somehow incorporating, you know,
really fantastic ideas into the project,
so I think we've just created a
great environment. A great team I.

I hope you feel the same.

I think our voices have been heard.

I know I'm quite a strong,
strong headed leader so I sort of

steam ahead because I know what I want.
Achieve so I can see that goal.
I can see that flock on the
top of the mountain.
Maybe sometimes, you know,
it could be a bit slower to absorb things,
but you have learned a lot from you.
I've learned a lot finished when you when
we went to our conference in Scotland,
I asked you all,
what did you enjoy about this most?
And you said to me working with other people.
And I was thinking,
what do you mean working with other people?
Even in Lancaster,
you work with other people and you said no,
the the we we are just all students.
It's about the students.
Yeah. Do you know?
And this really for me,
it just enriched my thinking even more,
because yes, as innovators.
How can you innovate anything
when you are just the same?
We can't,
can we?
So we encourage the store diversity
of of ideas but we are all here
either students or lecturers.
So I really want in the future.
Citizens of Lancaster to come
and attend our classes and be
with us in some of the some of
the challenges and work with us.
As equals, loss as guest speakers or.
You know, so imagine Tony,
Tony coming and maybe being
one of the classmates with us.
So that we can work with other people,
learn from their life experience and
just enrich the education altogether.
So yeah, anyway, I've, I've learned,
I'm a lifelong learn.
I just, I love learning.
So it's it's been like a a fantastic degree.
It was like a one year degree, wasn't it?
What do you think guys?
What was it like for you?
I think it was really exciting
having a leader like you.
As you said, you look at the mountain.
You run being that steam engine
you really pulled us along out of
our comfort zones at some point,
and I think we've learned a lot

more than anything we've learned
that perspectives matter.
And that anybody you speak to has a story.
It's all about listening to that experience.
Yeah.
And yeah, for me, actually,
I started my program with you as
my tutor and somehow I'm ending
this program with you as my
supervisor of this project.
And I've learned lots of
things and thank you for that.
I appreciate it.
Thank you.
Thank you so much for your time.
Radka. It has been great having
you with us and thank you for
providing us the opportunity and
support for the entire project.
We hope that the students joining you
next year will envision the same dream and
bring it to reality with you as their mentor.
So that's all for today.
I hope you enjoyed our chat
on the work we've done.
Please feel free to drop us a message,
a comment, or a recommendation of
a resource and we will get back.
As for our project, we continue.
Please continue to check out our
progress on the WordPress website
which will be attached in the
description and we're signing off.
Until next year, then take care.
Take care.
Bye, bye bye.