

Transcript of 'Education and Sustainability in a Time of War'

Season 3, Episode 14, Transforming Tomorrow

[Theme music]

Paul: Hello, and welcome to Transforming Tomorrow from the Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business. I'm Paul Turner.

Jan: And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.

Paul: What's it like to operate a university in a war zone? How do universities in Ukraine work with those here in the UK to develop new techniques and to build their reputation all while conflict is ongoing?

[Theme music]

Paul: Over the course of this podcast, Jan, we've spoken about many serious topics. Many not quite so serious topics. Asteroid mining. Asteroid mining, Jan.

Jan: Well, it was serious enough, but...

Paul: ...it was serious enough...

Jan: ...but, I agree...

Paul: ...it was science fiction rather than science fact at the time, almost.

But today, what we're gonna be speaking about is a really serious topic. Um, a bit sombre in many ways, but we'll. Try not to be too sombre, if you will, because there's lots of positivity that's gonna come out of it, and that's war, conflict and how universities operate in these situations.

But also the opportunities that maybe can arise as a result of it and the positivity for the future.

Jan: Absolutely. But it's also for those universities who are not facing such challenges.

I think we have a, a common friendship and relationship with other universities in the world and we, we operate as a global sector, so I think we need to be looking out for each other when things are tough.

Paul: Yeah, because while there are the collaborations that we're gonna be talking about that are going on with one particular university in Ukraine and us here in Lancaster, there are collaborations that Lancaster partakes in all around the world, and that other universities all around the world partake in and the benefits of those collaborations, because different universities in different countries bring whole new perspectives.

Jan: Absolutely. So I suppose for our listeners, the key to think about this is that this is an example. At your own institutions, if you're based at a university, you'll have other partnerships like this.

And so it's a really good insight into how sustainability of an organisation, in this case a university, um, can be enabled through partnership working.

Paul: So, we do have guests who've come over from the Ukraine to visit us here in Lancaster this week. Not specifically to do this podcast, I don't think we're quite so important.

Jan: No. But we're really, really pleased...

Paul: ...yes...

Jan: ...that, that you're able to do this at the same time and, and you know, really thankful for that.

Paul: Yeah. So we're joined by three guests today from Dniprotech University in Ukraine and that's Kseniia Tiukhmenova, and I apologise again as I've already apologised before we started recording, if I am mangling these names, I'm hopefully not. Olena Krasovska and Tetiana Kuvaieva.

Thank you very much for joining us here, ladies, and you are from a university, which is largely a science and technology based institution, but you do have a faculty for Management, Jan.

They do do that. I don't know what they do about accounting, but they do have management...

Jan: ...they're probably accountants. Paul, brace yourself. [laughs]

Paul: [laughs] I'm ready to leave, um, if that happens. And one for humanities and social sciences, and Dniprotech is twinned with Lancaster as part of UKRI's Twin for Hope initiative, and we'll talk a lot more about that as we go on through the podcast.

Welcome to the podcast.

Tetiana: Thank you for opportunity to share our experience and to be here today.

Paul: Can I start by asking you what the current situation is with Dniprotech University? What's happening there at the moment?

Tetiana: Um, despite the war, despite the full scale invasion, Dnipro University of Technology continues to operate steadily.

So we have, uh, maintained, uh, the full education process. We, um, implement different formats of education. So yes, we have blended format nowadays, but we, uh, continues to involve our students to, uh, take part in international projects, to communicate with our, uh, business partners, companies, employees, and so on.

So, and, uh, we understood that it is only one way to be, uh, resilient and, uh, to be strong.

Jan: And when I was, um, looking at your university, you're significantly older than Lancaster. So founded in 1899, but also the topics that you're working in are so important for sustainability. Energy, minerals, engineering, environmental protection, mining safety, and then combining that with, you know, management.

So those topics remain salient no matter what's happening in the world.

Tetiana: Uh, yes, we are one of the oldest university in Ukraine. And we are the first university in Dnipro region. Uh, we really have a very powerful engineering school, um, minerology school, mining school.

So that's why we like a city forming university, and that's why really, a topic that are connected with sustainability, with mining and so on for us, uh, really important.

And we have a lot of, uh, like orders from our companies, mining companies, to help them to, to do their best and to, to know how, uh, in, uh, our situation, uh, we could, uh, maintain our, our industry and, um, different, different process.

Paul: Is Dnipro traditionally a region then of mining? Is that mining, engineering, is that what's always been in that area?

Tetiana: Yes. Dnipro is, uh, like, industry capital and business capital of, uh, Ukraine.

So there are a lot of companies, industrial companies, and it is like, uh, uh, not only intellectual centre of Ukraine, but really, uh, we are like a base for mining and for, uh, for, uh, for industry

Jan: And for our listeners, um, because there's, there's nothing like talking to people from somewhere else makes you go and look on maps and find out exactly where, where people are. So, um, Dnipro is sort of southwest of Kyiv. Um, and then about 50 miles or 85 kilometres from, uh, perhaps the thing that you would've seen in the news, which is a nuclear power station on, oh, I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna go for it...

Paul: ...go Jan go, go, go...

Jan: ...Zaporizhzhia...

Tetiana: ...yeah, got it...

Jan: ...excellent. So, so that's the 10th largest nuclear power plant in the world.

It has been, you know, suffering from the conflict and particularly water supply. So it's a, you know, it's a really sort of quite a fraught region.

You know, you know that the whole of, um, Ukraine isn't involved in the war, but you, you are quite close to the war, and that must be, you know, frightening in itself.

Tetiana: Yes, we are not so far from the war line, and it's, uh, really a huge challenge for us, for our university for people. Yes, we are suffering from, uh, such situation, but um, it's like opportunity for us to find some solutions, new solution, how to be adaptive...

Jan: ...mm-hmm...

Tetiana: ...uh, how, uh, to be resilient. And, um, we also understood that nowadays university, uh, our university and all others university in Ukraine, they play a huge role.

Uh, to unite people, to make community, and also to help, to help people. So for example, each university, uh, should have three mission. Academic mission, uh, research mission and civic mission. Third mission to help local community, to help people, to help local enterprises and so on.

And uh, that's why even today we have power cuts, we have blackouts, but, uh, really also with the help of our international partners, with the help of, uh, our cooperation, we, uh, try to find resources. We find, uh, we try to find ways how to be more stronger.

Paul: One thing that's interested me, going back to the history, is that in the late 19th century, a university was set up in what was an industrial area. You don't see that so much in this country.

A lot of the universities were set up in places like Oxford, Cambridge, a long, long time ago. And then the places like Yorkshire, Lancashire, where you relied on industry in the mills, those universities came along a lot later. There's the odd one here and there, Manchester, for instance, but a lot of them came. But no, in Ukraine, you've got one that started up at the end of the 19th century and has obviously flourished to come to where you're at.

And I know you earlier on, Jan, joked that I was about to find out that we have three accountants sat here. They're all actually involved in marketing.

Jan: I know. I was only joking.

Paul: Yes, yeah. And Olena, you are a professor of marketing, so you do research, you do teaching, and I wonder how hard is it to research and teach at the moment within the university, given the situation with the war.

Olena: Uh, thank you for these questions. Really interesting, um, because, uh, we try to combine, uh, academic and scientific research and, uh, improve, uh, our education process according to this, uh, research.

So, uh, we combine our, um, standards, uh, from, uh, national Ministry of Science dedication, and try to be oriented on international market. And so we collaborate, uh, with national and international company.

The most of our Dnipro companies try to be in touch with Dnipro University of Technology because we have a really amazing brain of our scientists and we cooperate with business, our famous scientists and young students, and so it's improving our process.

Jan: With the, the students coming to the university, so their school, schooling would've been disrupted as well and since then, then they're coming to university. Um, what kind of preparation do you need to do with them for them to be ready to be at the university and to start their, their courses?

Tetiana: Uh, first of all, we prioritise, uh, the safety of our students and staff.

We implement like a blended format of education. So we really have a very powerful digital learning. First, first of all, for first year students and second year students, we try to make face-to-face classes. Because we understood that it's very, very important.

Uh, we, with the support of our business, uh, we develop new, new laboratories, new auditories underground in the shelters. So if we have air rapid, uh, alerts and so on, we can move on these classes, on these auditories.

And also we provide interdisciplinary courses, interdisciplinary events where we involve students from different specialities and also the students can see of our university, really very active because we understood that it is like a way for socialisation of our students and to bring them to the real, the real world.

Paul: Have you found there's been support within the community for the university to continue its operations, to adapt in the way that you've adapted?

You talk about the businesses you're working with. Has there been that increased level of support?

Tetiana: Yeah. Uh, if you talk about our university, we really have a very strong tie with local community. And uh, uh, now even we continue to implement different international project that are dedicated to supporting of local communities.

For example, it's like a service learning where we involve students, we, uh, take into account the needs of local community, and then they, uh, develop different courses, uh, that, uh, also will help to, uh, develop our local, local community.

And also, I would like to add that we are only the one university in region that, uh, each year conduct international conference. Comfortable, safe, uh, local community where we invite, uh, the representatives of the, uh, local community and where we discuss. Discuss problems, discuss the ways of cooperation, what forms of cooperation will be most effective and, uh, how, uh, really to, uh, be strong and resilient nowadays.

Paul: So, Kseniia, when it comes then to international partnerships, we've got this Twin for Hope initiative. What can you tell us about that and how it works?

Kseniia: Yeah, I'm happy to tell you about this, 'cause we are really proud to be in this partnership. Uh, Twin for Hope, a twinning initiative coordinated by Cormack Consultancy Group together with Minister of Higher Education of Ukraine, started from 2022, because of war.

Uh, and we are happy to have such twin at Lancaster University, 'cause uh, we are, have really, uh, strong, uh, engineering background, the town I just told you. And, uh, that's why we have quite, uh, many common field of study and, uh, research.

And, uh, for now we have already three project that are finalised or just, uh, finalised in the third one. The first one was the project in, uh, joint research, uh, area in soil. Two, uh, projects more, uh, financed by British Council of Ukraine, uh, dedicated to the global reputation and, uh, building of the international brand of the university.

And, uh, here we are for, uh, joint workshop about global reputation and ranking. And, uh, we learn from Lancaster University, from their best practices in this area. We, uh, discussed, uh, some challenges, common challenges of each universities on this area, on this pathway for the global recognition.

Later on we will share this experience with our Ukrainian colleagues so we can use this opportunity not just for, for Dnipro University of Technology, but for our community of academics and uh, for higher education system in Ukraine.

I also can mention here that, uh, within [inaudible] collaboration, we have other joint activity such as student mobility, as participation of our academics, uh, in, uh, Lancaster University educational conference, participation of our, uh, students in undergraduate of the, in the conference for undergraduate student.

So I think we have quite actively development cooperation and, uh, for now we have already some new ideas that we can develop through after, uh, our visit. Uh, and so we do have quite, uh, many researchers who can continue this cooperation, who can go deeper in global reputation, who can develop some joint, uh, courses. We believe that it will be possible the next, uh, um, as an as the next steps for preparation, having some joint, uh, activities in engineering as well.

Jan: And for us, Lancaster is the, the centre of our universe. [Paul laughs]

Did you know about Lancaster before the twinning initiative? Do you say, I know what, let's get to Lancaster.

Paul: If they say yes, I *won't* believe them.

Jan: We, uh, for, for listeners, they're smiling broadly, which tells me, never heard of Lancaster before, [Paul laughs] which, you know...

Paul: ...we won't be offended.

Kseniia: Well, that was really great opportunity for Ukrainian university to find us to be in. Uh, and of course, uh, we were supported by these consultants group about which profile would suit each university in the best way.

So that's really mutual cooperation, and we, we believe that we can be benefiting both with not just Dnipro University of Technology learn from Lancaster, but together we can find out, uh, these common topics that we can develop, uh, and benefit for both of universities.

Of course, we had study the profile of Lancaster University carefully and, uh, underlined this common topic that we can develop through there.

Jan: And I think we, we should make clear to our listeners that uh, this is not the only twinning relationship. 'Cause there's that twin exists between, um, lots of universities in the Ukraine and the UK, about a hundred long-term partnerships in place.

And it's for now, but also for after the war finishes as well. And so it's a, it's got a future looking orientation to it as well.

So I would say that, that we will benefit enormously from, from that opportunity. So, so I don't want anyone to think that it's a, [Paul laughs] you know, it's charitable, but it's not charity. It's a, it's a partnership in the proper sense of the word.

Paul: Yeah. And it, and it is, like you say long term, because it would be so bad just to say, oh, when the war ends, ah, that's it, on your own...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...and, uh, you'll, you'll be there and you know, we are gaining from it, as you say. I mean, have you seen specific benefits that we have gained as Lancaster from working with you?

Kseniia: Well, actually I think that's the best way to ask the representatives of Lancaster was today about that. But as yesterday, we, uh, summarise the result of our workshop, the, the conclusion we're at, kind of that everyone has benefit from this, uh, workshop in particular, but in, for cooperation at all.

So both partners, uh, find, uh, some mutual benefits and interesting stuff for through the cooperation development in, uh, joint research in, uh, student mobility, in joint educational activities.

So we meet new colleagues from new departments and also agree about some joint activities, not only for academic staff, but also for non-academic staff, and for service departments that can, uh, help to student community to be better in wellbeing in, uh, student career centres, in professional development.

So I think that's a really interesting exchange...

Jan: ...yes...

Kseniia: ...not just, uh, uh, partnership for one side, but exchange of the ideas and exchange minds...

Jan: ...I agree, I agree totally. And I was really struck and, um, you know, sorry Paul, I'm gonna talk briefly about rankings...

Paul: ...well, I was as well. [Jan laughs] Bizarrely, I was going to bring up rankings.

Jan: Well, I will let you ask a question about rankings. 'Cause usually Paul is really hostile to rankings. He usually, you press the ranking button and then you go [makes 'ranty' noises]. But this time I think I'll let you ask a question about rankings.

Paul: I'm not guaranteeing, I'm not going to go, as you put it [makes 'ranty' noises], which I didn't know I could make that noise until I just made it. [Jan and Paul laugh]

Um, I'm aware that one of the meetings you've had this week actually involved one of our former guests on this podcast, Rose White, who is in charge of rankings and reputations for our Management School.

I work very closely with Rose. We just totally disagree on the value of rankings. Um, but as is, I wonder, 'cause I know we've got here the Head of International Marketing and the Head of Marketing for Dniprotech, how important to you are things such as rankings and accreditations?

Tetiana: Um, first of all, we think that, uh, rankings, it's, uh, it's not, um, the main aim. So it, uh, shouldn't be the main aim. It's like a tool, uh, that help us to rethink everything to build our internal process correct, to optimise them. And to bring some understanding about what we should, uh, to do, where we could do the best, like a reflection, uh, on all what we have done.

So that's why for us, yes, it's uh, really, um, and we as a marketer, we understood that when we, for example, promote our university and when we ask our students or partners or, um, another colleagues, they yes, they said that we have looked on the ranking and just, it was like, uh, the main criteria why we decide to cooperate with you or to come to your university.

But, um, for us, yes, for our team, we really use these rankings like a way to be, uh, better and, uh, where we should do more and, uh, how we can use, for example, opportunities from our colleagues.

When we, for example, research their rankings and research experience of other university make like benchmarking, uh, we try to find best practice. So, for example, uh, from Lancaster University, we really appreciate your experience in transfer knowledge. We really understood that you are very powerful in sustainability, and that's why after the first visiting, uh, of your university we also decide to create like such a centre, uh, for sustainability, uh, to collect all the information, to make it more, more effective also for, for us.

Paul: How about, Olena, internationally? Because there's marketing within Ukraine and then there's marketing internationally, which I can only imagine the difficulties of that for any, uh, higher education institution in Ukraine at the moment.

Olena: Yeah, it's not easy for us now, but if we speak about international rankings, we are not so long in international rankings, but last year the firstly, uh, was in Times rankings. And our chief, our boss, our top management director say, wow, we are in The Times.

And international marketing, marketing, we say on all social networks about this results. So if we speak about, for example, uh, Times ranking, uh, QS rankings, it help us to be more serious partners for our potential international partners.

So if we speak about international rankings, it's important not only for international partners, it's important for our all stakeholders. It's something

like, uh, about trust between, it's about reputation. It's uh, not so fast result. It's something like our activity for our future.

And I, uh, fully agree with Tania, it's not about only rankings, it's about, um, our representative, not only national educational sphere, it's our representative on international sphere.

It, it help us to be more competitiveness. To deal with more brilliant students to deal with our international partners. And, uh, we are in process, uh yesterday we speak about results and, uh, case of Sunway University. It's very, very important. Uh, last fall, this fall we speak about Lancaster University, your experience in educational ranking.

And, we faced with communication. All, uh, in universities, all in business, not only in universities, in business, it's about communications, communication between internal, internal communication between each other, between, between faculty, between infrastructure, personal. And all process grounded on communication.

And I understand that our, uh, challenges is the same, like challenges in Sunway University, in Lancaster University. And so it's something like, uh, make us more strong in this long way.

Paul: It seems to me, Jan, that this is valuable use of rankings. I've had my say many, many times on, in, no, I don't wanna say invaluable, 'cause that means it's [laughing] had even more value...

[Jan laughs]

Paul: ...unvaluable, whatever the opposite, worthless. No, it's not quite worthless. It's somewhere in that scale between worthless and valuable, but more towards the worthless side of my, of rankings. And seeing how they can help a university grow and develop from not having been there.

And so you're saying you've got a senior person at the university. Wow, we're in the Times rankings, and that's such an impressive thing. You can become obsessed with getting a certain place on them and wanting to be in a certain number, forgetting that for some people, the key thing is being in there to show that you are actually part of this bigger global picture.

Jan: And what I also loved about how you, how you talked about it, is that the ranking, if you like, is the introduction point for a relationship and to develop that properly.

So I think in that respect, even though, you know, sometimes the rankings are a wee bit, you know, drive us all a bit crazy, but actually to use them properly and for them to be a proper indication for, for partnership and for going forward together, I, yeah, I think we can forgive rankings, all sorts of things at that stage. [laughs]

Paul: I'm wondering when it comes to teaching, 'cause I know two of you here do do teaching, do you include sustainability within the teaching that you do?

Tetiana: Yes. Uh, we include sustainability in each courses because we also understood that to achieve all sustainability goals, uh, we should implement such topics, for example, in our courses, in our research. And that's why it's not only like, uh, requirement of our ministry because yes, we also have such requirement, uh, that sustainability, uh, should be in your university.

But we also understood that for post-war recovery it should be the main, uh, the main point. Because if we don't know how to do this, how to achieve all uh, seventeens, uh, goals, we, uh, couldn't even imagine, uh, how our students, future of our country, uh, will do this. So that's why all courses, all researchers, uh, they are very tight, have tight, uh, strong connection with, uh, sustainability topics.

And for example, for our university one of the main point also, if we talk about like technical part, engineering part, it is, uh, clean energy. The seven goal is very important for us. And nowadays because our energy system a little bit damaged, not a little bit, but that's why we try to find alternative resources, energy resources, and that's why, uh, as for our university, because we are first of all technical university, uh, this topic, uh, is very, really very important.

And we also, the one university in region that have its own solar panel. So that's why we like also, uh, give such, um, opportunity for our local community when it's, for example, um, power cuts and so on, uh, citizens, they could come to our university and use, it's like a hub.

Jan: And that's something we've talked about before, Paul, about anchor assets and anchor institutions, so places that, that help, you know, the whole of a system operate well. So that's a really good example of that.

And I also, um, we are gonna try, uh, in a future podcast to get colleagues who are going to be dealing with soil, um, because Ukrainian soil is legendary. And

so how that could, it's productivity can be recovered and, and, um, any pollution, um, sorted out...

Paul: ...there's such an interesting topic there, like you say. Ukraine, renowned for farming. There's a book about tractors in Ukraine, isn't there...

Jan: ...oh yes, there is...

Paul: ...can't remember the exact title of it...

Jan: ...well, I come from a farming background, and I mean, your soils are legendary. [Paul laughs] Your farming is legendary...

Paul: ...I'm sure it's all that was spoken about over teatime [Jan laughs] at the Bebbington household, was Ukrainian soil.

Jan: I'm not sure my mum and dad knew where Ukraine was, but we certainly, certainly have come to realise how good the soils are there.

Paul: Olena, what's the attitude of students towards sustainability, from the students you teach?

Olena: I think from the, the first year of education bachelor programme, or master program, we, uh, attract our students in this process. So they should understand that water, electricity, climate changes and we can influence, each of us can influence on this.

And we speak about it. We speak about, uh, goals of sustainability and, uh, I try to attract students and to give them understanding that each of us, behaviour each of us, can influence on all over the world.

So, and, uh, they make some projects, uh, for business during our study programme, uh, with some research, uh, influence of, um, mining sphere, uh, electricity sphere on, uh, sustainability.

And many of our, of our students already, during, during education, already have something like part job and, uh, part-time, uh, work on our business and they try to get, uh, their view of sustainability in, inside, uh, our Dnipro business.

Tetiana: And could you also, I add that, um, uh, in our Marketing department, we have, uh, like, uh, some, uh, disciplines, courses that students could choose.

And we also, among this, uh, the list of these, uh, disciplines, we have marketing of sustainability. Where we talk about voluntary sustainability standards, where we talk about the tools, how to promote. And it is one of the most popular discipline in the list when students, they choose such, such way what, what they want to learn additional.

Paul: It's good to see that we've had this before, students and uh, younger generations being so keen and enthusiastic about. Understanding, tackling sustainability topics.

Jan: Absolutely. And I think that was very evident before Christmas in, um, the one that looked at those international, um, legal opinions...

Paul: ...mm-hmm...

Jan: ...where students were the epicentre of some of the, the prompt to get those, um, advisory opinions on human rights and climate change.

Paul: Indeed, indeed.

Well, I think we're sort of coming towards the end now, and I realise this is such a hard question, because you don't know when the war is going to be over, but how do you feel that, what's going on now, the work you are doing with Lancaster and all the other work that you are doing at the university, how do you feel that's going to be shaped after the conflict's over and what's going to happen? And how can the work that you are doing with Lancaster help to support what's going to happen afterwards?

Tetiana: Uh, so we, um, really hope and we know that, uh, the war was, will end and, uh, we will gain victory. And, um, I think that after war is ended, uh, we, we really understood our strengths and we become more, uh, strong.

And that's why if we can, um, can functionate in such environment, in such condition, so, we, uh, could do our best, uh, when the war will end.

So that's why, uh, everything that we have gained from our cooperation could, uh, be like, uh, the future way to developing, to forming our new, for example, ways of, uh, collaboration.

So that's why, uh, we, uh, we think that, uh, we will be more, more stronger and, uh, we could achieve a lot of common results. And also we hope that we, um, will be very helpful for, for your university as too, because for example,

challenges with digital learning, um, challenges with adaptation for different conditions also be useful for, for your.

Jan: Yeah, we look forward to having the, the good possibility of doing that soon.

Paul: Well, Tani, Kseniia and Olena, thank you so much for joining us. It's been fascinating getting such an insight into how things are operating Dnipro, and the partnership that you have here with Lancaster.

Thank you.

Tetiana, Kseniia, Olena: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

[Theme music]

Paul: There's so much to take out from that Jan, and so much that you would never even consider would be part of considerations for a university in a situation such as Dnipro and all the universities across Ukraine are in.

Jan: It's, um, it, it's hugely sobering, because the kind of situation they're facing, and especially when you look at a map where, where they are, I'd be terrified.

But of course, you're there, you might be terrified, you've still gotta carry on. And, but they're carrying on in a way I think that, one of the things that I really took away from of, how our colleagues were speaking about their situation is that, um, they're words we've heard before, but actually words which have quite more intense meaning when you're talking about the, the situation in which they're exercising it...

Paul: ...mm-hmm...

Jan: ...so to be adaptive, to use, um, technology, uh, to help bridge gaps. Resilient. Their interdisciplinary approaches, but then also that huge and close partnership they have with their local businesses where they, they're an anchor asset and they sustain each other through the conflict.

Paul: Yes. When they talked about being a hub of resilience and resistance, that is a whole different meaning to anything you'd get here in the UK. A hub of resilience here would be something that was just carrying on, making sure that businesses were adapting slightly. And a hub of resistance would be possibly in countries where the right wing has taken on and the, the message

of sustainability has been pushed aside. It'd be just pushing that sustainability message.

A hub of resilience and resistance in a war zone is an entirely different thing...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...and yet the message of sustainability was so strong as well...

Jan: ...yes...

Paul: ...they're talking about setting up a competitor to the Pentland Centre. [Jan laughs] Soon you'll be run out of business and that, that'll be it. That'll be...

Jan: ...they would be the perfect people to be run out of business by, I have to say, um...

Paul: ...but yeah, and having it within the teaching and having that enthusiasm among the students and the staff for sustainability being part of the whole education and the whole process.

Jan: And, um, in the last few days, I, I had the good fortune to hear the ambassador, who was one of the co-authors of the first drafting of the SDGs speak.

So he, um, as an ambassador to Ireland, who was an ambassador to the UN at the time, he's also the architect of the Good Friday Agreement. So, really, you know, experienced man. And we were talking about the SDGs in a, you know, a sort of an open forum, and he highlighted that one about peace, justice, and strong institutions.

And he said in some ways they, they, you know, lumped all of those things together because they, they weren't, you know, because the process was complex in that respect...

Paul: ...they'd have ended up with about 512 if they didn't pull a few things together...

Jan: ...exactly, exactly. But he said the dynamics in there are really different. They're not the same dynamics. And I think today we've had that opportunity of really teasing out that, that SDG 16 about, you know, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and then also 17 Partnership For The Goals and what that means in a, in this context and what it will mean at the, after the end of the war.

Paul: And we talk about partnerships, not just between Lancaster and Dnipro, which is obviously the big one that brought the three ladies here with us today to talk to us about their partnership through the Twin for Hope initiative, but also the partnerships they've got ongoing with businesses and the importance of businesses *supporting* them and helping them adapt and continue on...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...and it's, there's levels of support for universities and then there's levels of support for universities, and that is a whole new level of the community and business coming in to support.

Jan: Yeah, and the other thing they identified, which I, which really caught my ears, was, um, staff and student mobility. Uh, perhaps not right at this point in time, but after the, after the conflict is over, that, that knitting together of people moving between the two places and actually becoming much more connected as a result of it.

Paul: Yes. And what they haven't mentioned, uh, as part of the recording, but through talking with them before and after, they've got a three day journey from Lancaster to Dnipro.

They can fly from Manchester to Krakow, and then there's a more complicated journey on the back of that. They have stops and starts along the way. There's trains, there's planes, there's probably automobiles involved in the whole, [short laugh] you know, construction of that journey.

And like you said, that's not something therefore, that, that international cooperation of coming back and forward and having the exchange of people, as much as the exchange of ideas can be done remotely, having that personal connection. Hopefully when that war is over, that becomes more of a thing, like you say.

Jan: Yes, indeed. I agree.

Paul: We've had totally new guests with us today, Jan, but next time we're gonna be welcoming back one of our first guests, Duncan Pollard.

Jan: That's super.

Paul: Yes, Duncan talked to us a long, long, long, long, long, long, long, long, long, long time ago. [Jan laughs] I, I feel I should have thrown in a few extra 'longs' in there.

Uh, but he's back to talk to us about wildlife corridors. Which are not buildings in your, uh, or structures in your house where cats can go and badgers can just, you know, crawl under the house.

Jan: No, and it'll be great because it builds on our other podcast where we've looked at the, the interrelationship between business and biodiversity, we've looked at nature, uh, restoration that's undertaken by corporations.

And this in some ways combines both of those two together, but look at, at a specific feature of, um, wildlife connectivity and wildlife restoration.

Paul: Well, until then, thank you very much for listening. It's goodbye from me, Paul Turner.

Jan: And goodbye from me, Jan Bebbington.

[Theme music]