

Placecast Episode 25 - Transcript

00:00:07 Nicola Headlam

Welcome to Placecast, a Local Policy Innovation Partnership Hub production based at the University of Birmingham.

00:00:13 Nicola Headlam

Placecast is essential listening for those keen to explore the ins and outs of knowledge mobilisation for influence in central and local government, based on the view that it is only through animating the power of place-based leadership that the wicked problems of 2026 can become more manageable.

00:00:28 Nicola Headlam

Whether you're a researcher, a citizen scientist, an activist, a professional working in the public sector, civil servant, a politician, analyst,

00:00:36 Nicola Headlam

or entrepreneur, we think it's through our networks that most solutions can be assembled, tested and the learning shared before we go again, and that universities can act as the repositories and observatories of these efforts.

00:00:48 Nicola Headlam

We're based in City-REDI, rooted in the LPIP programme funded by the ESRC, AHRC and Innovate UK.

00:00:54 Nicola Headlam

This podcast aims to highlight knowledge and evidence base, ways of working and the strategy needed to make real impact on the decisions that shape our society.

00:01:03 Nicola Headlam

Our guests are change-makers from across the UK with stories about the ways in which influence can be achieved.

00:01:09 Nicola Headlam

We focus in particular on some of the connective tissue within and between sectors for clues as to how to animate place-based leadership as innovating is a team sport best done in the open.

00:01:21 Nicola Headlam

Please contact us with feedback on the episodes if you'd like to be a guest or have strong views on the processes of advocacy, lobbying, public campaigning and more.

00:01:30 Nicola Headlam

Unpacking how research and evidence connects with neighbourhood

00:01:33 Nicola Headlam

local, city-regional and national missions.

00:01:36 Nicola Headlam

I am here with two amazing guests today, talking about some work that was done on fashion.

00:01:44 Nicola Headlam

A bit of a departure for us, we're obviously academic, so deeply unfashionable people, but we'll give it a go.

00:01:49 Nicola Headlam

Tamara Cincik and Alix Coombs, can you tell us something about the research that you did for the Hub as your LPIP Fellows, aren't you?

00:01:57 Tamara Cincik

I'm an LPIP Fellow.

00:01:58 Tamara Cincik

So I'm Tamara Cincik and I'm an LPIP Fellow.

00:02:02 Tamara Cincik

I'm a former professor, so I am a fashionable academic.

00:02:05 Tamara Cincik

I am the CEO and founder of Fashion Roundtable and the founder of the Great British Wool Revival.

00:02:12 Tamara Cincik

And Alix is part of my team.

00:02:13 Tamara Cincik

And over to you, Alix, to introduce yourself.

00:02:15 Alix Coombs

Thanks, Tamara.

00:02:16 Alix Coombs

My name is Alix.

00:02:17 Alix Coombs

I've worked with Fashion Roundtable for about two years now, and I co-authored this report with Tamara as part of her fellowship.

00:02:25 Nicola Headlam

You're both most welcome.

00:02:27 Nicola Headlam

Can you tell us something about the work of Fashion Roundtable?

00:02:29 Nicola Headlam

Is this kind of a normal thing for you?

00:02:31 Nicola Headlam

Do you normally do research into policy?

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What's your sort of normal operating?

00:02:35 Tamara Cincik

I set up Fashion Roundtable just under nine years ago and it came out of having been on the Fabian Women's Network mentoring scheme.

00:02:44 Tamara Cincik

I was cohort 5. I then was offered a role within my mentor's office in Westminster.

00:02:49 Tamara Cincik

So I was juggling being a fashion stylist.

00:02:52 Tamara Cincik

I'd had quite a big career in the fashion industry, working internationally and working in Parliament and I saw the preamble into Brexit at close hand and realised that my sector wasn't engaging as much as I felt it could.

00:03:06 Tamara Cincik

So I set up my first roundtable as a consequence with conversation with Hilary Benn and at that meeting I had key stakeholders from the sector and everybody from the then Minister for Culture, Matt Hancock, Hilary Benn and lots of cross-party parliamentarians.

00:03:21 Tamara Cincik

I then made sure that questions were going into Parliament because there had been no questions in for seven years from the fashion sector, which given what was happening with Brexit and how heavily remained the sector was because of business reasons rather than anything remote

00:03:35 Tamara Cincik

ideological.

00:03:36 Tamara Cincik

I felt it was important to set up Fashion Roundtable and we do reports, we run all party parliamentary groups and events.

00:03:44 Tamara Cincik

So yes, reporting is a very normal part of our work.

00:03:47 Tamara Cincik

I think we've done 4 reports on Brexit, we've done reports on for Treasury, we've done reports on wellbeing and creative industry alignment, lots of different things.

00:04:00 Tamara Cincik

This is obviously the first of two reports that Alix and I are working on for my LPIP fellowship.

00:04:05 Tamara Cincik

So I'd say the structure is slightly more formalised because it works within a framework that is relevant to LPIP and it centralises place within that.

00:04:14 Tamara Cincik

But I mean, every year we've done a value of fashion map.

00:04:17 Tamara Cincik

I'm very solutions orientated.

00:04:19 Tamara Cincik

So what I like to see is how can you fix a problem rather than moaning about the problem.

00:04:23 Nicola Headlam

Brilliant.

00:04:24 Nicola Headlam

That is a kind of collage of a career, a bit of everything.

00:04:28 Nicola Headlam

And Alix, what was your background when you came to this to Fashion Roundtable?

00:04:32 Alix Coombs

I come from a very different background to Tamara, not fashion at all.

00:04:36 Alix Coombs

I lived in Cambodia for many years and worked in the international development sector, primarily in public health.

00:04:42 Alix Coombs

And I moved to the UK a couple of years ago.

00:04:45 Alix Coombs

I've always been very passionate about sustainability in the fashion industry and particularly living in Cambodia.

00:04:50 Alix Coombs

It was sort of the challenges of the sector and the injustices are very apparent in your day-to-day.

00:04:55 Alix Coombs

You know, you see women being trucked to work quite like cattle stood in the back of a truck.

00:05:00 Alix Coombs

Some of my work overlapped with garment factories in ways public health considerations, such as lactation rooms and such in factories.

00:05:07 Alix Coombs

And I very much came to be passionate about sustainability in the fashion industry and labour and human rights, particularly as it's such a women's-centric industry.

00:05:17 Alix Coombs

So when the opportunity came up with Fashion Roundtable a few years ago, I jumped at it and yeah, I've been working with Tamara ever since.

00:05:29 Nicola Headlam

It's a pet peeve of mine how appalling we are at community and economic development.

00:05:34 Nicola Headlam

We've got, you know, sort of UK challenges, but how poorly the conversation, particularly since cuts to aid funding, the dialogue between international and domestic poverty reduction and sustainability, they really are in different kind of parts of the forest.

00:05:49 Nicola Headlam

It's so frustrating that if something works, then it will work, you know, in Doncaster as well as in the global South.

00:05:55 Nicola Headlam

I think it's a very interesting.

00:05:57 Tamara Cincik

It's very pertinent given the rising heat wave issues that we're facing.

00:06:02 Tamara Cincik

I've just been in France and in Paris.

00:06:04 Tamara Cincik

I was quite frankly really shocked by the levels of refugees who are living in absolute squalor right in the middle of the city.

00:06:12 Tamara Cincik

I've never seen anything like it.

00:06:13 Tamara Cincik

And, you know, this was in July and it was as hot as when I was a child in Southern Turkey was in August.

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So there's going to be massive issues around climate migration and that is going to impact on a domestic

00:06:27 Tamara Cincik

And then if we keep exploiting, it's a different subject from what we covered.

00:06:31 Tamara Cincik

But in fashion landscape, there's an EU policy called extended producer responsibility, which is focusing on waste reduction, which is an important part of the solution.

00:06:41 Tamara Cincik

But currently what's happening with our textiles waste is it's going to the global South.

00:06:45 Tamara Cincik

So it's all part of a cycle of what we call waste colonialism.

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And that's relevant to domestic and international being a bit more aligned than they currently are with the cuts that happened and the loss of reach

00:06:57 Tamara Cincik

within the Foreign Development Office.

00:06:59 Tamara Cincik

I think that's a really important part of what you're saying.

00:07:01 Nicola Headlam

I think it's fascinating as well that the sort of anthropology of intimate things.

00:07:06 Nicola Headlam

So again, making consumption choices, what you wear, how you construct yourself using clothes.

00:07:11 Nicola Headlam

I've just been listening to Fashion Neurosis.

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I absolutely love that podcast.

00:07:15 Nicola Headlam

It's just so clear how your aesthetic decisions and your decisions about, she always just starts by, she says, "and what are you wearing?"

00:07:23 Nicola Headlam

Why did you choose those clothes?”

00:07:24 Nicola Headlam

And within a minute, people are in the worst that's ever happened to them and their kind of real hopes and dreams.

00:07:30 Nicola Headlam

It is quite amazing how that material culture, quite literally, is a different jumping off point, I think, for all of the relationships that we're talking about global with supply chains, with resource and younger people certainly so activist around fast fashion, around wanting to know where their clothes were made, things like that.

00:07:49 Nicola Headlam

So I feel really hopeful when you talk to some younger people about kind of not being kind of blind consumers for kind of the ways that clothes are put in front of them.

00:07:57 Alix Coombs

I agree and I think the issues we see domestically when it comes to cost of living and challenges with people being unhoused, etc.

00:08:05 Alix Coombs

As soon as those issues start to become more prominent, I think it very quickly leads people to call for investment to be pulled back home away from the international sphere.

00:08:16 Alix Coombs

And I think there's sometimes a struggle to understand that those two things are intrinsically linked.

00:08:21 Alix Coombs

And every person wakes up every day and every person gets dressed.

00:08:24 Alix Coombs

We all wear clothes.

00:08:26 Alix Coombs

And as a result, the choices that we're making every single day are impacting upon people in the Global South.

00:08:32 Alix Coombs

And I think it's a not productive maybe view to look at drawing funds away from helping what's happening in other nations, because I think ultimately that flows back into the

00:08:44 Alix Coombs

UK and has a net benefit for everyone the world over.

00:08:46 Tamara Cincik

Well, it's the same principle as austerity.

00:08:48 Tamara Cincik

Austerity now has, I mean, the consequences of austerity 14, 15, 16 years later are massive on the UK.

00:08:55 Tamara Cincik

It's the same mindset. It's like, okay, put the drawbridge up and forget about it and then kick it down the kerb.

00:09:01 Tamara Cincik

It's the same, short term.

00:09:03 Nicola Headlam

And it's also absurd given that the minute you've sort of got your underclothes on, you've connected with literally something that was made, you know, where something was made.

00:09:11 Nicola Headlam

I think clothes are quite an interesting way to get into these really deep questions of identity and self and all that.

00:09:17 Nicola Headlam

So it sounds like you were pretty-well organised in terms of making the case for fashion as a kind of sector nationally with Fashion Roundtable.

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How did that work? How did you come across LPIP? Was it just a call that you saw or?

00:09:30 Tamara Cincik

We applied for me to become a Fellow and I was accepted because of the work that I've done and the calibre of the work that I've done.

00:09:36 Nicola Headlam

Brilliant. And as I say, it's really pushed some of our thinking around a truism, isn't it?

00:09:40 Nicola Headlam

The creative industries punching massively above their weight, but relatively poorly.

00:09:46 Nicola Headlam

Like DCMS (The Department for Culture, Media and Sport), for example, the “Digital” in DCMS is bigger than the “CMS” part.

00:09:50 Tamara Cincik

Within that there's even more nuance because I feel that within policy, is it now the last government with the last Prime Minister, Keir Starmer.

00:10:01 Tamara Cincik

To create the industrial strategy, creative sector plan.

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It focuses on areas of the creative industries, which I'm flummoxed by, quite frankly.

00:10:09 Tamara Cincik

Advertising and marketing, which to me feels like last century thinking, given the way that AI is going to dominate.

00:10:16 Tamara Cincik

Basically going to have personal adverts. It's already happening on our phone.

00:10:20 Tamara Cincik

The film industry is at 68% unemployment since the strikes in the States and the ongoing issues that that's had, and poor decisions around tax breaks for film studios

00:10:30 Tamara Cincik

that were being built left, right and centre by American conglomerates and now are being snowballed and 75% of the sector want to leave.

00:10:38 Tamara Cincik

So, you know, fashion isn't even in the conversation of a creative sector plan.

00:10:42 Tamara Cincik

And then with this report, when you look at the defence strategy, uniforms aren't in the defence plan either.

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So the omission is glaring.

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And that's the part of the puzzle that Fashion Roundtable constantly seeks to ameliorate and to highlight because if you say to someone like we have to civil servants when we've shared the report, surely you would want to onshore for questions of security.

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Would you want troops wearing clothes by states that you might be at war with?

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The penny drops.

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And I think with the new Prime Minister and even on the steps of Downing Street, he was talking about public procurement.

00:11:24 Tamara Cincik

I mean, this for me has been five to six years of work because I was alongside Kate Hills from Make It British, asked to be part of very regular meetings with the then government about the pandemic and public procurement.

00:11:39 Tamara Cincik

And Kate Hills and I were pushing for UK-made public procurement, but Deloitte had been brought in and Deloitte didn't seem to want to answer the question of U.K. made, and were looking at cost.

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It was a mess.

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And we had one situation where we were waiting at the height of the pandemic.

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So, I was personally getting e-mails from NHS trusts.

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I was helping volunteer organisations to create -- do logistics, to create scrubs.

00:12:07 Tamara Cincik

And other people were investing in equipment to create PPE.

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And a well-known brand that Deloitte had brought on were doing a colour chart.

00:12:16 Tamara Cincik

A pantone colour chart.

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I mean, it was just a mess.

00:12:19 Tamara Cincik

And then you see that there was £10 billion of our taxpayers' money wasted.

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And even if some of that money not all had been invested into UK

00:12:27 Tamara Cincik

made, would there have been greater transparency?

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Because you can obviously have greater transparency if you're buying from up the road, rather than 10 countries away.

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But also, you're investing back into local communities.

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And that really has been a piece of work that I have wanted to get my teeth into since the pandemic.

00:12:46 Tamara Cincik

When accepted as an LPIP fellow, I knew that was one of the pieces of work that I wanted to concentrate on very heavily because it's just kismet that Andy Burnham is saying that he wants to look at UK made public procurement because I've been saying it for several years now.

00:13:00 Tamara Cincik

It's very clear to me that it's necessary.

00:13:03 Nicola Headlam

Absolutely. And I mean, I've done work briefly in that same inglorious period.

00:13:08 Nicola Headlam

I was head of Northern Powerhouse and we had a whole north shoring strategy that was around exactly that, keeping supply chains as short as possible, making that a priority.

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And I've done work over the years on public procurement, the sort of enormous wins, some of which you identify in your report for public procurement done right.

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It's not a legislative solution. It's not something we need to lobby for from a front end.

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It can be done in terms of implementation in real place.

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I guess I want to talk a little bit about the power of place, because you mentioned working obviously globally, but then also this shortened supply chains, and in terms of, in my experience, north shoring.

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What is the potential for, if it was going well, for this public procurement work on fashion, reaching maturity and becoming fully embedded?

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So imagine we've implemented your recommendations.

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What would the size of that prize be?

00:13:58 Tamara Cincik

I mean, it would be massive.

00:14:00 Tamara Cincik

Alix, have you got the stats in front of you?

00:14:02 Alix Coombs

Speaking generally, we know that the supporting the manufacturing ecosystem goes far beyond just supporting manufacturing.

00:14:11 Alix Coombs

There's such a network behind it that's talking about training providers, logistics, maintenance, compliance, design, and ultimately the stability that public procurement would bring lends itself to so much more than just supporting factories.

00:14:26 Alix Coombs

And that's why we're pushing so hard.

00:14:28 Alix Coombs

It opens up so much more.

00:14:29 Alix Coombs

And once factories have stabilisation, we've then being able to preserve the heritage and culture of that industry that's been thriving in the UK for so many years that we've been known for that it really is quite recently that it's all just started to fall away and it really is such a shame.

00:14:47 Tamara Cincik

Under Thatcher, there was an offshore agenda and it, kind of, in the high street started with Marks and Spencer's and then evolved from that.

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And people at the time were saying, oh, it's great because I can get it for cheaper.

00:14:58 Tamara Cincik

And then not really worrying about the fact that factories up the road were closing.

00:15:02 Tamara Cincik

I would say that you've got to stop thinking about the word 'fashion' and you've got to start thinking about manufacturing.

00:15:08 Tamara Cincik

And I think the word fashion does itself a disservice because people immediately think of catwalk shows and crazy outfits and a whole load of glamour that they might feel alienated by, right?

00:15:20 Tamara Cincik

Or they might think about their fast fashion guilty purchases or something that they've saved up for.

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I think if you start thinking about manufacturing and textiles and

00:15:30 Tamara Cincik

and provenance and place-based growth, then you start thinking about it in a very different lens.

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And that's the lens that we're coming from.

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We're called Fashion Roundtable, but we could literally be Textiles Roundtable or Manufacturing Roundtable.

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It's just the name I chose at the time.

00:15:47 Tamara Cincik

So I think you've got to think about it as, "okay, so not only from a security perspective, I would argue we need to bring it on shore."

00:15:55 Tamara Cincik

But when I was on those calls with Kate, what was flummoxing us was just looking at baseline price for imports, which we now know most of them seem to have been a complete waste of our money.

00:16:07 Tamara Cincik

And I say our money because as taxpayers, it is our money.

00:16:11 Tamara Cincik

And instead, if you invest in a factory, whether it's in Leicester, Manchester, London, Edinburgh, the borders, Northern Ireland, Bristol, wherever, Plymouth, where there's a massive defence build, in terms of defence munitions, you know, if you place it around that, you know that you're investing.

00:16:29 Tamara Cincik

I worked for the Sunderland

00:16:30 Tamara Cincik

Sunderland MP, who has Nissan in her constituency.

00:16:34 Tamara Cincik

Within Nissan, it's very clear that there is a supply chain, a localised supply chain, and it's the same for cars as it is for public procurement.

00:16:41 Tamara Cincik

And the reason why I feel this is so necessary is we've heard a lot from factory owners and trade bodies, and there is a lack of consistency in orders, because in fashion, there was brands like ASOS who were buying from the UK.

00:16:58 Tamara Cincik

But as fast fashion has escalated like this runaway train, you've got the likes of Shein or Temu or whatever will come next and they're not producing here and so you've got very skilled people, and I say that to policy people because I

00:17:12 Tamara Cincik

would like to see them make a suit and do a good cut.

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So I do see it as a highly skilled job, even though it's not on the shortage occupation list.

00:17:21 Tamara Cincik

I can't make a suit.

00:17:22 Tamara Cincik

My great-grandmother was a tailor.

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She could have made a suit very well, beautiful.

00:17:26 Tamara Cincik

But those skills are being lost.

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We have lost the STEAM education.

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I know there are cries to have it back in real terms in England.

00:17:33 Tamara Cincik

I know Scotland never lost it and Wales has brought it back.

00:17:36 Tamara Cincik

And let's see what Burnham does about that. But therefore we have a need to retain skills.

00:17:40 Tamara Cincik

Factories need a stability of orders because then the fashion part that the people that love and their eyes light up or they roll their eyes out, depending on their perspective, which is catwalk shows or high-end fashion and super creative, is the bit that is the fun bit, but it's not the pressure point that is the anxiety about, I don't know, maybe 180 from invoice to payment delivery or a brand goes under.

00:18:03 Tamara Cincik

Like what happened with Matches, when Matches was bought by Mike Ashley, suddenly it went from being highly profitable, multi-billion pound industry to a load of people with no payment or orders.

00:18:14 Tamara Cincik

So we need to remove it from the vagaries of that.

00:18:17 Tamara Cincik

That's what public procurement does.

00:18:19 Tamara Cincik

And ultimately a factory worker, owner, employer, employee will look forward to doing the high-end fashion stuff, but will have the security of knowing that they're doing public procurement.

00:18:29 Tamara Cincik

I think it's an absolutely vital lever for change.

00:18:35 Alix Coombs

100%. The stability piece is just the most key.

00:18:38 Alix Coombs

And in conducting the qualitative research that we did for this research report, we spoke to such a range of stakeholders from across the industry, including manufacturers and brands.

00:18:50 Alix Coombs

And it was very clear that without that stability, that's where skills start to fall away.

00:18:57 Alix Coombs

And skills retention is more of a challenge as a result of instability than the fact that the skills actually aren't there.

00:19:04 Alix Coombs

And we risk losing them forever if we don't start to find a way to provide that stability.

00:19:09 Alix Coombs

And we're not speculating that public procurement is the solution.

00:19:12 Alix Coombs

We know it's the solution because during COVID, the factories that did get awarded public procurement contracts for PPE, hospital gowns, whatever it may be, they said that's the most stable their business has ever been.

00:19:24 Alix Coombs

And that has enabled them to reinvest in better machinery, upskill their staff, hire more staff, provide better services to the brands and the retailers that they service. The evidence is there.

00:19:34 Alix Coombs

And speaking to the place-based aspect of that, we all know that Leicester is such a key hub for manufacturing in the UK.

00:19:43 Alix Coombs

And another project that we're working on at the moment in partnership with the Apparel and Textile Manufacturers Federation is focused on proving that this public procurement lever really is the key.

00:19:57 Alix Coombs

And as part of that project, Jenny at the ATMF has been able to establish a consortium of 20 factories based in Leicester, and they've just put in a bid for a £60 million pound contract with the Home Office for the public provision of textile goods, for the public provision of textile goods.

00:20:17 Alix Coombs

So it's not theoretical, it's happening, but we need the support of the government to see the value in awarding the contracts on shore.

00:20:25 Alix Coombs

You know, a short-term perspective on it where the unit cost may be slightly higher is far too short sighted because the long term impacts on the economy, on our communities

00:20:34 Alix Coombs

and our businesses is far greater than the per item cost saving that you may see on paper and make a decision on.

00:20:41 Tamara Cincik

And leads to £10 billion pounds worth of waste in the height of a pandemic.

00:20:45 Tamara Cincik

I mean, it was -- we were buying from China and selling to America.

00:20:49 Tamara Cincik

It was insane, people 10 miles away not being joined.

00:21:00 Tamara Cincik

Another piece of work I've done is the Great British Wool Revival and I have another researcher called Harriet on that.

00:21:06 Tamara Cincik

And basically that was a mapping exercise that we worked in collaboration with the King's Foundation on because I also sit on the UK Trade and Business Commission and was hearing about the potential impacts of the Australia trade deal on farmers and was hearing that wool, it was costing more to shear the sheep than you made on the wool and being a massive history geek knew that was the backbone of the UK economy for hundreds of years.

00:21:29 Tamara Cincik

I just thought, isn't it symbolic of early doors capitalism was funded by wool, late-stage capitalism, now it's a waste product.

00:21:37 Tamara Cincik

Where have we gone?

00:21:38 Tamara Cincik

So we've mapped wool across the UK, and it's gone from an all-time low to a 10 year high in the 18 months since we've been running.

00:21:45 Tamara Cincik

We did a summit at Dumfries House, which is the global headquarters of the King's Foundation up in Scotland in May.

00:21:52 Tamara Cincik

And we're seeing more and more people, I think there's over 600 businesses joining the map.

00:21:56 Tamara Cincik

And what that means is, again, you can find your supplier

00:22:00 Tamara Cincik

and you can map your journey as a farmer through to designer, through all of the ecosystem. And that is the solution that's needed.

00:22:08 Tamara Cincik

I can't speak for the current government, but in the pandemic, the consultants that were being brought in had no fashion or textiles experience.

00:22:16 Tamara Cincik

I consistently met food experts.

00:22:19 Tamara Cincik

And there are methods in lean manufacturing, such as the Kaizen method.

00:22:23 Tamara Cincik

I brought people to meetings with government saying, I think, you know, this guy's expert, he's literally just left Burberry.

00:22:29 Tamara Cincik

It's lean manufacturing, which means it eradicates waste, which means you will have a much more fluid, succinct supply chain, end-to-end solution.

00:22:37 Tamara Cincik

They never called the guy, and they bring in a food guy who's told me he'd done six weeks of training in Kaizen.

00:22:42 Tamara Cincik

I mean, it's like monopoly to these people.

00:22:44 Tamara Cincik

I go back to the fact that's our money, and what does that mean for, I don't know, libraries or youth clubs or hospital waiting lists or schools or, you know, food bank support and all those things that we all as citizens want for a better society, well, that money just went on wasted PPE.

00:23:04 Tamara Cincik

This solution is the lever for that.

00:23:06 Nicola Headlam

Yeah, that's what's so key is that, as you mentioned before, we're into year 15 of really unstrategic austerity where things were cut away, but it wasn't with the design principle in mind for what was being cut, it was just get the bottom line down.

00:23:21 Nicola Headlam

So I think the wool story is absolutely fascinating that you describe.

00:23:25 Nicola Headlam

I came to wool because I did my first degree in Bradford.

00:23:28 Nicola Headlam

The basis, And now I live in Manchester.

00:23:30 Nicola Headlam

So from wool to cotton, the ways in which you're so right, early capitalism was all about understanding those resources and their circulation was going to give us kind of global supremacy.

00:23:43 Nicola Headlam

And as you say, there, now it's a waste product. It's fascinating.

00:23:46 Nicola Headlam

In terms of the characteristics of the wool example that you've just described, was it more that there was a willingness?

00:23:52 Nicola Headlam

Was it the right time, right people, right politics? What helped it to work as a kind of example?

00:23:58 Tamara Cincik

I'm very stubborn.

00:23:59 Alix Coombs

That's what I was about to say, Tam was just unstoppable.

00:24:02 Nicola Headlam

Yeah, as in you wouldn't give it up on it.

00:24:04 Tamara Cincik

No, I did two years.

00:24:05 Tamara Cincik

I get this feeling in my fingers, it comes from when I was a stylist, if something was creative, I'd get this feeling and I had this feeling about the wool issue and I wouldn't let it go.

00:24:16 Tamara Cincik

We did more meetings about that.

00:24:17 Tamara Cincik

I mean, again, there was government, 800,000 went on wool, but no one wanted to fund the mapping, which was a lot less than that.

00:24:24 Tamara Cincik

And actually, it was a coincidental meeting when I was asked to speak at Choggon, which was in Kigali, with the team around the then Prince of Wales, now the King, and that was an introduction to the King's Foundation, and then we got a small amount of funding.

00:24:37 Tamara Cincik

And then last year, I was funding it through other pieces of work, and then this year, it's now starting to be self-funding.

00:24:44 Nicola Headlam

In terms of the new Prime Minister,

00:24:45 Nicola Headlam

Greater Manchester has done work on, and I know a guy in Greater Manchester that's done a lot of work on textiles and wool.

00:24:51 Nicola Headlam

So let's hope.

00:24:53 Tamara Cincik

So we've actually got an open letter out at the moment to gather names.

00:24:57 Tamara Cincik

We launched it only on Monday, and we've already got people like Ben Fogle have signed it.

00:25:02 Tamara Cincik

I think we're going to get a lot of people.

00:25:04 Alix Coombs

Over 50 already, I think, signatories.

00:25:07 Nicola Headlam

And what's the purpose of that one?

00:25:09 Tamara Cincik

We want a meeting to talk about public procurement.

00:25:11 Tamara Cincik

I don't care if I meet at No. 10 North, South, East, West, wherever, but I want a proper meeting and I want to sit down and I'm going to get them to understand why this is such a lever.

00:25:20 Tamara Cincik

I mean, politically, because I'm a Fabian woman and if I can't get an in with this cohort of the Labour Party, then I'll never get one because they are the most aligned.

00:25:30 Tamara Cincik

Look at what he just said on the steps of No. 10 about public procurement, about revitalising our high streets, about supporting SMEs, about respecting technical skills, not just university.

00:25:40 Tamara Cincik

I mean, the thinking's very aligned to the thinking that's gone into Fashion Roundtable.

00:25:45 Nicola Headlam

Quite fascinating, I think, that first speech, because some of the commentary said it was nerdy or something, and I was like, "yes!" like it was in a good way.

00:25:54 Tamara Cincik

I mean, he lives his values.

00:25:55 Tamara Cincik

He's wearing Private White VC, which is a Manchester-based brand, you know, that does a lot of its production. They we also on

00:26:02 Tamara Cincik

some of the early pandemic calls, they invested to try to secure public procurement orders heavily in equipment.

00:26:08 Tamara Cincik

I don't know if they got any, I'd have to look that up.

00:26:11 Nicola Headlam

And of course then, there's a horrible op-ed about how, oh, it's all designer, he's not really a man of the people.

00:26:16 Nicola Headlam

But I did note when I was looking at that, yes, it was onshored, it was British.

00:26:21 Tamara Cincik

Well, James took it on and ate his chips out of the newspaper on LinkedIn, the CEO of Private White VC, which I thought was genius.

00:26:29 Tamara Cincik

If you want to get into a conversation about Cost Per Wear,

00:26:33 Tamara Cincik

then let's go because, I ran into Andy Burnham at a conference a couple of years ago with a friend of mine from the party and I was looking at him and it was a Sunday and I said, you're dressed like a Sunday dad and he was in floods.

00:26:46 Tamara Cincik

It's true, he was wearing all the clothes like someone who likes Oasis or The Verve or whatever, you know, like my husband would dress like that, right?

00:26:53 Tamara Cincik

And he got it.

00:26:54 Nicola Headlam

You're dressed like a centrist dad.

00:26:55 Tamara Cincik

Sunday dad, like you're a Sunday dad, you know, like you've gone to the football with the kids, you've gone to the pub, you remember in the 90s, It was all a lot better than, still having it in your kitchen.

00:27:06 Tamara Cincik

So he's that guy to me.

00:27:08 Tamara Cincik

And I think that's the relatability.

00:27:10 Tamara Cincik

So we want a meeting not to just talk about him being a Sunday dad, but to literally push this because, what I saw with the pandemic made me very anxious about how removed policy can be and the consequences on income generation that has for our majority of our SMEs across the country.

00:27:28 Tamara Cincik

And actually the public procurement applications, the companies find them really challenging to get round, which is why Jenny's had to create a consortium.

00:27:36 Tamara Cincik

And Leicester really has suffered, but it's got a great history as a hub of textiles for hundreds of years, great skills, hardworking people who are doing the right thing.

00:27:47 Tamara Cincik

And that's across the board. I mean, I think anyone who's an entrepreneur is brave in this climate, so they deserve to be celebrated.

00:28:01 Nicola Headlam

You clearly are well-connected person.

00:28:04 Nicola Headlam

On your travels, can you think of where there is a good international lesson on this stuff that we could import or steal?

00:28:11 Alix Coombs

I earlier in the year spoke to the Australian Fashion Council and they had just recently launched their national manufacturing strategy for 2026 to 2036 in partnership with RM Williams, which is a quite historic Australian brand.

00:28:28 Alix Coombs

And one of the very core parts of that strategy that they recognise as a key driver to activate and drive demand is government procurement acts.

00:28:38 Alix Coombs

And their strategy leans very heavily into the potential for public procurement to reinvigorate the Australian fashion industry and manufacturing industry.

00:28:48 Alix Coombs

And it's strongly recognised there and while it's early days for them, I'm following along really closely being Australian myself as well.

00:28:55 Alix Coombs

And I find it really interesting that in the UK by comparison.

00:29:00 Alix Coombs

This work is being pushed by people who are purely passionate about it.

00:29:04 Alix Coombs

We are operating on a very lean budget, as are most of our colleagues who are working on this.

00:29:11 Alix Coombs

And we do it because we see the doors that it's going to unlock.

00:29:14 Alix Coombs

We see the wider benefits that it's going to have.

00:29:16 Alix Coombs

Whereas on the flip side of that, that's now embedded in the Australian Fashion Council strategy, and the government has bought into that strategy.

00:29:23 Alix Coombs

So I think there's quite a few lessons to be learned there in the way that it needs to be positioned and supported and in order to be successful.

00:29:31 Alix Coombs

And that's where our intended meeting with Number 10 comes in.

00:29:35 Alix Coombs

I have very strong hopes that that's the place that we're about to get to.

00:29:38 Tamara Cincik

And in the States, it would be the Berry Amendment, which is a law requiring the Department of Defence to source items from domestic producers.

00:29:48 Tamara Cincik

So that would cover clothing and fabrics.

00:29:51 Tamara Cincik

And I think that's a kind of nice tie-up, because, actually, interestingly, post-Brexit, the UK can be much more intentional about its procurement.

00:30:01 Tamara Cincik

So, as a remainder, that is at least something that could potentially be something that we could hero.

00:30:06 Tamara Cincik

I mean, it's a divergence again, but we talked about EPR, extended producer responsibility.

00:30:11 Tamara Cincik

They're not going far enough because their rankings are rating recycled polyester higher than natural textiles.

00:30:18 Tamara Cincik

So, if the UK was to implement EPR, I'd like us to go further and look at recyclability, rather than just cradle to grave, so cradle to cradle.

00:30:27 Tamara Cincik

So, there are opportunities post-Brexit.

00:30:29 Tamara Cincik

The alignment and what Andy Burnham said on the steps of Downing Street, I think those are the ways that we can support what is ultimately a country of SMEs.

00:30:40 Tamara Cincik

I mean, entrepreneurship is part of UK mindset, but most of us are working in SMEs, we're not working in big businesses.

00:30:47 Tamara Cincik

And I think there's been far too much focus across several governments on multinationals.

00:30:52 Nicola Headlam

Absolutely.

00:30:52 Nicola Headlam

And I mean, SME voice in industrial strategy, SME, even just the optics of Rachel Reeves would have very big business voices.

00:31:00 Nicola Headlam

But I think certainly from my perspective, which is about local economic development, you know, unleashing SME growth is the way to actually find growth, and it's been poorly managed for a little while.

00:31:11 Nicola Headlam

Okay, so it sounds like you've got a full slate.

00:31:14 Nicola Headlam

Once you, obviously, it sounds like you're going to talk to the Prime Minister about public procurement.

00:31:19 Nicola Headlam

What are you working on next?

00:31:22 Alix Coombs

This report very much provided the qualitative evidence base for onshore and public procurement.

00:31:29 Alix Coombs

And our next focus is the quantitative.

00:31:32 Alix Coombs

So the LPIP 2 that Tamara mentioned is our annexed piece of work and it is diving into the ONS data around the value of fashion in the UK.

00:31:42 Alix Coombs

So Fashion Roundtable for many years now has produced a value of fashion report each year, which outlines the businesses and

00:31:51 Alix Coombs

the number of businesses and the turnover across the UK in the fashion textile sector.

00:31:56 Alix Coombs

And through doing that, it has become very apparent to us that the numbers are wrong.

00:32:00 Alix Coombs

So this piece of quantitative research is diving into those numbers, unpacking how, where, why it's going wrong, and essentially how we can fix it, which is a very long road given the way that the ONS works.

00:32:17 Alix Coombs

And beyond just how can we fix it, we also want to investigate

00:32:21 Alix Coombs

What are the true numbers while we're at it.

00:32:23 Alix Coombs

So that will provide, we hope, a much clearer picture of the industry in the UK and the value of what's happening and where it's happening.

00:32:30 Alix Coombs

And then on top of that, the project that we mentioned just before working with Jenny and the ATMF and a few other partners based in Leicester, that project, beyond proving that there's capacity through that consortium, is also going to do a full economic assessment of the impact that onshore and public procurement will have.

00:32:50 Alix Coombs

So, by the time that is published, we estimate around October, we'll have a full report with a full economic case and policy briefs to go along with for us to then take to government and to aid our lobbying work.

00:33:04 Alix Coombs

So between those two pieces that we're working on now and the qualitative evidence that we've already generated, we're going to have a really strong body of work to prove the value of onshore and public procurement in the UK.

00:33:17 Nicola Headlam

From your travels, can you think of a specific person who stood out to you as a really good broker?

00:33:25 Nicola Headlam

And then the second question, can you think of a really good place leader?

00:33:28 Nicola Headlam

The idea being that a broker is able to pull people, knowledge, resource, ideas and put them together and it's almost like a Lego brick.

00:33:37 Nicola Headlam

Your broker needs to Lego brick onto your place leader in order for it to be effective.

00:33:42 Nicola Headlam

So we separate them out like that.

00:33:43 Nicola Headlam

But from the stories that you've described, you've got people very active. Can you think then of a good broker?

00:33:50 Tamara Cincik

From the all-party parliamentary group perspective, I think two people who really stood out for me were, he's now retired from the House of Commons, but John McNally, who's an SNP, and he was one of our chairs and he's had an interesting life.

00:34:06 Tamara Cincik

He's an ex-hairdresser.

00:34:08 Tamara Cincik

So he's watching everybody, got the chat, able to work very cross-party, still engaged, he's now on our board.

00:34:16 Tamara Cincik

And then I would also say

00:34:17 Tamara Cincik

Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey, who was also a co-chair.

00:34:21 Tamara Cincik

The work that she's done around modern slavery, which she continues to do in the House of Lords, is very pertinent, but also the way that she brings together people like she's been on Booker Prize judge.

00:34:33 Tamara Cincik

Her backstory is incredible because she was in the care system.

00:34:36 Tamara Cincik

So, many, well, I'd say concrete, not even glass ceilings that Lola has smashed, and I've got massive admiration, and I see her like a mentor.

00:34:44 Tamara Cincik

And the way she brings people together, and both of them I think

00:34:47 Tamara Cincik

they've got this kind of like, I don't use that word lightly because it's not common at all, but the common touch.

00:34:52 Tamara Cincik

They're able to translate lofty ideas into language that people relate to, and I think that's so vital.

00:34:58 Tamara Cincik

I think that a lot of people switch off when it becomes "4.7% of da, da, da, da, da..."

00:35:03 Tamara Cincik

They want to know, is my life going to be better and what can we do to fix it?

00:35:07 Tamara Cincik

I think both of them have continued to be very engaged with us, very collaborative, and I think it's a mindset thing, because ultimately politics

00:35:17 Tamara Cincik

has to be cross-party, otherwise it doesn't work.

00:35:20 Nicola Headlam

I think that's sort of, as you describe, animating elements of your autobiography into how and why, so people can kind of believe in why you want to make change.

00:35:31 Nicola Headlam

I think that's a real skill that people that really have it are animating their life experience into a why which moves them forward.

00:35:39 Nicola Headlam

How about you, Alix?

00:35:40 Nicola Headlam

Can you think of a good broker?

00:35:41 Alix Coombs

To be honest, I would back what Tamara said, and I also think that Tamara plays a large role in that in this sector in the UK.

00:35:49 Alix Coombs

I think that a big part of why Fashion Roundtable is able to achieve the work that we achieve is because that Tamara is excellent at bringing people together and aligning people under a cause.

00:35:59 Alix Coombs

That was the best and that immediately came to mind for me.

00:36:02 Nicola Headlam

It goes without saying that you are change makers by virtue of talking to us today.

00:36:06 Nicola Headlam

And also, again, it's good that you've been able to use the fellowship in such concrete ways to influence your decision makers kind of in real time.

00:36:13 Nicola Headlam

So then in terms of place leaders, you talk about the Leicester example.

00:36:17 Nicola Headlam

Do you think of really good leaders of place that kind of get it on the public procurement point that you've made or are you waiting for them to emerge?

00:36:25 Tamara Cincik

I feel in the UK that people were a bit quiet about it until just over a week ago now and now they're all going to be like gung-ho about it.

00:36:35 Tamara Cincik

I have been in touch with SPADs saying, look, for God's sake, just get me that meeting.

00:36:39 Tamara Cincik

That's all I ask because I've been banging on about this for now for what, six years.

00:36:43 Tamara Cincik

My nickname from myself and one other person is "the Cassandra of Fashion".

00:36:47 Tamara Cincik

And quite often you are saying it and no one's hearing you. And then suddenly they hear you.

00:36:52 Tamara Cincik

It's been the same on wool, it's been the same on Brexit, It's been the same on many other things.

00:36:57 Tamara Cincik

So I'm used to this because fashion, if it teaches you anything, is that feeling.

00:37:01 Tamara Cincik

It's that, oh, this is what's coming.

00:37:03 Tamara Cincik

Because actual fashion at the level that I worked at, which was high-end luxury international fashion editor, you are in the future.

00:37:10 Tamara Cincik

You are looking at what the image will be in the future.

00:37:13 Tamara Cincik

And you are actually, if you're any good at it, you're deconstructing ideas on quite a metaphysical level.

00:37:20 Tamara Cincik

It's not just putting clothes on people, which I think increasingly, and that's another conversation, but it has been much more reduced from the kind of high-octane world that I was part of because it was print media.

00:37:31 Tamara Cincik

So I think that, you know, understanding where the future's going and wanting to be part of shaping, it's really exciting.

00:37:37 Tamara Cincik

I think Sadiq is a decent London mayor, but there are criticisms.

00:37:40 Tamara Cincik

I personally, as the mother of an asthmatic child, quite glad that we've got ULEZ, because the air is better.

00:37:46 Tamara Cincik

I think that when we read all of the local and national policy reports, I remember saying to Alix the only one that was positive was Manchester's.

00:37:55 Tamara Cincik

So they owned the fact that there was a lower educational outcomes.

00:38:00 Tamara Cincik

They owned the fact that there was a lot of poverty in the area.

00:38:02 Tamara Cincik

They owned all these things, but they looked at solutions.

00:38:06 Tamara Cincik

I thought that was interesting, and therefore I could understand why there was such a drive after the locals for Andy to take that role as the Prime Minister, because we need hope.

00:38:17 Tamara Cincik

We can all get behind something if we've got a reason why.

00:38:22 Tamara Cincik

If it's a bit worse now, but it's going to be better tomorrow, I think a lot of us drive on that impulse.

00:38:27 Tamara Cincik

So I don't live in Manchester, but I got a sense of an optimism in the narrative.

00:38:32 Tamara Cincik

I mean, obviously she got undone by a camper van, but I thought Nicola Sturgeon was a very interesting leader of Scotland, but again I didn't live in Scotland so it's very hard for me to comment on what the reality on the ground was there because I didn't live there.

00:38:43 Nicola Headlam

I made a bit of a study of Manchesterism since my PhD which was in 2011. And I called it at the time, so just talking about how autobiography animates people towards action just before in terms of really good brokerage.

00:38:56 Nicola Headlam

In some ways the Manchester sort of genius has been the performance of evidence and a socio-spatial biography that you can kind of believe and if it's good at anything

00:39:06 Nicola Headlam

or if we're good at anything as a kind of polity, which the differentiation is exactly that.

00:39:11 Nicola Headlam

It's about those kind of magic threads going all the way through.

00:39:14 Nicola Headlam

I was thinking actually preparing for this, how many of our metaphors are tailoring and design and if you think you're doing system thinking, you're actually talking in sort of textiles metaphors.

00:39:24 Nicola Headlam

So often I think it's fascinating. So, you know, a golden thread for policy and things like that.

00:39:29 Nicola Headlam

When your genius loci, so your kind of spirit of your place, meets the zeitgeist, then you've got kind of place leadership that's kind of worth having.

00:39:37 Nicola Headlam

And that's kind of where I think we are in terms of...

00:39:39 Tamara Cincik

So for me, I mean, I'm what, a mile and a half away from where I grew up, because I'm at my parents while we're recording.

00:39:45 Tamara Cincik

I grew up on a council estate called South Oxhey, which was one of the Greater London post-war estates.

00:39:50 Tamara Cincik

My dad's Turkish, my mum's English, they were very young, and they bought a salon and it came with a flat.

00:39:56 Tamara Cincik

So I'd say it was quite a tough area, but it functioned.

00:39:59 Tamara Cincik

And it functioned as a system that was built by the welfare state.

00:40:03 Tamara Cincik

And it had nice flowers outside, nice geraniums, thank you very much.

00:40:07 Tamara Cincik

That was the public loos over the road.

00:40:09 Tamara Cincik

Then it had the police station. Then it had the doctors.

00:40:12 Tamara Cincik

On the end of our part of the precinct was the dentist.

00:40:15 Tamara Cincik

That area was systematically run down and has recently, in the last three years, been knocked down.

00:40:22 Tamara Cincik

And private property, because there's a train that can get you into London, because this is-- I mean, it was an 01 number, which means it was Greater London when I was growing up.

00:40:31 Tamara Cincik

Now it's in Three Rivers, which is the local council. But.

00:40:35 Tamara Cincik

What that area taught me was the power of the welfare state to drive people from any background to realise their potential.

00:40:42 Tamara Cincik

And I would say that is my red thread because I am all about working class aspiration, but I'm also about never forgetting where I came from.

00:40:53 Tamara Cincik

And I lived maybe like 14 years ago in a council flat in London and I saw how it was already being run down.

00:41:03 Tamara Cincik

And in the two years that I was there,

00:41:05 Tamara Cincik

They went from having a local office that the community walked to, to a centralised phone number to somebody offshore, and I had elderly neighbours, sorry, who couldn't get through, who I was then ringing to try to get through to deal with social issues... And the disharmony that they were living with because they were being removed.

00:41:23 Tamara Cincik

And don't forget in Camden specifically, they were people who'd probably lived in nice Georgian houses in the 70s and been put in flats when there was a then commitment by that council to build council housing.

00:41:33 Tamara Cincik

So I have never forgotten where I came from, and that, I think, has consistently been my driver.

00:41:40 Tamara Cincik

Why do we run down systems?

00:41:43 Tamara Cincik

And back to when austerity came in with the coalition, I was living in Wendling, then, in Gospel Oak, and I knew what that meant for that local community, because austerity means, what do we have 15 years later?

00:41:56 Tamara Cincik

We have more knife crime, we have more teenagers and early 20s who have not been supported by youth clubs, libraries.

00:42:03 Tamara Cincik

The library where I grew up changed my life.

00:42:06 Tamara Cincik

And I've never, ever forgotten the power of a place that functions.

00:42:11 Tamara Cincik

And George Clark, who I've met through the King's Foundation, did a fantastic program on Channel 4 about coming from a council house and what that gave him because it was secure housing and it was decent housing.

00:42:24 Tamara Cincik

And if we have more of that, we have less people who are struggling because the fact that my mum at 19 could have a flat and a business, that would be impossible now.

00:42:33 Alix Coombs

And public procurement is not only a lever for national economic growth or security, it's a social mobility tool.

00:42:43 Alix Coombs

And it's no secret that the garment manufacturing and textile industry is primarily dominated by migrant workers.

00:42:52 Alix Coombs

And there needs to be an investment to create opportunity for people.

00:42:57 Alix Coombs

Social mobility is a really strong outcome of having a strong sector.

00:43:01 Alix Coombs

People are able to upskill, people are able to move on, people are able to start their own businesses.

00:43:05 Alix Coombs

And the state that we're in right now, we found evidence through our research that in garment manufacturing areas, access to food banks is growing.

00:43:16 Alix Coombs

The people that are accessing those food banks are primarily garment workers.

00:43:20 Alix Coombs

And the reason for that is there's not enough work for them.

00:43:22 Alix Coombs

Their income is dropping.

00:43:23 Alix Coombs

Their model of work that may once have been stable and full time is now gig work.

00:43:29 Alix Coombs

It's short term, It's dependent on the contracts that the factories are

00:43:33 Alix Coombs

In. And the contracts the factories are getting in are continually under worse and worse conditions because brands want to place smaller orders, brands don't pay, and brands absolutely have the capacity to.

00:43:45 Alix Coombs

I'm not saying all of them, but the larger ones do. And they're the ones that are the worst offenders of these kinds of things.

00:43:51 Alix Coombs

So there's such an intrinsic link there between what we want to unlock and the impacts that's going to have right down to the level that Tamara's speaking to.

00:43:59 Tamara Cincik

Yeah.

00:44:00 Nicola Headlam

Okay.

00:44:01 Tamara Cincik

It's deep.

00:44:04 Alix Coombs

I know, who would have thought of fashion?

00:44:06 Nicola Headlam

That's what's so compelling is that, again, the threads begin with, as you've said, not fashion, but textile, manufacturing, and they emanate to every level from national through places like the Leicester example you've talked about into neighbourhoods such as the one you're talking about growing up in.

00:44:23 Alix Coombs

I mean, even earlier, it starts on the cotton farm, it starts on the wool farm, and beyond that, it flows into the river near the garment factory

00:44:32 Alix Coombs

in whichever country people are choosing to manufacture because it keeps their margins as thin as possible.

00:44:38 Alix Coombs

And that impacts food security, that impacts soil health.

00:44:42 Alix Coombs

It's so, far-reaching.

00:44:44 Tamara Cincik

It's massive.

00:44:50 Nicola Headlam

I am going to let you have a wave with the place-based innovation magic wand.

00:44:55 Nicola Headlam

Careful with it.

00:44:55 Nicola Headlam

We talked about the life-changing magic of high fashion, but the magic wand, you have absolute power to do one of these things, but you must use your powers to make a tangible change to a specific place.

00:45:09 Nicola Headlam

Your change will be, it won't be Kaizen, but it will be SMART: specific, measurable, actionable, recordable and transferable.

00:45:15 Nicola Headlam

Magic is hard to get hold of at the moment and is subject to a 20% reducing multi-year budget settlement.

00:45:20 Nicola Headlam

So you can have 10 million pounds in a project fund, half an hour with the cabinet and a slide deck, editorial control of the front page of a tabloid, a clause to insert into a bill, I'm going to be generous today and give you a whole act that you could have in the next King's Speech. A simple message to go viral on TikTok or social media.

00:45:37 Nicola Headlam

Anyone is an advocate for this work or, and this is really one for the people who like to hide in their bedrooms, the answer to something that's bothered you forever.

00:45:45 Nicola Headlam

It sounds like you're doing pretty well in terms of access and doing all those kinds of things.

00:45:50 Nicola Headlam

But which of those do you think would take the conversation on public procurement from where it is to where you can see it making all those benefits?

00:45:58 Tamara Cincik

For me it would be the Act in the King's Speech because that's the actual one that's going to transform things.

00:46:02 Tamara Cincik

£10 million is not enough to do real change.

00:46:06 Tamara Cincik

I've already had a tabloid headline.

00:46:08 Tamara Cincik

I don't need to be viral. I just need to create the space.

00:46:11 Tamara Cincik

And also cabinets change willy-nilly.

00:46:14 Tamara Cincik

So, you know, we could have.

00:46:16 Nicola Headlam

Legislative lever that you want to pull.

00:46:18 Nicola Headlam

So a public procurement that pulls together and ties together into one, all the different places where public procurement pops up.

00:46:25 Tamara Cincik

Exactly.

00:46:25 Tamara Cincik

And also then you can grow it into school uniforms, you can grow it into so many, you could grow it into hospitality uniforms, you can grow it.

00:46:32 Tamara Cincik

You just need to start the lever with public procurement.

00:46:34 Tamara Cincik

And then because there are lots of people who are starting to look at school uniforms and the toxicity of the unsustainable fabrications that are being chosen for price point.

00:46:44 Tamara Cincik

And there's a growing awareness about the toxicity of the petroleum industry's impact on our clothing.

00:46:49 Tamara Cincik

So what's that doing to young health? So, you start with public procurement and then you grow it.

00:46:55 Tamara Cincik

And really, I think the UK, funnily enough, post-Brexit could be the best-case study across this and Extended Producer Responsibility by looking at biodegradability.

00:47:04 Tamara Cincik

And then we're not only looking at food sovereignty or energy sovereignty, we're looking at fibre sovereignty.

00:47:08 Tamara Cincik

And that's a really exciting proposition.

00:47:11 Nicola Headlam

I know that certainly as unthrilling as kind of Securonomics is, everything needs to have more than one hit, right?

00:47:18 Nicola Headlam

Everything needs to work for more than one thing.

00:47:20 Nicola Headlam

So whilst there is more money going into defence, then that can, defence-led procurement can do some of the things that you describe as well.

00:47:27 Nicola Headlam

So it needs a joined up approach to public procurement in a bill.

00:47:29 Nicola Headlam

Well, I love it.

00:47:30 Nicola Headlam

Thank you.

00:47:31 Nicola Headlam

I look forward to it becoming law.

00:47:33 Nicola Headlam

Thank you for joining us.

00:47:38 Nicola Headlam

Thank you so much for having us, Nic.

00:47:40 Nicola Headlam

It's been really good.

00:47:41 Tamara Cincik

Thank you very much.

00:47:42 Nicola Headlam

And we set out to mine insights from experts.

00:47:45 Nicola Headlam

That's the pair of you.

00:47:46 Nicola Headlam

Really impressive portfolios of expertise from their real-world case studies.

00:47:51 Nicola Headlam

I'm not sure about practical tips and career advice.

00:47:54 Nicola Headlam

Just be dogged and follow your kind of thread as far as it takes you.

00:47:58 Nicola Headlam

And we have spotlighted some solutions that are possible, including the big legislative one that we want at the end.

00:48:03 Nicola Headlam

and we've waved the place-based innovation magic wand and we have.

00:48:07 Nicola Headlam

Thank you.

00:48:07 Tamara Cincik

I would say there's one thing about careers.

00:48:10 Tamara Cincik

I think that when you, especially if you come from a working class background in this country, which I know to Alix might be alien about quite how class-ridden it is. But the two people that I've cited as amazing conveners are both from very working class backgrounds.

00:48:26 Tamara Cincik

And I think that those voices, that agency, understanding that, you know, if you're not used to walking left on an airplane or you're not used to buildings like the Houses of Parliament or your voice is just as valid if not more and I think that's the part of it that I've always tried to maintain that reality connection that

00:48:49 Tamara Cincik

even though my life has changed and is always changing, that there is as much validity and a voice of someone who comes from what is actually the majority, the 93%, but also from diverse backgrounds, from marginalised communities, as people who use very long, complicated language from academia.

00:49:09 Tamara Cincik

And I think actually it's the cut through and the relatability, which is why I do have hope.

00:49:13 Tamara Cincik

I think that the timeliness of LPIP and the current government, I think it's a very exciting opportunity for LPIP to really grow the policies into action.

00:49:22 Nicola Headlam

Into real impact, and that's exactly what we're trying to do.

00:49:25 Nicola Headlam

As you will know, the LPIP is kind of winding up towards the end of the year, but we are determined to keep banging the drum for the work that's happened, holding the space, and you know, place that we're more and more encouraged that place leadership and place management are going to be ever-increasing importance.

00:49:41 Nicola Headlam

So, thanks ever so much for your time today, and as I say, I look forward to seeing you succeed in your legislative quest.

00:49:48 Alix Coombs

Thanks Nic.

00:49:49 Tamara Cincik

Take care.

00:49:49 Tamara Cincik

Thank you.