

Transcript of 'Greenpeace and Beyond'

Season 2, Episode 2, Transforming Tomorrow

[Theme music]

Paul: Hello and welcome to Transforming Tomorrow, the podcast from the Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business, here at Lancaster University Management School.

I'm Paul Turner.

Jan: And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.

Paul: Jan, we've talked about many subjects over the course of Transforming Tomorrow, but one thing we haven't talked about is activism.

Jan: Indeed, and activism is really important because it's part of a continuum about how change happens and when, when is it a good time to protest? What is a good time to work with others to try to influence? When is a good time to work with corporations to try to achieve their outcomes?

So I think one of the great themes of the podcast today is going to be the many ways in which we might intervene to create change in the systems that we want to see.

Paul: And then there's the links between the conflicts between possibly activism and academia and how that all fits together. Because academics and activists sometimes share goals, but don't always share methodologies. There's lots of things to consider.

Jan: And certainly when I came into university in New Zealand, there had just been a, an Act of Parliament that really tried to spell out exactly what universities were for. And we were charged with being the conscience and the critic of society.

So I don't think that you can be an academic and not in some way, shape, or form at various times drawn into discussions about what is right, what is proper, what is necessary, et cetera.

And of course that's a really difficult uh, line to follow along. But a really important one to know that it, that you don't have to just be an independent,

observer that doesn't have a view or doesn't use evidence to articulate a view and a, a track forward.

Paul: The reason we're talking about this is because today's guest is joining us from the Stockholm Resilience Centre, and you may remember last year we had Henrik Österblom from the Stockholm Resilience Centre with us, um, but also is a former lead of the Greenpeace project for the oceans campaign.

So we are welcoming Frida Bengtsson. Hello Frida.

Frida: Hi.

Paul: A very interesting uh, career you've had in your background let's say, working for Greenpeace and now being a PhD researcher in Stockholm.

How is it that you decided to move from Greenpeace to completing a PhD?

Frida: Oh, it's a good question and I'm glad I got it because it's not a very normal move, uh, to go kind of the other way around. Um, I spent a long time at Greenpeace. It's been very formative for me since I was a kid. My mum was a uh, a supporter of the organisation. So, I think it's really shaped how I see the world in, in many ways.

But after many years, I also felt that I wanted to understand what it is I have done. It's funny you mentioned Henrik because it's actually through meeting Henrik as an activist in a government setting that we started talking and started talking about doing things together. So, I'm forever thankful to him for also giving me the chance to uh, to do this.

So, it was really about trying to understand what it is that I've experienced. Um, and a little fun anecdote of that was when I did my interview for the PhD position, I was actually bobbing around in the Drake Passage on my way back from Antarctica.

Paul: [chuckles] Well, so it, it'd be interesting now then going to your work at Greenpeace. What did you do when you were at Greenpeace? What, what, what was your role there?

Frida: So I've, uh, had multiple roles, but before I left, I was project leading the Global Oceans campaign. So Greenpeace is organised in a distributed campaigning model, which means that most people have heard about Greenpeace International, but that's the coordinating body of the Greenpeace offices, and then different offices then takes on different projects.

So the Greenpeace Nordic office, which I worked for, together with Greenpeace UK and also Greenpeace Germany, co-led this big, big, oceans project, uh, which started with a trip to Antarctica, and kind of, um, didn't end with the, uh, trip to Antarctica, but for me it did.

But it was about trying to really tell the story about the oceans in relation to the negotiations on the High Seas Treaty for biodiversity. It was a lot of oceans, uh, of course, but then also a lot of ships and, and research actually, uh, throughout those years.

Jan: So, Frida, can you tell us about that treaty?

Frida: It's a very important treaty that's been negotiated for, I think people say that it's 17 years of talks from when it first was sort of mentioned to, to the final kind of deal that they made.

As we have sort of the, the United Nations Convention of Law of the Sea [UNCLOS], is like how we govern the ocean. And under that sits different implementing agreements. Uh, one is around management of fisheries and another one is how we manage deep sea mining, for example, through the International Seabed Authority.

But everyone kind of realised that some, piece of this puzzle is missing, and that was biodiversity. So even if the world or governments and, wanted to protect biodiversity on the high seas, we didn't have the global tools to do so.

So while a lot of people compare it to the Paris Agreement, it has a very distinct different feature because this is legal, it's law, so it, sits very firmly under UNCLOS. So it's not a voluntary agreement by nations. It's a mandatory legal instrument that is now through the process of being ratified and, and so on. And hopefully that speeds up.

So it's been a big part of my life and it's, I think a lot of people have this great passion for the ocean and most people live along the coastline. I think that's a common thing we say.

But to really understand what the ocean is, and I think that's what we try to do with those ship tours, to really kind of go out on the high seas and bring stories about what goes on there back to people on land to sort of understand what this treaty is about really.

Paul: It's interesting that you talk about that work and how there's an obvious demonstrable impact and difference that that work has made. Do you feel

that as an academic and a researcher, there's the potential for making those same kinds of impacts?

Frida: Yes and no. I think, [short laugh] of course, being an academic, it gives you access to certain audiences and, and certain kinds of discussions and credibility. So I think, it both plays a role.

I think what activism or my, uh, Greenpeace background can do is to be a bit tougher and harder. While I think academics and science should be a bit more careful [laughs]. It is, you know, to be completely honest with you, frustrating that I don't have 2000, uh, activists and three ships, to my disposal, [laughs] but a keyboard and a computer.

Jan: [laughs] That's what I love about talking with Frida is the realisation, that yeah, we're sort of stuck in an office, whereas her passion and her ambit includes those kind of you know, resources, but then also being both in the Antarctic and in the Arctic and making sense of, you know, some of the most phenomenal places on Earth, that I've never been to and I can't really imagine how I'd ever get to go there.

She can bring insights from those places to, to, you know, colleagues in the in the academic world.

Paul: My worry would be what you would do with three ships and 2000 activists that [Jan laughs] I, I fear for, yeah, many, many things that would ...

Jan: ...I think it's better of them than, than me. I think I'd, I'd be quite, um, daunting.

Paul: I don't want you to feel singled out here. Any academic with three ships and 2000 activists would be a danger as far as I'm concerned. An academic in charge of their own office can sometimes be a danger, let alone being given three ships and all those activists to go and do with what they please.

Jan: [laughing] Well, I think that's a good time to move on to some more questions, 'cause, 'cause one you're making me giggle, but also, you know, I have to sort of more or less agree. [Paul laughs]

So where you started off there, Frida, is you're talking about that, that legal framework. But I know that with regard to some of your roles within Greenpeace, and now also within academia as well, you're also involved in supporting voluntary corporate agreements that might lead us towards ocean stewardship.

Can you give us some examples of those kind of, um, initiatives and activities?

Frida: Yeah, it's been actually the highlights of my time at Greenpeace, but then also the, so great to be able to continue that type of conversations as an academic, because I think it sort of proves my previous 'yes and', sort of situation.

And so at Greenpeace, a lot of what Greenpeace do is doing these kinds of campaigns against corporations that quite often land in different forms of voluntary agreements. I think one of the kind of big one and known one is of course a soya moratorium in Brazil.

But what I've been involved in is, two particular ones, and one is, about the cod fishery in the Barents Sea, which is the largest cod fishery that, that we have and it's the kind of cod we eat in our fish and chips and our fish fingers and, and fish restaurants.

Uh, and then also like a similar one in Antarctica with the, with the krill fishing. Uh, and, and in both of those cases it was very clear that we could not only go after the governance, we had to kind of get people on our side.

And getting the industry on your side creates so much more pressure towards the government action that you then later wanna see.

So it's been really fun, and I've learned so much from those interactions. And I think to be able to, have that experience and then come into SeaBOS has been, yeah, really useful.

And then of course, also, seeing, a very known company that I know from my time in Greenpeace, Thai Union, and then to sort of meet them in another setting, in SeaBOS, uh, that's been really nice.

Jan: And now I'm gonna quiz Paul, what does SeaBOS stand for?

Paul: [muffled sounds of confusion] Uh, it's the, uh, Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship project.

Jan: It is indeed. And we've had some other SeaBOS colleagues with us on the podcast, because it's, it's, you know, quite an important initiative, but it's also one where we are exploring the, the dimensions and maybe the limits of, of, um, voluntary corporate action as well.

Paul: Which is where Greenpeace and activists come in because they sometimes push these organisations into actions that maybe they wouldn't

have done and bring them bad publicity and do lots of kind of really positive activism there.

And I know that activism is much more than publicity, but it's where the general public sometimes pick up on it, is through the publicity that is there.

Jan: It does indeed. And I think it very feels different in different parts of the world as well. So, um, I've been a, a, a member of Greenpeace over many, many years, and Greenpeace is considered, you know, really mainstream and really helpful in a, in a Aotearoa New Zealand context because they're campaigning about a nuclear free Pacific.

Whereas I was quite surprised when I moved to the Northern Hemisphere, people going, ooh Greenpeace are a bit edgy. And I was saying, oh, not if you come from the South Pacific, you know.

So, so there's also the way issues move from being edgy to being mainstream, but also how that changes in different places on different issues as well. So I think there's lots of, there's lots of nuance in that whole activist government, corporations, academia relationships.

Frieda: But, and I think also for me to, like, experience that for real, it's been like amazing, for example, to work with Greenpeace China. The office in China, who of course has a different reality what you could see is the [inaudible] like in, in Sweden, but also you don't have to go further than look at when I started in Greenpeace I lived in Norway, where we had very few members and, and very little support because of the whaling campaigns, back in the nineties.

And, and then to sort of rebuild and, and kind of the only way that we thought that we could rebuild that trust was to engage in real conversations with people and industries in over, over a long time. And that's taken time, but now the organisation is at a different place.

So it also teaches you something about the different realities and how you communicate across, like we want one thing, but you can't just sort of tell the same, the same story doesn't work in all contexts.

Jan: Yeah. But of course this is only a prelude to, um, discussing your academic work, and in particular, um, I know you've got a, a paper out recently and, uh, dear listeners we will make sure there's a link to that at the bottom of the podcast description.

And it focuses on better understanding the practice of transshipment. And that's where we need to start. We need a little bit of a briefing and a primer as to what is transshipment, and why does it happen, and how is it the prompt for your paper.

Frida: Yeah, so it's a practice within the fishing industry where refrigerated cargo vessels, uh mostly, it can also be other types of vessels, but primarily it's refrigerated cargo vessels. So that's basically big freezers, that goes out to sea and they meet fishing vessels out at sea so the vessels can offload their catches, and continue fishing. And the reefer then takes the fish back to port.

But the reefer can also act by, for example, taking change to, crew changes, but also bring spares, but also fuel. So it's a way to keep the fishing industry at sea, and basically this ship becomes an extended port facility, even if it doesn't work as a port, but it basically does that.

Uh, and it's very frequently used in, in particular the tuna fisheries, around the world, but also in some, other fisheries. And for a long time it's been viewed as very opaque. And it's of course a way to, if you were to do illegal things, where kind of, uh, mixing your illegally caught fish with legally caught fish, and so on.

So it's been a focus for a long time by the FAO and others who developed a lot of kind of guidelines. It is a regulated activity, but it's, yeah, we know it happens, but that kind of where it ends.

Jan: And, um, here, I'll just define one thing before passing over to Paul. So the FAO is the, the UN body, the Food and Agricultural Organisation.

Paul: Thank you, that was my first question. We've now cleared that up. You anticipated my first question. Thank you, Jan.

I want to know what you found then. What, what has your research found? And how hard has it been for you to be able to carry out this research given, as you say, that a lot of this is taking place in like an opaque environment and so many miles out to sea?

Frida: So the key part of it has been like over the years there's been what is called AIS data, so that's an automatic identification system. So it's like satellite data over where ship moves around. So that has been an important first step, and I didn't do that. It just means that this information is now available.

Based on my experience of being in ports and being at sea. I kind of wanted to know that while we often know where the ship operates and what flag it uses,

because that it has to communicate, I wondered who actually owns these vessels, because I think they have been a missing piece in the puzzle of trying to go to, to see what happens.

So, it's a bit of an academic and investigative kind of [laughs] piece here, where it's like, it's taken a lot of time. I'm also, I'm the kind of scientist that want to do things by hand, so I also manually sorted a lot of these vessels out, and when you do that, you can look at different ship spotting sites. I think we, people might have seen the film train spotting. There's also a huge and very interesting ship spotting community out there.

Um, combining that with different databases to kind of lay this puzzle of ownership. But it's also interesting that these vessels are also assets that corporations have, and they sell and trade. So you might fly a Panamanian flag in, in January, but you decide to change in May, and then you fly under another flag.

So it's also kind of, building that history over the past years and see how vessels have moved, uh, and which these actors are. Yeah, so it's taken some time, but I looked at a *lot* of vessels.

Paul: I'm wondering how open the companies are when you maybe approach them and ask them questions. We've done an episode not that long ago, in the previous series, around salmon fishing and salmon farming. And we have Josi Fernandes who spoke a lot about maybe the reluctance of people involved in that industry to make public or discuss a lot of their practices.

And I wondered if that, it's kind of similar when it comes to, transshipping and whether there's cases here where people don't necessarily want to even talk to you about, it or reveal any kind of data to you.

Frida: Um, and I think the simple answer to that is no. It's also because no one has actually asked them. So, I'm hoping what this paper can contribute with is that we actually open up a whole new set of conversations.

So, one of these areas where we know that there's been issues and there have been identified problems is the kind of African side of the South Atlantic. So, kind of out along the coast of Africa. Where previous studies have identified, uh, risky areas for illegal fishing.

So, with this study, we can now look at the vessels that operate there. They're mostly owned by Japanese owners and there's only 14 of them. And to me,

that tells a very important story, like 14 companies that's manageable. That's very easy. You can send a letter to them, you can engage with them. Through the SeaBOS cohort, for example, because they will be sourcing from these companies or have contract with them, but no one has ever asked them.

So, we don't know how they want to, how they're gonna react. So that in a way can be kind of a follow up or an experiment based on, on the paper, because I think we like to talk about these vessels a lot, but we never talk to the people that owns them.

Jan: Yeah, and I think here also there's a sense that there's these keystone patterns and that it's not about every vessel everywhere in the world, but there's particular areas where you'd want to investigate more, more carefully.

So it's place-based, keystone patterns and actually being open to asking the questions 'cause then you might get the answers. And I suppose this is where your knowledge and experience, on the water becomes really important. 'Cause I would've never known even to begin to ask that question. But you've got the scientific and the practice background to know, oh, here is an interesting question.

So I think, particularly for academics, sometimes if we only read our own work, we don't know what are really interesting questions. We only know where the gaps are in the literature. So I think this is a really good reason to be, you know, well-endowed and understanding of the, the life of what's happening in, in the natural places.

Frida: Yeah, I think. And, and in addition to sort of make it a bit more like personal if, if like, if a corporation can be a person, it's interesting that at sea we, we tend to talk about kind of it's the fishing vessels that fish illegally.

So that infrastructure does thing, you never talk about it on land in the same way. You talk about the farmer and I think in this case we should talk about the owners or the captains.

The vessel is not fishing illegally, it's a piece of steel, with different kinds of equipment attached to it. So I think it's also hopefully can change the kind of, I think no matter if you're an academic or an NGO or where you come from, you tend to kind of create the little kind of place where you discuss everything and, and in one particular way.

So, my hope is also that we can lift that study, or lift the ice a bit, and start sort of thinking about, it's the captains that fish illegally, it's the corporations that do it it's not the vessels.

Paul: What interests me here is you've talked already about, Jan, you mentioned how, the practice and the experience with the likes Greenpeace has come in handy when it knows to ask these questions.

Do you feel that you would've been able to ask these questions when you were an activist and when you were working with Greenpeace, or does your position as an academic give you the ability to ask these questions and find out this information that maybe you wouldn't have been able to find out quite so easily previously?

Frida: I think I have had conversations with a, particularly at least one of these companies beforehand from the activist side, that wasn't very constructive. And I think also because you play a different role, and I think science here is like a good way in to, kind of, restart a conversation or engage with people because it's less threatening.

And of course I understand that sort of coming to any corporations with the Greenpeace brand and organisation behind you isn't always a good, kind of, nice conversation starter. That can be quite rough and, and quite hard.

So, and I also think well, while the role at Greenpeace is like partly to create a conflict or create some sort of tension that someone needs to solve, I think what science can do, which is really good, is that it can open a different dialogue because it doesn't have that confrontational element.

So I'm really pleased that I can kind of, been able to see it from, from both sides.

Jan: When you were describing your work, you, you talked about being maybe a little bit old-fashioned and hand gathering data. So I, I think for our listeners, I really like to know how do you find out who owns a vessel?

And I know what you mean about the, the ship spotting things 'cause occasionally, I will be in a, a port somewhere and I'll send Frida a picture of a boat and she'll come back and she'll say, oh, that's owned by X. It's on its way from Y to Z and it's doing something else.

And I, and I've used some of those websites myself, and it certainly enlivens your understanding of a port and what's there. But how do you get from, you

know, the vessel data through to who the owners are of the vessels and, and complications and interesting things in that process of discovery?

Frida: Yeah. Oh, it's, uh, I love those, uh, keep on sending those images. I love them.

No, so it normally starts with a, with an MMSI number, which is basically the ship's phone number, which is attached to its flag. So it also follows international telephone codes, quite fascinating.

So from that MMSI number, you just have to go into the better, like to the world of internet, and then you can start searching on the MMSI number. Which ship, it can change over time but what can't change on a vessel is its IMO number, which is ship identification number, which is stamped onto the hull of the vessel. So that always stays the same.

So you start with the MMSI, you find the IMO, and from the IMO, you can then start going into either the, so it's the International Maritime Organisation, uh, for the listeners.

They also keep the records of, registered ships and then there is a whole world of, of, at least I've been super fascinated by the world of shipping, because it has its own language, its own tradition. And from that I then used MarineTraffic, which is one of these websites, but I've also heavily relied on Lloyd's, which is a paid subscription service. But for anyone who wants to know anything about vessel movements, they're amazing.

I also once want to go to their library in London because I think they keep ship records back for about 300 years.

Paul: Yeah, I think that's something that Lloyd's are famous for, isn't it? That you, you go back hundreds of years about Lloyd's having the shipping registry, when, you know, ships were lost at sea.

However, you know, many hundreds of years ago, Lloyd's would be the ones who'd know what was on that ship, how much it was worth, who was the owner, who should therefore get the payments for any insurance that was on it.

Jan: And we, we might come back to Lloyd's, um, once, uh, Frida's, described this a bit more because they're also the insurers, and there's no way you're on, on a vessel on the ocean without insurance. So they're one of the sort of, hidden keystones to our whole system. But anyway, sorry, we digress.

Frida: Yeah, no. So, so from that I've been starting to puzzle it together, this, this puzzle of who owns and, and trying to sort of triangulate and, and of course, there's sometimes vessels, which it's very hard to find the ownership of. That happens regularly.

But many of them you can actually find, if you know where to look. So that's what I've done, then. And then from that sort of building a database and then starting to looking at how it looks in different contexts.

If there's a very competitive, sort of the Russian sector, for example, how they do their transshipment, the Chinese-owned vessels. And then of course the old kid on the block here, which is Greece. So Greece is not a famous fishing nation as such, I think they're known for their amazing islands, but also, for ship owning.

So it's not strange from a ship owning perspective that Greece turns up in my research, because I think they, by tonnage, have the most ship owners in the world. But that just looking at the tonnage and not very many vessels are flagged to Greece. So they're flagged to the big registries like, uh, Liberia or Panama or, uh, and others.

Jan: And how did these big registries come about you know, why is Panama quite a popular flag for a, for a vessel to, to come under?

Frida: It's been over time, different things that meant that ship has flagged to, I think the, a case that people refer to is, of course, like alcohol, like the alcohol situation in the US and why they were flagged to different.

So it's, a way to sort of avoid certain kinds of regulations, and, and maybe have laxer regulation. But it's also, I think over time that some of these ship registries have been very good at sorting out their registries. And of course we have the challenge around what we call the flag of convenience, which is sort of a ship registry, which is sort of less rigid.

But still, if you look at Panama, they still have, competence of authority authorisation with the EU, which means that they're being audited regularly and they are passing through those audits. So I think also sometimes we need to put a bit of nuance into what flag of convenience means.

But, of course, it is a bit weird when you know that the Liberian flag registry is hosted by a law firm in Virginia, and their address in Monrovia is an address that very often come up in the Panama Papers, you know. That's, that's, then it

starts to be a bit like, you know, that they might not be the strongest on workers' rights.

Paul: How does this then affect the potential for formal regulation of the whole system, if you've got flags of convenience, if you've got, you know, ships that are being owned here, there, and everywhere.

And if you've got all of these practices going on, um, when we go back to transshipping, you know, in the middle of the ocean far away, some of it legal, some of it illegal. How, how does it all work when it comes to regulation?

Frida: Very fragmented because fisheries, world fisheries on outside of national borders is governed in, in multiple different ways and they all have slightly different regulations when it comes to this activity.

So in my head, it'll be if we have one owner that operates in five different areas, if we get them through voluntary agreements or through corporate, higher corporate standards, to apply a higher standard, we can actually get at five places in one go, instead of doing it sort of five different times and negotiate those across.

So I think that's kind of where my experience from negotiating those kinds of voluntary agreements, the work with SeaBOS, I think this is a prime example of where it can be very, very useful um, to get corporations or ship owners to then kind of, tighten their regulation.

It's also a very effective way to take out the bad fishing vessels, because if they don't find anyone at sea to transfer their fish to, it's not gonna be worth fishing. So it could also be a way of, instead of going through thousands of fishing vessels, you can go through a hundred of these like key actors of the reefer vessels.

So for me it's like, at least in my mind, it's a kind of a clear case of where I think it could be very useful. Because I think shipping is by default kind of hard to govern, because of its history and its tradition and the way it operates, at least on the high, high seas, and you can use ports for that and you can check it.

But I think we also have to remember that when we talk checking things in ports, it's actually requires people to do that checking for you. While I think we still have a lot of good paperwork around, the Port State Measures Agreement and other bits and pieces, I think it's still kind of changing people's behaviour that are active in their activities, that's gonna give us a quicker and faster win.

Jan: [joking] And Paul thought he was just buying a tin of tuna.

Paul: Fish fingers. You could have got me on fish fingers.

Frida: Oh yeah, they're very often transshipped so...

Paul: ...yeah, yeah, yeah. So you could, you could have definitely got me on fish fingers. In a household with two small children fish fingers are something that does definitely, uh, come into that.

And I was, it gave me a great sense of joy to discover that fish fingers aren't just a British thing. I very much see them as a British thing. But when Frida mentioned fish fingers unprompted before, it made me realise that somewhere in Norway, Sweden, Scandinavia, fish fingers are very definitely a thing as well.

Frida: Yeah.

Jan: Well you can't have beat a fish finger sandwich in my view.

Paul: Mmmm. yeah. These posh, you know, gourmet fish finger sandwiches go too far, and I bet they don't even do their checking on their transshipping issues either.

Jan: Uh, I suspect they probably do. And I suppose that's one of the real sort of insights that's coming from, from this conversation on this podcast is that different parts of the system are regulated, and when those parts join up and become robust, then you eat your, your fish finger sandwich with, you know, a carefree attitude because it, the system behind it is, is functioning well.

Paul: Frida, I just want to ask one final question. And I guess this comes across from either your time in Greenpeace or your time in academia.

Do you see inspirational activity that's giving you optimism, and do you see stuff that's giving you inspiration for moving forward?

Frida: Yeah, no, I, I decided to constantly be inspired and, and kind of feel hopeful about where things are at. I think if you're gonna focus too much on what doesn't work, it's just not gonna be helpful.

So I've seen change happen. I've experienced it. I know it's not easy, but I know that it can happen. So I think that kind of gives me motivation. And also that sort of science, to know, it's nice to know that science can really matter, and I

think at Greenpeace we used so much science to underpin campaigns that we did.

Of course, then, it gets packaged in with the Greenpeace messaging and the Greenpeace kind of label to it. But it, was so important that what we said had a scientific foundation, and to be able to then now contribute to that it, it makes this really meaningful.

Jan: And the last question...

Paul: ...the last question, yeah that's normally our last question, but there's a really, important question that Jan is desperate to know the answer to.

Jan: Because you're, you're the only person I know that could do this.

How do you hire a helicopter?

Frida: Oooh. [laughs]

Jan: Not that I have an immediate need for one, but if I were to have a need for one, um, along with my, you know, several thousand activists and three boats, how would I hire a helicopter?

Frida: There's lots of, there is companies of course, that you can hire them from. I have contacts in the helicopter chartering business. But It's also been an interesting, how do you get a helicopter from mainland Europe to the mid-Atlantic? Where you see how they fly from, over the UK and then onto Iceland and then onto the ship. And, uh, quite amazing.

We also tried to take a helicopter to Antarctica where we didn't have cover for it, so we had to build a helicopter hangar and attach to the vessel while in port. And it's just so fascinating that there's people that can build helicopter hangars in the port in the end of the world and, and all these things.

Jan: Yeah. There we are.

Paul: If you ever need a helicopter, you know...

[Jan laughs]

Frida: ...call me. [laughs]

Jan: I will, I will.

Paul I, I, do worry about helicopters in the Antarctic, as the only example of helicopter in the Antarctic I can think of off the top of my head is from the John

Carpenter film, *The Thing*, where there's a helicopter crash and essentially alien type creature ends up killing everyone.

So, less helicopters in the Antarctic as far as I'm concerned, 'cause that, that's the only way I can see it ending.

Jan: [straight-faced] I'll explain to Paul later that it wasn't a documentary. It will be fine. [chuckles]

Paul: Frida, thank you very much. It's been a wonderful conversation we've had with you over the last half hour or so. Thank you very much for joining us.

[Theme music]

Paul: Well, Jan, that was fascinating.

Um, before you dash off and hire that helicopter, because the, the question seemed a bit much like you've actually got a plan for what to do with that helicopter, 2000 activists and three ships.

To understand how you go from activism to academia and how both play a role in each other is just fascinating.

Jan: Indeed. And I really like the way Frida's really good at articulating how change comes about and how there's multiple players. Some of it's governmental, some of it might be, uh, the NGO sector. Other ones will be from a corporate perspective. Others will be the insurers and the people who keep records.

So, so change if you like, can come from all of those places and where it crystallises together to create well-governed robust systems for people to be on the oceans, because we expect and hope people are on the oceans, um, catching fish for, you know, it's a really important, um, food group and a really good protein to have.

So I like the, the nuance and the complexity that she's able to draw out there.

Paul: And Frida's a good example of academics come from so many different backgrounds. So, so much experience they bring with them. Not everyone just goes straight from studying for a bachelor's degree to a master's degree, to a PhD, to a lifetime in academia.

People go and have lives in between that, and they bring experience, which then brings valuable insight into, uh, their work. It's like, like you mentioned,

would Frida have been able to know to ask certain things if she hadn't had that background in Greenpeace?

Um, likewise if Frida was still in Greenpeace, would she have been able to have the access to the people she's then had access to, and they've given her the answers that she's been able to get from them?

You know, she meets people in different circumstances. She's met in one life as a Greenpeace activist now as an academic, and is able to converse with them in ways that maybe they would've been scared of previously.

Jan: Indeed. And what I also really like about sustainability in business in general, and you know, our good colleagues from um, from the Stockholm Resilience Centre are a really good example of it, but we also hope the Penland Centre is as well, is that in order to be able to answer what is quite a sort of corporate focus, corporate responsibility-focussed question, you actually need to know about everything else as well.

And so that interdisciplinary nature of the knowledge sets that come together to understand the possibilities for sustainability in business is really important. And, and, Frida's conversation that we've just had is a really good exemplar of, of needing to bring all of that knowledge and experience to bear on a, on a really important question.

Paul: I was also really fascinated to learn that you spend half of your time when you're abroad just tracking ships.

Jan: [laughs] I've, um, I've, I love ports and I love vessels. Um, and it partly comes from when I was in my twenties and, and still living in, in the South Pacific. I was a volunteer crew on a sail training vessel, called The Spirit of New Zealand.

And, once you've been to sea, particularly on a square rigged, you know, vessel, you end up quite obsessed with who's in port, what they're doing. So I usually pop down to ports to see if there's any square rig vessels in or any sail training vessels.

And then you look at these fantastic things and I think, I wonder what they do and uh, have a wee conversation with Frida.

Paul: See, from my bedroom window, I look out on a small port in Barrow and I get to see what are mainly nuclear ships. But every once in a while you'll see

another ship in there and you wonder what that's there for 'cause it's not one of the James Fisher nuclear fleet that's transporting nuclear waste.

And then you obviously get to see nuclear submarines going out and coming in, every once in a while. Well actually, usually coming out. If it's coming in, then there's something really wrong with it. [Jan laughs]

Yeah, they're, they're all going out and you see wind farm boats going out to the wind farms, which are a lot smaller. But yeah, it's fun watching the boats go into and from. And so that's something I get to see from my, the elevated view from my back, back window.

Jan: It is. And there's data behind all of that so you can figure out what you're looking at, what they're doing, and really understand the nature of the world.

Paul: Well, let's understand the nature of the world a bit more next week when we welcome, uh, Professor Steve Kempster here.

He's gonna be talking to us all about Good Dividends, positive change, and working with businesses on doing good in general.

Jan: Well, positive is a theme from where we've just been to where we're going.

Paul: Well, until then, thank you very much for listening. I'm Paul Turner.

Jan: And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.

[Theme music]