



## Nik Kafka

**Nik Kafka:** [00:00:00] That's part of what we want to create, is a community of like-minded changemakers, who are entrepreneurial, and go out there, and tackle some of these many issues that we face locally, regionally, nationally. The world is sadly full of problems, we need problem solvers.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:00:16] Welcome to Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. This is Annalies Corbin, Chief Goddess of the PAST Foundation and your host. We hear frequently that the global education system is broken. In fact, we spend billions of dollars trying to fix something that's actually not broken at all, but rather irrelevant. It's obsolete. A hundred years ago, it functioned fine. So, let's talk about how we reimagine, rethink, and redesign our educational system. So, in today's episode of Learning Unboxed, we have a very special treat, because we're going to have a conversation about what happens when social enterprise meets education and opportunity.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:00:51] And joining us today is Nik Kafka. And Nik is the Chief Executive and Founder of an entity called Teach A Man To Fish, which Nik founded after leaving a successful banking career in the City of London for a local microfinance institution in Paraguay, where he discovered an innovative school that was aiming not only to teach the poor how to become rural entrepreneurs, but also to do so as a self-financing social enterprise, which is super, super exciting for us to be able to talk about. With that experience, he helped transform the school, turned it into a replicable model, and then he went back to the UK, where he founded Teach A Man To Fish. So, Nik, welcome to the program.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:01:51] Thank you for having me.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:01:52] So, I always want to sort of start this conversation, because our audience is global, they come to us from all over the world, and very interested in these amazing stories of success in education. We hear all the time that so much is not working. And although that's true in many cases, there are these amazing golden nuggets out there of extreme success. And they are nuggets that we should figure out how to capture or replicate, if possible, and certainly, implement in a variety of ways, which I suspect is part of what you discovered in Paraguay that you then came back to found this organization. So, start with telling us what is Teach A Man To Fish.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:02:32] So, Teach A Man To Fish is a UK-based nonprofit. And our mission is to empower young people around the world with the skills they need for success in work, in life, and to make positive contributions to their communities. So, yeah, we started out in 2006, based off some fascinating work I saw in Paraguay and contributed towards. And with a sensation that there are, sadly, the world is not lacking in innovations, but too many innovations failed to scale up. So, I thought I would do my part to see what I could do to take some of these really interesting ideas about doing education differently and making it much more

relevant to the lives of young people, so they would get more out of it, and try and turn that into something more global and with greater scale.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:03:23] That's a very lofty ambition and absolutely worthy. And I feel you, because I think so much of what we do at PAST, and the PAST Foundation is very similar, or at least like-minded in terms of our premise. So, share with us a little bit, before we get into the nuts and bolts of exactly what Teach A Man To Fish does, so share with us a little bit about that experience in Paraguay, and this the school of this idea, because obviously, it was very inspiring to you, because you didn't go back to banking. You came back and founded a nonprofit. And anybody who's involved in the nonprofit world knows, that's an epic lift. No matter what the nonprofit does, it's not easy. So, you are clearly inspired, or you would not have said, let me just take on some more.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:04:11] No, absolutely. I mean, I went from a banking background and I was actually intending to do microfinance work when I went to Paraguay. But I realized, actually, already, the microfinance industry was very well-established then. But this was an interesting organization, Fundacion Paraguaya, who was trying to apply some of the things it had learned from microfinance to the world of education.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:04:32] And I guess one of the biggest takeaways they'd had over the years was just how vulnerable you can be as a nonprofit when you rely entirely on donations. That means, you don't control your own destiny. So, they were looking for a way to make that school, they had been donated a school, because a religious organization that no longer have the means to support the school wanted to see it go to good hands for an organization they could trust to pursue its social mission to ensure that kids from the poorest backgrounds would still get an education.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:05:08] But somehow, the organization wanted to make this thing sustainable so that it didn't have to rely on donations. And a great idea, I thought, at the time, and then still do was to try and make the thing pay for itself by running a number of businesses within the school. But because it was a technical high school, they could really include the young people in this.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:05:31] And through seeing, and learning, and experiencing business hands-on, the kids would not just get their technical education, which is the main part of what was required by the government, but would actually get a very entrepreneurial education and would learn about how to make money through being part of a process that would enable the school to generate the funds to pay for itself.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:05:53] And, A, the place was beautiful, and B, it had such a positive impact on the young people. you could see them coming in from rural backgrounds, where they would have some of these sort of attitudes. They would constantly—they wouldn't look people in the eye, they couldn't speak with much kind of confidence. And over the space of the three years of high school, they would blossom into young people who could speak confidently, look people in the eye, and sell, because part of what the skills, one of the skills they worked on in the school was actually selling to customers.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:06:25] And if you do that long enough, you can sell yourself, you can sell your vision, and this is a transformation for them. So, that left a real impression on me in a sense that Paraguay isn't one of these countries that people sadly know very much about, and it would be very easy for them to exist as a sort of island of excellent or hidden from the world. One of the advantages we have being based in places like the UK is the potential to reach out to a wider audience or access different people, and I thought I could really do something to sort of propel some of these ideas a bit more globally if I set up something when I came back to the UK.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:07:06] Yeah, absolutely. And I can't tell you how much that really resonates, because we see the exact same thing in the processes that happen with the kids that we work with and engage in, that very applied, hands-on. The kids show up here at the PAST Innovation Lab, same sort of thing, they haven't had a lot of experience. They might not have engaged in much public speaking. They lack confidence. And again, the not looking you in the eye, that is so, so incredibly familiar. And to your point, by giving kids these great, wonderful, robust experiences, their confidence grows and it's amazing the things that they can do.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:07:40] So, I truly appreciate that element of all of this. So, how does that then translate for when you went back to the UK, create Teach A Man To Fish. So, fast forward to this moment, how did the experience in Paraguay and the sort of the journey since 2006 really sort of solidify or impact? Because right now, when I look at the list of things that your organization is doing, it's remarkable. So, how do you get there? What's the nuts and bolts of how do you make the decisions around what projects to do?

**Nik Kafka:** [00:08:15] In the first instance, I wanted to know, is there anyone else doing this kind of thing out there? Frankly, there are too many nonprofits in the world and many refuse to die when they probably should. So, actually, the world doesn't need more nonprofits unless you've got something that's really distinct and no one else is doing it. We did a lot of research, and really, there was no one else trying to promote practical, skills-based entrepreneurial education that would also involve creating genuine income for schools.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:08:44] So, knowing that there was no one else out there doing it kind of propelled me. And we just started from my kitchen table like so many people do. I found a volunteer who had come along and helped me for nothing, and we started making a bit of noise. We started pulling together organizations who had a similar outlook. We created a members network, we shared between ourselves, and looked for that initial seed funding.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:09:11] And slowly, slowly, we started the first year. Our income was like \$3,000, and then maybe \$50,000 the next year, and it's grown steadily over time. I think one of my co-collaborators in the early days, his message to me strongly was, you've got to stick your bucket out there, and then it'll fill up. If you're doing the right thing and you're capable of explaining to people what you're doing, then you will attract interest and opportunities from that.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:09:38] So, that's how we got started. We've always been sort of demand-driven. So, we went places and we worked with people who sought us out and wanted to work with us rather than trying to impose ourselves, and decide where we wanted to work, and persuade people they should do that. And that sort of naturally grew, I guess, out of English-speaking at Africa or India, there was always a lot of interest.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:10:05] And then, Latin America also, because of our roots in Paraguay. And to some degree, we've stayed with those kind of geographies over time. Although now, we've added some more programs, which kids anywhere in the world can take part in. So, in terms of which projects we add on, we've, yeah, got—I think it's in a lot of pies, but there's a common golden thread running through them.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:10:33] And again, one of the things we learnt over time was that original model that we started with, the Paraguay model probably wasn't going to be the one that we could really take to mass scale, because even though it was hugely impactful, which was brilliant, it was also very intense to run and did require a lot of startup funding, even though it was sustainable for its own resources once it got going.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:10:57] So, one of our biggest challenges was to turn that into something that was much more scalable. And once we had that, so this program, School Enterprise Challenge, I'll speak about a bit more later, and then the main thing was just really to scale that out, to get that known, to get as many schools involved as

possible. And since then, we've selectively packaged that up in different ways to work with different audiences so that we can create even more impact.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:11:27] Yeah. So, tell us, help our listeners understand then, how exactly does it work? So, what does—once the decision is made, we're going into X country or X community. So, what is it? What's the work that's happening? The roll up the sleeves, what's Teach A Man To Fish actually doing with that partner, school, or community?

**Nik Kafka:** [00:11:51] I guess the way things have evolved were from working very intensely with individual schools to wanting to do a lot more in a country. So, in the first instance, we would have a single school, perhaps, that we were working with and really understanding their needs and more about how it worked in a country. And often, because the nature of things, we'd end up starting with expats who would understand the model, because they'd spend time with me or being able to visit some of the programs already going on somewhere else.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:12:28] But we rapidly would transition to local teams of local staff who understand their country and their culture in ways that no outsider could. And then, really, it's a question of raising awareness. Marketing, from our perspective, sharing with schools that might be interested, the fact that this thing exists and explaining what it is. And as part of that process, obviously, we'd try and collaborate as much with local government as possible. They already have those connections with schools and come with a sort of unique credibility.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:13:04] So, when local governments could say to schools that if this looks like a quality program, we'd be interested in you doing it, schools would feel much more comfortable getting involved. And then, little by little, as we are able to raise some funds, put on teacher training workshops, the things would build momentum. So, yeah, in certain countries in Uganda, I guess before the COVID, we were up to working with around two or 300 schools, which is already quite a significant number, except you're probably somewhere between sort of 40 and 100 kids, and that in each school, would be taking part in the program. So, around sort of 30,000 kids just in Uganda alone.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:13:48] Wow, that's remarkable and very, very impressive. So, share with us a little bit about the School Enterprise Challenge. So, that's really sort of a sweet spot, I guess, if you will, of where you've evolved, too. So, help us understand the ins and outs of that program.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:14:04] Yeah. So, that's been very much sort of our flagship program, and it's structured as an awards program for school, so schools can go through it year after year, progressing from bronze, to silver, to gold. But the heart of it is the idea of planning and setting up a business, which is led by young people and facilitated by teachers. So, we have a 14-step process, which starts with looking at the resources that are around you, and a community identifying needs, thinking about what makes a great business, and where the opportunities lie, and then going through business idea generation, business planning, creating our business plan, so there's a point of reference to look back on, running a business, trying to make it as successful as possible.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:14:59] And then, every year, the students write up an annual report just like a regular business, but the difference is these reports get sent back to us, and we get volunteer markers to go through them, provide feedback. And there are prizes, which everybody enjoys as a sort of little extra incentive or cherry on the cake. So, some of these schools can win several thousand dollars, which, in their context, can be a very transformative amount of money. This sense of competition and global community creates an energy, and then that draws more schools into the program. And that's partly how it's grown over the years.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:15:39] Do these businesses that the kids create, are they still intended or does it just vary from location to location? I mean, do these businesses actually, ultimately get started, get founded, not just ideated, and then actually are contributing to the bottom line as sustainability of their schools, or is that just some of them do and some of them don't?

**Nik Kafka:** [00:16:01] Yeah. So, one of the things that we really push and advocates for is the actual setting up of the business. So, if you look at all education programs out there, there's an awful lot of ones that are centered around the ideas and the planning. And I recently took part in judging a competition like that, and it was amazing to see the ideas these kids were coming out with, but I couldn't help feeling, very few of them would be in a position to actually make that into a reality.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:16:29] So, having a competition that's about dreaming is great, but creativity, possibly, not great business skills. I think it's fundamental that a business gets set up, and then they have to work out, what do we do with the cash every day? How do we keep the records on this? How do we know if we're making any money or not? And this is the essence of business, and this is what trips up so many sort of necessity entrepreneurs or very small scale entrepreneurs around the world, wherever they are.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:16:58] So, that experience is vital. But in terms of the scale, because again, we believe it's really important that the sense of self-empowerment for people to start where they are, it would be kind of possible for us to raise funds and disperse seed funding that would get people off to a much faster start. But actually, the world doesn't work like that. For the young people, if they want to start something up, they're going to have to scramble around and hustle to find an initial startup capital.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:17:29] They're not going to have a sort of angel from another country coming, throwing a lot of money at them. So, often, they have to start with what they can find. Often, that's 10, 20, \$30. You can't start a very large business that makes a big difference to your bottom line that way, but the experience, the learning is still super powerful. So, what we see is when they're in their first year and they're starting at a low level, the amounts of money are less significant, but frequently, that grows over time.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:18:00] Again, one of the differences between what we're trying to do and many other sorts of programs that superficially sound a bit the same, that we're trying to really enable a school and students to create something sustainable that has ongoing value in their school rather than a startup experience. In the startup experience, you decide you're going to bake and sell some cakes, you sell them to your friends and family, it's still nice, you can learn things that way, but you can only get by so long selling cakes to your friends and family, otherwise, you have to find a wider audience.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:18:33] So, some of them, after a few years, it becomes more significant, and recently, I was being told about a really nice school in Guinea, in Africa. And there, the way it works is that if you want to send your kids to secondary school, you don't just have to buy the school uniform, which already cost you money like as a family, you literally have to send them to school with a physical desk, and that desk is going to cost \$27 or something, but \$27 is a lot to a family, and that can be the difference between sending your kid or not sending your kid.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:19:12] So, the school there had set up its own business, food-related business, and managed to generate about \$1,100, which would work out as equivalent of about 43 desks. That's 43 kids that could, with poorer backgrounds, go to that school, who wouldn't have been able to before. So, in some ways, it's not income on the scale of building giant new infrastructure or transforming the school, but for the possibility that if

you're one of those 43 kids, that's transformative for you, and certainly, money that the school couldn't afford to stump up itself otherwise.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:19:51] Yeah, life-altering in the most positive of ways. Absolutely. That's phenomenal. So, how do you—I'm super, super curious about, because you're absolutely 100%, there are a lot of entrepreneurial or entrepreneurship programs all over the planet, and very few of them, I agree with you, very, very few of them actually go all the way to real implementation, as opposed to just, like you said, a bake sale with your family or doing some things with your friends, great idea, operation. So, what is the support structure?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:20:25] I'm really, really curious about why and how it is that you're able to actually go from great idea to maybe even practice what the idea was to a true implementation? How do you do that? How is the support? And I don't mean the monetary support, I mean, just a school or teachers, they're not necessarily going to know how to do that. So, how do you facilitate that piece of the learning? Because that's the entire ecosystem learning. It's not just students, and it's not just teachers.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:20:58] Yeah. No, I mean, you're absolutely right, that one of the first challenges is the fact that teachers frequently know virtually nothing about running a business themselves. And because of the power dynamics in a lot of countries, teachers don't really appreciate being made vulnerable to the idea that students will discover what they don't know. So, we emphasize in the first instance a lot on teacher training.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:21:22] We have to get the teacher's understanding what the hell running a business implies, why it's exciting for students, and why it's exciting for them. And much as there can be a sort of sense that the teachers are short on time and won't always take on something that's extra if it's just for the kids. Actually, the reality is in so many countries, teachers are so badly paid and they have no possibilities for the pensions when they finish either, so many teachers try and have a business on the side or know that they would like to have a business so that they can generate enough money for themselves for a pension.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:22:02] So, actually, teachers have quite a strong personal incentive to build their skills and to run a program like this as much for their own learning as for the kids. So, between having a very structured program that takes people in very micro steps through all the different elements of learning that you might need in order to be successful, having lots of guides and videos that, again break it down into very manageable chunks and combining that with, where we have presence in the country, there are trainers who will provide actual training sessions face-to-face with teachers.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:22:40] And now, we do a lot of webinars with countries where we don't have a presence. We make teachers feel a little calmer that they understand what's going on, there are benefits for them, it's worth giving it a go. And then, the fact that there are these monetary prizes and non-cash prizes, and the fact that there are award levels so that the school can get recognition from an international organization.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:23:07] So, that makes the principals happy. Teachers are very happy if they're winning personal prizes or prizes for the business. So, we're just trying to align incentives. And I think that's what makes the difference. Often, we hope that just because we put something out there, that will get adopted, because it's good. And I think the sad reality is people don't just do stuff.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:23:30] Because it's good, like we all know in our own private lives, we should adopt certain sorts of behavior that might be better for us or healthier for us, but we still don't always do them, because there's a barrier. But when you get the incentives right, then you figure out, how do you do that diet? Why do you start jogging every day? And this is the same kind of thing, but in the realm of education.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:23:50] So, is the program then very broadly available? So, let's say you're not in Uganda. Let's say, you are in the south of France, or you're in the US, or you're in China. Is the program available broadly or accessible in such a way that all kinds of educational endeavors could choose to participate or opt in, or is it limited in the way you deploy it at this time?

**Nik Kafka:** [00:24:19] No. Yeah. So, again, that's one of the things, I think, makes us a bit distinctive. Often, only certain groups can participate in the programs that are out there, but we're super accessible if you have internet connection. I mean, that's the sort of minimum requirement. So, [schoolenterprisechallenge.org](http://schoolenterprisechallenge.org) is the website. Anyone can sign up from any country around the world, any educational level. So, we have, obviously, lots of secondary schools, lots of primary. Every once in a while, we get some pre-primary kids doing it.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:24:56] And it's amazing to see that even sort of four and five-year-olds, they can't do some of the more sophisticated finance stuff, they don't have to. But actually, it's about creating that sense, doing it as a form of creativity, exercise, problem solving. They still get a huge amount of output. Wherever you are in the world, whatever educational level, through our website, you can participate, you can watch the videos, you can download the resources, you can win the prizes, you can be part of the community.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:25:23] That's absolutely remarkable. And I'm super, super hopeful, actually, that we have any number of listeners that are like, hey, I want to give that a try and will at least sort of dig into the concept of it. And because I often talk about at PAST and guests that come here to sort of see what's going on, the fact that I sort of liken what we do is sort of the intersection between a startup weekend, and weekend serial entrepreneurship, and a hackathon, and an industry R&D prototyping team, right?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:25:58] All kind of rolled into one, right? Recognizing that each one of those different sort of enterprises has some really unique, beneficial experiences and learning opportunities for the participants. And if you can sort of mesh many of these things together, and combine it with a studio model, or portfolio model, or an early college sort of opportunity for students to really sort of dig in and expand on the things that they're, A, interested and intrigued by, but also, their opportunity to see true success that students will engage and always surprise you.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:26:34] And I would assume that through your journey, you've had some remarkable surprises coming out of these schools and these students. Could you share one or two of those with our listeners, because people get jazzed by hearing those successes? And the flip side is I'll ask the same question afterwards about some of the constraints or disappointments that you've experienced.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:26:57] Yeah. No, I mean, the list of successes is extremely large. I guess one of the things that is always interesting for us, I guess, is the success of the sort of the local level, or doesn't always involve the— or overwhelmingly doesn't involve huge levels of innovation, actually, because people need to operate within their local environment. They need to produce things that people are ready to understand and want to buy.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:27:31] Actually, that caps a little bit the level of creativity, because they're not coming up with wild, one of the new things. So, an awful lot of the businesses that we see happen are agricultural-based, different forms of making and processing food, handicrafts, things that can be started with relatively low income, but where there's a demand. But that said, there are always sort of interesting sort of surprise ones.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:28:03] We had a queueing business in Nepal, which I guess in the US, you kind of call a line. So, actually, for many services, there would be horrible kind of lines out there. So, the kids would recruit people

to go stand in line for other people who were waiting to get to the front of the line for the bank, or to pay bills, or whatever, and charge a small amount for that and managed to turn that into a viable business.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:28:36] We've got one in Turkey where the kids came up with sort of a discount card model, and went round lots of local stores persuading them to offer discounts, and people bought the cards. And that, again, was something more unusual for the kinds of businesses we see. But yeah, typically, they're not so high on the innovation stakes, but they make money and they actually get set up, which is one of the most vital things for some learning to go on.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:29:09] Oh, absolutely. Kids learn so much in that space. That's just phenomenal. So, what are some of the constraints that you've encountered? So, let's say, a school or a group hears about this, they think this is absolutely wonderful, but I also would assume that from time to time, folks get started, but then they just don't quite finish. And there are all kinds of reasons for that to happen, life happens, your local environment, your community, all those sorts of things, but is there anything that you see that is consistent when you sort of dig into, why did you not complete, that sort of turns up?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:29:42] I'm super, super curious about this, because we sort of see this with all kinds of programming. Kids will get started, schools will get started, and then either the next great thing comes along, and they get distracted, and they just don't realize that the greatest learning hasn't happened yet, because you haven't gotten far enough into the program to meet the moment where the aha happens for the participants.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:30:04] No, I mean, sadly, that happens all too often. I don't think we do a pretty good job of pulling people through the program. And what we do see is, often, there's a big drop-off between registration and the next stage, which for us is submitting a business idea, just principally, because people haven't really thought through just what the time commitment is. The biggest challenge, so you hear that time and again for schools and teachers who already have a packed curriculum is, how do they squeeze one more thing in?

**Nik Kafka:** [00:30:40] There aren't enough hours in the day if they do it after school, if they're not being paid for it. That takes a lot of love from the teacher. So, our programs are not easy. They involve a bunch of work. They involve the work of understanding the thing in the first place, let alone actually doing the thing. And not everyone's up to that. So, I think the biggest reason for dropouts is essentially not understanding or being able to sustain that time commitment.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:31:12] Well, partly, why that's sad is because it is putting a heavy burden on teachers, but the real benefits are for the kids. So, when kids want to do it, if teachers don't want to do it, it still doesn't happen. And that's partly why we've been exploring more recently other ways of reaching out to young people directly so that if their teacher doesn't quite have the possibility, because of their own schedule or the system to participate, that that still doesn't have to be a block on young people learning these valuable skills.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:31:46] So, that gets us to, I assume, what you're talking about is the 2020 program that you started working on, which is the Enterprise Adventure Program. So, tell us about that and why that's different than the challenge.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:32:01] Yeah. So, that's exactly it. We discovered during the corona crisis that as soon as schools shut down, whether or not the teachers wanted to participate, there wasn't any real means for them to do that. Some clever, brave ones were able to sort of continue doing some things via Zoom with their students, but that was the exception rather than the rule. So, we rapidly thought, how could we take the core of that program, what works about that program, and put it into a format, where young people could access it directly and it would be engaging?

**Nik Kafka:** [00:32:38] So, we've styled this as an adventure. You get to pick your superhero, and gain your various superpowers of creativity, and problem solving, and communication as you work through the various challenges or missions related to starting up a business, but doing it without a teacher's facilitation. They also took a few steps back to really make sure that young people would get an opportunity to think about their own ambitions, their own motivations, to really find that commitment from within, to justify going all the way through a program like that.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:33:21] And as it was our first attempt at it, that does only go up through the business planning process. But having done that, a good number of the kids did go on and set up enterprises themselves anyway. But our challenge this year and the coming years is to add on that sort of extra support to walk them through the next stages. But it's really interesting, the difference between working with young people directly, and working with teachers and groups.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:33:56] One of the real upsides is that the young person gets to do exactly what they want to do. There's nothing more frustrating in a group experience than you have an ingenious business idea, no one else seeing just how genius your idea was, and you have to put it on the back burner while you plow ahead with someone else's idea you don't necessarily entirely believe in.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:34:17] So, the possibility to really follow your own best judgment and spend more time on the things that excite you most, I think, was quite liberating for many of the kids who were involved in it. But the flip side, obviously, is without working in a team, the teamwork skills, the leadership skills we think are really vital, both longer term, running your own business, but also whether if you're going to be in employment, these are things that employers value. So, again, we're trying to figure out now how we can bring some of that more into this individual program.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:34:55] Yeah, that would be a great thing. I mean, I've seen some incubator programs that have figured out how to bring teams together virtually. So, folks that are pitching ideas, and who wants to be part of my idea, and sort of shuffle and trade. And so, there are positives and negatives to those types of approaches, but I certainly appreciate that. I always like to close the program, Nik, with asking a question about sort of what the future holds. So, as you think about the fact that the world is coming around, hopefully, on the flip side of this global disruption in the form of a pandemic, what's the next great thing for Teach A Man To Fish? Where do you see the next opportunity for the work that you're doing?

**Nik Kafka:** [00:35:47] I mean, I think there still are great opportunities on the ground in the countries where we work, and particularly for reaching more disadvantaged young people. That may be the only alternative. So, recently, we started working in refugee settlements in northern Uganda, and there, the conditions are extremely basic and so many child-headed households, desperate poverty, and there's technology, there isn't much in the way of cellphone coverage.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:36:18] Technology is not going to be the answer there. So, we're committed to continuing that kind of work. The longer term, I think the future is digital. Our programs need to be better online. And the real excitement, I think, there is the possibility for creating much more of a sense of community. So, whilst we've had even online programs already, it's been a very hub and spoke.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:36:45] We've had direct relationships with the schools who work their way through the programs, but the possibility of really trying to bring schools together and through the enterprise adventure, bring young people around the world together, I think, has huge potential to generate more self-sustaining

momentum. Really, I can feel quite happy about the number of young people that we would say around 370,000 young people we've reached in the last 10-odd years.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:37:19] But actually, this needs to go to millions, and the only way to get to millions is going to be through free technology. And it will only work through technology if it's compelling. And to be compelling, I think, needs to be social. And to be social needs this community aspect. So, that's what we're going to be putting a lot of effort into. And if we are successful in that, then actually, it feels to me like there's a bit of a gap out there.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:37:44] If you're a young change maker, if you want to change the world, what's the big thing you can be part of? There are lots of local initiatives or some interesting platforms you can join, but where's the community of like-minded people? So, I think that's part of what we want to create, is a community of like-minded changemakers, who are entrepreneurial, and go out there, and tackle some of these many issues that we face locally, regionally, nationally. The world is sadly full of problems, we need problem solvers.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:38:13] A worthy endeavor and ambition. Thank you, Nik, so much for spending time with us today and sharing the story of Teach A Man To Fish. And we certainly applaud the work that you're doing and can't wait to see what comes next. Thank you for joining us today.

**Nik Kafka:** [00:38:29] Wonderful. Thank you so much for having me.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:38:32] Thank you for joining us for Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. I want to thank my guests and encourage you all to be part of the conversation. Meet me on social media @AnnaliesCorbin and join me next time as we stand up, step back, and lean in to reimagine education.