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Miia Riihimäki

Lesia Lyndova

Olha Mihaylova

**Muut merkinnät:** (-) Pois jäänyt sana tai sanan osa

(--) Pois jäänyt jakso

(sana) Epäselvä sana tai jakso

[hakasulkeet] Litteroijan kommentti

**Huomautukset:** --

Spiikkaaja 1: Tämäkin ohjelma on Suomen podcastmedian tuotantoa.

[Musiikkia]

Spiikkaaja 2: Kuuntelet Laumapodia, jossa kysymme, miten rakennetaan kaikille toimiva yhteiskunta, ja jossa pääsemme näköalapaikalle tulevaisuuteen. Podcast on Humanistisen ammattikorkeakoulun tuottama 25-vuotisjuhlapodi, jossa 25 jakson verran pohditaan, mitä tarvitaan yhteisöllisyyden vahvistamiseksi, osallisuuden kasvattamiseksi, saavutettavamman yhteiskunnan tai kestävämmän maailman rakentamiseksi. Millaisia ratkaisuja pienellä korkeakoululla on pirullisiin ongelmiin? Laumapodi – näköalapaikalla tulevaisuuteen.

[Musiikki häipyy vähitellen.]

Miia Riihimäki: Arriving in a new country, newcomers find themselves in a situation where their role and place in society has changed massively. They have been active actors and citizens in their country of origin, but now, in the new country and its culture and norm, language and general habits, they lack the cultural code to act and feeling of acceptance and cohesion. This happened to Lesia Lyndova and Olha Mihaylova, who emigrated from Ukraine to Finland to escape the war in March 2022. Lesia is a translator and psychotherapist and worked as an Ukrainian coordinator in the LEARN module at Humak, and Olha Mihaylova was student in LEARN module. My name is Miia Riihimäki, I'm a lecturer in Humak’s bachelor degree in adventure and outdoor education, and in this Humak podcast series, I will invite and hold the space for Lesia and Olha to discuss about their experiences of arriving in a new country and integrating into the new society. So, Lesia and Olha were part of Humak’s LEARN module, which was a year-long bilingual programme for Ukrainian educating professionals in Finland. Olha was studying for a year and gaining 25 credits from the studies, which included face-to-face contact sessions and practical training throughout the year. So, the discussion will behold the thematics from social well-being, integration, participation and agency of newcomers in the new host country. And I think this is a big topic and issue in our country, in Finland, but also in other countries, because the migration and moving from country to country will be a mega trend of our time, for the future decades as well. In this episode, I will invite Lesia and Olha to discuss about their experiences of arriving in a new country and integrating into society. Lesia and Olha, they were part of Humak’s LEARN module, a year-long bilingual programme for Ukrainian educators, and the whole studies were 25 credits, and it included practical training and studies in community educator’s and adventure outdoor educator field. Good. Yeah, maybe we can start from that.

Lesia Lyndova: Thank you, Miia. Everyone in the LEARN course would agree that you are an integral part of this experience and of our change generally, and I think Olga will agree with me that we are very happy that you joined us for this podcast, because together, we're not that scared, right? And also, thank you for this nice phrasing, the newcomers, because how we call something actually defines how we will feel towards it. So, when we hear words like immigrants, migrants, or refugees, they form not a very appealing attitude, so, let's be honest, it doesn't sound good. Newcomers we are. And today, our discussion, we will try to squeeze it in 30 minutes, at least, our year-long experience, but we will cover the key factors that promote social well-being of the newcomers and how this later translates into a stronger society in general. This is such an interesting topic and there is so much depth in it, I wish we had a weekly series on it, really, but we will talk about coffee, stress, and how to be rich, maybe [laughter]. Well, you'll find out. But let's start from the beginning, from you, dear listeners. The COVID memories are still fresh, I think, and I'm asking you now to go back there and remember how you felt. How did you feel when there was so much uncertainty? When you had to change the habitual things you thought were unquestionable. When you were isolated from others. Many people lost their jobs. Even more, lost their loved ones. That was one big mess, and we all felt scared and anxious and desperate and lost, and we were all looking for something to rely on, for some solid ground. And in the majority of cases, that's what the migrants feel when they come to another country. Because no matter what the actual reality is, the inner response to uncertainty and change is always the same. The same feelings experienced all the students of the LEARN course who had to flee from Ukraine, including myself and Olha. And Ol, it's been almost a year, right, since we started. We both joined the same time. Do you remember what was your first impression at the start of the LEARN course?

Olha Mihaylova: Yes, I remember this, the first day, because it was a very strange feeling, because when I came in this Humak university first time, it was something like misunderstanding feelings what I'm doing here, what is totally meaning these adventure outdoor education. But at the same time, I have to say that it was some interest about something new, because before, I was working in the factory, and I had the feelings to find something new, to have some communication, to meet some new people, and to practise English language, and to start learn Finnish language finally. Yes, it was very interesting. New place, new people, communication, and like this.

Lesia: Right, but you can call it stress still, right?

Olha: Yes, yes, sure…

Lesia: I agree, for me as well, even though I kind of had this coordinator status [laughs]. But yeah, but like every new experience, no matter if it's challenging or difficult or actually happy, is a stress for our psyche. And feeling nervous is a very healthy reaction in such situations. And everyone who finds themselves in a new situation has the same response. And that's actually a very solid ground for mutual understanding and compassion. Like now, we all feel nervous, right? But it kind of feels OK together. I think it's important that we all share these feelings and slowly get acquainted with the new surroundings, and when we do that, then our feelings also change. I hope it's true for you too, Ol.

Olha: Yeah, that's true for me also, the same feelings.

Lesia: Yeah, did your feelings, experiences generally, change throughout the year of these studies?

Olha: Yes, my feelings started to change, I think, maybe after second or third our lecture, and then I felt a little bit relaxing. My self-confidence started to growing up and I started to be more open and finally, I started to understand what I'm doing there [laughter].

Lesia: That's important, right?

Olha: Yes, it was great, because I remember that one of the days I said to Miia, yes, I'm on the right place now here. I feel this.

Lesia: Great. Do you know, do you maybe remember what were the factors that influenced that change?

Olha: I think it's maybe a few factors, because totally, I would think that you are as a person who can to be a leader, or who needs some supporting, but when I started to study on this course, I understood that you can be the same person, the same moment, you can to support somebody, somebody who is not, have not so much knowledges or some language skills or something like this, but any way you hear the information. And you can get some skills and active methods how to support, and it's very interesting , it changed a lot of insight. Even if I, after all the lectures, I think, when I back in Heinola, I had the feelings like I have a bubble on my shoulder (-) [laughter, unclear]. So much information, but it was totally very interesting, and it move you to get more information and to know how can you realise this information in the life.

Lesia: What about the environment? Because I think for me, it's personally really important to talk about the environment, because that was the key for me. In Ukraine, as you know, it's totally different setting. How was the environment for you here in Humak?

Olha: Yes, I have to say that, first of all, when I came in Finland, I was living in the family, (-) [unclear] scientist, that woman, a wonderful, great woman, who all the time said me that you have to go and learn. And I think it was the first step, and after that, when I came in Humak and I saw the teachers who have the patience in the eyes and they like what they do.

Lesia: And the socks [laughs].

Olha: Yeah, and the socks, by the way...

Lesia: Which never happens in Ukraine, right?

Olha: Who make this lecture and jumping on the ball, and sometimes, yes, we have more traditional methods of the studying in Ukraine. And here, it's totally different, and it was very interesting for us. When you understand that it's good, it's interesting, it's normal.

Lesia: Absolutely, I'm totally on the same page with you here. Because actually, these pedagogical choices, because those are also pedagogical choices, they are very, very important, and every group, no matter if it's students, employees, or friends, it's like a small version of a bigger world around us. And then we can always practise new behaviour and choices in a smaller group, and then, we gain confidence to enter the bigger world and try out the new approaches there. And I think the crucial factor is Miia, or a facilitator. Because even though it seems that this person can actually do little, (-) [unclear] right? It seems like she's just, a little bit there and a little bit there, but then actually, they do so much. The crucial importance is on their shoulders, because integration into a new society is not exclusively a matter of outer achievements, like having a job or language courses, or, I don't know, social life, but also those are a consequence of how you actually feel inside. So, what's inside is always more important, so, the crucial role here is of the social and community aspect. Was it also what you were talking about, right? Did I understand you correctly?

Olha: Yes, and I want to say that the society, and we were there, that our group was with the Ukrainian teachers, and I think almost all of them had the same feelings like me had, at the time, they was also very scared, and after we started to communicate, we started to support each other, even if it was not about the theme or the course, and many different topics we was discuss and help each other. (-) [overlapping speech, unclear].

Lesia: Me too, actually. Yeah, a lot of useful information. Yeah, absolutely. I'm very happy to hear that, and also, actually, I wanted to share, because I've done a survey, we’ve done a survey about the experiences of other members of our course. And they also have similar experiences which actually proves that it works for many people, right? So, for you listeners, Olha and other students were asked to fill in an anonymous survey on their well-being and integration before and after this year-long programme. All the participants mentioned that the factor that influenced their improved well-being the most was the atmosphere of acceptance and support from course staff and peers. So literally what you just said, literally. Also, all of the participants stated that their self-confidence grew considerably ,as well as their vision of themselves and their future prospects. And I think we will get back to that a little bit later, right, we have some more information [laughs]. Next, you will find out about two things that will help you tackle any change. Why stress is good and how the habitual taste of your morning coffee can save your mental health. Yes, I'm not kidding. The research of the types of migrants and newcomers showed that there are three basic groups, depending on their reaction to stress. The first can be called conservatives. Those are people who don't want to change anything, and their main goal is to really recreate the previous life as precisely as possible. The second group can be called activists. Those are people that are highly adaptive due to their personal qualities. And then the third group, maximalists, people whose adaptation depends on the surrounding people. And each and every one of us has their own reaction to stress. It's called a coping mechanism, and I'll get back to this in a minute, but let's talk about you guys first. I bet if I say stress is good, everyone's going to think I'm nuts, but actually, yes it is, but in small amounts. Everything we learned, we learned through stress. When we failed and tried we then coped, and then we felt empowered and capable, and then we went on to a bigger challenge. So, stress helps us grow. But imagine that overnight, everything in your life changed, and the things in your apartment are now in totally different places, like everything smells weird, you don't know where you are and what to do, where is your underwear, you know nothing. Everything is off, it's really irritating, guys, isn't it? It's too much stress. Every time a person encounters a change, their brain has to undergo a difficult process of analysing and adapting to the new reality. It's a first line priority and it's the matter of safety and survival. Therefore, it requires a lot of energy. And as a result, we are lost, disoriented, and exhausted. We don't have the energy to learn or discover. So, here is the question, how do we help the newcomers maintain a healthy amount of stress, so they could integrate and grow in a new society? And now, let's get back to those three groups I mentioned. The first one, conservatives. They need predictability, otherwise they cannot function. Therefore, the first core element in going through change is to create as much predictability as possible. It's unbelievable, but many people manage to live through hard times just because their coffee tastes the same every morning, guys, yay. So, the first and very important support needed for the newcomers is very clear and fully accessible information about how things function in the host country. Only when you know what things are, you can build relationships with them. The second group, activists, they have enough resources to deal with the new as long as they have something to do, to achieve, or to overcome. And this group needs opportunities, and opportunities need to be accessible in many respects. Too much stress here is a lack of opportunities, followed by a feeling of powerlessness. The third group, maximalists, their decisions and feelings of self-confidence are formed within their communities, directly and indirectly. A crucial factor here is to create nurturing communities with high level of support and acceptance, by meeting core needs of every of this group, we will maintain the proper amount of stress to gain self-confidence and agency. Now, I've been rambling for quite some time. Sorry, Olha, I would like to get back to you finally and discuss how this is applicable to you. How do you think, which group are you in? What were the core factors that helped you face this new change in you?

Olha: I don't know. Maybe I think that I am in the group of activists, but it depends sometimes of the different situation, because I think not all people can come in some new community and to be an activist, straight in the beginning. And the person had to know to face with the other people. The same was in our course, I think, the first meeting when we started to know each other better. And after that, we can find some leaders or somebody who was more quiet maybe or more stressing, felt that stress more (-) [unclear]. But as for me, I think I'm activist, and I'm always ready to help somebody to do something, to find something, and totally, I think the most of our group is activists. I think those people who now is really activist, who stayed in this course for the end, and it's good, it's great, because those people, they know why they continue to study and they know how they can realise these knowledges. And I know also that somebody of them do this in life now, using this, they are using these methods and all we learned through this course. And our practise time, our visit to our activities and started from our practise time, and some people stayed in that places and continued to work in this place.

Lesia: Right, I remember correctly, I think, that many of you girls actually have jobs now, after this practical training.

Olha: Yes, some of us.

Lesia: Great, so, we can then state here, that the sense of agency for all of you actually changed. How do you think, how does this shift in the agency influenced your role in the society? Has it somehow changed, maybe? In the Finnish society, I mean.

Olha: Yes, of course we, as for me, I found something new in myself, I found also something old inside [laughter] and tried to rebuild this and to adapt this for the new place and new society. To do this, to rebuild and to construct a new self, we need to back in the past and to find some resources and…

Lesia: Just like psychotherapy [laughter].

Olha: But the main, I think, anyway, when you get some skills, you can get some knowledges, and only when you, in the peace inside, and when you only understand that you're in the right place, after that, you can realise all this. After that, you can find this power inside to realise all this knowledge. (-) [unclear] you like this, some your job, or some society where are you, and you are in the right place, you understand that you are ready to be coordinator or you're ready to be teacher or you're ready to protect somebody. That is the mean, the mean is what you feel inside. And what else I want to say? Yes, and I want to say that sometimes, we have to, how to say this, to cross this border, because we are afraid of something, we have some risks. For example, when I understood that I have to get to the course, I have to go in one side three hours and back, three hours, and I was thinking maybe it's not a good idea in the winter. But anyway, that understanding that I am on the right place, it is the main, and the understanding that you are ready to realise this in the future. For example, as for me, now I am not a teacher, I am not working as a teacher, I am back at the factory, but I know that that knowledges and everything, I will realise in my life. These inside feelings, it's not only about everything around, and I will back for this, for sure, one million percent. What else to say to you? Yeah, of course, going through, when you can (-) [unclear] your self-confidence, and you can do this only with a good facilitator in interesting community. When you see the idea why you do this.

Lesia. But also probably when you have some challenge to overcome.

Olha: Yes, of course it's challenge.

Lesia: And when you overcome the challenge, you gain even more confidence and you move forward.

Olha: Yes, maybe even I want to say one story, when we started, maybe it was the first our activity in Humak, and I think it was cold, it was cold, and I wake up...

Lesia: It's (cool/school) [unclear, overlapping speech] outside, no? In the morning.

Olha: Maybe, I don't remember, but I remember just feelings, it was very cold. And I wake up in the morning, oh, it's so cold, and I have to go in this winter somewhere, trains, buses, and different. What we talk about fighting inside, and you have to, okay, and you go there. But that feelings what I found, through these activities, I was talking with the people, we had so great mood, there was very sunny weather, cold, but sunny weather. And when I back home, I understood that I have to do this, and I had no, I think, more this problem in the morning, next time, to go. Because I knew that what I will get in there, finally of this day…

Lesia: You saw the value.

Olha: Yes, these feelings of the warm and this energy and everything.

Lesia: You see, that's what I told, some stress is good.

Olha: Yeah, that's true.

Lesia: Because we grow by risking and by allowing changes in our lives. And you did take a lot of risks, we all did. Can you maybe elaborate on what had the greatest impact on your sense of integration and inclusion in society right now? You've mentioned a lot of things, a lot of important things, but if you could sum up to a couple of them. What would be like the core?

Olha: The great, I think, the greatest I think is, anyway, as for me, is to feel the warm inside, to understand that you are not alone. And to feel that you are very strong and you can do everything, not to feel this fear inside. And to know the ways how to do this in the practise.

Lesia: So, predictability [laughs]. Community, right? Yeah, I'm totally on the same page with you in terms of this connection that we all need to feel, but it's not all unicorns and rainbows, right? It's not all that perfect. I mean, nothing is perfect, and that's good. Otherwise, the world would be so boring, a perfect world is boring. Do you maybe, no, but do you maybe have some experience, not that positive, in this case? Maybe you had some challenges.

Olha: The most challenges was to get to the studying place, I think, that was, and of course, the challenge was to understand the lecture, because my knowledges of the English language was not enough, and you write something and to back home and trying to translate this, everything. But it's good. I saw that everything I did, all the challenges, and anyway, they help us to growing, to get new knowledges and to fight, as we can say, like this, to fight all the time, to the challenge. And of course, for me, was the bigger, one of the bigger challenges the Finnish language, because I had no any ideas how I will start to learn this not easy language. But step by step, a little bit, I cannot say that I know, but I'm sure that I started to learn it. And I believe that I can someday, maybe, I will know this language.

Lesia: I'm sure you will, definitely.

Olha: Yes, I'm sure also, or almost [laughs].

Lesia: With that attitude.

Olha: Yes, it was, I think, the bigger challenges for me. Because if to say about the challenges, our activities… Oh no, I can say that my practise time also was challenge. Yes, because there, I had to talk in Finnish, yes, and understand and support some kids and communicate with the mentors. And it was a little bit difficult for me from the first time, but everything is fine.

Lesia: You remember we talked about that in cafe that sometimes the courses that are available, they're available during daytime when people work, and it's kind of hard…

Olha: It is the same as, totally, for the people who live in Finland, and the most information and possibilities to learn, to integrate in the society is in the daily time, and some, of course, the supporting of this Finnish society is great and you have so much possibilities to study, even some small courses, so, some few hours in the evening like I do this now. But if you are maybe like scientists or some, not just simple worker, you have to study, and it is not easy, totally. For example, even these Finnish courses and languages that's in the daily time. So, for those people who work in every day, it's almost…

Lesia: Impossible to combine study and work.

Olha: Yes, (-) [unclear, overlapping speech], it's not easy. It's possible to combine, but it's not easy. For example, now I back from my work and I have from the seven until eight Finnish language, and also, I have the kids. They want to eat.

Lesia: Important factor.

Olha: So we try to combine these, but it's not easy.

Lesia: For me, like personally, the not convenient thing that I encountered here was the lack of structured information. It's kind of there, but if I google something, I cannot find it. People know it. Some maybe offices know it, but then you have to call to the office and then, in order to call, you have to have money on your account, because with your package, you cannot call special numbers. That was actually a surprise for me, when I just came. But then you can't call, okay, then you go there, to this institution, then you stand in the line and then you have a possibility to ask, and this is so complicated. Like, when you can just Google it and find it. So that was a bit of a struggle for me when I was looking for some vero information or something. I was like, where is it? Why it's not here? Everything on the same page, please. So that was a bit challenging for me personally, that part.

Miia: Thank you, Olga and Lesia, that you have been sharing your insight and experiences during this year. I think there was a couple of things which were really interesting about how you were kind of putting yourself out there as persons who came to the new environment, where it was quite hard to cope. Like you said, just starting to get the information out of something or coming to the new community and gain the idea that I'm part of the group or I'm part of this new society, even. So, what I hear now, when I've been listening to you, is that there has been a step by step process, where the, I don't know if it's right to say, but I kind of see the growth in you as well. So that there has been this shift how you are standing, how you are sitting, how you are presenting yourself, how you are speaking. So, the confidence is really seeable [sic], and that's totally understandable and normal that this happens, because of course, when you are in a new situation, you really need the support. And then, step by step, gaining the confidence, and then taking the agency in the society. What I'm thinking now is more about that if we would have these opportunities in ways that we are not kind of holding newcomers’ hands all the time and kind of giving the support in ways that they are not gaining agency, and instead, doing the challenge by choice. Creating the challenge in ways that you can have a role in these situations and then find your place in the society and those communities and how things would be, in general, in our communities and societies, because then people are not just laying around and trying to find their place, even though they're really trying to do that in a hard way, but kind of that we need to hold the space for them, I would say.

Lesia: Absolutely, absolutely. And also, I wanted to add, because sometimes, not in here, but sometimes generally, I get this impression that the whole society tries to change the incomers in a way, you know, kind of, we will show you how to do things and what to do. And it's not very respectful, because they are already adults, and they are individuals, and you can't change a person. As a psychotherapist, I can really, you can never change a person. But you can create opportunities for this person, so the person changes themselves, in a way that they want to. This is precious. And I believe you, Miia, are an expert in this creating of this atmosphere, because I think all of the girls were blown away by this atmosphere that we had, but this like warmth and fun and support. It was the thing that made us all change.

Miia: Well, thank you. Thank you.

[Musiikkia.]

Spiikkaaja 2: Laumapodi – Näköalapaikalla tulevaisuuteen.

Spiikkaaja 1: Tämän ohjelman tuotti Suomen podcastmedia. Jos pidit tästä ohjelmasta, muista seurata Spotifyssa tai arvostele ohjelma Apple Podcastissa, niin muutkin löytävät ohjelman pariin.