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Episode Information

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Hosts: Ian M. Cook and Kate McGinn

Guest: Kemo Camara, Omek

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Transcript

[Music]

Episode Introduction (0:16 – 1:21)

Kate: Ian, why do we make this podcast?

Ian: I'm not sure. I just feel that every time someone asks me anything, any sort of question, my answer is normally, why not make a podcast?

Kate: Okay, think a little harder for me here.

Ian: Well, I want to say it's because I like the sound of my own voice, because I'm not sure I do really, but maybe it's because you like the sound of my voice. Maybe I want you to appreciate the sonic qualities of my voice when you spend all the time editing this podcast.

Kate: Hmm. Really?

Ian: Nah, maybe not. Maybe it's because a podcast like Urban Arenas' podcast is a way of creating communities of like-minded people, using a digital tool to create communities.

Kate: There we go. Good answer.

Ian: Really? Really? Why is it a good answer?

Kate: Well, today's guest on our podcast is Kemo Camara, a social entrepreneur and the founder of Omek, a new digital and physical platform dedicated to the social and professional advancement of the African Diaspora community.

Ian: Oh, nice! I want to hear more. Let's listen to him.

[Music]

Introducing Omek (1:23 – 7:08)

Kate: Keemo, thank you so much for joining us on the Urban Arena podcast. I want to dive straight into your work and discuss it, so tell me a little bit about your social enterprise Omek.

Kemo: Yeah, basically, Omek is a community centric platform that's dedicated to making connection and collaboration simple for the African diaspora professional and talent.

Kate: Mm-Hmm. And how did you first get the idea to start Omek?

Kemo: Yeah, that's a- that's actually a good question. The idea Omek came based on two things. One is my personal experience as a professional of African descent, you know, living in the West, in US and Europe. My pro- my personal experience of growing in that space, but also the second part, and the research that I done understanding in the diaspora capital, the African diaspora capital, for socio economic development. And so it was basically from this two learning that I realised this, this big gap, there's this need within the community to leverage the unique talent that we have, and to make a bigger impact than we are actually making- currently making. And so that's where the idea come from.

Kate: You know, I know you're starting or you're launching your app this year. Is that the goal?

Kemo: Yeah, the goal is by the end of this year to, to, to launch the app. Yes.

Kate: Yeah, that's very exciting. So say someone goes on this app knows nothing about Omek. How would they go through the process of, of, of using the platform?

Kemo: So when you go in there, you should be able to, like I say, it doesn't matter where you live, right? If you're from New York or Amsterdam, you should be able to find all the diaspora professional, like-minded professional like yourself, anytime, anywhere and you can find them by industry, you can find them by country of origin, country of residence. We live in this black box where it's like extremely difficult to find other like-minded people to connect with like-minded people, so I want to remove that black box, right? That's the first thing.

When you go on the platform the second you should be able to do is to find out well who are the inspirational people out there, who are- what are the inspirational initiative or project that's happening like conducted by the Diaspora? Like, right? you should be able to know that too. What is the landscape of what is happening? You should be able to know, like, hey, I live in Amsterdam, what are the events organised by the African Diaspora? I want to be part of this community. How do I do that? You should have a complete visibility of like all that. So like that is something that the apps, that's the first step, like the first very thing that we want to solve first within the diaspora. So yeah, when you go in the app, that's what you should be able to like, tap into.

Kate: Got it. And you know, just, I mean, there are a lot of other social platforms, you know, Facebook, Instagram, and especially I'm thinking about Facebook. You have a lot of these Facebook groups where people can connect over shared experiences or shared heritages. How does Omek kind of compete with that type of model?

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Kemo: That's a good- that's a good question. I'm on like so many Facebook group, but the Facebook, like I was saying, like Facebook, was in this- it's- Facebook is designed for the global community like everything. And so you can have like this small Facebook group here and there really niche specific here and there. But still, it doesn't- it doesn't solve the bigger problem, it's not the platform It's just a feature on Facebook that's addressing bringing people together. Right?

So like the platform, Omek platform, it is not only built to facilitate connection, that's the first step. So we wanted to build a platform that's dedicated to the social and professional advancement of the African Diaspora community, right? And so the very first step is to make that connection simple. Like once we start seeing each other, then we start communicating. Once we start communicating, we engage with each other, we start collaborating and we start building trust, and then we start leveraging our unique set of skill, our talent right to self-empower ourselves, you know, each other and then but also collectively, individually and then to grow from there. So that's the vision of Omek. So I want to build a platform that's really dedicated to that. And so all the features are going to be put in there designed to grow.

So it's not just a simple feature like, yeah, like interface, Facebook has that feature, but still you still have these challenges. Like when I was coming here, I had to like raise my hand to all the Facebook groups like hey, who live in in Amsterdam to help me out, right? But like, I wish there was like a platform like Omek, what I can go on, I'm already signed there before I go to Amsterdam, I know all the people, I made friend I connected with the network. If I'm looking for a job before I even get here, I want to be able to like people to open the door for me. And then I get the job before I get to here based on my expertise and all that right? And so that doesn't exist today. So that's what Omek what it's all make is about. This platform is built to solve, to empower the community to solve our problem, which we understand better than anybody else.

Kate: Absolutely. Yeah. And I find it really interesting that you're kind of merging the- the social aspect of- of- of a platform and the professional aspect of a platform, right? Because I feel like in our in our day to day, you have LinkedIn for your professional network and then you have your other social media for your other social connections. But what Omek is seemingly trying to do is blend these two things because obviously one yields to the other.

Kemo: Yeah, I know you got you got that right.

Omek in the Year of BlackLivesMatter (7:09 – 12:20)

Kate: And I know you started Omek last year in 2019. Obviously, this year has increased, I think, people's attention towards the African Diaspora community, you know, through initiatives like BlackLivesMatter.

Kemo: Yeah.

Kate: How has that kind of shape your- your future ideas around Omek?

Kemo: Yes, absolutely. I think it's been, I don't know if I should use the term roller coaster, but it's been like a really interesting moment for us, right? Because we've been in this

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space, for me, like most of my life, I've been like really advocating for this idea. And in the past couple of years since I've done my thesis where, you know, like the idea of Omek came from, I've been like a huge believer. It's like the talent that we have in the community, the potential that we have, the resources we have in the community, we- if we tap into it if we leverage it, if we harness it, we can do a meaningful- we can have a meaningful contribution to the society where we live in, but also like, you know, like our country back home. And so I'm so sure believer in that. And then I'm trying to figure out what is the most effective way to do that.

And so we've been doing this work, this advocacy, this like pushing forward this idea and then now with the Black Lives Matter movement it's like- it's like people are willing now, people are ready and people are like, are hearing it are seeing it, and wanna learn more, right? And it's kind of putting us out there like, yeah, this is a work we've been doing. This is what is space we are in, that there's a more and more people are willing to come in and support and help and- and give like their- their hand, but also like, you know, partners I've been like, you know, trying to contact and say, hey, how do we, how do we play a role in this part? How do we work together as a partner? It's been a really busy moment for us.

Kate: Busy and exciting I bet

Kemo: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Kate: Something that I think is a lot in the discourse here in the US around Black Lives Matter and the African Diaspora community is kind of this idea that the onus isn't on black people to necessarily like change the situation, but on white people who are in positions of- of power and who have created these systems of inequality to change the systems. So, this is currently, I think, at the heart of a lot of these discussions of, you know, whose role is it to kind of rise up and now start- start changing systems? How I see Omek is you're trying to help each other to rise out and connect and do better for yourselves. How do you- how do you see this?

Kemo: Yeah. And so you're right. Like, I feel like now everybody's aware of like- and we keep pushing in and we should be pushing in and loudly, to say we live in the system that's not built- the system that's working exactly the way it was built, like, you know, just against the people of African descent. If you look at the US like the police system and then everything, right? It's like, the system is working and it's just like the foundation is wrong, right? And so that's why like it's, you know, systematic- systemic issue and challenges, and so we need to look like a bigger perspective. And then for Omek the reason we existed, it's like we understand this system like it's part of our life, like I was born into this system and understand this system now. And is for me, is like, my whole thing, is like, how do I become part of the solution? Right?

The reason I move from Guinea to- to the United States because I was so angry, like I was angry because even living there, I see like the colonial system, the neo-colonial system, the country was like, wasn't going forward. I'm like, this is not this is not right. Like, I was smart, I was energised, I was like, I wanted to take on the world. So I got really angry of like the colonial power that we had and then, like, everything that was going on. So that's why I went to the United States in the first place. So I go to the United States and find out like, again, this is the system that's built there

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So like, my whole life is been living in this and in this- so I just turned that anger into a positive energy, right? And it's like, I want to be part of the solution. Listen, individually, we all keep pushing and pushing and pushing, and it's not changing. It's not moving a dial. And I'm like trying to figure it out, like if we collectively we can figure it out and crack the code to come together because there is this desire. And that's one thing I found out like this- this desire from every single professional of African descent. They want to be part of something that's bigger than themselves.

Kate: Mm hmm. Well, and I think the Black Lives Matter movement, I think is an excellent example of, you know, people are powerful when they come together than when they do this, this- these things alone. I mean, the- the power of networking to launch these movements has just been incredible. I mean, this is how people have learnt about these protests. This is how people are signing petitions, donating to bail funds, doing a lot of other- other civic work, and without that type of- of mass networking this- none of this would have- would have happened. So I absolutely think there's a need for- for this type of collaboration.

From University Research to Omek Platform (12:21 – 16:12)

I wanted to discuss your, your research. So you, you studied the role of the Diaspora community and the socioeconomic development of the countries of origin of people; would love for you to discuss your research a little bit further and then understand how that led you to Omek.

Kemo: Yeah. So I lived in the US for, you know, few years and then about five years ago, my family and I moved to Germany for the job opportunities that my wife had there. And so when I got there, I actually decided- I find this programme about development, economics and international study, which like aligned perfectly what I wanted to do. So I sign up for that. I got really in love to- fall in love, like, in learning more about the diaspora, the diaspora and then the diaspora power and the diaspora impact, and I learnt a lot about Asian diaspora, other diaspora right? The Irish diaspora, the Chinese diaspora, their impact, the Jewish diaspora, and I started reading more about the African diaspora.

And so as I read more, I realised that the vast majority of like the literature, I want to say probably like, you know, like 80 or 90 percent of them was written by someone who is not like myself. Right? And my thing is like, wait a minute, you're writing about me. You're writing about my life. I am like a professional for the African diaspora, and you are writing about, like all the capital. Do you have no idea how I got my social capital, how I got my financial capital, how I got my, um, my human capital? You have no idea. Like so you can write, fancy whatever, but you have no idea.

So, and I was like, wait a minute, like, I should be writing this, I should be writing this here. So that's what I got like a really trigger, and I say that I've decided to do actually my thesis about the African diaspora specifically the Guinean diaspora, but overall, the African diaspora. And so that led me to do a lot of interviews with people from like Germany. That's where I used to live, I- I live at the time; and the US, France, Netherlands, Belgium and talk to more like a lot, you know, over two hundred people to a survey and then

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interview, and then like all this. And now since I've been here it's been way more than that, I'll probably say, like close to a thousand people that I have talked to, right?

So I talk to all these people and then I start realising like, wait a minute, like, it doesn't matter if you live in Germany or if you live in the United States or you live in Paris, and that it was the same thing they kept saying. And so to summarise the biggest thing that I kept hearing it was two things. One was people kept saying this unequal access to opportunity. It doesn't matter, even if it's a professional, like it doesn't matter which career level they are, they feel like there was unequal access to opportunity, right? And the second part was really like, all these people wanted to be- they wanted to find other like-minded people like themselves. Right? They wanted to, like, connect with other likeminded people that have the same energy, that have the same vision as them like being- you know, changing this system, changing- you know, contributing something like social justice, right? That all of these things, they want to be to be a part of something that's bigger than themselves.

And so those are the two big thing that I- that came by and then I was like, wow, I have this result now, now what do you do with that? Right? And so like, what do you do with this? And because for me, I live the experience. I live in the US and I built thousands of networks there and I move to Germany. I have to start from scratch, I have a nobody. I didn't know anybody, right? And so I'm like, where are the- I'm a professional like experienced like all level from the US, I'm coming to Germany, like I want to find all the like-minded people, so I don't have to start from scratch. So that is the result of my, from my research, right?

Communities in Movement (16:13 – 23:45)

Kate: Mm hmm. Real- really quick. So something that I think about a lot is, you know, just and sustainable cities, which is obviously the topic of this podcast and the transient nature of our society. So this idea of moving every couple of years and starting a community from scratch, in a way, is very difficult to creating a just and sustainable community or just in sustainable cities. You know, you're obviously trying to tackle the idea that when people move, they have to start from scratch. How do you make that process easier? But I want to push back a little and ask, what are your thoughts on kind of our society or our way of life where you move for a job, and you live a very transient life? And that makes it very difficult to create strong communities within cities?

Kemo: Yeah, that's- [laughs] that's a good question. And I think. I think this is the way forward. I think it's only going to happen more and more where we become more- maybe if not our generation, but our kids will be- because like I have three kids and then they were all born in three different continents, one in Africa, one in Europe, one in the US, right? And so like all they know, like they've been moving, I was saying to my- my second son that has- by the time he was three, he has already visited like 11 different countries. And so, like this is what they know, and this is what's going to be, these are the global, the future like global workforce. So that's going to happen more and more. Right. And so like is that how do you build a system where it becomes much easier when they travel from, you know, from here to, to, to anywhere around the world.

So like there is a community, the sense of community that's built there, they can come in and become part of that society, that community like right away. Right. And so for me,

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that is something that I experienced personally. And then I feel like building Omek is going to be a solution to that. That's what I was saying. Like this sense of visibility where you will be able to find anyone, anywhere, anytime. Right?

And then so to come back to your question, yes, like it should be that way. Like when I come to- before I come to Amsterdam, right? If there's a strong community that's built in Amsterdam here, I should be able to tap into that community and make my integration into the society here really easy. And then I don't have to waste a lot of my energy and, um, to build a community myself. The community is already here so the community can start tapping into the energy or whatever, whatever resources that I can bring to the table, right?

And so I don't have to, like, so it's more efficient. It's more efficient. And I think, even beyond like, yeah, Omek is trying to do this, but like the reason I like the idea of Omek being part of this system is like, yeah, like if someone come like now like a company is going to start recruiting people from, from Africa or from Asia, from everywhere. And so when people comes in and we start building as a as a city, right, sort of allowing these kind of communities like a can received people that come into our community so we can really start tapping into like the different like, thing the new thing that they can bring in so they don't have to spend a lot of the time thinking ah whether they like the community or whether they like the city or whether they like- no, this is like a shelter put in place to like, really welcome and make people feel home.

And so like my, I give you my personal example. Yeah, I live- I lived in Guinea. I was born there. I moved to to the U.S. and even though I was working the U.S., I always been part of the community building community organising, right? And so being part of that community almost like, give you this sense of belonging, this family like you find. And so you don't feel completely disconnected, right? And I was having this conversation with one of my friend who was asking me, hey, do you miss living in the US and living in Germany or living in Guinea? I'm like, I don't know if I feel bad about it, but like, I don't miss it that much. I don't feel extremely- the reason for that, I was thinking about why not. Is because when I was when I was in Germany, by the time I left there, I built a community.

Part of that community was like that with friends like our really close that I could call like I could hang out too, and I feel like really close. They feel this sense of like family, the sense of home, right? This sense of home. And so when I came here with Omek, I've been able also to, to build this community that's created this sense of belonging, this sense of home. And so I don't, I don't feel like, okay, when I was in Germany, I did my part. I contributed to the society. Then I was an asset to like, you know, to the society and then that communities is going on. And then I come here and I build another community and they're welcoming. And it's kind of feel like that sense of like, you know, just a home. And I think that's what it's about like that. It's what it's like, like a beautiful city need to have a space, a community when people come in. Need to feel home. Right?

And I think that's what's missing in like the bigger structure because as urban cities like a growing, the society where the structure is built, it's about individual rights, about individual, it's about individual. You come for work and you get off work and you don't even connected with the people you work with, right? And then you get on, you're like a busy life and the train or whatever. And then come home. You close this, you live in this like square. You know, you open the door, you get in there and it's like a completely

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disconnected right and you start, what do you do like you start thinking about, well, I moved from Germany, then I left all my family behind me.

What if you have the society's build where you have the community here, where you can be part of it, right? So yeah, that's my take on it.

Kate: Well, and I think that's technology's, I guess biggest, biggest potential, I think in ways, but also biggest trap. So it's, you know, how do you create technology that connects people and doesn't further isolate people because I think technology or technological innovation can go both ways. It's really fascinating.

Kemo: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I mean, we leveraging technology to make, as a tool, right, is a means to an end, not an end itself. For all that said, we leveraging technology as a means to- to building sustainable community like we building a place where we can empower each other and empower collectively and individually. So yeah, we just want to tap into the technology to make that, but it's not, the end goal, is just to mean that we want to use to facilitate that. And yeah, so yeah, we want to be able to find each other, we want to be able to come together. That's why I like our business model actually it's like, we have the digital space, right? So the digital space make a professional digital platform that we're going to like use, and that will make it easier for us to see each other, right? And then like a mentorship like everything going to go to the net that we can do digitally.

But we also have a physical space. We want to have a physical space where we can now foster collaboration and trust. That's a Community 2.0 where we can go to work together, where we can going in like programming, where we can go and do it any day. You want to find all the like-minded people, that's where you go. And because that sense of like finding- so when I use the technology, we meet offline and we'll come- you know we meet online and we come offline. And then so like this goes hand to hand. And so technology is just allowing us to come together. Yeah, not the other way around.

Challenges of (Black) Entrepreneurship (23:47 – 26:10)

Kate: Kemo you're- you're- you have a lot of roles. Researcher, community builder, entrepreneur; and the world of entrepreneurship is, is extremely homogeneous. It's very white. It's very male driven. What is it like being a black entrepreneur in Amsterdam, and what are some of the challenges that you see?

Kemo: That's a [laugh] that's a good question. I don't know. I think it's hard being a black entrepreneur, being an entrepreneur period. Being an entrepreneur is, is not, it's not easy. And it doesn't matter how to tell you this until you jump into a you won't know, you won't understand it, you can read it, you can- you can watch on YouTube, you can do all this until you jump into it, you will now understand. Period. Like, yeah, it's not, it's not easy being entrepreneur and in addition to that, being a entre- a black entrepreneur or like entrepreneur of African descent, kind of come to this, this second layer to it.

You know, the truth is as an entrepreneur, we can of have this beautiful idea. You can pull the things together and you can keep working hard like time. It's not, it's not about your talent, it's not about the hard work you do, like, that's all foundational, right? And sometimes this success depends of like one person or someone come in and opening the door for you. And sometimes you just need that one person that trusts you and then say,

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like, you know what, I'm going to put my money and I'm going to put my energy on, I'm going to use my network and I'm going to support you to open that door for you. And many people don't get that chance. And I think that- that's the part as people of African descent overall in general, like, sometimes we feel like that lack of access to opportunity is not the same. Like, it's statistically been proven. It's a fact, right?

And then, but you don't you don't sit around and then be like, oh, this is the thing, I won't do it. If that door is not open, I'll create a different door. Hell, why do I have to go through that door, I'll create my own door, or why do I going to have to go in that room? You know, I'll go somewhere else and that's, that's been my, my life. That's- that's the way I'm just doing it, like Nike says “just do it” like, yeah. So that's, that's- the spirit.

Future of Omek (26:11 – 28:04)

Kate: I feel like that is, that's the- the by-line of an entrepreneur. What is the future of, future of Omek? You know if you could paint a picture 10 years from now, what would that look like?

Kemo: Oh, that's a good question. Six months from now, by the end of, you know, by December, what do we want to do, um, is I want it to like it's still thinking about the Netherland, but like we're growing now that globally is creating aware- awareness. There is a lot of people down don't know about like Omek and so within the community want to create awareness or want to grow to at least a couple of hundred thousand if that's possible. So that's the that's the six months goal. And so 2021 is to, like the digital apps is ready, and physical space should be ready in 2021, at least in Amsterdam. And so that's the idea. And then just sort of expanding that.

So three years from now, if you're part of Omek team community or Omek group, right, network, one individually want to like help you to grow, collectively, whatever group you're in, a collective growth. So individual growth collective growth, right? And then the third vision of that once we create like a, this group and it's like, how do we go externally and then really try to like bring the change that we want to see? Yeah. So that's the vision.

Kate: We'll listen back to this podcast five years from now and see a lot of these hopes and dreams come into fruition. On that, on that inspirational note, thank you for being on the Urban Arena podcast, and I look forward to tracking Omek and your, your future.

Kemo: Absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. This was a pleasure.

[Music]

Post-Interview Discussion (28:04 – 35:59)

Kate: So, Ian, now that I am the interviewer and you're the listener, would love to hear your thoughts on the conversation. What did you like and what interested you?

Ian: Yeah, I really enjoyed listening to the conversation. I thought it was, um, it's always really interesting when you hear people who, who've lived in many different countries and who have tried to find a common thread in their lives from living in different places

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and then try to do something with that positive in the world that. Like to try to make some change from that. Because I think like myself and also you, we've lived in different places. And then so of course, you're constantly forced to question things about identity and who we are and which communities we belong to and which we don't.

So I think it- it's really interesting how Kemo has managed to, I guess, take that experience and do something with it, or at least now start to have this idea to do something with it. And especially when I'm thinking, okay, and you touched on it in a couple of your questions, I think it's really interesting in terms of the relationship between using a digital platform that he's that he's trying to create and locally rooted communities and also some sort of cosmopolitan sort of ideal which is going on there as well and how this relates to sustainability.

And I think that's it. That's a question, right? Because somehow by allowing sort of increasing movement, if you- if you like, in an easier way for, in this sense, for people from the African diaspora, in a way it sort of goes against sustainability. But then at the same time, we also know that it's easier for white people, especially white men, like myself, to move in cosmopolitan- in a cosmopolitan way. You know, it's like we sort of accepted that we can be in different places, you know? And so there's a, there's a, there's an interesting tension, I think, in terms of like sustainable and just cities in a sense that, okay, then we should we say, okay, actually, we should travel less, we should travel less. But who have been the people who've been doing all the travelling of the last 50, 60 years that are destroying our planet? For the most part, it has not been the African diaspora, right? Or at least if they have, then it's been not in the way that Kemo's talking about it and sort of the professional class sort of way. It's been a labour migrant of a very different type.

So I think it's interesting that he's trying to develop a platform to basically enable the best talents of people from Africa in different, in different continents. And we can't legitimately say, hey, hey, slow down. Stop, stop, stop. You should all be staying at home now, because that just sounds like completely hypocritical when we think about sort of the historical and social context within which we've been living in the last decades.

Kate: Mm. Mm hmm. Well, and I think it's interesting that this platform is in a way kind of the necessary ingredient to tackle just and sustainability-oriented challenges in cities, right? I mean, we've seen this with Black Lives Matter specifically, that when you're working on your own, it is very difficult to create any type of social change. But when you are able to gather people and work together and create a community of fellow social change makers, that's when you can start tackling these things. So I think what he's doing is creating this platform so that he can address these challenges with people who have shared experiences and who, who equally understand where he's coming from.

Ian: Yeah. And especially as, let's be honest, like any sort of- or most of the environmental movement in Europe and also America are really white, you know? Let's talk mostly about Europe because that's what we're dealing with in the in the podcast. But yeah, they feel very white and also quite middle class, and we talked about this before. And so, and so basically, you need, we need to be thinking not only about ways of saying, hey, do you want to join our community of environmentalists or whatever, but like actually saying, okay, there are different communities forming around different ideas, and how can we then work together with them moving forward? So, yeah, I mean is you're totally right.

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We can't, we can't do anything as individuals. We basically need to think about your community, community formation.

Kate: Mm hmm. And what I think is so interesting about Omek is its ability or desire to not only create an online community, but then also, you know, put those, that online community into action in person, having people congregate in different community centres, creating events, organising things or people meet in person. Because I think something that I think about a lot is how technology, even though it's trying to create communities and in urban cities, which again is harder than if you live in a village with 200 people, how technology can contribute to that and not just make us further siloed in these big cities that we live in?

Ian: Yeah, yeah. And I was actually also thinking about ownership of, of the digital platforms that we use. He wants to create something which is for a certain community. And the really big ones now, we know, there's always these questions of ownership and who's allowed to use them and who isn't allowed to use them, not only in the sense that, you know, Twitter puts warnings up about Donald Trump's hate speech and Donald Trump gets upset. I don't know if you saw the news in the last couple of days because there's a, there's a- tensions between India and China over the border, and so India just banned a whole host of Chinese apps. I think the most famous of which is Tik Tok, which is used a lot in India, especially in smaller towns and cities, and they just banned it overnight. Tik Tok is no longer there in India.

Kate: Wow.

Ian: We think- yeah, exactly. So we think, you know, and it's not, it's not unimaginable that, you know, one of these big tech companies becomes very popular and then also becomes exclusionary in- towards certain groups of people. So it's also about like ownership over the digital platforms we used to communicate. Like, if you know, God forbid, one of the really popular social media platforms gets taken over by racists or nutters or, you know, whatever, whatever else, they can start using it in an exclusionary way. So it's also, I think, also very important that people start to build their own digital platforms all the time as well because we can't be reliant on the benevolence of Facebook and Twitter to basically always allow everybody to do what they want to do and, um, both on a smaller, I guess, both on a, I say, less political level like what Kemo is doing, but also like, but certainly when it comes to political organising, we certainly can't rely always, always on the big platforms, which is why it's slightly ironic, I guess, that when I'm going to ask you to, which I am going to ask you to now to tell people how to get in touch, you're going to list off a whole ream of massive [laughs], massive tech companies who probably don't care what I say about creating sustainable and just cities.

Kate: Yes. Well, even though I wish we could maybe advertise on smaller platforms, you can reach us on the Big Three: Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. You can find us on Twitter or Instagram at the handle @arena_urban and we are on Facebook, this is a new addition, our Facebook page is UrbanArenas.Project, so you can check us out there as well.

Ian: Alrighty. I hope everyone enjoyed the conversation today. You will have noticed, of course, that Kate made the interview today and not me, and this is something we're going to play with more and more moving forward, so I hope you enjoy that, and I hope you get in touch and hope that you stay safe.

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Ian and Kate: Bye.

[Music]

Disclaimer

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