**Aziz:** I would like to gladly introduce a new participant in our project, Mr Artem Egorov. He is a leading specialist in the well-known Uzbek company Enter Engineering. I would like to start by talking about the purpose of our project. Artem, we consider you as a very valuable source of personal perceptions, personal life circumstances in modern conditions. Your story will be a very important testimony about our time and, most importantly, your attitude to this time. Along with the stories of other people we will get a palette of different opinions, perceptions, life stories, with the help of which future historians will be able to reconstruct our time and make some impression about it. You are involved in a worldview project that transmits our time into the future. I would like to ask you about your family, how was your life when you were young, why did you choose the path you are on today?

**Artem**: Good afternoon, thank you for your question. As a child, I did not have any idea that I wanted to work in construction, to build factories. As an ordinary classical child, I liked to play with toys and fly into space. My parents are ordinary people. They were both born in Kazakhstan. And when they got older, they moved to Sevastopol and met there. My father was a military man and they moved to Moscow. My father was posted. I was already born in Moscow. A native Muscovite is considered to be in the third generation. I'm still in the first.

**Aziz:** Well, you were born in Moscow.

**Artem:** I was born there, lived there all my life, graduated from my favourite school there. I graduated from university.

**Aziz:** which one?

**Artem:** Higher School of Economics.

**Aziz:** I congratulate you. It's a serious university.

**Artem:** Faculty of Management. I liked it very much there. I would very much like to note the work of the lecturers with the students. They invest a lot.

**Aziz:** I'm very interested, it's a relatively young university. It is the birthplace of New Russia. How did you study there? What are your impressions? The traditional famous Moscow university, the Bauman College, and here comes a new, now famous and fashionable university.

**Artem:** I periodically look at teachers, whether they have different articles about them or they publish their own articles, and I follow university rankings. I am so proud that I studied there. When I finished school I was not sure where I wanted to go. I always considered the top schools, MGIMO, Moscow State University. And the Higher School of Economics was already offering something. There was a faculty of pre-university training. That is, they invite applicants, they get acquainted with the programme of study, the preparation for admission to university. I was the first year when we took the USE.

**Aziz:** you were the first to take the USE?

**Artem:** yes. There was a pilot year before us, and we had already taken the real USE.

**Aziz:** there is a big debate on this topic. How do you assess it? Your fellow students have all gone through it.

**Artem:** now I don't know what the USE procedure is. Does it assess knowledge objectively? I can't give any comment.

At the time I thought the idea was very positive. Because already in the 11th grade we determined the list of subjects and passed it at the national level. And not by the requirement of a certain university. There was a general competitive basis, where applicants took exams, well, there were also additional university exams. It was difficult to prepare for it. A very large list of questions. Russian language, maths and social studies were compulsory. Well, I needed social studies, because I entered the faculty of management. I don't remember exactly.

**Aziz:** so you have very positive impressions of your studies?

**Artem:** Well, how can I say it, it was still stressful. Like any 11th grade graduate, I prepared, worried, studied with tutors.

**Aziz:** I mean your impressions of studying at the Higher School of Economics.

**Artem:** I am already 31 years old and if I look at the past with my present consciousness, then, yes, it is certainly a positive experience. You have to go through such tests, you have to prepare, you have to stress in a positive sense of the word. Not to push yourself to the limit, of course. In the 11th grade they already say: Guys, life is not so simple. You need to solve problems, solve issues.

**Aziz:** is the education you received at university quite competitive at the international level?

**Artem**: I have a bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Management. And my degree is in Human Resource Management. Education is competitive. In interviews, when they see that you graduated from the Higher School of Economics, they treat you more positively.

**Aziz**: it's already a brand.

**Artem:** there are divisions there too. Faculties. In the 90s, during the transition period, there were people who were hiring, they had no idea of any faculties or concepts, what is marketing or management. They think they are a middle manager who works in a shoe shop. Some people still need to be explained what project management, human resource management, financial management are. Today, the image of specialities is already being created. As for my speciality, I had no construction education and had to learn a lot. It turns out that I graduated from the Higher School of Economics and did an internship at Sibur.

**Aziz:** the famous Sibur? It's a very big company.

**Artem:** yes, it is a very large company and I was very lucky to get there. I am very glad I got there. I learnt from very strong specialists. I had knowledge of project management, I was interested in it, and it just so happened that I went into project management, engineering. Not civil construction or heavy industry, where you need to know technological processes. I was already finishing my 4th year of study and in parallel I was preparing for state exams, and I went on an internship at Sibur. I was studying and interning in parallel.

**Aziz:** great. And you were invited there?

**Artem:** I was recommended, and I applied there.

**Aziz**: well, you are a very brave guy to join such a company.

**Artem:** there is such a tradition. My brother studied in the UK, he specialises in architecture. He is a project manager. And my father worked in an engineering company. And I went into this field. My brother now works in agriculture.

**Aziz:** Did you like this sphere of activity?

**Artem:** My acquaintance with this sphere of activity can be divided into 2 stages. I can't say that I had a passion for this field. I finished university at the age of 22 and I had to make up my mind about my life. I realised that I liked project management and had an opportunity to work in the engineering part. To become a professional in this market segment. And it was necessary to gain knowledge in the construction sector during the internship. And the internship was intense and I finished university, passed all exams, had my graduation, and I was sent to my first project in the Nizhny Novgorod region, the city of Dzerzhinsk. There I met and worked with wonderful people, and all the fundamental knowledge was obtained there.

**Aziz:** very interesting, wonderful. My nephew also works in this construction sector, and he told me: apart from earning money, he gets great pleasure from the fact that he is creating something, it is all being built before his eyes.

**Artem:** I would like to point that out too. I have experience in other spheres, but I get the greatest pleasure from the work I do here. And when I tell people about my work, they are shocked. My work is connected with travelling, it's the Far North, etc. And when your circle of contacts is Muscovites, it's strange for them, why do I go there, why do I go there. I go to the facility where I work and it is an amazing feeling when you feel this production power and you realise that you are invested there and you are part of this whole process. Andyou are not just there, you are influencing something, helping people to do something.

**Aziz:** yes, it is an additional motivation. It is both monetary motivation and career motivation. Feeling that your work is important is one of the most important things. If in your experience you can be paid well but you're only in a single process all the time, it's hard to work.

So the feeling itself is amazing, these big objects.

**Aziz:** and they stay for a long time.

**Artem:** and a large number of people work in these factories that we have produced. When I go to my friends in Nizhny Novgorod and show them what you're working on. We have a Sapsan train that goes to Nizhny Novgorod and on the way to Nizhny Novgorod you pass by a factory that is being modernised and I work there and you can see where we put these columns and as I drive by I tell them that I was involved here.

**Aziz:** amazing, I can imagine.

**Artem:** I had an intern position there.

**Aziz:** what's the difference, you participated.

**Artem:** Yes, it's still nice. Passing by, such a warm feeling comes over me.

**Aziz:** it's very beautiful. Conventionally speaking, oil workers are also a very necessary profession and everyone needs it, but there it's just drilling the earth.

**Artem:** no, I had that experience too. In one of the projects I worked on, Gazpromrazvitie, there was an oil production facility in the far north. But it was not oil development, but the construction of these facilities. This facility is in the North, we flew there to Urengoy, from there we transferred to helicopters and flew to the North on a rotational basis. The desert is snowy all around.

**Aziz:** Was it a tremendous hardening?

**Artem:** I was 23 years old at the time. It was more interesting for me than scary. I saw it more as an adventure.

**Aziz:** it's hard, isn't it? It's very cold. At the end of the earth.

**Artem:** yes, it wasn't easy, but when you start working, you don't pay attention to it anymore. It becomes your norm of life. It was wildly cold there at times. Once on the Victory Day holiday, on 9 May, I was sitting on watch, snow was falling outside the window, and there was a parade on TV, and people were wearing shorts. It's such a big contrast. In terms of weather it was hard there, strong winds, we still lived in carriages with metal doors like safes. When you opened them, you almost flew away with the wind. I still remember that period with warmth. We lived in a group and there we had our own socialising, our own subculture.

**Aziz**: I wanted to ask about this subculture. It is, after all, a selection of people who go there to work. A certain type of people. People who are easy going. Not every specialist will go there. These are people with a certain psychology, ready for the challenges.

**Artem:** These people can be divided into several groups. They are young specialists with a young spirit of adventurism and career growth. Foreign specialists are also attracted there. For some very good sums. We cannot say that they feel any pleasure. They just go there to earn money. To do quality work and earn money. And there are people for whom this has become their life. They work on these projects, they are shift workers. One project is over, they go to another. This is their way of life. Their own socialising.

**Aziz:** Do they know each other?

**Artem:** the guys I worked with at Sibur are working here too. We don't have such a diverse cluster of specialists. And as it happens, we overlap with each other. Our project activity is so project-based and offers something that you don't live in the same place for 30 years. Sometimes it's like people say, "I worked there for 30 years as a chief engineer," and that's not the case with us. You come for a certain period of time, you've done your job, you move on.

**Aziz:** I feel you had an interesting time with these people?

**Artem:** working with the Vakhtaviks was a very interesting period. They are interesting people themselves. They are kind. Although there is a stereotype that they lack education, it is not true. They are well-read and you can discuss a lot of things with them. It is difficult to convey in words, they create their own microclimate. You spend 70% of your time in the office.

**Aziz:** and you know almost nothing about them.

**Artem:** just a mate relationship. And here it turns out that you come there for a month, work together, have breakfast and dinner together, live together, and it turns out that you not only work together, but also spend your leisure time together. You go for a walk, do sports together. More multifaceted relationship turns out.

**Aziz:** listening to you, I wanted to go there myself.

**Artem:** Well, the main thing is work, of course. To go there, you have to pass a serious medical commission. Well, you leave the facility and you can see the northern lights. It's a small thing, but it's nice.

**Aziz:** it's not a small thing.

**Artem:** even if the work there is hard.

**Aziz:** it's an experience of a lifetime. Was it all at Sibur?

**Artem:** no, it was when I worked at Gazpromneftrazvitie.

**Aziz:** you name such powerful companies.

**Artem:** this kind of activity. A similar cluster of projects.

**Aziz:** it's understandable. But not everyone is hired there.

**Artem:** I haven't thought about it, who is taken, who is not. I never had any such thoughts at all. It was a job I was interested in, my career expectations.

**Aziz:** how long have you worked in this organisation?

**Artem:** one year. And I was already starting to get homesick. I had been travelling for 4 years after graduation. The first project was in Nizhny Novgorod region, then the second project in Sibur in Tobolsk, and from there I moved to Gazpromneftrazvitie in the Tyumen region. I have a certain amount of omission, I have friends in Moscow, I have a family in Moscow, I look at how they live, celebrate holidays, and I started to think that I was doing something wrong. At that time, I looked at work differently, going somewhere by helicopter, but you can stay in the city. And I wanted to go home.

**Aziz:** but you know Siberia quite well? Have you travelled there a lot?

**Artem:** Siberia is huge. No one on the planet can say they know it well. I know a certain area. These are big cities, with a very big history. When I came to Tobolsk, I didn't know that Mendeleev was born there. That the royal family was kept there. The first Kremlin was there. Nature is fantastic there. I've lived in Moscow all my life and of course everything was a wonder to me there. The nature, the beauty, and the people there are different. The language is the same, but the mentality is different. And this life experience, to communicate with different people in different parts of our vast country, it was a tremendous experience.

**Aziz**: and you came back to Moscow?

**Artem:** yes, and I was already looking for work there. I got a job in a construction consultancy company. Implementing IT products.

**Aziz:** and then?

**Artem:** there was a period when I couldn't find a job. There were offers, but I wanted to be at home. I would look for a job in Moscow, I would live in Moscow. I had travelled far and wide. I couldn't find a job in my speciality. And when something doesn't work out, you think maybe it's not your thing. And by coincidence, I wanted to stay in Moscow, I ended up in the Moscow government. Funny thing happened. I was no longer working in my speciality. There were staffing difficulties in the department where I went to work, and I found myself in the wonderful world of public procurement. And there I stayed for three and a half years.

**Aziz:** Is it in the City Hall?

**Artem:** It's the Moscow government, the main control department.

**Aziz:** for a while you were an official?

**Artem:** no, it wasn't like that. I was not in the civil service, it was the institution itself. I was an analyst.

**Aziz:** well did you encounter this world of officialdom?

**Artem:** I didn't call it the world of officialdom.

**Aziz:** it's still a big difference from a private company, isn't it?

**Artem:** a big difference, a completely different experience of municipal government. This is its own culture of communication, its own vision of the world, of processes.

**Artem:** I've worked in industry, in the construction sector, and this is such a 180-degree turn. It was not easy to readjust. It has its own rhythm of work. I am used to being at work all the time, from my experience of working in projects where everything has to be done, everything has to be done.

**Aziz:** subordination with people?

**Artem:** even if you work in an industrial state company, there is a chain of command there too.

**Aziz:** but she's different.

**Artem:** yes, it is very different. People have their own view of the world. They do not look at solutions from a commercial point of view, they have no concept of project activity. There is a process. We improve the city, make some improvements, we need to fix housing conditions, public procurement, etc. An unusual moment for me was that everything you see is obvious to you, but when you face it, it is a gigantic number of different services. Some of them deal with the metro, others with medical care and so on. I worked in the main control department it is control of all purchases of all departments and it was necessary to understand in different spheres: in medicines and construction and landscaping, it was easier for me there I already understood something there. And the Moscow Aviation Centre and I had to understand something there. I liked that it was process work, but when you are analysing procurement, you need a completely different cluster of knowledge. You have to read a lot of information on the internet. A lot of different specialisms. Acquired skill from different activities. To get information, and to produce results.

**Aziz:** Moscow is a colossal scale. It is a state.

**Artem:** A state within a state. Then, of course, you begin to understand why so many different services are working. To control everything. It is a colossal labour. Special thanks to the people who work there. They do a lot of work.

**Aziz:** The goals are different. You have correctly pointed this out. Private companies have one interest and state organisations have another.

**Artem:** a commercial organisation works to make a profit. This is its first task. And here people should have a sense of social responsibility. The starting point is this.

**Aziz:** the initial motivation should be different. Ideally.

**Artem:** when people come to the municipal administration after graduation, they have a different idea, it is definitely formed afterwards. I have a slightly different view. I worked in a different sphere. And I have formed my own opinion. I started to look at this sphere of activity in a different way.

**Aziz:** 3.5 years, was it useful for you?

**Artem:** it was very useful. After all, I worked there for 3.5 years. In the last year I started to realise that it wasn't my thing at all.

**Aziz:** did you decide to leave?

**Artem:** It was just a thought. I was good at my job, I worked as an expert and a department head and managed other departments.

**Aziz:** you were no longer a technical employee. You were already a civil servant. Deputy head of department is already a bureaucratic position.

**Artem:** but there is a division there into civil servant and non-civil servant. So I was not a civil servant.

**Aziz:** everyone who is there, they are all civil servants.

**Artem:** I understand that. I have to explain to people that not everyone there is a civil servant.

**Aziz:** why did you leave there? If it's not a secret.

**Artem:** it's not a secret. It was not an intention, but a thought that I wanted something different. I no longer wanted to work there. When I worked there, I clearly realised that if I stayed there, what kind of job I would have in 10 years' time. I didn't see anything special for me. Maybe that was the impetus for me, my inner adventurer woke up. And I decided to go to live in Kazakhstan.

**Aziz:** Kazakhstan? That's interesting. What did you do there?

**Artem:** I was lucky and got a job in a small firm with my friends. The firm was engaged in economic trading. My brother was in the business and I knew something about it. I was in Kazakhstan for a year and I had friends there. I thank them very much for taking me in and supporting **me. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have been able to even model the situation.**

**Aziz:** How did you make friends in Kazakhstan?

**Артем:** в школе мой брат учился с одним человеком, который оттуда был, они дружили потом семьями

**Азиз:** и это родина Ваших родителей?

**Артем:** не Алматы, а другой город, ну малая Родина. Мы шутили, что каждый Егоров должен пожить в Казахстане. У меня же брат тоже уже в Москве родился. И так получилось, что после окончания Университета он 2 года пожил в Казахстане. И когда я уже туда приехал, то уже шутить стали, что каждый Егоров должен там пожить. Вообщем, у меня уже были какие-то сбережения. Чувствовал я себя там нормально и поэтому решил вот так рискнуть и поработать в новой сфере. В целом было интересно, но не мое.

**Aziz:** and you ended up in Uzbekistan? How did you end up in Uzbekistan?

**Artem:** as I said, my acquaintance with engineering is divided into 2 stages. A number of my colleagues told me that they moved to Uzbekistan. Since 2017-18 already. There are a lot of construction projects here. Uzbekistan started to invite foreign specialists. Back when I was working in Moscow, my friends would call me and say: Come here, try it here. And it is interesting to work and the projects are interesting. But as long as you live in Moscow, you don't really want to come here. I must be getting older, and I began to think that it is better to work in one place. Up until a certain point, I didn't consider this option. And then I began to realise that what I was doing was not my star. Companies that work here announce their vacancies and one vacancy I liked, that's what I was doing. And I thought, What if?

I'll see, I'll try it. And go to work again with pleasure.

**Aziz:** what are your impressions? It's been a few months and there are already stable impressions.

**Artem**: I haven't done my job for 5 years and I was recovering some knowledge. It's like coming back to my home. It's mine. I like it and I am interested in it.

**Aziz:** I wanted to ask the following, it's interesting and important to me. You have had experience in very large companies. How do you assess the technological level, the management culture? Is it very different from where you worked before?

**Artem:** Yes, of course it is different. The culture here is different. Both Russia and Uzbekistan, we all come from the same country. And at the same time, we are culturally different people. But there are no barriers.

**Aziz:** do you feel any discomfort?

**Artem:** when communicating with people, when solving some issues, no. There are no problems with communication. We understand each other, we co-operate. Local people have a very good quality - they are eager to help. They tell us where it is better here, where to go, how to talk better. It all helps a lot. You adapt better in new conditions. I can't even say that I had an adaptation period. I was more getting used to the climate.

**Aziz:** of course, after the North.

**Artem:** now I have to work in the plus 40s. Compared to Moscow and other cities, there are difficulties in everyday matters, but they can't be called difficulties. The most important thing is that there is food. Delicious food, fresh vegetables and fruit.

**Aziz:** and technology? The construction technology itself. Are we on the level?

**Artem:** The basic technology of construction is the same everywhere. Everywhere concrete is poured in the same way, there may be some nuances. The ambitiousness of local projects is very attractive here, which I think is a big plus for the people of Uzbekistan, is that they understand the wealth of their country and develop it. Now the biggest projects are on the territory of Uzbekistan.

**Aziz:** the industrial cluster is very developed.

**Artem:** for example, there is no such scale in Kazakhstan.

**Aziz**: I agree with you. This is really true.

**Artem:** and people have become starved for human resources to implement these projects.

**Aziz:** that's good. It means a lot of projects.

**Artem:** So they invite personnel from abroad. And the government is supporting these projects. People realise their great potential. And they want to realise this potential. And I personally would like to help in this.

**Aziz:** do many expats work with you?

**Artem:** I don't know how to estimate it, I haven't had that experience of working abroad. It seemed quite a lot to me.

**Aziz:** from which countries?

**Artem:** from India, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Iran. Large foreign projects are coming in, working on projects. There are specialists from the USA.

**Aziz:** has the feeling of creation returned to you?

**Artem:** I work at the site and I see how it is all being built.

**Aziz:** what are you building?

**Artem:** a copper processing plant.

**Aziz:** it's a very big project.

**Artem:** the president opened it. A very large number of places are planned there. Resource extraction.

**Aziz:** I saw it last year, and even then I was impressed by the scale of work.

**Artem:** I was very positive about it. And I saw opportunities for further development.

**Aziz:** when I went to talk to you, I thought you must be stressed. You are a person from Moscow, and now you are in Almalyk. But after you told me about your work in Siberia, I realised that it is not a problem for you to move around. But still, Uzbekistan has a favourable climate for people coming here to work. Even compared to Kazakhstan.

**Artem:** the human factor is favourable, it is also favourable in Kazakhstan.

**Aziz**: I mean bureaucratic procedures.

**Artem:** it is easier in Uzbekistan than in Kazakhstan. Well, you can understand the politics of the country. There is an influx of migrants. And every country develops its own policy. But in Uzbekistan it was much easier in this respect. I was legalised in a week.

**Aziz:** I am very happy that it is possible to get formalised so quickly, to get a job.

**Artem:** the country itself is interested in inviting people here. This also played a role when I travelled here. Stress always remains. As you get older, your attitude to stress changes. I had the experience of moving, I packed my suitcase and came.

**Aziz:** do you want to continue working in the future?

**Artem:** I don't know what will happen in a year or two.

**Aziz:** you can't predict, of course, but for now you are here.

**Artem:** for today I'm interested, I like it.

**Aziz:** great. We are already finishing our conversation and my question. You are not an IT guy, but you have been in contact with it, you have studied it. I'm always curious, it's such a cutting edge industry now. Are you not afraid of artificial intelligence?

**Artem:** Ilon Musk said that we should be afraid of it.

**Aziz:** people who work with this, are they not afraid of it?

**Artem:** when I worked in the Moscow Government, there were these projects with the development of artificial intelligence. In general, I don't want to cause panic, but as Ilon Musk said that one day artificial intelligence will decide that people will make great toothpicks, I think there is some truth to that. I've heard there's even a petition being put together to stop the development of intelligence.

**Aziz:** What's scary is the rapidity. The pace of development of these technologies.

**Artem:** since 50-60 years the pace of development is crazy. At the beginning of the century we were still using button phones.

**Aziz:** I am 59 years old and I have already experienced 3-4 technological revolutions. A complete change in technology.

**Artem:** I'm 31 years old and I can't compete with 15 year olds anymore. Exactly in the technological sense. This is a certain stage of humanity's development. It's inevitable.

**Aziz:** as long as it is not the final one.

**Artem:** Anything can be final, and it will be at some point.

**Aziz:** Artem, thank you very much for your agreement and for the conversation. I wish you success and it was a pleasure to meet you.

**Artem:** Thank you, it's a pleasure.