

# WWF Youth Initiative and Flood Green Guide

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## SPEAKERS

Anita Van Breda, Misaki Daniel, Manon Ebel, Luz Cervantes, Doug Parsons, Barrisse Griffin, David Urueña, Samuel Shores

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Doug Parsons 00:00

Hi everyone this is America adapts the climate change podcast Hey adapters welcome back to another exciting episode I have partnered with World Wildlife Fund as we continue our flood green guide series focused on nature based approaches to flood risk management. You may recall episodes I did with WWF in 2018, shortly after the release of their natural and nature based flood management, a green guide, better known now around the world as the flood green guide. In the intervening years despite setbacks by the pandemic, WWF has been busy doing trainings on the flood green guide, and in this episode, we're exploring how WWF engages youth in flood risk and management. We'll hear from young individuals worldwide sharing their experiences with flooding and their thoughts on nature based approaches to flood risk management and the importance of art, science and engaging communities. We'll discuss why WWF is launching a new flood green guide youth champion initiative, the importance of including youth and flood risk reduction strategies and some of the barriers young leaders face while trying to make meaningful change. And we'll hear from a group of young professionals who traveled to Sri Lanka to work with the WWF team to design the flood green guide youth champions initiatives from the ground up some of the participants and organizers share their thoughts on the workshop and why engaging youth in a truly meaningful way is so critical to reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change. I'd like to thank World Wildlife Fund for sponsoring this episode. This was a fantastic experience for me where I spoke with inspiring young people doing amazing work to reduce flood disaster risk. Okay, let's get this episode started. Hey, adapters joining me is a Anita Van Breda. And Anita is the Senior Director, environment and Disaster Management at World Wildlife Fund. Hi, Anita, welcome back to the podcast.



Anita Van Breda 01:52

Hi, Doug. It's good to be with you again.



Doug Parsons 01:54

**D** Doug Parsons 01:54

You've been on quite a few times. But for those who aren't familiar with you, what do you do there at WWF.

**A** Anita Van Breda 02:00

I'm the Senior Director for environment and disaster management based in Washington DC with WWF. And my team is part of our climate goal, and we're part of the adaptation and resilience team.

**D** Doug Parsons 02:12

I'm very excited about this episode, I was able to talk to people from all over the world. But this is based on some previous work around the flood green guide. And let's ground people in that what is the flood green guide.

**A** Anita Van Breda 02:25

The flood green guide is the short name for natural nature based flood management, a green guide. And this was something that we issued in 2017. It's about using natural nature based approaches to flood risk management, the guidebook and the training program that supports it was generously supported by USA ID bureau of Humanitarian Affairs. And they asked us to develop this program because many of their clients and constituents that they support around the world face risk around floods. And with a changing climate, we need more and additional methods to complement some of the more traditional flood management methods that are based on what we call hard or gray engineering. And they told us they couldn't find the kind of guidebooks that they were looking for. And so we wrote the flood green guide to respond to that need. And we did then develop a training program to support the use of that guidebook. And we are just closing now on the current phase of that training program.

**D** Doug Parsons 03:37

And for those people out there. So the guide has been out there for a while, who do you recommend use it? Who do you want to use it?

**A** Anita Van Breda 03:43

The primary audience was really intended to be for what we call mid level decision makers, maybe a local mayor or a local manager of water management board, or a local community group that's supporting risk reduction in their area. And if they face flood risk, they're looking for multiple and alternative practices to help reduce that flood risk. They could use the guide, but it lays out some basic steps and procedures that the user can use to understand what their flood risks might be to understand how to set an objective for managing that risk and really being clear on what you what are you trying to do by managing flood risks. And then a number of different methods that can be used either standalone methods or in usually in combination in

order to reduce flood risk. And there's much that goes into it's not just the technical engineering part, but it's also about engaging with community members and decision makers. It's about understanding what is risk and where is it coming from and how can that be included in the management approach? It's understanding how a changing climate how changing land use all has a bearing on flood risk and And the multiple kinds of numbers of people that need to be a part of the solution to flood risk. And also the book is promoting the several different principles. One is that not all floods are bad. And floods can be a very part of a natural process within an area. And so we want to be able to maximize the benefit that flood waters can play in a community, but obviously reduce the risk and eliminate threats to lives and livelihoods.

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Doug Parsons 05:29

Do you have been on the podcast before for a variety of reasons, but we did this whole three part series. And it's been a little while since we did those podcasts. But those were related to the flood green guide. Can you just briefly tell my listeners, what did we cover in those previous podcasts and I highly recommend people go back they still hold up very well in this is a continuation of that story that we've been telling together.

A

Anita Van Breda 05:49

Yeah, thanks, Doug, I did. Knowing that we were going to talk today, I've also gone back and listen to those episodes. And I also hope your listeners will do the same, because there were some great conversations. And it was a reminder to me about the challenges the many different kinds of challenges that we face with flood risks. So we talked with some of the leading experts, the technical experts, that have been really on the front of managing flood risks around the world. And they also spoke to, you know, as things change, we have to also adapt and update our practices and are supportive of using nature as part of that flood risk. We had people who are doing communication, doing art and film, and engaging young people with art and understanding disaster risk and how to mitigate it. And so it was a reminder to me that the things we talked about a few years ago, and those podcasts have come up over and over again, in the interim, in the training program that we implemented as part of this flood, green guide, project. And Doug, we started that training after you and I did those episodes together. And we were really geared up to go out in the world and do lots and lots of in person flood green guide trainings. And we were just ready to launch that in March of 2020. And we can all remember what happened in March of 2020, the whole world came to a halt, because of the COVID 19 pandemic, my team had to, like everyone else had to adjust and quickly translate all that in person training we were going to do into an online and virtual only training program. And we did that from 2020 to 2023. And only in the last, you know, year or so as as things have been getting better with the pandemic, we've been able to go out again and meet with people in person and work with people in person. So as we do that, we hear some of these same themes coming up over and over. And that has led us to where we are now talking to you about this new initiative that we've crafted on a real focus on youth and young professionals in flood risk management. And I was also inspired by a few words I happened to hear a couple of months ago, the USA ID administrator Samantha Power, she was giving a talk in Fiji and we're doing some work in Fiji. So I was listening in. I'm glad I did because she spoke very eloquently about youth and youth engagement. And she said and I'm quoting here, youth are not just the future, they're the present. And too often we think of us as down the line, they will be the leaders. No, they are the leaders today. And I just love that because that is exactly what we're

trying to do with our FTG flood green guide, youth champion initiative. We sought out leaders, we want to support leaders, not because they are the future, although they are they're also valuable and valid now in the present, but they need support. They need training and capacity building, and they need this space to really contribute meaningful engagement. So I'm not suggesting we know all the answers to those challenges now. But I'm quite confident that working with this group and others that will join, we can try to tackle that. And I think that's really key for reducing flood risk in the future.

D

Doug Parsons 09:37

So let's get people to 30,000 foot view. We're going to hear from the participants of this workshop in Srilanka about what was happening on the ground and we'll also hear how the people were recruited to participate in this workshop. But can you tell us what the whole point of bringing people together this workshop was in the first place?

A

Anita Van Breda 09:54

Yeah. And just to set the context a little bit as we've been doing training meanings the last few years on the flood green guide, we keep hearing from many of our participants. And we were just looking at the numbers. And we've been able to reach about 500 people who have gone through a two or three day training program with us. But through some of our other education and seminar based learning, we've been able to reach over 1000 people with this concept. So we we've been able to get a lot of feedback from participants. And one thing message that came across to us is that the nature of the workplace is changing the way that people go into their professional careers, be it in conservation organizations, or humanitarian organizations or engineering firms, there is an expectation that that organization and the work that it does, is going to take climate change, climate change, adaptation, disaster risk reduction very seriously. And that nature has a role to play and all of that. So recognizing that those expectations are out there. And as I have said, in our past podcasts, and people hear me say all the time, I personally am very committed to training the next generation of practitioners, I was inspired by our flood green guide, training participants, by the people on my team, to make sure that with this issue of flood risk reduction using nature, we are really focused and invested in building the capacity and supporting young people to be a serious part of this issue. And so that led to our team's decision to create a youth champion initiative for the flood, green guide and loose sarantis, who you're going to be speaking to, is the project manager for this. She's really been leading the effort for the team on a day to day basis,

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Doug Parsons 12:08

besides loose, who else are we gonna hear from

A

Anita Van Breda 12:11

what we're going to hear from a diverse group of people because as you and I've talked about before, to address flood risk management, we have to have a diverse set of skill sets and experiences in the room so to speak. And so lose, we'll explain, we took a pretty deliberate

approach to recruiting those differences into the program. And we're going to hear from some of the youth champions from for example, Uganda, in from Colombia and in from the Bahamas, they all had different backgrounds and have had different experiences with flood, and flood risk management. But we're also going to hear from a fellow called Sam shores who is based in the US. He was not part of the Youth Championship program. But I really wanted to include him in this discussion because he's working on living shorelines, which are a nature based approach to addressing sea level rise as well as flooding. And I think he represents a lot of the aspirations that we have for the Youth Championship program in terms of his creativity and his dedication to working with people who have been impacted by disasters. So I thought it would be great to include his experiences in this discussion as well.

**D** Doug Parsons 13:26

Anita I'm going to see you at the end of the episode talk to you soon. Thanks, Doug. Hey, adapters Joining me is looser, Vantis loose is a senior program officer environment and disaster management for WW s us Hi, Luz. Welcome back to the podcast.

**L** Luz Cervantes 13:44

Hi, Doug, thank you so much for inviting me again.

**D** Doug Parsons 13:46

Let's just talk about that you've been on the for what episode was that?

**L** Luz Cervantes 13:49

So that was the episode related to the program, mangroves for climate and community where we talked about or work where we have been doing some projects in WPF, Madagascar, to help restore mangroves as well as integrate disaster risk reduction measures in the area.

**D** Doug Parsons 14:07

That was a fun episode. I got to go on location, Mexico, and it's great to have you back on. So remind my listeners again what you do at WWF.

**L** Luz Cervantes 14:15

So I work in the environmental disaster management team where basically we work to integrate environmental considerations into disaster risk reduction and recovery activities. So we're really working to make those connections between environmental degradation and how that affects disaster issues.

**D** Doug Parsons 14:32

So tell us a little bit of the history though. How did you end up joining the EDM team?

**L** Luz Cervantes 14:36

Yeah, so I actually joined WWF to work on the common mitigation side of things so quite different and just ended up connecting with Anita who leads the team while I was working on communication issues. And I was really interested in that since I actually have a background also on working with international cooperation issues in developing countries and and he does work Kim is very focused on international issues. So I was really interested in going back into the adaptation field. And that's how I started working with her.

**D** Doug Parsons 15:08

Great. So we're gonna pivot here, and we're gonna talk about the youth workshop in Sri Lanka. Tell us a bit about the process of recruiting those nine youth champions. And, you know, how did that all work?

**L** Luz Cervantes 15:18

Yeah. So basically, it was a really long process, and time consuming process, because we had a lot of interest. We put out a call for applications earlier this year. And we got over 400 applicants from three different regions, which are focused regions, so Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific Islands, as well as Africa. So a lot of interest. And we had a small team working on reviewing those applications, we worked in collaboration with the Red Cross Climate Center, and youth for resilience, which is a youth led organization to start that first stage of reviewing the applications. And so from then on, we defined a selected number of applicants, which were around maybe 30. And we really wanted to have an independent third party look at those applications, so that it wasn't the core team selecting the nine youth champions. So for that, we actually involved an international selection committee members, part of that team was Kyle McKay from the US Army Corps of Engineers, and Lauren herzer, racy from the Wilson Center. So that really helped us to have outside, I look at those. And from then on, we had like a pool of 10 applicants that we interviewed, and ended up picking nine of them.

**D** Doug Parsons 16:34

So let's talk about the workshop in Sri Lanka, what did you guys literally do there? And of course, you can't cover everything and maybe share just some of the outcomes?

**L** Luz Cervantes 16:41

Sure, yeah. So the workshop really had like two main focuses, one of them was capacity building. So we had a lot of sessions focused on natural nature based flood management, climate change, disaster risk reduction, obviously, a big focus was on the nature of the

climate change, disaster risk reduction, obviously, a big focus was on this nature of the solutions for flood management, because it was based on the foregoing guide. But then we also had even more important focus, I would say, on CO designing a program, a youth engagement program, with these nine youth champions. So really, the objective of this pilot program that we are finalizing right now was to design a youth engagement program with youth and for youth. So we had a lot of workshop activities, where we heard from the nine young leaders that we selected, the barriers that they have been facing in trying to engage in activities related to flood or disaster risk management and climate change. And we really try to understand the solutions that they could see for those problems. And with those ideas that they had came up with basically a design for this youth engagement program for Flood green guide.

**D** Doug Parsons 17:50

Can you tell us a little bit more about that draft design?

**L** Luz Cervantes 17:53

Yeah, sure. So that draft design basically focused on three main objectives which respond to the barriers that they have identified, one of them being the lack of capacity, and use for understanding and knowledge around natural nature baseboard management. The second objective is really focused on the lack of spaces to integrate into decision making process. So there is not really a lot of spaces for youth to contribute to decisions around flood risk management or disaster risk management generally. And then the third objective is related to the lack of funding that is available for a youth to be leading projects or being involved in flood risk management. So basically, building capacity is one of the main objectives that will have this program that establishing your focus spaces that can help them to engage in decision making, and increasing the funding available for youth innovation and flood risk management.

**D** Doug Parsons 18:49

Great. So most of the participants had their own personal experiences dealing with floods, what did you learn when you heard those stories?

**L** Luz Cervantes 18:58

That's right. Yeah, we had really a variety of backgrounds, among the nine youth champions, but a lot of them had, as you said, faced themselves floods in their communities. And I think what I really learned is that those experiences are invaluable in order to address the challenges that we are trying to address with climate change. So it is really key to actually integrate their knowledge into this process. So they have been working with communities already themselves, and have all of that experience that we can bring into this process to make sure that the program we create is going to be as effective as possible. And I think that is something that that was one of the the main outcomes of this program for me personally.

**D** Doug Parsons 19:38

So what are some of the key issues that are turned out to be priorities for young people starting their own flood management journey that you learned from the workshop?

L

Luz Cervantes 19:46

Yeah, so they mentioned for example, a big problem around tokenism. So a lot of programs are now talking about youth engagement and for example, inviting us to speak in panels, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they are really meaningfully integrating their thoughts and their knowledge into program design or decision making process policies etc. So they are really interested in being meaningfully engaged in decision making processes, not just invited for one or two webinars, and then that's it. That's where it ends. Another one they mentioned was like a funding available for youth specifically. So a lot of the times they are trying to develop programs into their communities, because they're really close to where floods are happening in the case of these youth champions, but there is no funding available for them, it's really hard for them to get the funding. And finally, yeah, the lack of capacity building opportunities for youth as well.

D

Doug Parsons 20:45

So there are these nine young people, and they're all from different countries, and they all have their own different circumstances. So what value do they really get from working together?

L

Luz Cervantes 20:56

I think the value was that they were all. First out, they were all passionate about this topic and about helping their communities to be more resilient to climate change. So I think they really found some sort of tight group in that sense that they all have this common goal, this common passion, and different challenges. So they were able to problem solve together, we had a session, for example, where one of the youth champions shared some problems and challenges that she has been facing in her community and the other champions were able to contribute with ideas of how she could engage to support that community, who has been facing devastating floods. They also all came from different backgrounds in the sense that some of them had been working really closely at the community level. Some others had more of experience with policymaking, for example, engaged in youth networks, I think that diversity of experiences really helped them also to gain a broader perspective on the issue that they're trying to address.

D

Doug Parsons 21:55

And a pivot a little bit more here just with your own personal experience in dealing with young professionals. And so you've worked with folks in Colombia and Madagascar? What did you learn from them?

L

Luz Cervantes 22:04



I think the main thing I have learned from all of this process is really, that this passion and determination that they have is really something that we should not overlook, because it is big asset and an untapped resource that we have to address this challenge of the climate crisis. And so by partnering with youth in a meaningful way, I think we can really achieve so much more. And yeah, I think I really left like energized and inspired by their contributions and by the work they've been doing on the ground, and also by their insights that we often don't have, like the space to listen to.

**D** Doug Parsons 22:42

Last question. If my listeners want to learn more about the flood green guide Youth Initiative, what should they do?

**L** Luz Cervantes 22:48

So they can head to our website, we have a couple of articles that have been published also, or Twitter. And I guess also listen to this, this podcast, but stay tuned, because we will be publishing a lot more resources around this and we are definitely also looking for partners as we move forward to the implementation of this design program.

**D** Doug Parsons 23:08

Fantastic, Louis, thanks for coming on the podcast and sharing your message.

**L** Luz Cervantes 23:12

Thank you so much.

**D** Doug Parsons 23:18

Hey, adapters. Joining me is Barrisse Griffin, an expert in disaster risk and preparedness. Hi, Barry, welcome to the podcast.

**B** Barrisse Griffin 23:24

Hi, Doug. Thanks for having me.

**D** Doug Parsons 23:26

Where are we talking from? Where are you based out of?

**B** Barrisse Griffin 23:30

**B** Barrisse GRIFFIN 23:29

I am born and raised in Nassau, New Providence Bahamas. So I'm currently talking to you from the Bahamas.

**D** Doug Parsons 23:36

That sounds actually very exciting. So what do you do there in the Bahamas?

**B** Barrisse Griffin 23:40

So I am an expert in disaster preparedness, management mitigation, adaptation response, pretty much everything to do with disaster management. So I'm working on various projects throughout the Bahamas and often throughout the Caribbean in improving disaster management strategies.

**D** Doug Parsons 23:57

Okay, we're gonna talk a bit about the World Wildlife Fund flood green guide it but I want to start off let's talk about how floods have impacted your life there in the Bahamas.

**B** Barrisse Griffin 24:06

Yes, born and raised in Bahamas my entire life. Interestingly enough, my birthday is in September. I just celebrated my birthday last week birthday. Thank you. And I can always remember my birthday being around two things the peak of hurricane season and also around the first day of school. So it's always up in the air on whether I will actually be able to attend school around my birthday because either a hurricane is happening with hurricanes comes flooding, lots of flooding and with the Bahamas being an archipelago and a low lying coastal nation we are below sea level a lot of our land is below sea level so we do get a lot of flooding so flooding in my life has is a recurring theme. I can always remember friends and families in low lying areas kind of losing everything or a lot of property damage on fortunately for me, no personal live loss, but just A lot of damage as rainy season peak hurricane season we can expect a lot of flooding on. It's a common occurrence. So every year every season, and it's getting worse by the year, but I can always remember floods.

**D** Doug Parsons 25:12

I think we could talk about this for the entire time, but I don't want to do that. But tell us a bit about hurricane Dorian. That was a pretty significant event to impact the Bahamas.

**B** Barrisse Griffin 25:21

Yes. So hurricane Dorian occurred in September of 2019. So I think now about four years ago, and it was the worst recorded hurricane in the Bahamian history. So it's came as a cat five

hurricane and it stalled for about 48 hours over two of the northern islands. So for 48 hours, it simply did not move over these two islands. So this was unheard of an unprecedented in Bahamian history for hurricanes, usually, hurricanes just come and go. But Dorian just loved the Bahamas so much that he stayed for 48 hours. So it caused a lot of damage. And I think for us targeted, Dorian has now become the baseline for how we should look at hurricanes in the future and how we should improve and adapt our disaster management strategies on our flood management strategies.

D

Doug Parsons 26:16

I imagine it's the equivalent of Hurricane Katrina for New Orleans. This is just this detail finds the entire area. Can you tell us a bit though, like being on the ground there, you said these northern islands, but you still must have seen a lot of impacts where you were based?

B

Barrisse Griffin 26:29

Yeah. So I am based in Nassau, which is the capital is one of the central islands on the two northern islands, Grand Bahama and Abaco. They're pretty much in a hurricane belt. So statistically, they're the two islands in the Bahamas that gets the most hurricane action. They're always repeatedly and frequently hit by hurricanes. So in the ground in Nassau, I can just remember flooding everywhere. So luckily, I live on a hill or a very high area compared to the rest of the island. But I can just remember looking through my window and seeing the entire island pretty much flooding highways were flooded. You could not see through the rain, how much rain came. I know that the storm surge in Abaco and Grand Bahama was about 23 feet. So people's homes, two storey homes, three stories home were completely underwater, people's second floors were underwater. So it was just a lot of water and on the ground in Nassau just flooding. Cars were trying to go through they got stalled out in the water. It was just water everywhere. We were completely underwater for days after Dorian,

D

Doug Parsons 27:37

that sounds harrowing. So thank you for that just giving us a little bit of background. Like I said, we could devote the whole episode to that. But I want to pivot here and I want to talk about the WWF flood green guide flood Youth Initiative that you participated in. Now, we've already learned what that is. But can you give us a bit of background? Why did you apply for that

B

Barrisse Griffin 27:56

I received my master's degree in disasters adaptation and development from King's College in 2020. So I have kind of self branded along with my cohort at the time as masters of disasters, because we all received our master's degree in disasters. So as the self proclaimed master of disaster, I just thought it was important to become well rounded in various types of disasters, particularly disasters that affects me in my home country, the Bahamas, and my region, the Caribbean. But it was important for me to be well rounded on well versed in different types of disasters and how to manage these different types of disasters. So when I saw the opportunity with World Wildlife Fund for the flood green guide youth program, I thought this is a great way

for me to take some of the theoretical things that I've learned in school and through my practical experience, and just kind of expand more with flooding, because although we get hurricanes a lot in the Bahamas, we really get a lot of flooding more than being directly impacted with hurricane. So I thought this was a great opportunity for me to learn about flood risk management, particularly, and different ways to incorporate nature with flood risk management management in my local context.

**D** Doug Parsons 29:15

Well, the workshop sounded pretty intense. And you guys covered a lot of ground, but can you give us some highlights from the workshop?

**B** Barrisse Griffin 29:21

The workshop was really intense, five straight days of nonstop learning, interaction and participation. I think a highlight for me was not just learning about flood risk management, but learning about nature based solutions with flood risk management, because when people think of, or at least in the Bahamas, when I think about flood risk management, I can just see a lot of sea walls being built. So I learned the difference between gray infrastructure green infrastructure and mixed methods and solutions. So that was really cool to learn and see how it is implemented or is not implemented in my local context. And then this being the pilot program, I also thought it was Whole to see how to build a program or designing a program from scratch, you know, getting a cohort of young people from different perspective, different countries, different backgrounds and designing a comprehensive and holistic program for future generations to learn about flood risk management. So building a program from the vision statement or the mission statements of the objectives, I just thought it was pretty cool to build something from the ground up and see how it evolves over the years.

**D** Doug Parsons 30:31

And tell me a bit about some of the other participants. You guys came from all over the world, right?

**B** Barrisse Griffin 30:35

Yeah, we did. So the participants were ranging from, let's see, the Philippines, we had someone from Cambodia. We had someone from Uganda, lots of different places, so just all of them all but

**D** Doug Parsons 30:50

yeah, I want to put you on the spot. And so anything stand out from some of their stories,

**B** Barrisse Griffin 30:56

**B** BARRISSE GRIFFIN 30:30

some of their stories, it's pretty interesting hearing a lot of the acts of youth participation that they've had in their experience and seeing how much youth engagement was very much a pivotal role in their journeys. And just understanding what flood context looks like in different context. So for me being a coastal area, and also in the program, we learned about different types of floods. So that was cool. So me being a coastal area, I know about aerial flooding, on coastal flooding on storm surges versus other countries experiencing urban flooding, flash flooding on what that looks like. So it was nice to get these different perspectives and see how they are coming up with strategies to combat flood risk management.

**D** Doug Parsons 31:40

All right. So you kind of talked about this. And I think this is what you actually identified at the workshop. But what subject matters should be included in training to support young people's involvement with dealing with flood risk,

**B** BARRISSE GRIFFIN 31:50

just the technical capacity. So just the basic terminology, learning the differences between a hazard and the disaster, floods, different types of floods, just the technical vocabulary, and the the knowledge would be very important.

**D** Doug Parsons 32:05

All right, so you call yourself a master disaster. And I think this workshop informed this, but have you had formal academic training or even on the job training and using nature based approaches to reduce flood risk?

**B** BARRISSE GRIFFIN 32:16

So no, I think my academic training was really theoretical, more policy base our policy approaches or just case studies and examinations of different types of disasters, not even much natural hazard disasters just all encompassing. So I don't think that I had a lot of academic training, in terms of flood risk management, specifically, but practical training, working with government institutions in disaster management, and seeing the capacity or lack thereof, the capacity, I think I'm getting a bit more into that groove.

**D** Doug Parsons 32:55

They brought you together, and how do you feel that what responsibilities do you have when it comes to disaster risk reduction and floods? I mean, everyone's young and WWF was focusing on you guys. So what are your responsibilities?

**B** BARRISSE GRIFFIN 33:06

BARRISSE GRIFFIN 33:10

I think our responsibilities at the crux of it is building awareness or trying to build a bridge between the older generation and the younger generation on seeing how we can collaborate because I think General consensus from the program was that there's a lot of gatekeeping, or knowledge gatekeeping from older generations where they feel like they are being pushed out of certain positions and spaces, and young people are fighting their way in. So I think it's important for us to understand that there's lots of room for collaboration. And there's importance in succession planning succession, building on the trickle down of knowledge and making sure that younger generations know the history of certain practices and strategies, the good and the bad. So they can present new and fresh ideas and perspectives on making sure that some things evolve. But some things are put in place for a reason. So I think our program talks a lot about just young people building awareness in local communities and context on just trying to create a space for collaboration between older generations with the younger generation.

D

Doug Parsons 34:19

So the Bahamas have a unique threat from sea level rise and as all islands do, do you sense that younger people in the Bahamas are thinking about sea level rise, even if they're not deeply involved, like you are?

B

Barrisse Griffin 34:32

I think in recent years, there has been a lot of conversation among young people on sea level rise because with the Bahamas just celebrated its 50th year of independence in July. So it's a big occasion for us to be 50 years young because we are still a very young developing nation and with people in my generation, my age group and younger. We're all thinking about our future. You know, Hurricane Dorian wipes out a lot of places in Abaco and Grand Bahama. So people are thinking, when I have my children and my legacy building, where am I going to go? Where am I going to plant my mangrove seeds? Or where am I going to plant? My sugar apple trees? Will I even have a place to call home? So with sea level rise, a lot of young people are thinking, future building and future development on what's going to be left or what's going to be available if we don't tackle this issue now or create strategies to adapt and mitigate these flood risk issues now, so the conversation is building on how do we protect what we have left and make sure there's something to pass on to future generations?

D

Doug Parsons 35:43

Obviously, with WWF there's this emphasis on nature based approaches to reduce disaster risk. Do you feel the Bahamian government is thinking like that? And if not, should they be?

B

Barrisse Griffin 35:52

I think the Bahamian government this this administration's agenda is climate change focus. And I think there are baby steps being made as someone in the field and someone who's very passionate about the field, I'm always going to say not enough is being done or not enough is

being invested into climate change and disaster risk management to protect our coastal zones. But I think baby steps are being made. We are having a lot of mangrove planting initiatives, because we recognize that mangroves present a lot of capabilities for biodiversity, but also coastal management and coastal protection. We're investing a lot in coastal zone management and the blue economy strategy right now. And like I said, I think it's baby steps. But some things better than nothing. But with this is a marathon, not a sprint, but as a Caribbean, we run fast. So I think we shouldn't be running a bit faster.

**D** Doug Parsons 36:50

All right, good answer. So what's next for you? What's on your plate?

**B** Barrisse Griffin 36:53

Well, I'm always working. I do have a blog called The Master of disasters.com, where I offer household and personal strategies and tips on how to have some personal level of preparedness against hazards natural hazards. Specifically, I am going to continue to work with the private sector and government institutions in the Bahamas and the Caribbean to create effective policies and strategies for disaster management. Lifewise I see myself obtaining another degree maybe in climate change or even my PhD in disaster management just to become more knowledgeable or more of an expert in this field. I have my own consultancy called mangrove strategies in which I am working on projects with the private sector on the government to create effective disaster management strategy. So that's what I have going on now and then hanging out with my two dogs.

**D** Doug Parsons 37:46

That sounds pretty busy. All right, last question. Let's say someone's visiting the Bahamas. Do you have a favorite spot? Just give me one a favorite spot in the islands

**B** Barrisse Griffin 37:55

in the islands. Well, my family heritage is from Andros addresses the biggest island in the Bahamas. And I think it's also a great place for rest and relaxation if you want a little bit of island life, so it's pretty underdeveloped. So if you were looking for peace and quiet, great food, beautiful beaches, I would definitely recommend Andros,

**D** Doug Parsons 38:17

thank you so much for coming on the podcast and sharing your story.

**B** Barrisse Griffin 38:19

Thank you for having me, Doug.

- D** Doug Parsons 38:26  
Hey, adapters. Joining me is David Urue±a. David is a geologist and an expert in disaster risk and preparedness. Hi, David, welcome to the podcast.
- D** David Urue±a 38:35  
Hey, Doug, thank you for the invitation.
- D** Doug Parsons 38:37  
Can you tell us where you're recording this from?
- D** David Urue±a 38:39  
In this moment? I am living in the Netherlands. I am doing my master's degree in geo information science and Earth observation and the facilities about disaster risk reduction and natural hazards.
- D** Doug Parsons 38:53  
So how did you end up over in the Netherlands to start studying? Because tell us where you are? You're from at originally?
- D** David Urue±a 38:58  
Originally, I am from Colombia. So that's why I have like a Spanish name. I like to maintain that a little bit. Because when you are far from home, you like to have something that reminds you why I am here. I came here to study because I've been working with disasters for maybe five or six years now. We need to study and we need to learn something new. If I want to learn something about the floods, we should go to a place where they have a lot of loads. This is the Netherlands and they know a lot about how to manage their water. We can learn something about it and apply it in our countries.
- D** Doug Parsons 39:39  
Yes, we hear all about the work that Netherlands are doing. They actually collaborate with quite a few local governments in the United States and so they their reputation precedes them. I want to talk a bit about your background and so have you had academic training already or on the job training and using nature to reduce flood risk?



D

David Urueña 39:57

Well, though, I have some Academic Training. As you you say, I am a geologist, but my Bachelor's was in geological engineering. I did my bachelor's thesis in fluid assessment in one particular region back in Colombia, I have done several courses related with disaster risk management, I am really interested in about floods. Because Colombia, it's like an amphibious country, that means that we have a lot of water. And for us, it's a big problem. I have some experience working with the government in Colombia in a local office of this service management. I think that we have to work with the communities we have to learn about the disaster assessments in order to apply our knowledge in the communities in our countries.

D

Doug Parsons 40:48

And can you elaborate on any other involvement that you've done with flood risk or disaster management, I guess, maybe in Colombia, and or maybe some other countries, but just on the ground experience there,

D

David Urueña 40:59

I can't tell you the only story if you don't mind about how my life have been impacted about floods and disasters. Okay, my journey with floods, like started when I was maybe 1617 years old, and I was in my grandparents house, in town, in a really small town near Big River, the name of the river is to Paulo, it's another responders name. Suddenly, when night, everything was flooded, and it was what's happening. I didn't understand in that time, what was happening, when we had more like the war was going on. I was, this is weird, we had a lot of water. And in this moment, we don't have almost anything, but the damage was done, we had everything damage, and everything was affected. It was a lot of people that were affected about the floods. And now as a geologist, I understood a little bit about how floats works. And I know that floats are something natural, because they our rivers, and all the rivers in all the world are really dynamic. And it's normal to have lots because sometimes a river is going to be with a lot of water. And sometimes a river is going to have less water. And that's totally normal, we need to understand how is the behavior of a river, to plan our cities to plan our settlements, when we can do that that's perfect. But in the tropical regions, I mean, there's in the Global South, that's kind of difficult. So that's why we need to train the communities to know and to learn how to read the dynamic of the river, they need to know like when the river is going to be with a lot of water they need to need when the river is going to have less water, and they can plan ahead, how are they going to build built the neighborhood? How are they going to do their normal activities?

D

Doug Parsons 42:54

All right, we're gonna pivot a little bit, that's really interesting that your background got you to where you are, obviously, got your head into this flood management area. And that's fantastic. But we're gonna pivot and we're gonna talk about the World Wildlife Fund flood green guide, flood Youth Initiative. So what inspired you to apply for that in the first place, was



D

David Urueña 43:12

a friend of mine from in cheese from the Philippines, she sent me the I don't know how to say that they call about the program. And she told me that I could apply or to that initiative. And after I started the call, I said that I could participate, I could learn. And I could contribute with my experience. In all my years, I've been thinking the communities should participate in all the processes related with the fluid management. And I showed that the program wanted to do that. But with an especial interest in the new generations in June, I was totally agree with the approach that they wanted to do. The other approach that really interested me is related with natural because I really believe that we can build our cities and we can build our neighborhoods, if we understand that what is going on with the river? How is going to affect our houses, how is going to affect my work? That's something that I've been thinking a lot. So I just applied to tell us

D

Doug Parsons 44:16

and I know is a pretty intense workshop. What did you like best about the workshop? And you can you tell us a bit about what you thought of the other participants.

D

David Urueña 44:22

I just want to say a little bit short sentence about it. We have the same problems. Were right, listening, my peers from Asia, from Africa, from other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Give me our approach about the fluid problem that we have in the Global South. We have exactly the same problems. We have, of course, many cultural differences. But the problem with fluids, it's worldwide, we are not alone, because we are trying to do something about it. The new generations are working really, really hard to make our communities to try to better communities to try to plan our cities, I think that we built a really good program for Judith, in the global south back in Sri Lanka, when we were doing the workshop, we are sure that is going to be a really good proposal for all the jobs dealing with floods seen in our countries.

D

Doug Parsons 45:22

So I guess on that note, just what subject matters, and I guess you talked about this at the workshop should be included in training to support young people's involvement in dealing with flood risk,

D

David Urueña 45:31

we have to understand that jobs are the key for social processes and transformation in our societies, we need to give God the tools to do that, to do the change. At the beginning, we could have like an approach with some workshops, but later, they will need to have really good backup and support for continuing the processes that they started in their communities, the government, more organizations could give the dude like that support to do all the work that it needs to be done in the communities earning into supplements.

**D** Doug Parsons 46:11

So what do you think governments and NGOs need to do to include youth, when they're thinking about flood risk management,

**D** David Urueña 46:18

maybe we need to understand our territories before make proposals. So the flood risks assessment will be a must for future training. So they do it, I am not talking just technical skills, we need to understand how our societies works, how the organizations work, we need to know how to get resources to do our projects, this could be like the way that we could train them, we could give them the tools to do these kind of things, these kind of projects, for the flood risk management in the local communities. And that is something that you don't learn in this code. That is something that you don't learn anywhere, you only learn with experience, but it's kind of difficult, try to do things, you don't have the tools to do that.

**D** Doug Parsons 47:07

And going back to the workshop, were there any surprises when you get there, you had your own experiences, and so did everyone else. But were there any surprises that stood out for you,

**D** David Urueña 47:15

they were just showing us how they fluid green guide is they were presenting that. And also they try to give us some of those tools to present projects to find some resources to build like a platform for the Jewish community. For me, that's was something new because I am from the Academy, I have a lot of experience working in communities, but in a different context. It's not like I am organizing the communities in I am coming from a university I am coming from outside we have this project. But the point of view of WWE was you have to build with the community with you have to go with the community. I'm being with them. And that was something that was a different approach to the things. And I really liked what I learned there.

**D** Doug Parsons 48:07

Fantastic. So last question. And this is kind of a fun one. Is that going back to your home country of Colombia? Is there a favorite spot if someone was visiting Colombia? Just give me one. What's your favorite spot there?


**D** David Urueña 48:18

I like beaches, the beachers from the Caribbean. Amazing. So I haven't seen that kind of which is anywhere in the world. I have traveled a lot. And I think that Colombia has a really good beachers. Yeah, maybe in Santa Marta. They can find like a really, really good spot to go to

relax.

 Doug Parsons 48:39

Great. We covered a lot of ground there. I want to thank you for coming on the podcast.

 David UrueÅ±a 48:43

Thanks

 Doug Parsons 48:47

Hate actors Joining me is Misaki Daniel Misaki is the founder and executive director of hindered zero youth advocates for nature. Hi, Misaki. Welcome to the podcast. Thank you person. And I think I probably mispronounced the name of the title. Could you go ahead and do that for me again?

 Misaki Daniel 49:02

Yes, I'm the executive director Evandro youth advocates furniture. All right, perfect.

 Doug Parsons 49:07

So tell us a bit about what you do there in Uganda with that organization.

 Misaki Daniel 49:12

Yes, hello is advocates furniture. It is a youth led and funded community based conservation organization. And we are working to mitigate flood risk in communities. We are based in Uganda in the western part of the country because it's a district particularly that's when they were in Surrey mount and so we work on projects in landscape restoration. We also work on projects in promoting affordable clean energy technologies so that people can reduce the impact of energy on the natural resources. We also work with grassroots communities to help them establish green enterprises that will help them mitigate and adapt to climate change.

 Doug Parsons 49:55

Can you give us a really quickly overview what's Uganda like on I'm assuming it's a very mountainous country and how many people live there give us a little bit of basic facts about Uganda.



M

Misaki Daniel 50:06

Uganda approximately has professional 14 million people. But in this population over 75% is generally young people who are adjust the youth between 12 years and 35 years. The country is actually a very nice and nice country. Geographically, it is crossed by the equator in Jesus sauce of the great night. It hosts the ruins the rosary Mountains National Park, they will resort Mountains National Park has the windy Benefiber National Park, which was the largest population of the chimpanzees in the world. It has the Queen Elizabeth National Park, McKeon falls and very many other attractive natural scenarios. Generally the country is rich with biodiversity and Seville good and everybody who is here has always desired to be here again.

D

Doug Parsons 51:00

All right, fantastic. I did not know that the largest chimpanzee population to help my listeners get a sense of what weather patterns are like in Uganda, what are some of the extreme weather events that you experience there?

M

Misaki Daniel 51:12

Well, seems to be now actually is now one of the expected things that every time you have a rainy season, you expect floods and landslides in 2020, we had the worst of the worst extreme weather conditions that we've seen. That is a time that was in on 20th May 2020. And the time when we had all the rivers across the district flooding the river and Jamba was flooding and destroyed or the hospital, Columbia hospital and cassis a town municipality from book was also flooding river area here at the border we use the DRC the western border, while also destroying all the bridges across the river connecting Congo and to other sub counties within Uganda, everything was shut down. And by the time when we're in the COVID, pandemic, mobility was very difficult, or the farms were damaged, houses were damaged. trade and business was typically completely damaged, and all the infrastructures including rods were down. It was hard time for both the civilians and the government to cope up with the disasters, because we needed food to eat, but couldn't connect to our gardens. Because the bridges were down. Even if you had practice you you got in. Without the bridge, the food was either damaged by the landslide or the floods. So it was very dangerous for government, there was a lot of struggle to renovate all the bridges can imagine in one district having lost more than five bridges that we are going to cost more than 10 billion Ugandan shillings each to preach. That was a huge gross one a hospital where there were patients the mortuary was the damage is sick people were taken and towards the field very, very dangerous that up to date, you still live with the scars of that flood disaster actually, when the park slided part of the resort National Park was sliding and you know, the forest was damaged itself. So transit you had

D

Doug Parsons 53:11

that lot of impact. Alright, we're gonna pivot some here Misaki and I want to talk about the World Wildlife Fund flood green guide flood Youth Initiative that you participated in. So why did you apply to participate that in the first place?

M

Misaki Daniel 53:25

Thank you. First of all, I am a young person who has been inspired by the challenges that my community has lived with for decades from the time I was born. I saw natural scenarios here. But because people have been over depending on natural resources, they are flooding their drought. So generally floods and landslides are causing a huge, a huge disadvantage to the community. So as a young person, I saw this was a great opportunity for me to first of all, connect with other young people and share my experiences on a landslide. Now we are working with a yachtie to combat the magnitude of the risk and also help build the community resilience and adoption to these disasters. And then from the sharing of CASA, I also needed to look at how other youth are working on the other side of the world to combat and integrate different solutions in flood risk mitigation. The Florida green guide was the app for an advantage for me that I was so optimistic and ambitious that when I connect with these young people, I'm going to be in a network of people where I can keep on collaborating on solutions and innovations in combating using letter based solutions to combat fraud risk. And indeed, it has been a great opportunity because I connected I shared and I was able to learn and I'm still connected and learning more from the network that we have been able to work with from with other youth.

D

Doug Parsons 54:51

Alright, so you were at the workshop, and this is obviously some stuff that came up with what you were talking about what subject matters should be included in training to support young people's involvement when you're dealing with flood risks, so what kind of training background would you recommend? And I'm sure you guys identified that in the workshop.

M

Misaki Daniel 55:07

Yes, one of the things that should be included in training ones should be the pre flood preparedness. Most of the government most of the communities are under responding to flood is when floods have just occurred. And there are some of the risks and some of the things that have happened that already irreversible about these communities that are prone to that the risks should be trained, actually, using those communities should be trained on how to prepare ahead of floods, for example, if it's a rainy season, how do we equip the youth in this community to respond to these floods to one of the other things that should be changed is youth should be trained in is advocacy on how to call for other different stakeholders to come on board and join the youth movements, youth have solutions, but youth have not been given an opportunity to go on that table where ideas are being influenced. And if we actually formed the decisions of the key stakeholders, users should be saved actually, on how to make the advocacy meaningful and come out with meaningful impact. Another thing that you should be trained in is how they can cooperate. Because you know, the climate crisis is not a one man solution, we need to offer bridge so the YouTube friend on how they can collaborate on election sharing between countries, continents, and countries and communities, so that they can be able to understand that when they do their work in separate countries, there are a lot of things that are in common that they can collaborate on. Maybe this could be fundings. This could be knowledge sharing, this could be opportunities for learning workshops. So youth need to be trained on collaboration, particularly when they are events or flood disasters, you should be trained on unknown life rescue, many people have died in floods, where even it could not have been possible to rescue life if there were meaningful trainings. So you should be able to access trainings actually, on how to respond to these floods when they are happening. Another thing

that you should be trained on is flood recovery. We have seen communities happy expressing floods, but youth are not evolved on how to work with these communities and help them recover from either economic loss if they have not been held up to recover to risk to understand how they can work to restore the biodiversity that has been in the plains, they don't know what to do with landscape restoration. So these are things that are really very important that you should have trainings on. And we can be able to even be able to mitigate the impact of flood risk.

D

Doug Parsons 57:47

Wow, that was a lot of recommendations. That was fantastic. As you said earlier, in Uganda, there's actually a lot of young people. So there's a lot of great opportunities, especially with your organization to engage young people in dealing with these issues. How is Uganda using nature based approaches to reduce disaster risk,

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Misaki Daniel 58:05

Ghana is already working on first of all, they're trying to enforce policies to make sure that wetlands are not being destroyed, so that these wetlands can always be backfilled for water so that maybe the water is not coming in the floods are just pushing good water bodies and displacing the water like you understand the trees in the wetlands especially those bad risks. But systems tree system root systems help to protect the soil of the from the water effect, especially when it is near protected area. But others say now are the Frankie the government's trying to work on a number of projects to make sure the there is bamboo, bamboo being planted around rivers, so that the speed of water can be checked, the erosion effect of the floods can also be checked. But as I can say, generally Uganda has not yet responded with nature based solutions to full capacity. Because if this was so then there will be a lot of landscapes restore in the upper streams. This can I will say Uganda is not yet being a very big role when it comes to use of nature based social though it is trying. But there is still a lot lacking especially there are few projects that are working with the grassroots communities. Because when you use nature based solutions, it's very paramount and is only effective when you come and work with the people on the ground. And most of the projects are just being implemented by people from different communities coming to work in this community with no clear background about the community about the topography about which may be nature based components or plants can best mitigate the problem.

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Doug Parsons 59:47

So what's next for you? What's gonna keep you busy over the next few months?

M

Misaki Daniel 59:51

Absolutely. From the training. I'm now working here on ground to see how I can mobilize support to arrange trainings for the youth in nature based solutions to combat flood risks. In my I'm also currently conducting a farmers trainings on use of nature based solutions, especially in climate smart agriculture, where we trying to work with farmers now to make sure farmers

along rivers, trying to work with agricultural practices that can help them generate the money, but also mitigate their agricultural impact on the river systems. Because yeah, typically, people have been clearing riverbanks to access land. But now what one of the projects we are working on with is restoring those river valleys and also establishing be farming projects within the river valleys, so that the people are not cutting the trees. And while the lit the trees grow, they can also have visited the honey from those trees from the hives established under the trees in the valleys. They're also currently working to expand our nursery, middle Soiree. And we expect that by the end of this year, we should be able to give out 40,000 Trees help restore the areas that have been affected by landslides. So basically, that's what we're doing. We also trying to move and see how best we can find partners to support us in landscape restoration and the other flood mitigation projects because it's not easy to find partners to fund projects. But it's very critical that we need to find partners who can fund these youth initiatives so that the youth potential can materialize the youth initiatives and ambitions to combat flood risk can really be seen by active engagement in projects,

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Doug Parsons 1:01:33

you are quite busy. Final question, if someone was visiting Uganda, what spot would you recommend? Do you have a favorite spot there you'd like to visit?

M

Misaki Daniel 1:01:41

Yes, yes, if you are visiting Uganda, before you leave the country, make sure you've gone to the top of the rains or in mountain so you go to the margarita peak, we call that a mystical challenge. Those are the few people who visit that place because it's a mystical challenge you climb and as you grind from top from down, you will be expressing the equatorial area in the Queen Elizabeth National Park and you will be climbing through different Tropics actually from through different vegetation types. And you will be able to explore a variety of animals, including those that are on Indeed, those that are endangered and those that are are endemic to the Randori mountain region.

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Doug Parsons 1:02:24

All right, fantastic recommendation or the psyche, you are doing some amazing work. I'm inspired by all the wonderful things that you're doing. And I want to thank you for coming on the podcast.

M

Misaki Daniel 1:02:33

Thank you Doug, thank you for your time and the effort you're putting together to share the stories of young people to inspire the one.

D

Doug Parsons 1:02:44

Hey, adapters Joining me is Manon Ebel. Manon is a technical adviser with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Center. Hi Manon welcome to the podcast



Crescent Climate Center. Hi Manon welcome to the podcast.

**M** Manon Ebel 1:02:52

Thanks a lot for having me.

**D** Doug Parsons 1:02:54

So I've been doing this for most of my guests mispronouncing their names, and let's hear how your name is pronounced in the proper French might not have been so much better. So I just did. First off, tell us about the Climate Center. What do you guys do there?

**M** Manon Ebel 1:03:07

Yes. So the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Center is a reference center for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, where we are advising national societies and getting them to understand the climate risk they are facing, and or to reduce them to looking at the best science available at all to make this useful in practice in the local context, and ensuring that the policy landscape is adapting and bridging the gap between the humanitarian climate and the development sectors.

**D** Doug Parsons 1:03:40

And you're based in Montreal, right. But you're you have colleagues that are based all over the world.

**M** Manon Ebel 1:03:45

Yes, exactly. The Climate Center has been working remotely for over 20 years now. So we have a broad team working from New Delhi every countenance. It's a lot of fun to work with at the gas team.

**D** Doug Parsons 1:03:59

Tell me a bit about your role as technical advisor and I emphasize a lot of your youth engagement as part of that role.

**M** Manon Ebel 1:04:07

Yeah, so there had Crescent is a bronchial based movement. And I bought off of the volunteers, the 40 million volunteers that we have our youth. So the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Center is doing a lot of things, creating a lot of tools to support the volunteers in their climate engagement. So we have, for instance, a youth strategy that really emphasizes the needs for

you to learn about climate change to take action and advocate. We also have curriculums like why adopt while really avoiding you to take actions in their communities. We also have a set of cards for younger child and we recently have put together a youth advisory group that is advising the Climate Center in different capacities on different subjects from mental ill to policy. So we are also supporting their work Maya Only is sort of working on all of these different components to February's team at the Climate Center.

D

Doug Parsons 1:05:06

What are some of the key considerations? And you just explain some of the youth engagement you do there? But what do you have to consider when you are engaging youth? It's not the same thing. It's maybe engaging more seasoned professionals in the field, like what other factors do you have to think about?

M

Manon Ebel 1:05:21

There are many different factors, I will say that we need to consider that like, often they are volunteers. So we need to consider the type of engagement that will not take up too much of their time that it will be something that would be interesting for them as well. So we are often looking at concrete opportunities for them to engage that will benefit them in their professional or personal pathways. And we also want to make sure that their engagement will be not only a one time thing, but something that will be sustainably engaging the youth. So if they are going to talk at an event, we want to make sure that they will be involved in all the steps from the design of the event to the the facilitation and not just coming at the last minute to make sure that there is a huge speaker.

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Doug Parsons 1:06:07

Now how long have you been doing this job there at the center?

M

Manon Ebel 1:06:11

It's been about two years, two years,

D

Doug Parsons 1:06:13

it's probably too early. But here you are engaging youth in environmental issues, and does the center track because five years 10 years out, it's like, All right, well, these people went into these careers, have you been able to look at that information? Or is that too hard to track?

M

Manon Ebel 1:06:26

Well, that's actually a very timely questions. Because we are about to launch a survey, looking at youth led climate action across the movement, we really want to sort of have a baseline of

what is already happening in different national societies and see how we can improve youth engagement in climate action. So I'm fully with this, someday we'll be able to sort of have an idea of what's happening and how we can improve.

D

Doug Parsons 1:06:53

I hope you guys share that far and wide, I'm sure there'd be a lot of interest in what you come up with there. You also worked with the World Wildlife Fund on the flood green guide flood Youth Initiative, where they brought all these people into Sri Lanka, all these young people to work on how to better ways to reduce flood risk. Can you tell us a bit about that? How did you get involved with that in the first place?

M

Manon Ebel 1:07:13

Yes. So WWF reached out to the Climate Center to look at or expertise mostly in innovative approach. And so I've been involved with WWF at different stages of this project. First, looking at the selection of the youth champions, then we really wanted to have like a diverse group, not only geographically but also in terms of like den experience. And because the Climate Center recently and created the Youth Advisory Group, we also utilize this experience to advise them in the selection process, then we also work together on designing the agenda for the program in Sri Lanka. And then we really looked at different methodology to make sure that we will have a program that will be created by you to and for you, at the end of the week. And we used a lot of same use games. That's something that my colleagues at the Climate Center I've been developing a lot in the last few years. And still use games are very weird to really interact with people to make sure that they not only are fun, but also the day rate and experience that they will remember. So say use games often simplify very complex situation and create a fun experience for participants. And we also support the WWF with the facilitation of the workshop. So definitely Sri Lanka, working on the facilitation of the sales games, and also team building activities. Because we had such a diverse group, it was really important to create also a common language to make sure that the program was really sustainable with the coop.

D

Doug Parsons 1:08:51

So this is right up your alley and the kind of work that you do there at the centers. I'm sure it was really really great experience but any highlights from you like you think about the workshop you were there. So what were some of the highlights for you.

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Manon Ebel 1:09:03

I think for me, like one of the I liked was really to see like how the group came together we had like such different people attending. For some of them, it was the first time going out of their countries. For others it was quite a normal experience to travel so much. But they all have a different background and seeing them like learning how to collaborate and create such a big piece on together for me that was really impressive to see coming together.



D

Doug Parsons 1:09:31

So a lot of work happened there and they all helped inform like what would future training be with us? How did it help you you go back to your day job it was it a useful experience for you and are you bringing some of the things you learned there to your job now?

M

Manon Ebel 1:09:46

Yeah, definitely. We are looking at how to best spirit from this experience with some of my colleagues. And also for me, it was also personally super interesting experience in terms of facilitation skills and things like that. And we are really hoping to see or to connect,

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Doug Parsons 1:10:03

obviously, from everyone I've talked to this was a successful workshop and there's real tangible products out of it. Are you hoping within the Climate Center to do similar things? I'm guessing with all the young people that apply, there's probably a lot of demand for this kind of training, right?

M

Manon Ebel 1:10:19

Yeah. It's always fascinating to see like the number of application that we receive when we open plug on for youth. So for this specific one, we had over 400 applications. Yeah, we are hoping that this program will continue and CEO youth from Delta Casa Christian movement can also benefit from this expense.

D

Doug Parsons 1:10:41

If people want to learn more about what you guys are doing there at the Climate Center, or potentially even partnering with you, what would you recommend they do?

M

Manon Ebel 1:10:48

Well, we definitely recommend everyone go look at our website, Climate Center, that org. And there are different ways that you can contact us that are present on the website. And we are always keen to hear from your partners and to engage on different projects.

D

Doug Parsons 1:11:05

Well, thank you so much for coming on the podcast.

M

Manon Ebel 1:11:06

Thanks a lot

THANKS A LOT.

D

Doug Parsons 1:11:12

Hey, adaptors joining me is Samuel Shores, a graduate student at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Hi, Sam. Welcome to the podcast.

S

Samuel Shores 1:11:19

Hi, thank you for having me.

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Doug Parsons 1:11:20

Let's get people grounded. First, you're there at Wilmington, what are you studying?

S

Samuel Shores 1:11:24

I am currently getting my master's degree in marine biology. So I primarily study living shorelines as well as fisheries ecology in natural habitats on our coastline here in North Carolina.

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Doug Parsons 1:11:37

So how did you get interested in that? Where it where's the background for that?



1:11:39

I think a lot of people will start off by doing benthic ecology because they aren't sure exactly what it is. And that's exactly what it was for me. So I really wanted to be out in the field, I wanted to have an experience where I felt like I was having hands on learning. And one of the best places to do that is benthic ecology, because that involves getting dirty being out in oysters, marshes, and mudflats. And so I started studying that and really learned about some of those new techniques that we have on our coastline here in North Carolina, about stabilizing shorelines that being living shorelines. And they're very new, relatively new, interesting way that we stabilize shorelines using natural materials. And they're also projected to enhance local fisheries. And so I got really involved in both building them as well as studying them and actually designed my graduate thesis around living shorelines.

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Doug Parsons 1:12:31

Let's get dig into that a little bit more. So there's this living shoreline project that is that part of your university? Or is that just outside and you participate in it and give us that example of the oysters? I just love this story, this notion of using oysters to restore and yeah, give us a little bit

background on that.



1:12:47

Absolutely. So I think I should start off with what a living shoreline actually is. And so living shorelines are a low impact development that we use to stabilize our coasts. And so these are supposed to be an alternative to some of those hardened structures that you might see, like bulkheads or stone riprap. And so this way it can stabilize shorelines as well as use natural materials like oyster shell, which allows oysters to actually recruit to that material, and therefore enhance things like fisheries, providing refuge habitat, and a food source. And those are ways that we can use natural materials to kind of focus on those nature based solutions in terms of coastal erosion. My lab at the University of North Carolina Wilmington works in tandem with the town of St. James as well as Fort Caswell, which is on the southeast side of North Carolina at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. And we've partnered with them for anywhere between three to 17 years for both of those areas.



Doug Parsons 1:13:46

I when you're dealing with a living shorelines project, does the terminology of your adapting to climate change come up? Or do you kind of get into that? Is that something that you're thinking in the back of your head?



1:13:56

Absolutely. So it's one of those concerns that's in the back of our head because we currently have one of the most pressing problems in North Carolina, which is shoreline erosion, and some places are eroding much faster than others. So you have probably seen the Outer Banks eroding away in the news houses falling into the ocean. It's not quite like that down here. But we are talking about areas that have receding marshes as well as a lack of oyster reefs. And what that means is that channelized areas like the Intracoastal Waterway, as well as areas that may be along rivers can erode a lot quicker, especially because of boat wakes. And so those areas are already very sensitive to erosion. When you take on compounding factors like increased storms, increased storm surges and the intensity of storms such as major hurricanes, you then have a big problem on your hands because you don't have a solution and an area that can be protected if you don't have a natural infrastructure in order to hold that sediment together. That's one of the reasons where we talk about the immediate Need, because some of these areas are basically channelized. But the major thing is that we have to think toward the future. And using natural solutions like this allows us to work with those materials and living organisms like oysters to hold sediment together. And so they tend to be much more adaptable and actually can help increase sediment in areas that are affected by storms. And so there's a fantastic study about Hurricane Matthew and how living shorelines actually held up better than hardened structures and increased sediment in the following years from those major storms. There's a lot of interesting facets to living shorelines not just increasing sediment and preventing erosion. But some of those natural benefits that you get to like habitat protection are also very important.



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Doug Parsons 1:15:44

We're going to pivot a bit here you I guess created a documentary around a hurricane. And I want you to get some background there. Give me the name of the documentary and just what was all about?



1:15:54

Absolutely. The documentary is called hurricane Florence, the eye of the storm. And this was produced with you and CW Office of University Relations, right people at the media department there. This was a story about hurricane Florence as the name entails. And when I was a freshman at UNC GW, I just moved, I was ready to call this place my home. And about two weeks after I started class on Labor Day, we got news reports coming in that there was a major storm off the coast that was now pivoting to hit Wilmington with the I quite literally sitting over top of Wilmington for days. And I had to evacuate for over a month, I just sat at home and watch the news and watch the place that I had just started to call home get completely devastated. And I returned as quickly as I could. I worked with plastic ocean project and did some relief work in Berga, which was one of the harder hit places after the storm and came back to a colossal disaster, it looked like ground zero. And there were huge pine trees in the street. You could hear chainsaws all around and people who lost everything. And a lot of people who didn't get relief until even years later down the road. And it was formative in my early education because I had just moved here. But I also saw this entire city come together. And I saw that this was something where the urgency to rebuild and to sort of start anew transcended a lot of those barriers that we might see on a regular basis. And it really broke past racial and socio economic barriers to rebuild this area. And there was just this resurging sense of hope from that. But there were a lot of stories that weren't told when we kind of let the dust settle. And I really was determined after my four years and undergrad to try and tell that story. And I worked with Jess Bradley, Bradley Pearson and Christina McKinney at Oh, you are at UNC dw, to really work on telling those potentially forgotten stories so that we can learn the lessons from Florence, but also take it with a grain of salt that we have to do better. And there were a lot of stories that came from that that really spoke to me that I didn't even know about. And it was both, I think, hopeful, as well as kind of harrowing in the same sense to see those impacts that we're both forgotten about as well as things that still are occurring to this day.

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Doug Parsons 1:18:34

What were some of the challenges that came up when you were making the documentary.



1:18:38

I think one of the biggest things was trying to tell all of these different stories in under 30 minutes, there were so many different angles to talk about. There were people who lost their homes there are people who didn't have access to resources are weren't even notified of where drop off locations were there were folks who stayed in their houses and just lost everything and didn't have anywhere to go. There were people who rebuilt and people who started food co ops and worked with emergency disaster management in our area to build those bridges. And there are so many different stories. And I think it was so hard to try until all of them in one go.

There's still so many that I wish I could have captured and plan on trying to capture in some degree just to bring this stuff to light. But I think it was also amazing that these stories had a lot of big impacts in our area. They spoke to a lot of people who manage a lot of these resources and have now made very, very impressive strides to accommodate those and improve our resiliency for the future.

 Doug Parsons 1:19:47

So what aspect of your education and training prepared you for making this documentary and is there anything you could suggest be included in future training around this around flood risk management and disaster communication?

 1:19:59

Absolutely. I think I have a unique opportunity because I have a technical background in marine science. And I know that there are gaps in communication with science as well as any form of mass communication, there's always going to be gaps in trying to be able to jump over those and build bridges across those is going to be important. As we start to think about the broad concepts of climate change and coastal resilience, we also have to keep in mind some of those social impacts and some of those different nuances that we see on a regular basis, but oftentimes dissociate in the field of science. And so I felt that I had a good opportunity to honestly tell stories, as well as understanding a lot of the science behind it and understanding some of the direction that needed to be provided for the future. And I think anybody who is working with disaster relief, flood risk management, and anything needs that holistic approach, we oftentimes think of flood risk management kind of in these different steps. And the general public may also see it as really what happens when the storm hits, we oftentimes go into panic mode. And we worry if our house is going to be flooded, we don't think about is my evacuation route gonna get flooded, we don't think of is my drop off resource location going to be accessible to me, we oftentimes really just break things down into very concrete steps and locations. And when you think about flood risk management, you think about these areas, especially that are low lying on the coast, it's not just about making sure that there are enough resources, or even if there's access, it's also that water has to go somewhere. When we think about flood risk, we need to have that natural infrastructure, things that can really allow water to be absorbed and drained out of an area when a storm hits. And when it gets bigger. And using at least with some foresight, using materials that we can have that are a little bit more resilient to storms and really thinking about transparency. For people who are looking to buy homes or where people live, that we can communicate some of these issues, as well as some of the improvements in the future, not just rebuild, and hope for the best. And I think it definitely comes down to trying to assess these things from a holistic manner of the science, the social side, the emergency relief side, and how we can work as a unit to get this done, as opposed to thinking of hurricane preparedness, and then waiting for the storm to hit and then see what the damage is a lot of those areas, you know, right now in major cities, there's going to be risky areas. And I think there's a lot of gaps that still remain in order to really address those.

 Doug Parsons 1:22:45

How can young professionals and students become engaged in narrating the story surrounding floods and the role of nature in mitigating disaster risks? And so you really kind of explained the



idea of that, but how can people actually get involved?



1:22:58

I think it starts with just asking the questions of where can I be best helpful, so much of flood risk management, getting involved and working with policymakers comes down to asking questions and showing up. So there's always going to be organizations and people who need things like volunteers, they need donations. And there's also a need for people to help speak up. If you see a gap or you see something in your neighborhood or in your community that doesn't feel right or you feel like people are getting forgotten about you have every right to raise your voice and say that something isn't right. And I think it's just about finding the areas that need help and making sure that you can do your part to to go and ask how can I be helpful and so much of that we don't think of as a preventative step or a proactive step, so much of it is people will wait until that storm hits. And then we say what can we do? And it's just as important to be proactive as it is to be reactive.



Doug Parsons 1:23:58

Alright, so how can art play a part in disaster risk reduction work.



1:24:02

So art is one of the best ways to communicate to people, it makes people think differently about a subject, it gets them to approach it with a different part of their brain than just being spoken to or watching it on the news. And I think when you can speak creatively about a subject and also do it in a way that's eloquent and concise. It gives people a new perspective. So much of what we see today in terms of climate change to climate disaster and natural disaster is usually seen on the news or written in reports. And I think a lot of people get burnt out on that or they feel like it's not something that they can digest. But being able to utilize art is a way that you can either make people look or listen to what you have to say. And it's such a great way to express urgent needs. And I think there's no better pairing than science and art. It is one of the most beautiful ways of communication that that you can use is a great answer. What's next for you? The door is wide open. I live in the unfortunate state of liking a lot of different things. So I personally have no idea. But I'm excited to see what comes.



Doug Parsons 1:25:15

Great answer. All right. Last question. Do you have a favorite spot there along the Carolina coast?



1:25:21

Oh my goodness. For me, it is either Wrightsville Beach or ocean Isle beach for our coasts. I think this area down way, way in the southeast is just gorgeous. It's very quiet. And there's a lot of peace. But I think I think our rivers and our marshes are not appreciated as much as they

should be. And I have the great pleasure of living right by the Cape Fear River, which is the largest river in North Carolina. And the extensive marshes and habitat here is a pleasure to just sit back and watch nature unfold in front of you. So it's a little bit of a dual answer. But I think both are equally beautiful. And they're both connected in the same way.

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Doug Parsons 1:26:06

Excellent. Well, Sam, it's great that you're doing the work that you're doing. I hope you've landed a job that you're able to keep doing this. And thanks for coming on the podcast.

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Samuel Shores 1:26:14

Thank you very much. It was a pleasure.

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Doug Parsons 1:26:21

All right adapters. I am back with Anita van Breda from WWF to wrap things up. Hey, Anita, welcome back. Thanks, Doug. We just heard from some really ambitious and inspirational young people doing some really cool work out there. You listen to the comments, what did you think?

A

Anita Van Breda 1:26:36

Well, there was a couple of things that stood out for me listening to these conversations, and I can't get to them all. But a couple of highlights, I think Barry mentioned, you know, bridging generations. And I think that's a really important point. And it came up at the workshop, that it's not just about youth doing their thing, and everyone else doing their things, but really bridging different generations in different experiences. And someone in the workshop, I actually forget who it was now, but they said, young people can run but the older people know where to go. And I'm paraphrasing, but it was this idea that we really need to work together in order to advance risk reduction. Misaki said that in the workshop, that he challenged his youth champion colleagues to really be clear about what were they going to do. And he said, Anita, and lose can't do all this programming by themselves, what are we going to do? So he really took responsibility and challenged his colleagues to also take responsibility for the outcomes. And I thought that was really important. And then as Debbie said, the younger generation is working hard, but they need tools to put change into action. And they need backup, to support that good work. And that's what we're trying to do with this youth program, as well as is to support their ambitions. And I thought what Sam had to say about the relationship between art and science is also really important and reminded by the power of storytelling. And, Doug, your whole career is based on storytelling. So I think that can't be underestimated in terms of the importance of making change happen, and making change real and I think with this youth champion initiative, and this skills and the enthusiasm of the of the individuals involved, we have a real chance to not just do projects, but to really try to change the system.

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Doug Parsons 1:28:42

Doug Parsons 1:28:12

Okay, so what's next for the initiative?

A

Anita Van Breda 1:28:44

Well, we have this great design that was designed by youth and for youth, we have a small group that got us started. But we really want to build upon that early success and that innovation and grow it into the future and expand it to other. So we're looking for partners, we're looking for collaborators, and we're looking for support to make that happen. And I hope that we can come back, Doug, in a year if you'll have us and give you an update on where we are with the program.

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Doug Parsons 1:29:13

Oh, that sounds delightful. Okay, so you were alluding to just now about finding partners and such. So if people want to learn more, and if people want to partner, what do you recommend my listeners do?

A

Anita Van Breda 1:29:23

Well, they can always connect with us, go to our website and connect that way. And let us know where you are and what you're working on.

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Doug Parsons 1:29:32

And before we leave, do you want to acknowledge any partners and supporters?

A

Anita Van Breda 1:29:35

Well, we've had a lot of partners in this work. As I mentioned it USA ID has helped with the funding and with some of the technical input, and we had support from the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Center with the Youth Initiative, which was a great help. And also the youth for resilience initiative has been very helpful in supporting this effort also lose money. attend it, but also want to thank the selection committee, US Army Corps of Engineers and Woodrow Wilson Center. They both helped with this. And that has been tremendously valuable. We're very grateful for all that support

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Doug Parsons 1:30:11

Anita we're going to wrap this up. It is always a treat working with you working with World Wildlife Fund. You guys have been great supporters of the podcast and you guys are doing fantastic work. Thanks for coming on.

A

Anita Van Breda 1:30:22

Thanks for having us.

D

Doug Parsons 1:30:29

Hey, adopters, that is a wrap. Thanks again to everyone who participated in this episode. As you heard, WWF is leading some critically important trainings that emphasize nature based approaches to adaptation and flood risk reduction. I hope you enjoyed hearing from these young folks from around the world as much as I did. I'm very lucky to get to have these conversations. My focus is usually on the United States. But once in a while I get to learn how the rest of the world is approaching adaptation. And it's encouraging to see groups like WWF move beyond tokenism and put in the work to create meaningful space for youth to lead the change in critical issues like addressing flood risk and climate change adaptation World Wildlife Fund has reached over 1000 people around the world with the flood green guide program, and more importantly, they are supporting those on the frontlines to include nature as the need to manage flood risk grows increasingly important. Remember, these trainings are essential to reducing risk and adapting to climate change. And WWF is actively seeking partners to expand their reach and make an even greater difference with their new flood green guide Youth Initiative. So definitely reach out if you see an opportunity for partnerships. And as we wrap up, I want to thank Anita and WWF again for their sponsorship of this episode, a NIDA has been a leader in advancing nature as an essential element in the disaster and risk management space. And I've been fortunate to work closely with her and before we sign off, don't forget to check out the three previous episodes I did with Anita in our archive featuring conversations with a range of flooding experts in the US Army Corps of Engineers del Taris, the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada, as well as artists and filmmakers, episodes, which delve deeper into the flood green guide an invaluable resource for anyone interested in flood management. Those episodes are in the show notes. Finally, as the host of America adapts I'm always eager to connect with my listeners and hear their feedback on the show. Whether you want to share your thoughts or suggest a guest you'd like to hear from. I'm open to it all your input not only helps me improve the show, but can also lead to exciting new opportunities. So please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at America. [dabs@gmail.com](mailto:dabs@gmail.com). I look forward to hearing from you. I have already connected with folks in the last couple of weeks and it's fantastic. I'm learning what you guys do how you get value out of this podcast. So continue reach out email me LinkedIn, whatever. It is always a treat to hear who's listening. Okay, adapters Keep up the great work. I'll see you next time.