



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

William (Bill) Francis

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CGF Graduation Year: Fall 2011

CGF Degree(s): BS Sustainability

Current Role: Director, Business Development

Current Employer: ENGIE North America

Career Pathway: Environmental systems, Science and technology policy

How did you end up in your career field?

I worked as an analyst for American Electric Power (AEP), learned about energy markets, utility tariffs, customer electricity use patterns, etc. Then I transitioned to become an analyst for a renewables project developer (leveraged energy industry experience and network to pivot). From there, I changed roles several times (project finance, sales, etc.) within that company, and eventually I ended up in the role I have today with ENGIE.

How did your personal experiences shape your career path?

I knew after graduation that I wanted to work in "clean energy" of some sort. However, I didn't really know the breadth of the kinds of companies doing renewable/clean energy work and the kinds of jobs that existed there. One important lesson I learned was that you can do "sustainability" work in jobs that don't have the word "sustainability" in the title -- and you can pick up a lot of translatable skills in adjacent or related industries. The biggest challenge I faced and overcame was finding that first job in clean energy (in order to get experience that would allow me to grow up and out within the industry).

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

When I was at AEP (during my "pre-renewables" career), I turned down a job offer to work at a competitor. It was an advancement opportunity, but I really wanted to keep trying for the next role to be in renewables. A year or so later, I was able to get a job at a renewables developer and make the important career pivot that I wanted. I think that maybe I could eventually have made the career change even if I had taken the job I turned down, but probably not for several more years, and the change would have been harder because I think I would have felt more entrenched.

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

I made some key professional "friends" and grew my network while at my first job. Eventually, one of the people I worked with at that company recruited me to my first job in renewables as she was working at that company (she had made a similar career pivot). Also, the first boss I had in the renewables industry still works for the same company and has been an advocate and mentor for me for the past ~8 years.

What was your career “aha” moment?

I don't know that I have a single moment where I learned my "passion." It feels more like a process of evolving and maturing it -- I joined the ASU School of Sustainability with a broad desire to do something to help make the world better, and over the ensuing years I have continued to refine and rethink what that means to me and what I want to prioritize with my career and personal service work. Some things just come very naturally to me, and a lot of times early in my career I received positive (and constructive) feedback on my strengths. I had the good fortune and focus to lean into my strengths through changes in job responsibility -- many times because others around me recognized what I was doing well and encouraged me to work more in those areas.

What is something that surprised you about your career path?

One thing that really surprised me was how quickly I was able to move away from "analytical" roles into commercial and strategic ones. After about 2-3 years of working, I knew I didn't always want to strictly be an analyst, but I was able to evolve past that rather quickly in my solar industry job after others around me recognized the other skills I had and gave me the opportunity to take new roles that allowed me to work on and improve those skills and responsibilities.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

Three things: (1) Do an internship. Good internships these days are paid and give interns direct exposure to day-to-day work associated with the industry and functional area they are in. (2) Even if your first job isn't exactly in the precise company / industry, keep growing your network and don't be afraid to take the leap to make a pivot (or two) -- breadth and exposure will be an asset even if you have to learn new skills / jargon / businesses / etc. (3) Figure out what you're good at and lean into it, but don't be afraid to try something new and stretch yourself, whether it's a different kind of responsibility, different kind of role, etc.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

I am working with a team to ultimately develop and install distribution-system connected, diversified renewable energy projects in communities throughout the country. Through these projects, we are helping create cheaper, cleaner, and more sustainable sources of power generation.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Olga Borquez

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CGF Graduation Year: Fall 2017

CGF Degree(s): BS Sustainability

Other Degree(s): Minor in Business

Current Role: Program Manager

Current Employer: Sustainable Phosphorus Alliance, ASU

Career Pathway: Corporate social responsibility, Food and agriculture, NGO or nonprofit, Waste and recycling

How did you end up in your career field?

I found out about a Sustainability Manager position with an agriculture company through an internship I was doing with Local First Arizona (LFA). I grew up in Mexico and my dad is a farmer so I was excited to be in this field. I applied and then met the COO at a LFA conference I was working on as a Zero Waste Officer. I got the job and worked there for 4 years. I then took a break and traveled for a couple of months and moved onto my current role as a Program Manager for the Sustainable Phosphorus Alliance. Phosphorus is an essential part of agriculture so the field feels like a smooth transition.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I have done internships with the City of Phoenix (government), Local First Arizona (non-profit), I worked at GIOSI coordinating sustainability events, worked with a privately held company and am now in academia. Exposure to all of these types of atmospheres has been a lot of fun because you learn different ways of working with each organization.

How did your personal experiences shape your career path?

One of my biggest challenges has been finding jobs that will sponsor my visa. As a Mexican citizen, it takes many extra steps to have a job in the United States. I've known this challenge for 10+ years and would be happy to advise anyone struggling with this.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

Being confident that you don't have to know everything but being willing and wanting to learn.

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

Professional relationships are very important! Introduce yourself and ask questions to people you admire without fear. People you meet at school like teachers, internships, jobs or in networking events will most likely be wanting to help.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Hannah La Luzerne

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CGF Graduation Year: Fall 2013

CGF Degree(s): BS Sustainability

Other Degree(s): MS Human Dimension of Natural Resources, Colorado State University

Current Role: Sustainable Impact Internal Communications Specialist

Current Employer: HP Inc

Career Pathway: Corporate social responsibility

How did you end up in your career field?

I've benefited from being a good writer and a good speaker in every role I've ever had. It started with writing the first sustainability report and contributing to talking points for high-level events at my first employer after college. Then, in my first job after grad school, I had a role that was 50% sustainability program management and 50% doing outreach to the public about them. That's when I realized I was not only really good at communications, but I really enjoyed it and actually preferred it to the other 50% of my job. By gradually building my involvement in communications and marketing across my different roles, I was able to demonstrate that I had the skills and experience for it, and that being a former sustainability implementer was valuable for a sustainability communicator.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I love getting paid to keep tabs on all the amazing sustainability work that is happening across HP and then finding ways to inspire others to replicate that success. I enjoy the art of storytelling, and getting to tell stories about work that is making a difference in the world is very rewarding.

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

The biggest one is my early career mentor. I've always been a good writer and presenter, and by seeking mentorship from the marketing manager at one of my jobs, I was able to get the coaching I needed to refine those skills and turn it into a full-time career in sustainability communications. When I started out, it seemed like a coincidental relationship, but she has helped me prepare for every job interview that got me where I am, market my skills to make a career change, and pump me up when I needed to hear that I was qualified enough to compete in this field.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

Communications is an underrated career path in sustainability, but it's so versatile. And that intimate knowledge of sustainability science and terminology that comes with a CGF degree is really valuable when you're tasked with creating content about it. If you love writing or telling stories, there are jobs out there that let you do what you're good at while remaining dedicated to the topics you care about. Starting a blog or volunteering to help with social media at a nonprofit that you care about are great ways to start tangibly building your resume in this space.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

I think my greatest impact is in being able to mobilize new stakeholders for sustainability and diversity by dialing in on their values, and showing them how anyone can contribute to our strategy. I have the challenge of finding new ways to empower HP's 50,000+ employees to participate in sustainability and diversity efforts. I get to tell the stories of employees who are innovating for sustainability, and celebrate them for helping us achieve our goals.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Alison Almand

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CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2019

CGF Degree(s): BS Sustainability

Other Degree(s): MS, Community Resources and Development (Sustainable Communities) - ASU

Current Role: Program Coordinator

Current Employer: Sustainable Cities Network & Project Cities Program

Career Pathway: Academia and education

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

One of the most fulfilling aspects of my career pathway is being involved in hands-on work with Arizona's local communities while still being immersed in new and exciting research and ideas within the university. I enjoy collaborating with faculty and students across the university, which in turn, allows me to learn more about new disciplines in a continuous learning environment. Through this work, I also get to connect the knowledge and expertise of the university with local communities to move the needle on sustainability and resilience in the state.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

When I started graduate school, I had the choice between two student worker positions - one that was focused on the nonprofit sector and one that focused on the public sector. The nonprofit sector role was certainly more familiar to me based on my previous roles and certainly would have been easier as I was going to school at the same time. I made a pros/cons list to make a decision, and I went with the public sector-focused role because it was unfamiliar and different compared to my previous experiences. That decision was out of character for me, but instead put me on a career path that I never would have considered previously.

What was your career "aha" moment?

I don't remember a particular moment, but I did not expect to be where I am today when I first started my graduate program. I started my graduate program and role as a student worker with Project Cities around the same time, learning about community development as I was actively supporting a program that facilitates community development led to an "aha" moment towards the end of my second semester. I previously thought that the nonprofit sector was the only pathway to community development, but I soon realized that university programs like Sustainable Cities

Network and Project Cities can act as a connector for sustainable community development.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

My advice for students looking at similar roles to mine is to be adaptable and open to learning new things. This was a hard lesson for me to learn, but the nature of working with local communities and academia is constantly changing and requires being open and able to pivot to learn new things. The turning point in my career was when I started saying “yes” to any new opportunity to learn new software or dive into researching a field or specialty that I knew nothing about. In career navigation, there is a lot of emphasis on which hard skills you already know, but I think the true skill is being able to learn something new and being able to teach yourself; that mindset will get you much farther.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Jenna Wolfenson

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CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2016

CGF Degree(s): BA Sustainability

Other Degree(s): BA Anthropology, ASU

Current Role: Business Operations

Current Employer: Aepnus

Career Pathway: Autonomous vehicles, entertainment venues, clean tech startup

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I love that my career path interfaces with everyone on the team from leaders to entry-level employees. My job is to ensure everyone is resourced and ready for scaling, so I have to understand the pain points and challenges at each level of the organization. It's my job to find where we can close those gaps and move forward together.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

I took a chance on a self-driving car company (when I learned the cars were all-electric) and it launched my career into generalist roles at companies focused on tackling big problems. I love setting up systems, structures, and strategy for teams who have a vision for a greener future.

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

I worked really well with an executive at Cruise who shaped my career path. He was willing to take time to coach and teach, and I learned from his experience. We don't work together anymore, but one of the main takeaways I got from our partnership was that you should never hesitate to ask questions to learn and understand how decisions are made in an organization. You should also ask about topics you're interested in so that you're always learning and growing.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

For those of you interested in joining a startup, do not hesitate to reach out directly to founders! They love to hear from smart, motivated people and they may not have an opportunity when you contact them, but you never know what kind of opportunities will come up in the future.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

The company I work at now is electrifying and decarbonizing commodity chemical production with ultra-efficient electrolyzers that run on renewable electricity. It fosters leadership in the global shift towards renewable resources. I love being the person on the team who helps the full team advance toward our mission to transform the way we make chemicals.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Carolyn Buckner

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CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2023

CGF Degree(s): Master of Sustainability Leadership

Other Degree(s): BS - Chemical Engineering w/ Spanish Minor: University of Iowa, Iowa City; MS - Environmental Engineering: University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Current Role: Project Manager

Current Employer: Stina Inc.

Career Pathway: Academia and education, Government agencies, Waste and recycling, Research and Technology, Water Quality.

How did you end up in your career field?

I started because of the push for people who identified as female to go into STEM at the time I was making the decision. I got to work with a professor as an undergrad who was the most wonderful mentor. But I stayed because of what I feel when I'm out in the natural world. It's the one place I've always felt completely home, and I wanted to give something back.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I enjoy working as part of a team towards a shared mission of harmonizing human behavior with the natural world. Project work requires collaboration which means I'm always learning, and it gives the satisfaction of concrete outcomes. Plus, it's transferable. Some of my most impactful projects have been as a volunteer. Research helps me stay curious and keep asking questions.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

Listening to a close friend and quitting my job to go back to school at over 50. It was an active choice to tune into my gut and the supportive voices rather than my fear and doubt and the negative predictions a few people shared. My friend connected me to a close friend of hers who works in sustainability. He recommended ASU's online program and that was that (although it did take me several months of info interviews and a trial online course before I made the jump).

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

Jerry Schnoor and Marty St. Clair at the University of Iowa were incredible mentors and people. I met them at a formative phase of life and their confidence in me then has helped me tap into a certain strength and continued curiosity throughout the years.

Here at ASU, Alycia de Mesa, Stephanie Pfirman, Katja Brundiars, and Doreen Bird all broadened my idea of what sustainability looks like and started me on a wonderful path of ongoing discovery. But it's my relationships with friends, family, classmates, and co-workers that have helped the most to get me where I am today.

What is something that surprised you about your career path?

I ended up taking almost two decades off to raise kids (and a dog) after my first full-time job. That wasn't what I envisioned when I was earning my degrees, but life unfolds how it needs to unfold. What surprised me was how things I had done as a volunteer while out of the workforce were what helped the most when applying for jobs post-graduation. I even got my current position through a former neighbor (another great mentor and now boss). In hindsight, it was all part of my career path.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

Take advantage of all the resources ASU offers. Get to know your professors and classmates, reach out when you have a question or when something sparks your interest. It's a special group of people. I learned so much in the conversation sessions and calls and am still in touch with classmates to this day. Finally, Mary McGillicuddy and others provide top-notch career advising through the College of Global Futures for free.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

This is tricky. I burned out working in water quality because I didn't see a net positive impact on the ecosystems we were charged with protecting. Our current systems need to change, and that kind of change is slow. The Indigenous leaders of a Rights of Nature campaign I've volunteered with here in North Carolina always say we are in a marathon, not a sprint. For me it's become important to watch for and cultivate positive impacts in the small projects both at work and at home, in my day-to-day activities, and in my relations. Take joy in these while all working together towards a bigger shift.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Tina Phanmanivong

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CGF Graduation Year: Fall 2021

CGF Degree(s): Master of Sustainability Leadership

Other Degree(s): Bachelor of Science Aeronautical Engineering, Purdue University

Current Role: Program Associate

Current Employer: Plug and Play Tech Center

Career Pathway: Academia and education, Consulting, Government agencies, Waste and recycling

How did you end up in your career field?

While studying at Arizona State University for my Master in Sustainability Leadership degree, I interned at the City of Phoenix as a Solid Waste Admin intern. After graduating, I worked as a Waste Management intern at Leslie's doing consulting work. Eventually, I moved on to being a Zero Waste engagement program coordinator at ASU. Now, I work as a program associate at Plug and Play, a company that accelerates, invests, and connects sustainability startups to corporations. Moving across different sectors has been an integral part of my professional journey. Each sector has its own set of priorities and work culture and being able to navigate that space is essential for success and collaboration within my field.

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

The people I followed on LinkedIn. I would attend webinars and presentations that interested me. If I found the speakers to be motivating or captivating I would follow them on LinkedIn afterwards. Eventually, they would post about open job positions in their organizations and I would apply for them. This is how I found two of my jobs!

What was your career "aha" moment?

Growing up in Alaska I always had a profound appreciation for its natural beauty. I knew I wanted to protect it in its pristine condition. I loved spending time outside camping, fishing, hiking, and boating so I was extremely passionate about this cause. I would volunteer for many park clean ups growing up, but I knew that was not enough. I wanted to make a career of sustainability because it is a problem I could spend every day thinking about and work on trying to solve.

What is something that surprised you about your career path?

I needed to separate my career and my personal identity. I am passionate about sustainability and doing better for the planet, but not many people share that same sentiment. My priorities were different from theirs and so it became frustrating when my ideas and programs would face opposition and hit a wall. I learned that I had to detach my work from my personal self-worth. I am one person trying to do my best and that is enough. Climate change is not going to be solved by one person. Billions of people are contributing to the problem so this needs to be a collaborative effort. I learned to be patient and to be ok with not seeing the results I wanted right away.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Brandon Suchan

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CGF Graduation Year: Summer 2021

CGF Degree(s): Master of Sustainability Leadership

Other Degree(s): BBA - University of Michigan: Dearborn

Current Role: Manager, ESG Consulting

Current Employer: Summit Strategy Group

Career Pathway: Corporate social responsibility, Food and agriculture, NGO or nonprofit, Waste and recycling

How did you end up in your career field?

I began my career in the traditional marketing and advertising space and about 13 years into that I decided to embark on a career change by enrolling in Arizona State University's Master of Sustainability Leadership program. I had always been personally interested in sustainability but had never thought of it as a viable career choice. But the more I learned about the industry and what types of careers were out there, that gave me the confidence that I could leverage my past experience with my ASU education to provide value to any organization willing to give me a chance.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I truly enjoy the work I do on a daily basis. Being able to guide and support companies on their sustainability journeys is something that I'm proud to be able to say that I do. Whether that be through communications and storytelling, collaborating on emission reduction projects and initiatives, or informing clients on ESG topics and trends, my work is valuable in helping companies achieve their sustainability goals. Because of my career path, I also love supporting and mentoring others who are passionate about the sustainability space. I wouldn't be where I am today without the help of others and I'm proud to have the opportunity to do the same.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

The most important career decision I made was to attend Arizona State University's Master of Sustainability Leadership program and to fully commit myself to my graduate degree program. Being a first-time, fully online student I wasn't sure how connected I would feel to the university and program. But ASU offers an invaluable amount of resources to online students, resources that I took advantage of to the fullest. Career counseling, resume prep, mentorship opportunities, ESG credentials and certifications, even extracurricular sustainability-focused projects, I participated in all of these with the

hopes of making as smooth of a transition as possible into a completely new career field.

What is something that surprised you about your career path?

When I chose to embark on a mid-career change into the sustainability field, I wondered how I'd ever show the value I could offer an organization since I had zero professional sustainability experience. When I began applying for sustainability-focused positions, I decided to showcase the soft skills I had gained over my previous 15 years while also leveraging my newly obtained MSL degree. This proved useful as soft skills like time management, project management, and communication/presenting are much harder to teach than hard skills like programs, data analysis, and report writing. I was surprised to learn that most hard skills can be learned on the job, lessening any fears I had that I needed to be the perfect candidate to get hired.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

You'll learn a lot from your sustainability degree program at ASU but that doesn't mean you should ever stop learning. Continue to focus your time and resources on earning certifications, gaining practical experience, and making connections that are relevant and helpful to your chosen career path. All of this and more is available to College of Global Futures students, and you should take advantage of the resources ASU has available. If you do, then you'll be able to supplement your ASU education and become a well-rounded sustainability professional.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Amy Hill

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CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2023

CGF Degree(s): Master of Sustainability Leadership

Other Degree(s): BA - Hotel Restaurant Management, Sam Houston State University

Current Role: Operations Manager, Garden Educator

Current Employer: Phoenix Country Day School

Career Pathway: Academia and education

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I love working at a Pre-kindergarten through twelfth-grade school. There are so many opportunities for sustainable change throughout the campus. I maintain all the gardens with the students' help and teach a gardening class daily, participate on the sustainability committee, and conduct sustainability learning sessions to the Upper School students. Earth Month celebrations, eliminating unnecessary single-use plastic, and no-waste events on campus all help to spread sustainable choices throughout the community.

How did your personal experiences shape your career path? What challenges did you face? What priorities changed?

I was a successful Real Estate Broker before my daughter was born. My priorities change almost overnight. I realized that I could not keep up with the workload of commercial and residential real estate sales and running a brokerage of 20 Realtors. I started seeing waste and overconsumption in a different view. I started making changes in my personal and professional life to resemble my values. Working the same hours as my daughter was in school was tricky so I started working at her school. I saw the impact I could have by making small changes on the school campus which helped to drive my passion for sustainable change. I decided to get my Masters at ASU in Sustainability Leadership to grow my knowledge.

What was your career “aha” moment?

How did you realize what you are passionate about? How did you realize what you are good at?

I started being more present in my day and paying attention to what brought me happiness and satisfaction. I made note of what types of books I like to read, what topics I like to research, and what brings me satisfaction. I also paid attention to what subjects or things came easily to me and what topics I was most interested in

discussing. Self-reflection does not have to be hard and time-consuming if you pay attention.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

First, enjoy being a student and spend as much time researching different topics and asking for help. Practice and develop skills that do not come naturally to you. Use all the resources available on campus and off. Internship, volunteer, and get out in the community. Find your passion and stick with it. If your passion is making a difference within a small controlled environment, then working at a school might be a good fit. Basically, you could have a sustainability position at any job you find even if you start out in a field that is not what you studied. You can always make a difference.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

Educating children and making a difference in the future is humbling and inspiring at the same time. The personal changes that I have made like installing solar panels and composting help me to be more confident when helping others make similar positive changes.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

John Cheever

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CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2023

CGF Degree(s): Master of Sustainability Leadership

Other Degree(s): Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Studies, Cornell University

Current Role: Commercial Project Developer; Director, Project Empower

Current Employer: RevoluSun

Career Pathway: NGO or nonprofit, Renewable Energy Development

How did you end up in your career field?

After fifteen years as a high school teacher, the turning point came when I put a PV system on my home, whereupon I became obsessed with not only the personal rewards to my family, but also the community/state/global benefits of renewable energy as well as the policy side of sustainability. I brought all of that into my classes and became an unofficial evangelist for renewable energy. A friend of mine who happened to be the in-house counsel at a solar company inspired me to take a leap of faith and leave teaching to work in renewable energy.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

As much as I loved teaching and getting my students to engage with real world problems related to climate change— that hopefully impacted their future courses of study or career choices— it is also very gratifying to see the immediate impact my work has on my clients' businesses and Hawai'i's renewable energy goals (100% net-zero by 2045). Even better is when I get to help friends and local non-profit organizations (such as schools, churches, and hospitals) achieve energy savings and sustainability goals, and also to work with former students in this industry.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

My first job out of college was as an Environmental Planner for a private firm, which mostly entailed writing Environmental Impact Statements and Assessments. I believed in the mission of the work even though I did not, honestly, enjoy it very much. When I came to the realization that my efforts were mostly about helping private developers simply go through the motions required by law— and I was subsequently told to water down my sections so they could avoid getting sued— I realized that "belief" in what I do is far more important than any other element of my job.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

Believe in your ability to adapt and learn, even if you don't have a ton of knowledge or experience in a particular area. When I first started in renewable energy, I literally did not know the difference between a kilowatt and a kilowatt-hour, or even how to use Excel. Most of what I know now I learned on the job by having the confidence and humility to ask a lot of questions, to not fear looking ignorant, and to commit to constantly growing. And now with the advent of AI, lean into "human" communication and interpersonal skills as much as possible.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

I enjoy knowing that my efforts directly bring the world closer to the ultimate solution of ending the use of fossil fuels. I get to see the results of my work in tangible micro outcomes, not just the actual installation of PV modules on roofs, parking canopies, and vacant land, but in the utility bill savings for clients and the barrels of oil not imported to the state (Hawai'i gets ~70+% of its electricity from oil). And the multitude of macro benefits from renewable energy— economic, social, national security, generational sustainability— represent values that everyone of all political and social persuasions can support.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Michael Hwang

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CGF Graduation Year: Summer 2021

CGF Degree(s): Executive Master of Sustainability Leadership

Other Degree(s): MBA WP Carey '14, ChemE UofA '10

Current Role: Sustainability GTM Director

Current Employer: Microsoft

Career Pathway: Corporate social responsibility

How did you end up in your career field?

I graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering and started my career at Intel as an environmental engineer, working in hazardous waste and water engineering. I decided to get an MBA from ASU's WP Carey in supply chain. After graduating, I joined the supply chain org for managing suppliers, negotiating contracts, and data analytics in facilities. After four years in core supply chain, I combined my environmental background with my new experience in Supply Chain Sustainability, combatting forced labor, conflict minerals, and progressing supplier environmental sustainability. Microsoft hired me in Sustainability Sales Strategy as an industry expert!

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I deliberately crafted my career to diversify the experiences, specifically deviating from environmentalism to to learn core supply chain. It helps me communicate with a variety stakeholders and understand the unique pain points, translating to develop the best solutions! Working as an engineer, I got to see how real and tangible systems are built and operate, and also working at the executive level on strategy. My strategy role at Microsoft allows me to apply the cutting edge technologies to solve the world's biggest challenge, using innovations in AI and data analytics to optimize for business value and sustainability!

How did your personal experiences shape your career path? What challenges did you face? What priorities changed?

Knowing your audience and speaking in a manner that resonates with them is key. I was competitive in policy debate, which taught me different perspectives and postmodern theories that helps inform unique ways of looking at a problem. My business studies and experience helped diversify my viewpoints and see it from the other side. A significant challenge students face is typically people in positions of power (and hiring) see students and young people as inexperienced or a "risk", rather than the

value of new ideas - learn how to work within those parameters and network to showcase your value!

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

Leaning into opportunities outside your comfort zone is crucial - it allows you to diversify your background and not get complacent with the knowledge you already have. When an opportunity arises, avoid saying "not in my scope" or "not enough bandwidth" - figure out how to make it work. Those chances are limited and are normally the foundation of career advancement!

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

Many of my professors were inspirational that led me to the path of environmental engineering, using their research to model global warming potentials and protect people from water pollutants. I've also had a plethora of managers, with a few standing out as incredible leaders including my managing Senior Director at Microsoft and the Corporate Services Site Manager at the Intel Ocotillo Campus. Mentors are key as well, listen from their experiences and mistakes to shape how you progress in your work.

What was your career "aha" moment?

How did you realize what you are passionate about? How did you realize what you are good at?

My sustainability mindset has been engrained since my upbringing - waste was a cardinal sin. I also got inspired by stories, largely depicted in films such as Erin Brockovich and A Civil Action to see the suffering that pollution can cause people and work towards a better future. My interest in supply chain stemmed from a circular economy project of taking plastic reels from a manufacturing operation to turning them into pencil boxes from a local molder. We held a school supplies drive and donated these to elementary school students! After that project, I went into the Supply Chain emphasis during my MBA program.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

Network and look for mentors!



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Florian A. Schneider

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/florian-a-schneider/>



CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2023

CGF Degree(s): PhD Sustainability

Other Degree(s): BS Meteorology, University Leipzig, Germany; MS Meteorology, University Leipzig, Germany

Current Role: Senior Research Advisor for Climate and Energy Program

Current Employer: Third Way

Career Pathway: Academia and education, Consulting, NGO or nonprofit, Science and technology policy

How did you end up in your career field?

It was the keen interest and passion that I developed during my life for, at first, weather, then climate change and sustainability, that brought me here. In hindsight, I would never have expected to be currently working for a think tank on US federal and EU policy for climate and energy. Especially, considering my background in meteorology, modeling, and extreme weather events. But, one thing led to the next and I guess, I was open to new challenges. Hence, I am now working in DC.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I do enjoy a lot how flexible my assignments are and that I'm in control of them. The same can be said about all my career choices that led me here. Going to college and then working in a research institute to only go to college again and bring me to entities close to politics was definitely a rollercoaster I enjoyed and still enjoy.

How did your personal experiences shape your career path?

I felt stuck at times. So far three times. After high school, after my MS, and during my Ph.D. Every time, the biggest challenge was to overcome the fear of change and throw yourself out there into an environment unknown to you. That includes moving abroad, studying a new subject, working in a new professional environment, and generally learning something that I wasn't expecting. Being open to new challenges will make you face challenges but it also has a lot of reward. The biggest challenge I face all the time: Where is the ceiling to my potential or my ambitions? That destroys rewards after the successful completion of big events. It is a mind game in so many ways.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

Leaving my family and friends behind after high school. Completely detaching from my life and allowing myself to develop in the way "I wanted" and to become who "I wanted

to be." This was a big one. And ever since, I'm more confident, more ambitious, more independent, and generally open to exploring new things, and new lives. I was the first to complete an academic degree because of that decision. And it was made in a moment when arriving in the city of Leipzig, and knowing, this is my place.

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

Fellow students of the same and upper/lower cohorts. Professors that I closely worked with. My supervisor team for my Ph.D. and all colleagues from Arizona State University that I met during my service to the ASU community. Now, it is that network and the additional network from other organizations and my friends that show up with opportunities for me as I do for them.

What was your career "aha" moment?

Which time? Before starting my BS in Meteorology, I was interested in Engineering, so I spoke with some local engineers about their work, and I learned that I wanted to work with technology, not make technology - haha. Another one, is looking back as to what always fascinated me: weather, especially extreme weather and the climate. So, it was an easy call to do something that I'm interested in and combine it with my strengths. Many of which I'm still building further.

What is something that surprised you about your career path?

How often I changed my subject of interest. From weather & thunderstorms to Climate Change in the Arctic, to Satellite Remote Sensing to understand drivers of Climate Change, to Extreme Heat in Urban Areas due to the way we build and use energy, and how all of these connect in Sustainability and how impacts compound each other... And how my subject adjustments led to new places and new people becoming part of my life. I'm still surprised all the time, how I got here.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

Figure out who you are and what you want, and recognize that that changes. That change can be used to drive your ambition in your career. Such as my choice to not stay in academia and rather get close to policy and politics. Explore opportunities aside from academia to understand the concepts of politics and how policies are derived. Learn and never cease to apply to things that seem out of reach. Be courageous and apply and do not undersell your value and impact that you have brought along so far.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

Positive impact for whom, what, when, where, and why? On the one hand, your definition of positive impact in the context of these questions matters, on the other hand, society's definition matters. I try to have a positive impact by being a kind, helpful, and open-minded person. I encourage conversation, debate, and disagreement to learn and build better. Advising policy provides pathways to a future that seems more positive than what is currently proposed. I use scientific knowledge, communication, and

modeling to persuade people and decision-makers that my information will lead to a positive impact.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Clay Robinson

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CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2023

CGF Degree(s): BS Innovation in Society

Other Degree(s): BS Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership - ASU; BS Political Science - ASU

Current Role: Associate

Current Employer: Winged Victory Agency

Career Pathway: Consulting

How did you end up in your career field?

I got involved early. As soon as I stepped foot on campus, I joined clubs and organizations aligned with my interested and where I wanted to be.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I love the flexibility and the challenge. The world of politics is constantly evolving and having the opportunity to respond quickly (and effectively) is fun!

How did your personal experiences shape your career path?

Within politics, I have the issues I care about (the environment and education) because of the place I grew up (Central Valley, California). This set me on a trajectory to be an advocate for those issues and the people affected by them because I've seen and experienced it first hand.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

Saying yes. There are so many opportunities out there waiting for you to take advantage of them. Go out there and find them.

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

Find a professor your respect and mentor in your industry you admire. My internship coordinator turned into my mentor and we still meet today. And then a client at an old firm I worked at ended up becoming a mentor and they still advise me today. Those are some of the relationships I'm most grateful for.

What was your career "aha" moment?

I realized I was good at what I do when other people started telling me I was. Imposter syndrome feels like it's always knocking at your door but be encouraged by others and when you find out what you're good at, get better at it.

What is something that surprised you about your career path?

Sometimes politics is messy and personal. You have to avoid both. Stay organized and don't take yourself too seriously.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

Build your social capital -- starting now. Politics is the industry of who you know, so the sooner you start, the better.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

Doing good and expecting nothing in return. Like that old quote goes, it's crazy what we can accomplish when we don't care who gets the credit.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Scott "LB" Williams



CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2020

CGF Degree(s): Master of Global Technology and Development

Other Degree(s): B.S. Management, USAF Academy

Current Role: Retired

Career Pathway: Corporate social responsibility, Entrepreneur, Government agencies, NGO or nonprofit, Science and technology policy

How did you end up in your career field?

After a career in the US military, I wanted to develop solutions and apply technologies to better the world. This was achieved via various channels including government, non-profit, Corporate Social Responsibility, and start-up tech companies.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I am fortunate to be able to retire in my mid-40s and focus on my family and my personal health. When the right cause arises, I am prepared to come back out of retirement on my own terms.

How did your personal experiences shape your career path?

Life always throws curveballs at all of us, the challenge is to be willing to adapt to the realities being faced. This does not mean giving up on dreams, but adjusting the pathway to get there.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

Leaving the military after eighteen years to found a non-profit. When we made the leap it was a large transition, and often times bittersweet. We self-funded a non-profit for just short of a decade, but the impact is immeasurable and the life experiences for my family unrivaled.

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

I decided early on to focus on one area of knowledge, outwork everyone to become a leading subject matter expert in that area, then expand the knowledge to additional areas in the same manner. Sometimes this included academic research, but it always

included hands-on experience. Being a proven subject matter expert opens doors to other subject matter experts across all topics, you simply have to find them and ask for help.

What was your career “aha” moment?

When I find myself awake at night thinking about the same topic, I know I am finding a new passion. Unfortunately being passionate about something does not necessarily mean you are good at it. Over my career I have had several "aha" moments, where solutions to major problems were clear to me. The challenge is getting those with the power to help you affect change to have the same understanding.

What is something that surprised you about your career path?

In a short period of time I went from a special operations tactics officer to running a conservation non-profit in Africa. My life has taken me places that I never even thought I was interested in and those passions may be the strongest.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

Choose a specific area of work, focus and outwork everyone to become a subject matter expert. It will take academic research and field work to truly become an expert, so expect to get your hands dirty. Find mentors and listen to their advice, and never be discouraged by the setbacks along the way.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

I always wanted to make an impact on others, rather than an impact in my career. I have gone from military service, to being a diplomat, to running a non-profit in Africa, to creating cutting edge technologies. Whether a "basic" or a "Founder/CEO" I always tried to provide a service that I truly believed was making the world a better place. When or if the impact will be acknowledged is not important, but I was always focused on doing the most that I possibly could (if not more than I could at times).



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Nicole K. Mayberry, Ph.D.

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CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2022

CGF Degree(s): PhD in Human and Social Dimensions in Science and Technology

Other Degree(s): Master of Political Science, Bachelor of Science in Political Science, Certificate in Civic Education

Current Role: Assistant Research Professor

Current Employer: Arizona State University

Career Pathway: Academia and education, Science and technology policy

How did you end up in your career field?

I determined during my undergraduate studies that I was interested in pursuing my PhD. Later, during my master's program, I recognized my interest in an academic career path. This realization grew as I gained more respect and appreciation for the ability to continuously ask critical questions, pursue research, and devote myself to reading, writing, and thinking. Being a lifelong learner, I found that an academic institution felt like the most nurturing place where I could transform my love for learning into a career.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

I'm in the job I want in many ways. I love being able to follow interesting questions from their inception until they are realized through a book project or an academic article. I love being in the classroom and engaging with students. Mentoring and teaching is something I am incredibly passionate about. It's so rewarding to introduce students to new concepts and watch as they not only make connections to their interests but ultimately develop and generate new thoughts. In essence, I suppose, I love the knowledge generation that my career affords me and the way I get to share that with students, helping to foster and support their questions and learning trajectories.

How did your personal experiences shape your career path?

This question is difficult because I believe no path is carved without intertwining with the personal. For me, as a first-generation college student who faced many challenges at home growing up, my journey has been unique. I'm the first woman in my family to receive an advanced degree, such as a doctorate, choosing to set aside traditional values like marrying early and having children. So, I think a lot of my personal experience has been characterized by solitude, but not necessarily loneliness. Being the first means having to accomplish much more, much quicker, to reach the same point that, at least from my perspective, seems easier for my peers.

However, my priorities shifted—not so much in my ultimate career aspirations, but in how I, especially during my graduate studies, really embraced community, friendship, and experience over simply achieving my goals. It became much more about personal fulfillment, as well as achieving professional and individual success.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

The most significant career decision I made was initially choosing to go to graduate school instead of law school, following the advice of an exceptionally inspiring mentor during my undergraduate studies. Additionally, in my final year of undergrad, I accepted a job as an enrollment advisor for the ASU Starbucks College Achievement Plan. This role was pivotal because, throughout my undergraduate years, I had always worked upwards of four to five jobs simultaneously to support myself. Taking this one job in my last year allowed me the financial freedom to quit the others, providing me with financial stability and a much more secure schedule.

This change was transformative. It enabled me to focus my attention on my master's studies in a way I couldn't have if I were still juggling multiple jobs. It also allowed me to ensure that my PhD would be fully funded, freeing me from the need to work alongside my graduate studies. These decisions focused my efforts and gave me the time to concentrate on what I truly wanted, instead of merely trying to survive while pursuing my education.

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of working with people who will champion you and fostering relationships with individuals who are earnest, and kind, and push you to be better. My professional relationships with mentors have been both fortuitous and intentional. By this, I mean I've had the great fortune to serendipitously meet individuals who became my mentors, but I also actively sought out people whom I felt I could trust, who believed in my ideas, and who could root for me when I perhaps couldn't do so myself. The academy can be a challenging environment if you don't fit the traditional mold of who is “supposed” to be a professor. As a result, many people become discouraged or overly focused on prestige, which often leads them into relationships with toxic individuals or into very toxic circumstances because the emphasis is on advancement rather than personal well-being.

I firmly believe that you don't need to compromise your integrity or your mental and emotional health, for the sake of prestige. Therefore, I have always strived to work with kind people, over simply the most prestigious people. Finding mentors or falling into mentorship with good people is absolutely critical.

What was your career “aha” moment?

"As a first-generation student, I didn't really have anyone in my family, or even within my immediate circle of friends, to be honest, whom I could look to and measure my success against. This often left me feeling very uncertain about whether I was doing anything

right. My "aha" moments came when I started taking upper-level and eventually graduate seminars. These were smaller classes where I could advance my ideas, engage in discussion with classmates and peers, and embrace the Socratic method. It was validating to see that people respected my voice and opinion, even when they disagreed with me. Whenever I met with teachers or others, despite feeling like a complete impostor who was just faking it the entire time, the feedback I received was that I was doing very well.

I loved being in these academic spaces but didn't always feel like I belonged. However, the external validation from others was my ""aha"" moment. If I personally enjoyed this and people thought I was really good at it, then maybe I wasn't an impostor after all. Maybe this is what I was meant to do—and to do well."

What is something that surprised you about your career path?

Something that continues to surprise me about an academic career path is the perpetual mindset of deficiency. Once you earn the three letters after your name and become a doctor, you must work your way up, a reality true in any professional organization. However, in academia, where prestige, hubris, and calculation are highly valued, you're constantly trying to prove that you deserve the next promotion or rank. This can be very discouraging. Sometimes, I feel that my job has high highs and low lows, which is markedly different from my experiences in other spaces. This job isn't a 9 to 5; it doesn't ever really leave you. The professional challenges aren't limited to workload but also extend to emotional and mental stress and anxiety, which don't easily dissipate. It's hard sometimes to compartmentalize because the job isn't just a job; it's very much a lifestyle. And because of that it is easy to constantly feel behind or that you need to do more, and more, and more again to feel accomplished.

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

First, create a backward CV. From the moment you decide you want to enter academia, identify individuals who intrigue you in terms of position, field of study, or research questions. Find their resumes or CVs to see what they have done to achieve their positions. Then, compare your own CV and identify the categories you need to work on. This approach is strategic for two reasons: it clearly shows if the academic path is right for you, given its demands, and it allows you to triage your time effectively in graduate school. Ensure you address any deficiencies by working towards them efficiently. For example, a project can fill multiple "buckets," such as a seminar that covers both mentorship and teaching. This method ensures you work efficiently and set clear goals to learn what you need and recognize areas for improvement. You might be excellent at grant writing and receiving funding but have never published an academic paper.

The second piece of advice, considering my emphasis on finding kind people, is to remember that academia is no different from any other industry in that the relationships you foster and nurture are very important. It's as much about the work you do as the connections you make. Always be working on establishing a good network, but keep in mind that you shouldn't sacrifice your well-being for the sake of prestige. Invest in

relationships because they are meaningful to you, but also make sure you are bold, curious, and entrepreneurial. Don't hesitate to email someone or try to collaborate with them. The worst they can say is no.

How are you creating positive impact in your career?

I'd like to think that I'm creating a positive impact in that the research I conduct is as personal to me as I hope it is impactful on the world. I believe that no matter what we do, we are charged with the responsibility to leave this planet better than we found it. The research I engage in is focused on actively pursuing better futures for those who have historically been denied the opportunity to have a future. I also feel privileged that my role allows me to actively engage with students. I believe that a university that does not serve its students but only focuses on research or personal gain is failing. Therefore, I hope to make an impact on students by learning from the behaviors I experienced myself as a student at university—the kinds of teachers I didn't like, or the microaggressions and thoughtlessness that always seemed present in my spaces or in parts of my study. I strive to learn from that, not just by avoiding replication, but by actively working to create structures to support my students, to listen to them, and to be a good mentor.

I'm hoping that my legacy is not just about leaving this place better than I found it, but if I do my job right in the academy, the impact I have will be less about my name and legacy and more about enabling other people to enter a space that has been transformative for me. Now that I've achieved something, I want other people to have the support that I had when I was very early in my studies and academic career.



College of Global Futures Career Path Profile

Gabrielle Lout, PhD

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/gabriellelout/>



CGF Graduation Year: Spring 2022

CGF Degree(s): PhD Human and Social Dimensions of Science and Technology

Other Degree(s): BS - Marine and Conservation Biology: Seattle University; MA - Global Leadership and Sustainable Development: Hawaii Pacific University

Current Role: Social Responsibility Program Manager

Current Employer: Ocean Outcomes

Career Pathway: Coastal and marine systems, NGO or nonprofit, Human and labor rights

How did you end up in your career field?

I became interested in the social dimensions of marine conservation during my masters degree. I observed that this was a huge gap particularly in the seafood industry, yet fishers, fishworkers, and communities are the main stakeholder groups. Fisheries are a key example of the intersection of environmental and social sustainability. During my masters I was exposed to community-based fisheries and rights-based management and as I moved into my PhD, I wanted to focus more specifically on human and labor rights in the seafood industry. I ended up in my current position as a result of my PhD focus and network that I had built during my time at ASU.

What do you enjoy most about your current role and/or career pathway?

Engaging directly with fishers and fishworkers is the most impactful and enjoyable part of my role. There is no substitute for in-person discussions with workers on a fishing vessel to understand their working conditions, and create improvement strategies that adequately address their needs. I enjoy the global scope of my work, as well. I get to engage with individuals and communities spanning from Latin American to Northeast Asia.

How did your personal experiences shape your career path?

During my masters and PhD, I was faced with several challenges related to adequate mentorship and guidance. I feel that this shaped me as an entrepreneur and contributed to my adaptability as a professional. I prioritized developing my “soft” skills and applied experiences or expertise during graduate school as a way to gain experience within the sector I was interested in (non-profit/NGO) and build a network and community of practice that I could lean on for growth and development.

What is the most important career decision you made that influenced where you are in your career today?

I chose to design my PhD as "practice-based." I sought out opportunities to conduct research or work as a consultant during my PhD as I knew I was not going to pursue an academic career. During this time, I gained valuable knowledge and experience on the tools and approaches that are being implemented in the seafood sustainability industry. I also built up the "soft" skills that are not part of your graduate curriculum, yet pivotal to your work as a practitioner (e.g., communication, program management, engagement).

What were some of the key academic/professional relationships that helped you get to where you are today?

My peers in my PhD (in my program and others at ASU) were pivotal to my success and support as a student. I worked part-time as a consultant with key players in my field of work like Conservation International, as well as the organization I now work at—Ocean Outcomes. These relationships were pivotal from a mentorship perspective, but also were the foundation of my network once I transitioned from the PhD to my career.

What was your career “aha” moment?

At the beginning of my masters, I was at a crossroads as a result of promised funding being unavailable for my research. I had to decide between staying in the same program and working on research I was not passionate about or switch programs. I ultimately decided to switch programs and move into a sustainability graduate program. During this program, I was exposed to the human dimensions of resource management, policy, and social science methods. Until then, I considered myself a marine ecologist. I realized my strengths and passions in marine social science, and never looked back. This experience was a reminder to stay open minded and adaptable to change.

What is something that surprised you about your career path?

I am still surprised (and grateful) that my work focuses almost entirely on humans. I became interested in marine science through deep-sea exploration. In my undergrad, I focused on coral reefs and climate change. I was focused on environmental dimensions almost exclusively. If you told undergrad me that I would now consider myself a marine *social* scientist, I don't think I would have believed you!

What advice do you have for current students interested in pursuing similar roles to your own?

My biggest advice to any students is to gain experience in the sector or position you are interested in. Don't rely on your academic development or curriculum to teach you all the expertise and skills you need. Seek out opportunities or individuals that can provide the mentorship or opportunities for growth that you need to develop as a professional not just academically. You will hear advice like “don't say yes to too many things” during grad school. I don't entirely agree with this. I think that being open to opportunities that are aligned with your career interests (e.g., internships or consulting) can be pivotal in your career and truly open doors for you.

Also, networking! It might feel awkward and inorganic, but make strong efforts to network. Set up a phone call with a professional at an organization or a position you're

interested in. They can share helpful advice, and I will say from personal experience that you will be remembered!

How are you creating a positive impact in your career?

Empowering and improving the lives of the most invisible workers in global supply chains is the foundation of my work. I believe that I am creating change (even if it's incremental) for workers in the seafood industry. In my work, I am consistently critical of our approaches and ways of "doing sustainability." While it's unlikely that I will change global systems or paradigms, I have witnessed my work positively improving the lives of fishers onboard vessels.