

Jason: Greetings to our audience, thank you very much for joining us on the green room today. I'm Jason McSparren, I'm the moderator for the green room here at the green Institute. Today, our discussion is about sustainable inclusion bridging queer identity and sustainability values. And we have two guests with us today which is really nice. We've got Gerod Rody and Sophia Paul. Please give everybody your silent applause and welcome to Gerod and Sophia.

Let me Please introduce them. Gerod Rody is the founder and former president of OUT for sustainability. Gerod has followed his passion for connecting various vision with near in action. He's animated by identity intersectionality, and where he sees fresh opportunities and spaces between established business practices and shifting cultural norms, is where he operates best, he is an innovative strategy consultant, focused on business design. He has worked with some of the largest organizations around the country and around the world, he applies his entrepreneurial creativity to benefit clients across sectors. He's worked in retail, finance, beauty and energy. And when he has a few extra minutes, his hobbies include long walks with his dog and Brooklyn, sharing meals with friends and traveling the world. Thank you very much for being here with us today Jerry. Thank you.

And I'd also like to introduce Sophia Paul. Sophia is the chair of the board at OUT for sustainability. Sophia is passionate about OUT for sustainability mission of environmental justice in climate resilient programs, created for in by LGBTQIA plus communities. Sophia has professional experience and collective processes in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the environmental movement. A graduate of Environmental Studies in Oberlin College, Sophia worked as a volunteer coordinator at a social service organization that focused on community engagement and food justice. Following that, they pursued a Masters of Science at the School of environment and sustainability at the University of Michigan. They focus on the studies and environmental justice in collaborative natural resource management. Currently, Sophia coordinates research and Institutional Diversity in equity in the environmental movement and plans conferences for young people, focus on equity in the environmental movement, currently living in Ohio, Sophia is employed at the trust for Public Land. Sophia spends their free time gardening, baking and training for their first marathon. Good luck with that.

Sophia: Thank you.

Jason: You're welcome, and everything else you're doing.

Sophia: Thank you.

Jason: So thank you too very much for being here. We can start our conversation by talking about what was the genesis for your program OUT for sustainability. Gerod, can you talk to us about that, please.

Gerod: Yeah, absolutely. I've been involved with the queer community for a while, and then I decided, but I also had this deep passion for sustainability. So I went to business school, the famous Graduate Institute, and I found these amazing progressive people who are actively inclusive, but a completely invisible queer community within that. So it wasn't that there weren't queer people present but there was no connection there was, it felt like I was divorced from this other part of my identity. And so, notoriously I asked around and said, is there any kind of organization that exists, kind of along these lines, so I can give a date. But it really

became much more than that very quickly. So we started doing stakeholder meetings and figure out like, does the world actually need this kind of organization or is it just me and maybe a few other people. So we built a board, we started doing some programming. And, you know, the thing I wanted to leave on this one is through all of the things we've done early on this try and learn model, it showed that even if you don't really like camping, like me, you can get involved with the environmental movement and the queer community and really bring these things together and get engaged, wherever you are.

Jason: I admired your entrepreneurial spirit. It really a good quality to have in, especially you know, the world needs leaders and it's really good to see. So tell us a little bit about, were there any challenges at the beginning that you had to overcome.

Gerod: A lot of it was just focus. What is the problem that we're solving. I got a lot of feedback of like this is nice. But, you know, is this do these two things have anything in common. And the, the original example I gave was, you know, there's get running groups there's queer foods contingents out there that are doing amazing work. Sustainability is so intrinsic to who we are as people and so essential to focus on is humanity that it was, it was a logic thing, we need to give everything we've got to surviving as a species and we can't survive if we ignore this incredibly essential and dynamic part of our human race. So in that respect, I think it was ended up being proving itself out that there is a value to this kind of organization. And thankfully there are a few others now, Doing this kind of work as well. Was 15 years later or something but I mean, the point is, it's been amazing to see how many points. Sustainability crosses with the career community like food, like health, like transportation, you know, anything sustainability is everywhere, it's every part of who we are and how we operate. So, Yeah, that would be my two cents.

Jason: I just got one quick question for you until you started to say about 15 years ago. Well, doing this work.

Gerod: Yeah, 2008.

Jason: Okay.

Gerod: Yeah.

Jason: And how large is your group nowadays in terms of membership

Gerod: Yeah so we've never been, you know, I stepped down from the board right before points only right before coven for a job that was going to have me traveling like three weeks, a month. But anyway, the point is, so I'm not totally up on the numbers, Sophia you may be able to step in but it's never been in a membership organization so we don't have, you know, kind of like a roster, but in terms of engagement, before that I think for 10 year and 2018, it was like 5000 people had been touched in some way by the organization like Atlanta, I'm sure it's grown since then, so

Jason: You know that's a significant amount of people because they have friends and contacts so that's really good. Yeah, I know that that's really good spread. Yes. Actually,

Gerod: Yea,

Jason: Thank you so much Gerod. Just give us one second, I'd like to bring Sophia in, but before we do that I just want to highlight one thing and share. After this the origin story. Yes, certainly. Okay. Yes, absolutely. I've got a question about to ask Sophia. I'm curious about how Out for sustainability is emerging. So perhaps you can talk about the mission, but prior to that I just want to again, just highlight our new guests today. We've got Gerod and Sophia from We're talking about bridging queer identity and sustainability, how they work for sustainability, you can find out for sustainability out4s.org. And then one thing I like to go to the green institute website is the website.greeninstituteng.com and you can get the latest book by Adenike Akinsemolu. Adenike is the director and founder of the group. And this is a fantastic book. You can read about the principles of green and sustainability science. The book is focused on the principles of green and sustainability science, using case studies across Africa, in the world. The book contributes to the literature about environmental science by expounding on the natural systems, and the scientific aspects of sustainability. Okay. So if we go back to our screen I don't want to share, and we'll go back to ask the question to Sophia. Sophia please Can you talk to us about how Out for sustainability is emerging

Sophia: Lately, So, Gerod provided a lot of wonderful history and context, and I will just say for myself that I joined the board about sustainability in 2019. And then, in 2020, like many organizations, we experienced some shifts in our programming. So as Gerod said he had to take a step back a couple other board members had to take a step back, there was a pandemic. That caused us to have to put a halt to a lot of the in person programming we had planned and you know so it also just sort of caused us to reevaluate Okay Where are we as an organization. Who do we want to be what do we want to be doing. And then in particular last summer. You know a lot of us felt like we were very involved in racial justice work in our local communities and mutual aid efforts in our local communities. So, for sustainability didn't feel like we weren't sure sort of had it we had some virtual events but we weren't totally sure how to be engaging so we took sort of a step back, and then this year we've sort of said okay, let's refocus let's think about who out for sustainability is what out for sustainability is in 2021, given what we're hearing from our constituencies, given what the people on the board right now are working on and are passionate about and we wrote a new mission statement that I will read quickly. And that mission statement is OUT for sustainability provides a platform for co-creating climate resilience, and environmental justice by and for LGBTQ plus communities. We do this through advocacy, training, fundraising and relationship building. And so, climate resilience and environmental justice are themes that had been definitely a part of OUT for sustainability as I saw it, but not made explicit in the mission, and we said you know like this is where we want to put our energy. This is where we see a lot of our communities. And when we talk about climate resilience we think about, okay, sort of social and ecological resilience, and in a world of climate crisis and wherever these natural disasters, queer people have unique vulnerabilities, but also really unique resilience and unique opportunities for transformation. So we want to really think about that and when we talk about environmental justice we think about, sort of, who has who's disproportionately impacted by environmental bands like these natural disasters or like

coal plants and historically that has been a lot of low income, communities of color and of course LGBTQ people are represented in those communities as well and as well as sort of, who has access to environmental goods like parks and fresh food. And then also we want to take sort of a step back from that and say okay but who's making these decisions, and who has a seat at those tables and how can we think about those systems. So that is sort of what we're bringing to our new mission statement, this summer.

Jason: I know that's really wonderful. You know my follow up question to Gerod was to ask you know about some of the challenges, because again, I want to bring out the entrepreneurial spirit of you to in everyone who you're working with, because we have a lot of young activists or could be activists in our audience. So I like to talk about this in the entrepreneurial spirit, and also what you were saying, a minute ago, Sophia, talking about how the pandemic was kind of a wrench in the works. And then you had some of the administrators making some changes. So they were shifts in the organization. You had to be flexible you had to adapt. And actually, that strengthens the organization because it seems to me. You came through it, and you've actually focused on a whole new mission and been able to really, maybe hone your approach right and your messaging. That's really great. That's really great. Let me see. So can we talk a little bit about how about a little bit about the training for OUT for sustainability. Can you talk about training that you might provide for the communities.

Sophia: Absolutely. So, like I said, a lot of this is emerging. And we're still figuring out exactly what it's going to look like. But a lot of the training we're really thinking about the climate resilience piece and we're thinking about, you know, working with LGBTQ centers in communities and saying like how can they be better prepared for these climate events, how can they help their local communities to be prepared for whatever climate disasters might be occurring in their communities, and then we're also thinking about these service providers who helped after a climate disaster occurs and you know, are they equipped to work with LGBTQ people you know do they know how to work, a lot of times, transgender people and transgender youth will experience challenges in those situations and a lot of these service providers are increasingly privatized and might not have those resources and so we're hoping to be able to provide some of those trainings on sort of both the LGBTQ community center side and the disaster post disaster service provider side to help our communities be more resilient.

Jason: It's really fantastic because again. We live in a broad in diverse community of the United States, so to speak in any of the globe, you know, even more broadly, but there are pockets of communities in like you say, some have more voice than others. So I really think it's admirable that you in the group, you know, Gerod and the rest of you have thought to, really focus in on the community of the LGBTQ plus factors and everything because there are, again we talked about the way that different people from different intersectionality experience, the pros and cons of society, the hardships and challenges of society, people experienced them differently. And it really is important for those who have access to resources and those who are either doing trainings or doing survival seminar seems like this really understand how to interact with different communities and really be able to reach people where they are. So again you know you're doing a great service. This is a fantastic group. Can you tell us a little bit about how are

you rebuilding your relationships as you're building your organization into a more national vision. Gerod I think you'd like to speak to that.

Gerod: Yeah, so we started very much a CIO organization, in terms of our focus and our energy and our even, you know, would we were exclusive to board members in the Seattle, Washington area and it was great. But then we started to think. We always had this inkling, this is a bigger, this is bigger than just the Pacific Northwest, let alone the Emerald City so it was a bit, It was a tough decision, how do you go from an all volunteer organization that's servicing a few million people region, and having a great time and doing great work to being national where most people have never heard of us, let alone, having the infrastructure and the tools and everything needed to get engaged, and it required a big shift in the board but I would say the main thing is the local connection still remains the most important thing. Whether you're connected to the, you know, 50, other people in your local community who are aware and active in OUT for sustainability or not, there's still that like, you know, we are the organization is still very much grounded in local action, and that's always been our intent, and I think that's why it's worked. You know it's and it's also it's organic, you know, we, not every community is the same originally. Earth Day was our biggest program it's, it was cheeky and fun and birthday. Birthday the gateway and whatnot. And we had a lot of success but different communities around the country started adapting from a park rebuild or something to income youth engagement, or a lecture on sustainable housing or whatever the community need was, and that's where we saw the adaptation, which is, as Sophia mentioned earlier, the resilience of the LGBTQ plus community is that we adapt very quickly, because we have to, we don't get a choice about adaptation from, in general, like there's very few people I know who grew up in a household that was completely affirming to who they are as a person so you learned very quickly to adapt and I think that that works for the organization as well.

Jason: All right, great, great, great. I've got a few more questions before we ask for questions from our audience, but I just want to encourage our audience and start to think about what types of questions you might want to ask Sophia or Gerod, but just give me a second here because I'm going to share my screen and then go back to this very quickly as we have another break. So again, we are here with Gerod and Sophia from OUT for sustainability. OUT for sustainability provides a platform for co-creating climate resilience and environmental justice by LGBTQ plus communities and do these through advocacy, training fundraising and relationship building. If you want to continue your education, take a short course at the Green institute. The green Institute has several courses that are led by renowned sustainability experts, they're inexpensive, and they are really good to help you, entrepreneurs, kind of focus your ideas on how you, in particular, can help your community, to become more environmentally sustainable. Okay, coming back. Let me see. So I want to talk a little bit about some of the programs that you have. Can tell us a bit about how your promote just and equitable social behaviors through content and connection in your Fab planet program can you tell us a little about that, please.

Gerod: We've started it off before Sophia join us. Just quickly, we started off with a social sustainability conference back in 2009. It was one of our first programming moments and we had no money in a hotel, put us up and over but the point is, it was always about intersectionality and what is the impact on the social side of sustainability not just so to speak. Pure environmental conservation which was more of the topic of the day. At the time, so

if we were talking about race and ethnicity and housing and redlining, we're talking about gender and healthcare and, like. How do you code trans identity within the medical system and we were talking about aged in community. how you have to go back in the closet in aging centers. Oftentimes, or as you age and how do you fight that kind of fight, to live your whole life for your whole life. Then, you know, a few years later we were doing some other formats and kind of came back to that conference format, and were able to go Seattle and San Francisco and had ambitions to do another one. But, covered. But the point is, it was really about like pushing the envelope of what is the thinking that's next generation that's leading edge, if you will, bleeding edge. Some term it. And, and then how do we disseminate that information, broadly and I think that's where I think Sophia's pick it up.

Sophia Yeah,

Jason: Sophie please add to that.

Sophia: Yeah, so people love fab planet. I think people love it as sort of a space to make those connections. You know I've worked in different parts of the environmental movement and queer people are always like oh my gosh like I feel like I don't like see myself reflected or I don't know like, you know, I don't like get to like talk with other people who are having some of my same experiences. And so people really love spaces like fab planet where they can build those relationships and also sort of build solidarity and come to a better understanding because of course there's also a lot of diversity within the LGBTQ community and people have these varied experiences and I think it's really important to have a space where people can learn from each other, as well as learning about these important topics and build those connections and networks. There is still a pandemic. I do a lot of work with in my actual job. And it's still I think very uncertain, sort of, when we're going to be able to bring people back together in a physical way so we're thinking about, you know, do we plan it further out do we look at sort of how to have some of these virtual events. So we haven't made like a full determination of that but the fat planet model is very cool and very important to us as an organization, and definitely something you want to

Jason: So may I ask me a little bit of clarification is the fab planet is an online platform.

Gerod: It kind of started as an in person conference. And then we recorded the content and had it on Soundcloud, I think it's still there will

Sophia: Think so,

Gerod: Yeah, that we have a lot of digital presence and being an all volunteer organization I know it's difficult to check the T's and eyes and on every bit of the ecosystem, but the point is there is at least the out for us on Soundcloud has a bunch of the past, sessions, but you can listen to their dance so it's like an hour of, you know, kind of hearing in the background but it's really strong

Jason: Early Okay, so the name of that is fab planet needs to fab planet program, and you can find it digitally on out4S on the SoundCloud. So, out the number four, and then capital S

(out4S) on Soundcloud for anyone in our audience was interested in learning a little bit more about the content on the fab planet program. Thanks so much. So what I like to do is I like to ask is there anyone in the audience that may have a question at this point. Any questions for Sophia or Gerod. Start to think about that you can raise your hand and we will certainly let you in. Okay well as people in the audience and thinking about questions. Let's see. There's also the green pride program. The green pride program is a way that offer sustainability, promotes environmental sustainability and like to hear a little bit about the origin, and then the future of this program.

Gerod: The main thing was we realized very quickly that talking to the audience at pride, which is sort of the traditional model when you think about, let's go talk to people at pride about how to be greener. It's exhausting, you, if anyone who's gone to pride as a queer person. You have everyone you know, volunteering on something else, and there's just no attention span. So we realized it's also actually the public building awareness that people actually do give it a care about sustainability. It's working with the municipality, because they're cautiously optimistic that they can make a difference, but they don't necessarily always have the cultural competency or entree into how to build policy that's going to push the envelope on pride and then the organizers themselves I think that's the biggest because they're hungry for it, but these are often all volunteer or are lightly staffed organizations that have tremendous there, they're organizing this, the biggest event of the year on no budget outdoor space, so they want to help, and they want the competency they just needed help. So that's kind of where we left off.

Jason: Okay, interesting, interesting. okay yeah, I was just gonna ask a follow up and then move over to Sophia, but yeah, please go ahead.

Sophia: Okay, sure. And then you can ask whatever follow ups you want. Um, so yeah I think something that I've noticed over the past couple years, both through my work with OUT for sustainability and just as a person, engaging with pride and engaging with this community is that people definitely still want to party and still want to go to pride, but there's sort of more of a reengagement around like the activist roots of pride and people are sort of starting to think like okay like what are all of these corporations doing here. And you know how can we rethink this and how can we rethink how we engage your own pride and so there has been more of a hunger for the sort of more social mission of pride, which was created a lot of natural engagement around our programming, which is great. And then, once again, there was a pandemic. And so this past June we focused on pride outside and getting people outside and all of the health benefits for queer people and for everyone of getting outside and sort of connecting over social media in that way, rather than all going to a party together, sadly.

Jason: Right, now I think that's really great. And yes, pride is again a great celebration you know people are always dancing it's a lot of fun, people are making friends and being with friends it's a party. At its heart, but as you just, you know, mentioned, It's also at its heart, as well social movement. Right, it's a stand up in see us and hear our voices and the LGBTQ plus community as you said earlier, is part of every community in our society, so you know whether wealthy or poor advantage or disadvantage. So, that sense of advocacy that sense that we have to do something is also a big part of the Pride Parade as well, in terms of environmental, economic, educational issues as well. So I'm glad you're tapping into the fun. But also, you

know, still promoting social awareness of issues around sustainability. So that's really great. And then there's another program that you have that's really interesting, called Q ready. It's the climate and natural disaster preparedness guide it specifically for LGBTQ plus community. Sophia would you mind telling us a little bit about that.

Sophia: Sure actually Gerod Do you want to talk a little bit about how this got started and then I will get into sort of everything that has happened

Gerod: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Just very quickly here Q ready, we realized there's a lot of disasters I can't remember which one because there's been so many and, and there are a lot of great programs targeted at, go to your local church, go to your local community center, which are not necessarily spaces where the LGBTQ plus community is welcome. And, or feel safe. So, we decided that there was a need for this, and built on the stories that Sophia is going to tell.

Jason: Fantastic.

Sophia: Yeah, so, and through that, I think, or in some other way OUT for sustainability got connected with a doctoral student named Vanessa, who's actually creating a film as a part of their dissertation on queer people and climate resilience it's focused on the hurricane Maria and the Santa Rosa fires in California and tells the stories of those disasters through queer people and their vulnerabilities and their resilience, and the opportunities for transformation and Vanessa is very cool, and is now an expert in all of this. So we're so excited to be supporting their film and to be able to draw on their expertise in these areas, as well as, with those specific disasters and of course they've just been so many other disasters over the past few years that have really inspired us to say you know Q ready is an incredibly important program and how can we do. So we're thinking about how we can do more work around that how we can. Like I said earlier work to work with LGBTQ centers, work with these community centers or shelters, or whoever, to help to make our communities more resilient.

Jason: Excellent.

Gerod: I want to point out two pieces of the purity guide that were that are very pertinent, and also just really kind of cute. One is have a pride bike so you can find other people that you identify with and you would feel safe with smaller, large, and the other one is, have the ability to pass the time effectively and make sure you have the tools necessary to do that as well so it's not just about food and water sometimes it's also about living fabulously at every moment.

Jason: There you go. I like that living fabulously at every moment. Makes plenty of sense, we're all trying to do that. And when you're dealing with some sort of disaster, natural disaster. You know that's an upscale thought, that's something you want to keep in mind, and if you can, that's the best way to go about it, for sure. I'd like to again invite the audience. Any questions from the audience.

Please think about that. Just give me one moment I'm going to go back to one more commercial break. Okay. So again, I just want to remind everybody that we are talking with. We're talking today with Gerod and Sophia from the OUT for sustainability. You can find OUT for sustainability at <http://www.out4s.org>. So please take a look at their different programs and see

how you can get involved in your own community also again put in a plug for Adenike Akinsemolu, she is the director and founder of the green Institute, and her latest book is principles of green and sustainability science. Additionally, at the green Institute, you can sign up to take courses, they're inexpensive, and they will help you develop your own ideas on how to live sustainably within the environment within the Anthropocene. Additionally, I want to encourage people to follow the green Institute in the green room at the green HQ on all social media. You can find us on Twitter, on Facebook and Instagram. So please look for us at the green HQ. Here we are back.

Ladies and gentlemen in the audience, do we have any questions. No. Okay. Well, I'd like to do is ask Sophia. In the event of a natural disaster, how does the administration from OUT for sustainability, how do you mobilize, what would be the actions you take in the event of a disaster in your local community.

Sophia: That's a great question, and we're also, I do want to say we are a national board so we are all located in different local communities. And so I think less of our focus is around sort of immediate disaster response it more around sort of creating that preparedness and creating that awareness within communities and sort of thinking about how can we prepare for these events and it's an interesting balance because you know as Gerod said we do want to focus on sort of some of the living fabulously at every moment and, finding each other but then we also want to think about some of the realities in our communities that you know, some demographics within the LGBTQ community are more likely to be experiencing poverty or homelessness and sort of what do those people do in a disaster and some demographics within the LGBT community are more likely to have chronic illnesses. And so, those obviously present unique challenges depending on what type of natural disaster is going on. And so we really just want to think about more than preparedness, we don't necessarily have the capacity to be sort of reacting. In the event of some type of disaster although of course, our board, and many of the people engaged in our volunteers are very wonderful mutual aid minded people as citizens will be engaging in their communities.

Gerod: And if I could follow up on that real quick. I think that's very much in the spirit of OUT for sustainability right from the start. We never wanted to duplicate efforts on other organizations, and we saw in that stakeholder meetings like we just turned into 13 years ago, that there should not be a big bureaucratic organization. OUT for sustainability is not designed that way. And I never I don't think there's ambition to change that, you know, duplicate having a massive fundraising engine is not the point. So, and I don't mean that disparagingly to other organizations that are doing the work of mobilizing people in the moment, and they need that kind of funding. We are connector, we connect communities and connect these and add value to them. So I think, you know, and when there's a disaster I've seen OUT there sustainability sense and I know we did before, point to here's how you can get involved with someone else. Or here's a resource for you out there that's already present. And I think that's true, all of our programming. Not just disasters but you make a good point like how do you do, what do you do well, we are good at the thinking and the adding that kind of, when you're in that moment. There was an issue in Houston where someone got arrested for using the wrong bathroom gender during Katrina fallout, and it was like, that should never happen again and that's what we're here for. As much as we can with a larger organization.

Jason: Right, Well, again, I appreciate the clarity, the clarification on your mission, again, you found your niche. And I think that it makes a lot of sense to do there already are local and national, state, national organizations that can react to natural disasters, your niche is really to connect people into give them information, make sure that they're prepared ahead of time. Make sure that these issues and problems are on people's minds, and then not only other issues and problems on their minds, but you're also providing them with ways of solving their problems when the disaster hits, or whether it's a rainfall or fire issue or whatever, right. Well, I really appreciate that, again, building community is really, it's an admirable.

It's an admirable role for an institution, you're reaching out to people who, again as we all know, are very often marginalized and are looking for stability and organization that they can trust and rely on. So again, OUT for sustainability is doing some fantastic work in the local and as a national organization. So it's fantastic.

So let's talk a little bit about how could our audience, connect with OUT for sustainability in possibly participate in your programs,

Sophia: Great

Jason: To do in order to connect with you. Yes

Sophia: The first thing I would recommend is getting on our newsletter list which you can find on our website, and perhaps following us on social media we're particularly good at updating Instagram, but we are on most of your major social media networks, and we are sort of right now as a board thinking about what volunteer roles we want to offer to people under a reconfigured mission and sort of who we want to bring in and so we will hopefully be sending out information about that very soon so definitely follow us. And in the short term, though, I mentioned that we're working with Vanessa on the film fire and flood, and they are working on finishing up that film within the year and if anyone in the audience wants to sort of a spark a conversation like this with a group that they work with. You can hold a sneak peek film screening, which I believe cost some money which helps to finish the film and provide mutual aid, and it's a fantastic film that really highlights a lot of these issues, and would be wonderful for any type of group, in my opinion.

Jason: Yeah, no, that's fantastic. So, anyone who's interested in doing that will they contact you via your email through OUT for sustainability, or how best could somebody find out more about fire and flood,

Sophia: So you can get to the link for so today's like a fire and flood landing page that you can get you through the OUT for sustainability website you can also send us an email. Possibly if you google fire and flood film, it'll come up but I'm not sure. DM on Instagram. We're very available.

Jason: Okay Okay, fantastic, fantastic. In, since we're talking about the fire, flood and you have kind of touched on this already, but I was wondering if you could just elaborate on how Out for sustainability is supporting the film.

Sophia: So, very specifically we are the fiscal sponsor for the film, which means that you know if you want charitable donations and you're not a nonprofit. This is so boring, you can partner with a nonprofit, so that people giving those donations can know that they're going through a nonprofit and their tax deductible. But, Vanessa, who is a graduate student doesn't have to like become a nonprofit for three years to make this film. But through that partnership Vanessa is actually on our board now, and they are a wonderful part of the OUT for sustainability community.

Jason: Okay. And can you tell us a little bit about what are some of the themes that we would see in the film fire and flood.

Sophia: Yeah, absolutely. It's very similar to a lot of what Gerod and I have been talking about. And what Vanessa does really well as sort of talks about the history of those of these places, and the history of queer communities in those places and then sort of goes through the narratives of survival and transformation and resilience of people going through these different natural disasters.

Jason: Okay. So can you tell us any the specifics which disasters are they looking at which locations is

Sophia: oh yeah sorry I said this earlier, but maybe

Jason: I know I just want to kind of bring it together here yeah

Sophia: Yeah yeah so the film looks at hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, and the Santa Rosa fires in California, both of which happened in October of 2017 so it's really sort of two simultaneous narratives happening in lands that have somewhat similar histories of colonization.

Gerod: Yes, yeah.

Jason: Interesting okay yeah really fantastic. So again talking to the audience fire and flood please take a look, there's a link at the OUT for sustainability website. We can also probably just do an internet search for fire and flood film, really fantastic. Now I'm kind of interested to hear from our audience today I'm really surprised that we have so few questions to this point. Anyone interested in raising their hand and addressing Gerod or Sophia.

Gerod: I saw one of the comments was very encouraging. They're like, very inspired. No, no idea what to ask because it's new territory,

Jason: And just noticing that yes so thank you very much John Brian, we understand you don't always have a question right they were answering a lot of the questions as we go along. But you're inspired and very interested in the topic so I think that that's fantastic because that's really what this is all about. OUT for sustainability is in outreach organization, and the green room is an educational outreach organization as well. So we have similar missions. In that sense, and it's really great to collaborate here and to get out and share this message with people in the

audience. Has there been anything that we've missed that you might want to elaborate on Gerod.

Gerod: I was, I was thinking about that, because we're just a little ahead of time, which is great. And I wanted to talk about the tone of the organization, just because it's fun and I think it's representative of where we're where the organization is going and where we started and also the parallel with how sustainability is changing, and in the world. As we face the reality of climate change more head on, you know it's here it's not in the future I mean, not that it was ever in the future anymore but you know it's like, it's very present, and we started off, you know, green fest was like the only conference that we were aware of and we were there and we did lectures on like sustainable sex and youth engagement, not at the same time, different things and it was just, it was a really fun space because everyone was in it together. And this idea of the careers of sustainability was cute. And so we played on that we had Earth Day, We had fab planet you know all of our naming started in this very funny kind of way and that was fun. But it's not fun anymore. It's just not this, the world has gotten very serious. And it's not that the organization is hitting with a stick or anything like that, it's that these issues, and the reality of what this is doing in people's lives, requires a more sophisticated and nuanced approach and I think that's been really great because I have no background in movements and that sort of thing I've been volunteering for most of my life but not in this way, and I as the founder, it's like, I'm so glad that other people like Sophia, and Lindy and others are stepping up and saying, you know, here's another way to think about this. Here's another conversation we can have. And I think that's true regardless what organization you're in. It's not that we need to be serious and sad and I don't mean that it's not serious and sideways seriously no like let's do this. Let's actually make a difference. And that's been really exciting to see within the organization, but also more broadly as we think about the world and where we're going, because if we don't have serious conversations and be direct and be pointed about these things, not be quite so cute about it where the message gets lost in a way. You know it in now I would say you know there's so much compete, competing noise in the system because that's just we're inundated by me. So, I'm just encouraging our audience to say, yeah, let's have some serious conversations still keep it fun. I mean, we are living fabulously, it's still a fabulous.

Jason: A lifestyle,

Gerod: But yeah, but it's much more than, than being cute anymore.

Jason: Right. No again I really appreciate you speaking from the heart there because that's the kind of message that our audience in the broader society needs to hear because you're right, for too many years for decades right we have been misled into thinking that you know climate change wasn't the real threat even though I think in the back of our minds most of us believe that for the last 20 years that it was such a threat that it is and it is active, it's hard to deny today. And you're right you know it's not fun to have to go through this and we really do have to be serious. But I appreciate your approach because when you're doing you're talking about getting people involved, and having some fun with it but in a serious way because we're dealing with serious issues, life and death and quality of life issues, and you're reaching out to a community in the broader community as well, to tell people look you know we really have to take action. And that's where we stand, you know as individuals, we have to take action, and I really

appreciate both you Gerod and you Sophia and everyone at OUT for sustainability doing what you're doing, because it is quite important work. Yes. Sophia, can I ask you the same question. Is there anything that you would like to elaborate on at this point. Any last words.

Sophia: Sure. A couple of things real quick. First of all, to the audience questions thing I feel like when I attend something like this I often think of a great question like two hours later. So like, please do feel free to email us or DM us on Instagram, like I said, we will be, Well, I will be available to questions for questions maybe I can forward them to Gerod if he's okay with that. Anyways, so yeah thank you Gerod, I think something like this conversation really reflecting is that we are sort of organization emerging and going through sort of a transition moment, which is really exciting and I'm really excited about it but it's kind of odd to talk about in this phase, but I am really excited about what we have planned and what I think will be coming up later in the summer and into the fall for OUT for sustainability and I really appreciate what Gerod just said, I think, you know, part of the reason I was drawn to OUT for sustainability, because it is the fun organization and we're a fun group of people and we have fun. But, I think, also, thinking about climate change, thinking about some of the anti queer sentiments and laws happening in this country, i'm also angry and I'm also feeling a lot of grief. So thinking about sort of how we can honor that and our programming but also continue to build a community that does have fun and does have these moments of joy, I think that is also really important to sustain us and to build that community. So thank you, Gerod.

Gerod: I think enjoy is the one word that really carries through from the beginning to the end. This is a joyful organization and in the end we can have joy in our community and I just so appreciative of Sophia. Sharing such a big idea with so many opportunities and trying to hone in on which ones to do and which ones to take advantage of and saying no sometimes is the hardest thing in this organization. So, anyone can do it. Yeah, exactly.

Jason: Yeah, no fantastic and again Sophia thank you for speaking from the heart there because, again, we all know the history and also the president for the LGBTQ plus community right there are issues of safety. There are people who have had to live lives closeted or not living their authentic life in that is a real burden you know that's the type of thing that brings somebody down it can take away some of the fun out of life. So I'm really glad that you are highlighting that even though you're dealing with serious topics. You have to have fun with it. I can see that the organization is focused on community building and supporting individuals through the community. And I think that that's really great, fantastic work. And I'm really pleased to have had both of you today on our program. Without the participation of the audience. I have actually kind of dried up my questions and again I don't want to just string this out for the last eight minutes, so I like to do is just take one more commercial break.

And thank our audience for coming today. But today we are again talking about sustainable inclusion, bridging queer identity and sustainability, with Gerod Rody and Sophia Paul. Remember that they're from OUT for sustainability, you can find Out for sustainability at www.out4s.org. Remember you can go to the green Institute website at the greeninstitute.ng in search for the publications, where you can pick up Adenike Akisemolu latest text, the principles of green and sustainability science. Please check out the website OUT for sustainability. Again that's out4s.org. Think about taking a class at the green Institute. We have several courses, taught by sustainability experts that you find very enriching and also directly, able to impact

your life and your ideas. Please follow the green HQ and social media. We're on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. And lastly, you can also watch previous Green Room episodes at the greeninstitute.ng/thegreenroom.

We are here, each month on the last Friday, excuse me on the third Friday of the month at six o'clock GMT. Please tune in. In September, for our next episode. Ladies and gentlemen, please. Collaborate with me in thanking Gerod Rody and Sophia Paul, for being with us today. Thank you very much for being with us.

Gerod: It was a pleasure.

Sophia: Yes, thank you so much for having us.

Jason: You're welcome and good luck with OUT for sustainability.

Sophia: Thanks

Jason: Ladies and gentlemen, that'll be off for today, have a fine day. And we can end the program. I have to say it was a pleasure talking with you to really it's an interesting organization I'm really pleased at the work you're doing. And again, I'm really grateful that you two came on the green room and shared your ideas.

Gerod: Yeah, thank you for hosting the show and it's great to be on. This is how we get things done right like we highlight each other.

Jason: Yes, exactly. Yeah, so we'll be following your work, please continue to follow our work in stay in contact, you never know where we can link up some sometime in the future. It sounds great, like World Environment Day is also a big day for the green institute we've had the last two years we've had online seminars and workshops. So it's you know, there's room for collaboration down the line, hopefully, so

Gerod: Yeah, and I just want to point out, I should have before, but the international community well as the same really doesn't technically serve globally. I won't put that on Sophia but there's a lot of energy out there and there's a lot of desire. So,

Jason: There's a lot of me

Gerod: I just think about, we can't just think about this from a US perspective, because he's not, it's not the whole story.

Jason: Agreed. I appreciate your vision, I really do. And again, it's hard work like you said earlier, talking about yourself you know you somebody who has volunteered in the past, but then all of a sudden you find yourself as the founder of an organization, and it's a whole new, you know mindset. It's a whole new set of responsibilities, but you know you too and the rest of your team are building something worthwhile. I wish you the best of luck

Sophia: Thanks so much

Jason: You are welcome, my pleasure. Okay. I am going sign off now. I wish you two best of luck. We will catch up in the future

Gerod: Thanks so much

Jason: You a welcome, best wishes