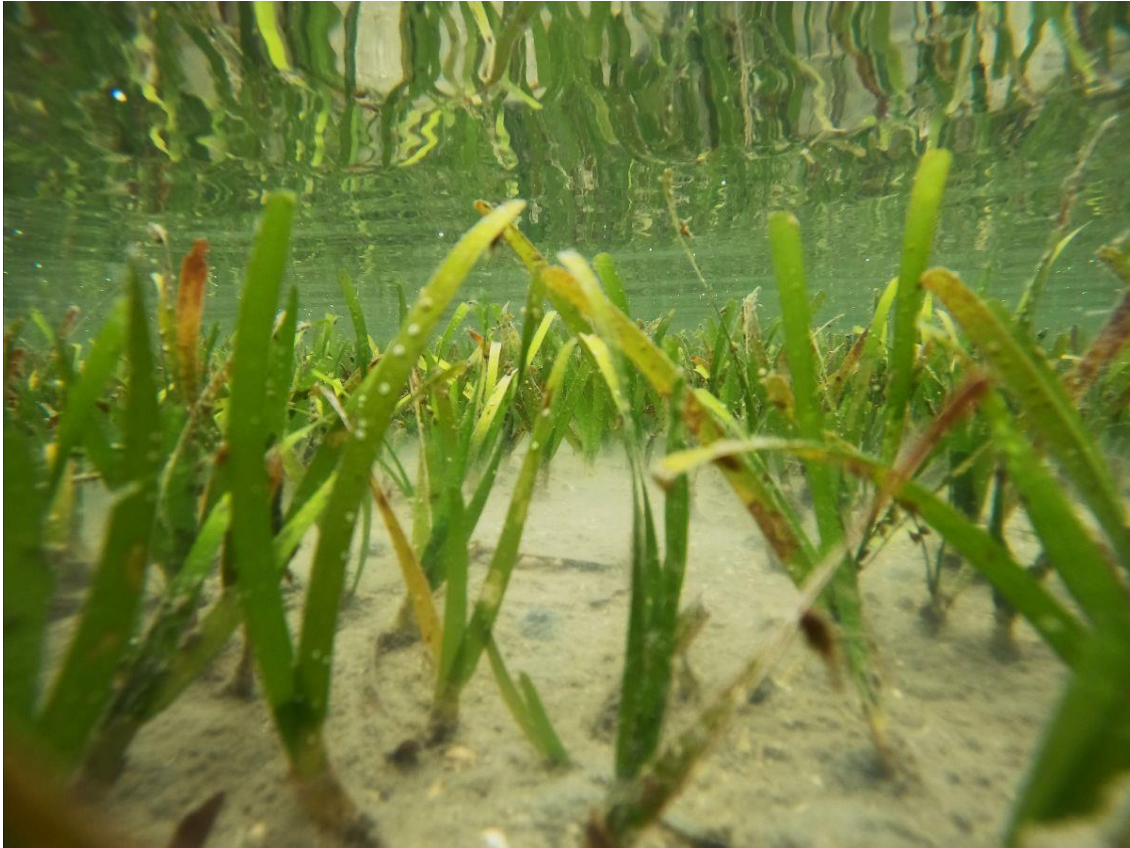




1. Newsletter

The latest news from the IORA Blue Carbon Hub

June 2024



Seagrass in Sri Lanka Credit: Susantha Udagedara, Director - Seagrass & Climate Change Programme - Blue Resources Trust, Sri Lanka

EARLY CAREER OCEAN PROFESSIONALS - 2024

We are pleased to announce our 2024 round of early career ocean professionals. They will join the IORA Blue Carbon Hub to conduct collaborative projects from July – September. We look forward to welcoming our visitors to the Hub office in Perth.

Below are some details about the successful applicants and their projects they will undertake you can read more [here](#)



Ashraf Moontahab

Country: Bangladesh

Project: Assessing the effectiveness of blue carbon policy initiatives in coastal ecosystem conservation and climate change mitigation in Bangladesh.



Avianto Nugroho

Country: Indonesia

Project: Strengthening Indonesia's blue carbon governance to meet 2030 emissions targets



Devica Natalia Br Ginting

Country: Indonesia

Project: Examining seagrass dynamics at Nusa Lembongan.



Jamie Yeo Jing Ying

Country: Singapore

Project: Investigating alternative financial mechanisms to unlock private capital towards meaningful conservation efforts



Josphat Gacoki Nguu

Country: Kenya

Project: Formulating closure area criteria matrix for a pilot seagrass carbon project in Vanga, Kenya



Waruni Tissera

Country: Sri Lanka

Project: The development of policies and guidance tools for carbon and environmental crediting in mangrove restoration projects to promote sustainable conservation practices and support economic recovery in Sri Lanka.

[Read more about the new ECOP's here](#)

WORLD SEAGRASS DAY - WINNERS

PHOTO COMPETITION

We celebrated World Seagrass Day on the 1st March 2024. This day was initiated by the environmental groups and endorsed by the United Nations, this day highlights the critical role seagrasses play in the oceanic ecosystem. The aim of the day is to raise awareness about the conservation of seagrass meadows and their importance in combating climate change and supporting marine life.

We asked for your favourite seagrass related photos from the Indian Ocean which could include pictures taken of you conducting seagrass field research, aerial drone photos or photos in the water.

Thank you to everyone that entered from all across the Indian Ocean, we received some excellent photos.

OUR WINNERS ARE:

Mir Kashem, Bangladesh Oceanographic Research Institute (BORI), Bangladesh



Susantha Udagedara, Director - Seagrass & Climate Change Programme - Blue Resources Trust, Sri Lanka



Congratulations Mir and Susantha!

ALUMNI UPDATE

We caught up with **Taiana Loureiro** on what she has done since being part of the Early Career Ocean Professionals Program in in 2021.



About Tai

I am an aquatic ecologist from Brazil who has lived in South Africa for some years and recently relocated to Perth as a [lecturer and researcher at the University of Western Australia \(UWA\)](#). With a strong commitment to environmental stewardship, I explore the dynamic intersections between science and policy to advance sustainable ocean planning and management. My research spans invertebrate ecology, invasion biology, ecosystem functions and services, and ocean management. I am particularly passionate about working with blue carbon ecosystems, as these crucial habitats are pivotal not only in carbon sequestration and retention but also in supporting climate mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development worldwide.

My enthusiasm for blue carbon ecosystems stems from their crucial role in climate change mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development worldwide. These

ecosystems are vital for their carbon sequestration and retention capabilities and the myriad ecosystem services they offer, including supporting biodiversity and local communities. An inspiring example of this comes from my work in Mozambique, where mangrove forests are integral to the community's livelihood, offering resources for building materials, food, and medicinal uses. Community-based mangrove management has shown ecological benefits and socioeconomic improvements for local populations.

My Journey at the IORA Blue Carbon Hub and Beyond

Since 2021, my work encompassed ocean accounting as an approach to mainstream oceans' contribution to society and support sustainable ocean development and the blue economy in Sub-Saharan Africa. I was developing projects related to coastal management in Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar, South Africa, and Zanzibar. Most of those projects included actionable or emerging blue carbon ecosystems. One of the components we were trying to streamline was the approaches to assess the health of those ecosystems in a way that aligns with the ecosystem accounting framework and is sustainable to support long-term monitoring by countries with different resource capabilities.

When the IORA Blue Carbon Hub call for Early Career Visiting Professionals 2022 opened, I was sure this would be an excellent opportunity to leverage my research and develop the capacity to improve my work in Africa. My application was successful, and I had a 7-week fantastic and immersive experience that profoundly shaped my research trajectory and professional development. This experience was invaluable for networking and learning about blue carbon endeavours across the IORA region. I had the privilege of working alongside colleagues from Bangladesh, Tanzania, Indonesia, South Africa, and Australia. This diverse cohort provided a unique platform for exchanging ideas, sharing knowledge, and fostering collaborations. The network we developed is still active today, and I continue to work with several of the professionals I met during the program. **Expanding Horizons:**

Blue Carbon Projects and Workshops Around the World

After completing my tenure at the hub, I have continued to actively contribute to the blue carbon realm through various projects, training, publications, and workshops. One enriching experience was supporting impactful blue carbon projects in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. Supported by the [Blue Carbon Accelerator Fund](#), these [projects](#) focus on conserving and restoring blue carbon ecosystems due to their role in climate regulation while enhancing the provision of other critical ecosystem services and paving the way for private sector finance. My role included supporting the development of environmental-economic accounts (EEA) to track the benefits of these ecosystems for climate, biodiversity, and local communities and track projects' sustainability metrics. One of the projects, for example, combines mangrove restoration with sustainable prawn farming. This innovative approach not only restores mangroves but also supports local aquaculture, providing economic benefits to the community.

One of the most fulfilling aspects of my work has been sharing knowledge and building capacity through various trainings and workshops. From discussing blue carbon ecosystems and their myriad benefits to exploring management and financing strategies, I've covered a lot of ground. I've emphasised good practices and social safeguards for blue carbon projects and delved into national and international governance frameworks related to blue carbon management.

A highlight was training students at the Maldives National University on seagrass monitoring as part of the '[Enhancing National Development through Environmentally Resilient Islands \(ENDhERI\)](#)' project, supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It was incredibly rewarding to watch these eager students grasp the importance of seagrass ecosystems and learn to monitor them effectively.



Photo: Seagrass monitoring training with students from The Maldives National University

Engaging with the Blue Carbon Community

I had the honour of co-authoring the [Blue Carbon Handbook](#), a comprehensive guide commissioned by the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. This handbook is vital for anyone involved in blue carbon work, providing detailed insights and practical guidance.

Since 2022, I've enjoyed participating in conferences and panel discussions, sharing my expertise and insights on blue carbon ecosystems. The [Mangrove Symphony: Blending Blue Carbon, Climate Resilience & Sustainable Finance in the Indo-Pacific](#) was a notable event. I was part of a discussion panel on devising integrated coastal management strategies. This event allowed me to engage with experts and stakeholders, fostering collaborations and promoting holistic approaches to coastal management.

Another wonderful experience was facilitating a [workshop](#) on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. This workshop aimed to develop effective strategies for sustainable ocean planning, ensuring that our ocean resources are managed wisely to support ecological and economic goals.

Looking Ahead: Upcoming Trainings and Projects

The journey continues! I'm gearing up to provide a training session at the [Global Dialogue on Sustainable Ocean Development](#) titled 'Harnessing Blue Carbon Ecosystems for Sustainable Ocean Development through Environmental-Economic Accounting'. This training will focus on integrating blue carbon ecosystems into environmental-economic accounting frameworks, essential for supporting sustainable ocean development.

Additionally, my current exciting role includes teaching undergraduate and Master's students passionate about the ocean in units related to marine ecology, conservation, and management. The blue carbon component is part of my lectures, where I highlight the importance of these ecosystems in mitigating climate change and supporting biodiversity and societal well-being and prosperity. I aim to inspire the next generation of marine scientists and policymakers to continue advancing the field of blue carbon research and their conservation.

The IORA Blue Carbon Hub's commitment to fostering a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to blue carbon science, policy and financing continues to inspire and drive my work today. The experiences, knowledge and networking I gained as an early career visiting professional have been instrumental in my ongoing journey.



[Follow Tai on LinkedIn](#)

VIDEOS

In case you missed, it you can view all the [training](#) and [webinar videos](#) on the IORA YouTube Channel.



[Subscribe to the YouTube channel](#)



Thanks for your time.

The IORA Blue Carbon Hub Team



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