



Interview with Natalie Deehan-Clark

Natalie Deehan-Clark is the Communications Coordinator for *CREATE!* and recently became a GlobalPDX Ambassador. She is interested in the power of storytelling as a catalyst for social change to create a sustainable and equitable future.

How has your experience been growing up in Oregon?

“I grew up in Corvallis and lived there for 19 years before moving to Eugene for college. After earning my B.S., I traveled the world solo for one year before landing my first job out of college with *CREATE!*. My hope for the future is to relocate to Portland next. There's a lot of inspiring organizations there, great networking opportunities, and in general, I think it's an amazing place to grow personally and professionally.”

Do you feel like Oregon has changed throughout your lifetime?

“I'm not sure if Oregon has changed so much as I have discovered a lot more depending on what stage I'm at in my life. As soon as I got into the professional world, it was still the same state, but it opened up more possibilities. I had no idea some of these NGOs were in Portland. I started looking for different networks and it became this amazing new world.”

What advice do you have for our community during this time of crisis?

“Honestly, I'm still trying to answer that question myself, but something I've found helpful is just taking a step back, really listening, and being open to changing my perspective. Being humble and being able to say, “I was wrong, and I am going to take the action and the steps needed to change and make it better in the future.” I also think it's crucial to be surrounded by a community that supports you and your growth. Also, be a supportive person too, give back to your community, support your friends, and support those around you.”

What does it mean to be a GlobalPDX Ambassador?

“GlobalPDX is based in Portland but there are so many different nonprofits around Oregon. As an ambassador, I want to include their voices and to let them know that they are welcome to be a part of this community too. When I was living in Eugene, I found a nonprofit community there and I actually ran one of *GlobalPDX's Development Drink* events in March. It was wonderful! If not for that event, I would have no idea that those people and those organizations were around me.”



What do you hope to bring to GlobalPDX through this position?

“I want to amplify more voices, more stories, more creative ideas. I think the *Lunch & Learns* with GlobalPDX are probably my favorite event to go to. Sometimes I would take the train up to Portland from Eugene just to be a part of a *Lunch & Learn*. I got to know people working in the same field as me, but they might be working in a different country with a different challenge. Even so, I learned so much from them. As a GlobalPDX Ambassador I’d like to be part of spreading ideas and letting people know that they have a voice in this movement and that we can't wait to hear it.”

What is the mission of *CREATE!*?

“*CREATE!* stands for the *Center for Renewable Energy and Appropriate Technology for the Environment*. We collaborate with rural communities in Senegal to develop community self-sufficiency with village women as the drivers of change. *CREATE!* has sequential programs that fit under four sectors: water, renewable energy, community gardens, and income generation through *VSLA*, a Voluntary Savings and Lending Association which is similar to microfinance.”

What is your role with *CREATE!*?

“I am the U.S. Communications Coordinator. The majority of our team is from Senegal, doing the work on the ground. I collaborate with the Communications Team in Senegal to share the stories of participants from different *CREATE!* partner communities. I also engage donors in the U.S. and around the world.”

What projects are you working on right now?

“It's *CREATE!*'s 10th anniversary! We have 10 activities for the 10th anniversary that people can join virtually to celebrate our work. We also have an upcoming matching grant campaign. *One Day's Wages* chose us for a matching grant, and we will be raising the first half this fall through individual donations. This is the fourth time that they've chosen us, so we're very excited.”

How can people get involved with *CREATE!*?

“There are so many ways to get involved! People are welcome to join our 10th anniversary celebrations: <https://www.createaction.org/celebrating-creates-10th-anniversary-in-senegal/>. We have an upcoming online cooking class for Senegalese cuisine that my colleague Fatou Sow is going to be running, which I am really looking forward to. Other than that, if someone is interested in volunteering, they can email me at natalie@createaction.org. We would appreciate volunteers particularly in development and outreach.”



You can check out *CREATE!* on their website <https://www.createaction.org/>, on Facebook @CREATEActionOrg, or on Instagram and Twitter @createsenegal. You can contact Natalie by email at natalie@createaction.org if you have any questions about volunteering for *CREATE!* or becoming a GlobalPDX Ambassador.