



## 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](mailto: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](mailto:natalie@createaction.org) if you have any questions about volunteering for *CREATE!* or becoming a GlobalPDX Ambassador.