



# GlobalPDX Podcast

## Season 2 Episode 4 Transcript

### *Sounds of Development Drinks*

#### **Andrea Johnson**

Hello, and welcome to the [GlobalPDX](#) podcast. For our 4th episode of this New Year, we wanted to do something a little different. Many things feel unpredictable right now for many of us in the world, so we figured why not join in, change it up, throw you off a little bit. As we continue this podcast and provide connection, content, and support to Oregon's Hub of Global Changemakers we are really excited to deliver this podcast and have some new voices joining me today.

My name is Andrea Johnson and I'm the Chair of the GlobalPDX Advisory Board, and the Executive Director at *Green Empowerment*. In today's *Speaking Change* podcast I'm joined by two amazing people that I have the pleasure of working with to produce this podcast, and it's super exciting for me to bring them into the spotlight today. So welcome Ted and Jennifer, maybe you could introduce yourselves?

#### **Ted**

Hey GlobalPDX Community, my name is Ted Schera. I am the producer of the GlobalPDX Podcast. I recently had the pleasure of hanging out at [Development Drinks](#) and talking to some GlobalPDX members, just getting in touch with the community over a beer or two. If you were there, you saw me in the corner with my microphone and my audio setup, and hopefully came and sat and had a conversation with me. And we just captured a few sound bites from the network on this evening and thought it would be fun to share with you just what some folks from GlobalPDX are working on, and some things that they've been doing recently.

#### **Jennifer**

Thanks Ted. Hi everybody, I'm Jennifer, I'm the Initiative Lead at GlobalPDX, and I am so excited to be here today. I love this podcast so it feels like a lot of fun to be able to speak on it.



## **Andrea**

Thank you guys so much. I think it's so fun to be able to share a little bit more with our audience from the people who work so hard to make these things happen for our community. So hello to you both!

## **Ted**

Hello! So Andrea I know that you are super busy with your work with GlobalPDX and Green Empowerment, so Jennifer and I actually thought it would be fun to put you in the hot seat, and give you a little bit of a break as host and ask *you* the questions this time. We know you do a ton of background research on every person you interview for the show. You always ask such amazing questions and have everything so lined up. So this week what we're going to be doing is, we're going to play clips from Development Drinks where we recorded those conversations and just have you share your thoughts and feelings on some of those clips and we'll chime in when we have the thought.

## **Andrea**

Alright that sounds great, a little bit of pressure is good.

## **Jennifer**

(laughing) You look cool as a cucumber.

## **Ted**

So before we dive in, do you want to give our listeners a little bit of background about what Development Drinks is? I understand it's kind of the foundation for everything GlobalPDX has become and I know that actually the last Development Drinks before COVID (back in the before times) was where the idea of this podcast actually came from.

## **Andrea**

Yeah, it definitely feels full-circle when you share it that way. Actually before it was even called "Development Drinks" there was a woman named Irene Tinker who was a professor at UC Berkeley. She's one of the first people to ever write about gender in relation to International Community Development. She has an amazing background and history all within that that I could spend probably hours and hours speaking of. But one of her other beliefs was about uniting people that were globally minded in Portland, this is where her and her husband ended up settling, and so they started hosting "Development Salon" in their living room. Eventually there was a lot more interest and desire to kind of expand that and Green Empowerment started doing Development Drinks pretty casually



in 2012. From that, you know Green Empowerment is small Internationally focused nonprofit and our staff couldn't really handle some of that workload to meet the needs and the request of community members. And that's where we kind of came together with Mercy Corps, Medical Teams International, OHSU, and PSU to form what is GlobalPDX and we kind of handed over Development Drinks.

And I'll just stay from a very personal perspective: Development Drinks was how I got introduced to Green Empowerment. I was a brand-new Portlander, moved to Portland from Ecuador, I had been living there the Peace Corps volunteer and then later worked with *Conservation International* and some really fun payment for ecosystems Services programs. Moved to Portland, knew nobody, and ended up at a Development Drinks and have been a fan of Green Empowerment ever since. That's how I met a lot of my global community in Portland and now I get to be the Executive Director of Green Empowerment and on the Advisory Board GlobalPDX, so for me that is all full circle. And at that last Development Drinks (so that would have been like January 2020 right?)

**Ted**

I think it was February I want to say.

**Andrea**

Was it February?

**Jennifer**

It must have been because we were monthly at that time.

**Andrea**

Well I was not at that one because I had just had a baby on February 1st! so I don't think I was at Development Drinks... So I don't think I knew the podcast came from that. So I would love to know, Jennifer, I would love to hear what that Conversation was.

**Jennifer**

It was really just the good fortune of Ted being dragged there that night by his partner!

**Ted**

Yeah my partner Rae, she is super into GlobalPDX and wanted to come to a networking event and meet the folks that all come there. She took me there just as moral support so that in this room full of new people there would be a familiar face.



## **Andrea**

And then you realized that you actually wanted to be a part of the community as well! You threw yourself right in.

## **Ted**

Absolutely! Jennifer was specifically talking (because Jennifer does such a good job of talking to everybody) and we were sort of discussing: there is a pandemic coming, we don't know how long we are going to be locked down for. But one thing that was popular at the time and still today (and that's probably going to grow in popularity) and a great way to keep in touch with everyone is: a Podcast!! And it just so happens that I went to school for audio engineering and I have all of the tools to make a podcast.

## **Andrea**

That is awesome and I will say, it could not have been better timing because it has provided such a great way for GlobalPDX to stay connected still be highlighting voices of Global changemakers.

## **Jennifer**

That's so true and I would be remiss to not do an extra plug of "thank you" for Ted for all of the production he's done (on season 1 *and* 2). I think that at that Development Drinks Ted offered to help us in the way that anyone offers to help a person when they've had a couple of beers and maybe didn't think that it would become the commitment that it has become. So thank you so much Ted!

## **Andrea**

The benefits of having a persistent, persistent Initiative Lead in Jennifer.

## **Ted**

(Laughing) Absolutely. Because you know how it is, you throw out an idea like that you throw up creative ideas all the time, it's like, "Hey wouldn't it be cool if *this* existed." And this is one of the few ones ever that everyone that I mentioned it to has been like, "Yeah let's do it, let's go!"

## **Andrea**

I kind of think that that speaks a lot to the GlobalPPDX Community though. It's a group of people that you know I do very different work or come at it from a different



perspective, but there is something that has united us and that those ideas do blossom into real collaboration or resource sharing, information sharing. So I am so grateful to be a part of this community.

### **Jennifer**

Awwww

### **Andrea**

So the last Development Drinks though, that's what we are here to really talk about, somehow in the middle of the various COVID variants that have happened we got together *in person*. It already feels like a lifetime ago but it was December and so that was the last time we got to see a lot of people in person, it was the first time we had seen a lot of people in person, and now it was *the last time* we were seeing all the people in person. So I believe that's kind of where we're heading right?

### **Ted**

We can jump right in. Apologies to the listeners right off the bat for the audio quality: you will hear the bar in the background. I apologize for that. I thought my microphone was set to block that sort of stuff, I thought I had a good placement, and after listening back to it after the fact realized that that wasn't the case. So...

### **Andrea**

It's more authentic that way! It makes people hopefully remember fondly what it's like to be in a bar together and hopefully we'll get back there someday!

### **Jennifer**

Sink in, imagine you're right there with us, cold drink in hand listening in to these conversations.

### **Ted**

So with that let's get started. This is our first little segment, I captured this sitting down with John Stephens and here he is describing the work he's doing.

### **John Stephens**

So I'm the CEO of the Boma projects in the Boma Project a nonprofit working across Africa to eliminate extreme poverty and we do that by implementing a formulaic program model that came out of Bangladesh about 20 years ago called the "graduation approach".



And we have tailored that for the dry lands of Africa and now we've created about five different program models. With 400 million people living in extreme poverty everything we do is about scale. So how can we reach more people, more quickly, and more efficiently.

**Ted**

Perfect, and what brings you here?

**John**

Well I'm a member of GlobalPDX and I used to go to Development Drinks when I was in Mercy Corps and now that I'm running BOMA I still love to come down for these. I really just love seeing what other people are doing, and I think that's just a great learning environment that's really informal. Hearing about what's on people's minds, what the challenges are, what their successes are. So it's a great venue just to kind of meet people you wouldn't normally meet and strike up a conversation, and sometimes you're able to help someone out with a challenge that you have solved, then sometimes they can help you out. So it's always fun that way.

**Ted**

Is there any particular issue or any sort of content/topic that you'd be more interested to hear from us (from a podcast centered around GlobalPDX)?

**John**

I think going back to that notion of *governance*, I do think governance is oftentimes neglected as a powerful tool of an organization. It tends to... people inherit boards and they kind of deal with them but they don't necessarily think of them as a superpower that needs to be *cultivated* and *evolved* and kind of *leveraged* for more incredible returns. So I think I talk to people a lot about Boards, just because I think they're really interesting, and it goes back to this notion I deal with a lot (especially in small to mid-sized nonprofits) which is: how do you kind of make these evolutionary leaps? You know we oftentimes get stuck and kind of a hand-to-mouth fundraising cycle, very hard to find that extra stretch to do something incredible. So I think for all of us we are trying to figure out: how do we make this quantum leap, how do we really change the organization and really do something incredible with very limited resources, on a very show-string budget. So I think of all of the elements within your organization, your Board is the most dynamic. They can come in and they have this ultimate ability to contribute, to connect, to drive resources and reputation, to eliminate risk, and we rarely use them in the way that we should. So people ask me "How do I grow my nonprofit?" And I say "Well, let's talk about your Board."



## **Ted**

It was so great to have him join us and to sit down and have that conversation with him. So my question for you Andrea: “What has been a big takeaway for you in how to use a Board as a superpower?”

## **Andrea**

Okay I will be a little vulnerable right now: when I started at Green Empowerment this was probably the thing I read and tried to learn the most about. Everything you read about nonprofit management is that you have to have a good Board. So I spent a lot of time just learning both on my own. I was fortunate at the time to come into Green Empowerment when we had had some transition (things were not the most stable) but the Board was really engaged and I think that is part of what “Superpower” for a Board is. Your Board Members care, they're showing up, they're volunteers and it's about how do you get them engaged in a way that is going to really advance the mission. And I've just been really fortunate over the last 6 years in his role to have some really incredible Board Members who bring so many different skills and resources and ideas, and I think also have allowed me to lead and in my own way, in my role as Executive Director. One example for me of how to use the Board as a superpower has recently been about expanding our visibility as an organization. Green Empowerment is about to celebrate our 25th anniversary this year, one of my Board Members coined the term (in I think 2018), “Portland's best kept secret”. It was just such an interesting perspective: he had lived in Portland most of his professional adult life, he had been a Peace Corps volunteer in his younger days, was passionate about this stuff, and yet hadn't been connected to Green Empowerment. So we are Portland's best kept secret. And we used that, we ran with that and it became this motivator almost like a mantra, that we are secret and we don't want to be, so how do we now transition.

And so that's why I think for me that resonated both with our team as well as our Board. It kind of created this united front, and it's really focused our energy in terms of increasing our visibility because we have so much more work to do in the areas of renewable energy and clean water access. So I feel like that's where your Board can, when they're engaged and you're working really well together, they can just bring in such an important perspective. Green Empowerment is my whole life (besides my family and friends), but like my whole working life, like this is how I spend most of my days. And I needed somebody who is passionate about it but maybe a little bit of a degree of separation using their volunteer time to recognize like, we are this amazing thing, how do we do more of it. So that for me really sticks out.



And I will just say I've also had the pleasure of learning directly from John about this. John as a CEO/ED himself has provided me with a lot of guidance over the years and we share some resources. He gave me a great idea about risk management in 2020 that I was able to bring to my Board to say, "Look we actually did really well through the pandemic Green Empowerment's operating model is really strong it works well when they're so much kind of global uncertainty (especially with travel because we really focus on local partners and communities to really own the work in many ways). Yet there's still risk. There were so many unknowns. And he helped me kind of think through what risk management strategy they were using and how I could adopt that with my organization. And so that to me it also is one of the things just specifically hearing John in this clip is so wonderful because I really see him as a resource for me and for some others in terms of using our Boards as superpowers, and many other things probably.

### **Ted**

That's awesome.

### **Andrea**

I also will mention quickly for GlobalPDX: Jennifer and I've been working really closely to expand our Advisory Board, and I will say that has been a really rewarding experience in terms of similarly bringing some more diverse and different perspectives into the initiative. And I know that Jennifer has been pretty instrumental in helping us kind of expand that reach, and on-board these Advisory Board Members that are really helping us think about: what is the future of GlobalPDX, how do we provide value and resources for our members? And so some of the learnings from Green Empowerment I've been able to apply to GlobalPDX as well.

### **Jennifer**

I was thinking the same thing, and how incredible it is to have people who aren't in the weeds with you looking at your organization as a whole, looking at the most important pieces, sort of giving you overhead guidance. I hadn't worked with a Board before working with the GlobalPDX Advisory Board and I just realized I didn't even know what I didn't know until they were there with all of their really diverse perspectives, weighing in on these topics that were driving us forward.

### **Ted**

The one thing that stuck out to me from his conversation that still sticks with me is: using a Board as an entry point to the global development space, especially for people who



are in industry or in the private sector). And that was something that was very interesting to me. I think everyone is giving me advice in college: “You need to go volunteer, you need to go do Peace Corps, you need to do all of these things”. But for those who are later on, or have careers established ready like he said, “No, go join a Board and use your experience to help in that way”. And I thought that was really poignant.

### **Andrea**

I definitely agree with that as well and I think it's one of the things that when we talk about just different skills and experience you know one of Green Empowerment's Board Members is Claudio out of Italy and he's the head of the Association for Rural Electrification and that is more social enterprise/business focused. Really global, still focused on rural electrification in many ways. Still in our sector of renewable and also has opened so many doors in terms of connections. And so while he might be more “for profit” focused, it's a way for him to apply that passion piece and that interest in social justice and making the world more equitable while still utilizing his professional skills for us.

### **Ted**

For sure. So next I spoke to Anita Ramachandran and Mikalia Belk, part of the MicroMentor Team, who we actually featured in one of our earlier episodes. Let's hear what they had to say.

### **Anita**

So my name is Anita Ramachandran, I can send you the spelling later! And what brings me here is drinks with like-minded people.

### **Mikaila Belk**

And my name is Mikaila Belk. And what brings me here is Anita! I have been a part of GlobalPDX's email group for 3 years now, I love seeing the newsletters and all of the things that come out, and the resources. But I have always been too nervous to come alone. And so I never made it out to a happy hour until today!

### **Ted**

Here you are! So what do you both do?

### **Anita**

We are both part of MicroMentor which is a social enterprise incubating within Mercy Corps. We are a global community of entrepreneurs connecting with mentors to



grow their businesses, solve business challenges, be able to create economic opportunities for themselves. I am going to just give you one more sentence and then I am going to pass it to Mikaila to give you all of the other answers. I am going to give you a whole episode (of the GlobalPDX Podcast) so why would I give you all of my best answers now?

**Ted**

Maybe we are workshopping

**Anita**

MicroMentor, we are all passionate about mentoring, and the power of mentoring and how game-changing it can be. When it comes to small businesses, it truly is life changing. We have thousands of entrepreneurs, this year we probably hit 150,000 entrepreneurs.

**Mikalia**

180,000!

**Anita**

Great, we are on track for 180,000 this year! And these are volunteer mentors from all over the world. Our platform is in English, Spanish, Arabic, Bahasa Indonesian, and Somali. And Mikaila works with all of our country teams. So she will be the best person to tell you how it actually works in real life.

**Ted**

Awesome!

**Mikalia**

I am the global programs officer for MicroMentor. So, I work directly and closely with our teams that are implementing MicroMentor programs in different countries. Like she said, we have a global online platform that has over 180,000 entrepreneurs, and about 80,000 mentors. So you can join the platform for free, you create a profile, put in your business needs (or your business expertise) and once you get on the platform it is almost like a dating site. Where you get to match yourself to someone who may be able to help you with your business needs. Or if you are a partner with expertise you can find a mentee who is looking for help with marketing skills, or finance, or, "I am in this certain market and I need to expand, or this part isn't working". So we are just this social networking platform. But from this we have found incredible impact. Just in the last year mentored



entrepreneurs have created .58 more jobs. So it sounds like a weird number but that was 2700 jobs just as last year in 2021 that were created.

**Ted**

And this is your first time at Development Drinks, right?

**Mikaila**

It is! Yes I have been part of the email group since I first moved to Portland in 2019. I found it cuz I started working at Mercy Corps (not at MicroMentor) but people recommended it and I joined and so I love getting all the emails but I saw the Development Drinks and I was like, "Should I go? Okay I want to go, but I don't know anyone, I'm nervous!".

**Ted**

That's the point, right? A networking event to meet new people.

**Mikaila**

Exactly now being here I'm like, "Why did I never go?" Because everyone's so nice and great to be around and like and we all have the same interest like we all want to talk about what we want to do in the world and in our lives. It's really nice to find people like this, you know? And find your network.

**Ted**

So Mikaila has an incredible passion for the power of mentorship and this makes me wonder: is mentoring baked into the philanthropic endeavors that are successful? And is mentoring something that you are thinking about to help advance your own work?

**Andrea**

Yes, I love this question. I had such a wonderful time interviewing Anita for the last podcast so hearing from one of her team members in this clip is pretty cool as well cuz it shows that that passion is across their team really which she talked about. And I'll just say, for me I personally feel like mentorship is so important across sectors. So you know when it comes to Green Empowerment's work, I want mentorship, I seek mentorship, but we also want to create those types of opportunities for our community members as well as for our partner organizations. I think for me actually GlobalPDX has created probably the best mentorship opportunities I've ever had that we have an *Executive Director Roundtable* which would be more considered "peer mentoring" we meet once a month. GlobalPDX kind of



brought us together and organized us and it's a chance for me to connect with other Executive Directors who are managing global nonprofits from Oregon, and learn from them and share resources and ideas. And so that type of peer mentoring is something I think about constantly because I'm grateful for it. It's helped me in such a magnitude of ways: in terms of looking at new foundations/funders, how to support your team during a global pandemic, "What are you guys doing about travel? like are people traveling right now? what are you doing?" Across the spectrum of issues and concerns it's so amazing to have that peer mentoring group.

And I do think the part of mentoring for me that would lead to success is recognizing that we all have something to learn, and we often all have something to give and share. And so that to me feels like a lot of what mentoring is about: is that you can have a mentor that might be more professionally advanced will you, but you also might learn quite a bit from somebody who's younger than you and you might get mentorship in that way as well. And I feel like I have that opportunity quite a bit with having a Board of Directors and having International staff where I'm constantly learning. For me the success of mentoring comes with *recognizing what we don't know* that we could all use a little bit of help and guidance. And having a peer mentoring group has just been such an incredible resource for me personally, and so definitely is helping me in my role as an Executive Director at Green Empowerment.

## **Jennifer**

I love to hear that it's so helpful for you as an Executive Director because I feel the exact same way, sort of starting my Development Career and I would be remiss if I didn't mention our [Community Ally Catalog](#) and all the wonderful Mentors and mentees who have signed up since 2020 to have those professional relationships through GlobalPDX. I remember back in 2020 we were talking about: how do we lend some support to students and young people who thought, "Hey my career is going to begin now I'm going to join the Peace Corps, I'm going to travel abroad, or I'm going to go do this work and apply the learning that I've had in school for the past however-many-years." And all the sudden a global pandemic comes, their trajectory of their career is totally changed and there isn't a playbook for this, because this is brand new. There isn't, "Hey this is what you should do with your time or these are the books you should read." or "Here is the work you can keep doing from home". So really incredible to see so many connections going on in that virtual space and some guidance happening there from some more seasoned professionals who are able to say, "Wow if I happened to have a couple of years in between my studies and my global travel, this is the knowledge I wish I had gained these are the languages I would



have liked to learn.” So that folks are able to hit the ground running when those development careers take off.

### **Andrea**

I think mentoring too is an example of how when you are helping, you almost benefit more in some ways. Because of seeing people grow and learn and that kind of a relationship is an amazing thing to be a part of. I do think it is kind of part of humanity and therefore should be a part of us being successful and achieving so many of these various mission-driven goals that GlobalPDX member organizations have.

### **Ted**

The next clip I have for you is a really short one from Kym Croft Miller. She is a professor who teaches criminal justice and writing here in Oregon. She had one ask for us that I thought would be great to share:

### **Ted (at Development Drinks)**

As a listener of our podcast, is there any content that you really think we should cover? That you would like to hear about, any topic, part of the world...?

### **Kym Croft Miller**

Yes: GOOD NEWS. I just feel like we hear so much bad news and I think GlobalPDX and many other organizations are such good work (I just talked to someone tonight from Mercy Corps) and there's just so much good work being done, and we don't hear a lot about the *good news*. So if you can give us, “Yeah there are a lot of the problems in the world, but there are some really great things that are happening too!” It would be really great.

### **Ted**

So Andrea: what is some good news that you want to share? What keeps you optimistic and hopeful in your work?

### **Andrea**

It's interesting because I do ask my podcast guests a very similar question. And I think you're kind of asking at a little bit of a hard time right: I'm a mom of two kids (one of them under five) and if anybody has been reading articles about how parents with kids under 5 are doing right now, societally (overall *not that great*). And so I think one of the things that keeps me optimistic and hopeful on a very personal level is that I get to spend



my working hours supporting an organization that I believe in, and I know that not everybody gets to have that. But on a very personal level, when I feel like the world is challenging or outside of my control, I know that I can go sit and have my piece of impact through my work with Green Empowerment. And that for me is a huge motivator.

And I also will say that there are so many silver linings among the pandemic and we often maybe hear some of the negative things are louder or bad news “does better” (if you look at Facebook algorithms you know negative news gets more clicks). But through that there has also been so much humanity shown are there are those examples as well. And I think that is what I hold on to. And for me what keeps me hopeful is getting to connect with so many amazing passionate leaders through GlobalPDX, honestly. I get to do that through my work with Green Empowerment, we have a global team and work with so many different partner organizations. So I get to see your leaders in action (even if it's virtually or at a distance or via WhatsApp often) and then through the podcast through GlobalPDX, through the ED round table, I'm connecting with so many people that are passionate, they're hard-working, there are more people doing good in the world and maybe we get to see. So that! People that are passionate and doing hard work keep me so motivated and optimistic about the future.

And I am a realist. Things are not great, but you know we have to be optimistic. We have to keep fighting the good fight, doing the good work.

## **Jennifer**

Ted, do you have any good news to share?

## **Ted**

You know, the Ducks hired Dan Lanning who looks to be a great defensive-mind and looks to really be turning that football program around after we just lost a few coaches ... so that's great!

I would say that honestly working on this podcast is kind of great for me because I don't work my day job in the global development space. Like I didn't go to school for this sort of thing, a lot of it is outside of my realm of knowledge, and not something that I *inherently* understand. And so just listening to all of these incredibly smart people who have done incredible work, come in and just ... every time I get to edit this podcast (I listen to these more than anybody else I guarantee you) and I get to hear every little bit of that conversation multiple times as I go through and edit. And just listening to how much these people care about making the world around them better and whatever way they decide to go about that, is awesome. Because it means that there are competent, smart, driven people who are dedicated to making the world around them better and that's exactly what



we need. So as long as there are more people like that then we're fine and we'll be fine. We are not fine now, but we'll be fine.

### **Andrea**

I love that. It's really cool to hear that from your perspective as well because I feel the same way when I'm doing these interviews, sometimes it's like the best part of my week because I just leave so inspired by these people that I wouldn't have been introduced to if weren't for GlobalPDX.

### **Ted**

Yeah, for sure.

### **Andrea**

What about you Jennifer? I know I am not supposed to be asking questions, but you can't hold me back!

### **Jennifer**

It's fair! I don't know if this counts as "news" but I just heard sort of a cool theory of thinking recently (or theory of hobbies) that made me feel really jazzed. It's this theory of looking at the things that bring you joy in your life as like a *pie chart*. And that there's this sort of theory floating around that before "covid times", our pie charts were largely one color. That we sort of had one thing that we did that brought us joy and we stuck with that and that was pretty much how we invested our time. And that was the basket we put our eggs in. And that now people are able to branch out (or maybe pushed out of their comfort zone) from that one type of joy and are diversifying. And are taking up making bread, or archery, or going for long walks, or listening to podcasts like this, or joining communities they wouldn't have been pushed to before. And I think that's kind of cool! I think that expresses a humanity in this tough time that is really positive and enthusiastic. That we're learning that joy can come from a lot of different places, and places that we might not have found if this tough spot hadn't hit us.

### **Ted**

Absolutely.

### **Andrea**

Yeah, I will say that has definitely been true for me as a mom with a young baby right when the pandemic started. I had planned to take a trip to Peru for Green



Empowerment with my 4 month old (he would have been 4 months) and that would have been June 2020 and obviously that trip did not happen. And I have got to spend so much more time with my kids (even if some of that time has been really hard I'll admit it). I also know that when they're older I'm totally going to reflect on that and be like, "Wow, what a cool opportunity I had because I was balancing work and life in a way that, even if sometimes it felt impossible, I did it. And I got to spend so much time with my kids at these pretty important ages, that I otherwise would have been traveling more and you know in the office more things like that." So that's very true for me.

## **Ted**

That's awesome. So the next person that I spoke with is Michael Telford. He's one of GlobalPDX's Advisory Board Members and here is his clip

## **Ted (at Development Drinks)**

So first thing I am going to ask you: what's your name and what brings you here?

## **Michael**

My name is Michael Telford. I've been associated with GlobalPDX for almost two years I guess, and I'm an Advisory Board Member.

## **Ted**

Okay, what does that entail, being an Advisory Board Member?

## **Michael**

So I'm a little bit new to it, to tell you the truth. I was really drawn to the organization because before there was the COVID Lockdown, there were a couple of Development Drinks. I had just moved to town and I'd researched to try to find My Tribe. I am an International Development professional and I just wanted to try to find those people in Portland and I found GlobalPDX. I was like look, this looks like some people that share the interests I have. And hey, they've got Development Drinks which sounds like a really Casual setting ) I don't have to like show up in some formal-deal and stand up and present myself or anything) and it was fun! I really had a good time doing it and I met some really great folks including Jennifer. And so I saw a call out to potential Advisory Board Members, a "if anyone is interested" sort of thing. I thought: I don't know if I've got the right things to add to the group but I'll throw my name into the hat and it's been a really great experience. And we just recently did the in-person UnConference that was a great success, and fun to see a



lot of the folks that are there here, including a couple of the speakers. And I'm really energized with the stuff that we've got planned going forward.

### **Ted**

So after listening to that clip there are a couple questions that I have for you. The first is: I bet most people don't know about the structure it takes to run GlobalPDX so will you tell us a little bit about The Advisory Board and the work that you do?

### **Andrea**

Yeah for sure. So I am the Chair of the Advisory Board (Green Empowerment is actually the Fiscal Sponsor of the Initiative). And The Advisory Board is a group of volunteers and it's kind of more like a "Working Board" (if you know much about kind of non-profit board there's different structures). But our Board Members are really doing work on behalf of the initiative. Jennifer is our only paid staff person (and it's pretty part-time). And so the rest of us kind of have to fill in to keep the Initiative going.

We actually launched the Advisory Board in 2020. Which is probably a hard time for people to imagine launching something like that. But I also think a lot of these Advisory Board Members (Michael is a great example) were looking for an opportunity to connect with their own local community. And trying to find how to get connected to people outside of their day-to-day work and outside of their families during this time. And I think that's how a number of those Advisory Board Members kind of ended up signing up to support and they bring such different skills to compliment what Jennifer and I are focused on. And Michael is definitely one of them. So our Advisory Board: we have the standard kind of quarterly meeting of the board and committees are really about supporting the work of the initiative behind the scenes. And then we had our UnConference in the fall of 2021 our Advisory Board Members got to actually get really involved. And that was their first in-person event since they had been on our Advisory Board and we got to meet in person for the first time, and they got to see GlobalPDX come to life in the physical/personal space. And they were already hooked in a virtual space, and I feel like that just hooked them even more. Because they really got to see it come to life in person, and so yeah! They kind of offer their skills, support behind the scenes, and some strategy (that type of guidance). And hopefully will be also helping us in 2022. We have some big goals in terms of continuing to grow the initiative and help it be more kind of financially sustainable as well.



## **Ted**

And so you mentioned this a little bit but the second question then is: This GlobalPDX Conference that Michael mentioned. So how'd that go? What's your favorite memory, what's the big takeaway? Tell us more about that.

## **Andrea**

I will tell my perspective, although Jennifer and I probably have different perspectives. We all agree it went amazingly well. I cannot believe how great that conference just went over all and I'll be very honest like I was a skeptic. I work from home, I don't go out very much now and I was like, "Are people really going to want to do this in person?" And this is a great example of where our Advisory Board and especially Jennifer's leadership really said, "No, people want this. Like let's do something, let's make it happen. Like people are going to want to show up." And man, people showed up, and they were so enthusiastic! There was just so much genuine engagement, really authentic discussions about some hard topics as well. I mean I was just so impressed by the conference itself.

For me a big takeaway was just, I guess how much people were craving that type of interaction. And we structured the conference in a bit of a nontraditional way. Allowed for a lot of space for dialogue and I felt like it was a great example of reenvisioning how we meet, how we share, how we congregate. I got to see it happen in real life. There was a lot of conversation in early 2020 of, "Let's create this new normal, what's the future going to be like?" and we actually got to see it in real life. People of different backgrounds, different roles in their organizations, different reasons for showing up to this conference all really sharing on a Level Playing Field at the conference, and I thought that part for me was a big takeaway, really cool.

I also did have to step outside a few times - I couldn't believe there were that many people together in person! But similarly we hit it at the most perfect time because it was before Delta came.

## **Ted**

Yeah that timing is pretty nice!

## **Andrea**

Unfortunately we don't control those variants. But it kind of felt like we did.



## **Ted**

I feel like right now, I know that you said you didn't think that people would want to show up to something like this, but I feel the opposite. If people can feel safe and like they're gathering responsibly and can go to an event and feel okay about it... I think everyone is trying to get out and do stuff. Like even we introverts are trying to get out and experience Humanity again.

## **Andrea**

Well then you would have been on Jennifer's side, which is why we chose to do the conference because she convinced me that that was true and she was 100% right

## **Ted**

Jennifer, how did the conference go for you, what are your thoughts?

## **Jennifer**

It was such a whirlwind I'm trying to isolate one particular moment that was like my favorite, or a real standout and it is hard. I feel like I had my head on a swivel the whole day. But the moment it comes to mind (and there are a lot of gems) is being able to finally sit down and relax after the conference at the sort of impromptu happy hour that happened afterwards.

And I just had this (kind of magical) moment of having a drink in my hand, having my feet stop throbbing from walking around on them (in the worst decision of shoes I've ever made). Hearing this buzzing around me of people having these conversations that I hadn't heard in a really long time, it was so energized and electric. In this little bar on the McMenamins property, and it was just packed with people who got each other's work on this foundational, essential level. It was like watching people skip over the first 30 minutes of a conversation that they would have with their friends (and usually their friends would tune out after that long, right?) they couldn't even get people to stick with them long enough to talk about the really juicy part of their work. And all the sudden they're in this bar full of people who *got it*. Who got what they were doing and we're so excited to hear the tricks, and tools, and tips, and resources, and methodology that they were using. I mean it was just enough to make any of us totally geek out, and yeah it was just such an energized, charged moment. It was really wonderful

## **Andrea**

That was awesome.



**Ted**

You guys are making me sorry I missed it!

**Andrea**

That is what we want you to feel so that you will come to the next one! We are going to try to have a Conference 2022.

**Jennifer**

You're there Ted!

**Ted**

Yep, I'll be there! So this next soundbite comes from a Development Drinks newbie Kimberlee Roberts. She joined us for the very first time on this evening back in December and she was amazing. She was still kind enough to sit down with me and share her thoughts and was brave enough to be recorded in that moment. So let's take a listen.

**Ted (at Development Drinks)**

So I will just have you start by telling us: what is your name and what brings you here?

**Kimberlee Roberts**

Well my name is Kimberlee Roberts, and I was actually introduced to GlobalPDX by a gentleman I met at one of my work's training sessions at Derek Olson with a WorldOregon. We made a connection and we were talking about different things and he told me about GlobalPDX, I found this event so I decided to try to come out tonight.

**Ted**

So this is your first one? Welcome!

**Kimberlee**

I am still new to Portland, I just moved here in February so I've been trying to find different... put myself out there and find different communities that I would be interested in trying to get to know, and be a part of.

**Ted**

Did you move from DC?



**Kimberlee**

From the DC area, yes.

**Ted**

Well, welcome! Happy to have you. So what do you do now?

**Kimberlee**

Right now I'm working with a diversity equity and inclusion consulting firm. Helping organizations with dealing with white supremacy, anti-racism, being a more inclusive and equitable organization, and spreading that out to the community as well.

**Ted**

That's awesome. So here is the point where I usually ask, "What's the coolest connection you've made at a GlobalPDX Event?" But this is your first one so I will just ask you: What is your general impression?

**Kimberlee**

My general impression is that there are some really great people out here! I did have conversations with people working in education, working for other nonprofits, working in Africa doing programs in different African countries, so I have really enjoyed the conversations. Made some good connections. I actually got invited out because my birthday is coming up so they are like, "Oh, we have got to take you out!" So I think I have made some really organic, genuine connections that I hope to continue.

**Ted**

Awesome. Is there any content that you would like to hear in a podcast that you think doesn't get its day, that you think would be good to cover?

**Kimberlee**

Um, yes actually. One thing that I have been looking at and wanting to bring to the forefront is Travel Equity. I have done work with historically Black colleges and universities, working with their study abroad programs and helping their students to be able to travel safety and security. So helping them to find the confidence to travel and actually want to do study abroad. And doing that research, doing that work, I recognize that it's a lot of particularly Black and brown students who don't travel because they're not encouraged to do so. They don't know that they can, it's not something that is normal for them. And then those who actually get the opportunities don't necessarily have the same equitable



upbringing or equitable things in place to help them to travel. So they just don't think they can.

### **Ted**

So when we think about what Kimberlee said around travel equity, how different do you think our nonprofit landscape (not to mention the you know the landscape of our own government) could look if this Equity was emphasized?

### **Andrea**

I love hearing from Kimberlee on this. It is not something that I have that much experience with, I do have the pleasure of knowing the Executive Director of [Carpe Mundi](#) which is a GlobalPDX member organization and that's actually what they focus on so they're are nonprofit that works with low-income and first-generation Portland college students and they provide them a year-long mentorship and scholarship program that includes the travel portion. But one of the things I think that's so impressive about their model is that they provide preparation and financial support ahead of time. They then support students through the actual International experience (I think it's usually 2 or 3 month program) and then there's also support on the return side. Those of us who have traveled or had the opportunity to live and work abroad know that integration back can be challenging, and how do you process some experiences that you've had? And they actually Provide support on that as well. So that's why I'd expertise and I think one of the beauties of the GlobalPDX Community is that you can often find somebody who's working on it, right? So had anybody from Carpe Mundi been at Development Drinks at that point we could have made that connection in real time for Kimberlee. But that to me feels like a topic that it's nice to know that there's often somebody within our community that is knowledgeable about it, and we can reach out to, to learn and kind of think about it.

And I do know that in general the topics of equity, especially within International Development, I think are also just super important. Green Empowerment talks quite a bit about how to be anti-colonial in our work. So not just "not being Colonial" but actually actively being anti-colonial. We talk about the language that we use, our operating model, how do we make sure we're not reinforcing systems that were built on white supremacy and colonialism and a history of racism. So I do think those are all important conversations no matter what your mission, no matter what your programs are. And I think especially with travel equity it's worth looking into Carpe Mundi, in terms of how they are addressing some of those things (through action and through financial and resources support).



**Ted**

So you can find more about Carpe Mundi on the GlobalPDX website.

**Andrea**

I also know they do mentorship. So it feels connected to that other question we're talking about MicroMentor as well. Really kind of one-on-one mentorship with the students.

**Ted**

So our last clip, certainly not least, I have a conversation with one of our incredible GlobalPDX Ambassadors, Jacob Dodds. Jacob is honestly one of the main reasons that this whole thing happened. Major shout out! When I showed up with a microphone and a recorder in hand and clear. Cleared off a table and sat down and looked like I was setting up trying to interview everyone and get them on the record, and all of this pressure was up, Jacob was one of the first people to go, "Hey what are you doing, how can I help?" Was going around talking to people (along with Jennifer (of course)) saying, "Hey you should go talk to Ted, here's what he's doing, how can I help?" and then even at the end when I told him, "Hey, it's your turn, you've got to talk with us" he was a great sport. Huge shoutout to Jacob.

**Jennifer**

We love you Jacob!

**Ted**

We will just start off with: what's your name and what brings you here?

**Jacob Dodds**

Yeah I'm Jacob and I'm here cuz I am a GlobalPDX Ambassador which is sort of like an intern-mixed-with-connections-mixed-with-fun. Events and supporting GlobalPDX.

**Ted**

Can you delve a little more into that GlobalPDX Ambassador role? Like what's your day by day, what do you do?

**Jacob**

Sure so there's three current GlobalPDX Ambassadors, and Ambassadors bring different things based on where they are in life. Specifically what I bring is connections to PSU. I'm currently a grad student getting my Master's in public administration, which is how



I met GlobalPDX. We did a project for them and I have connections to the school, the teachers and other students. And so sort of that feed of information, helps connect GlobalPDX to volunteers, and things like that.

### **Ted**

So Jacob is one of the people that is helping GlobalPDX become a hub for young people around Oregon who are interested in development. So what are some of the programs that GlobalPDX has that young people and students can take advantage of?

### **Andrea**

I think Jennifer should be the one to answer this because she is the one that has created most of these resources and runs them. I just want to give some real credit also to Jacob and all of our GlobalPDX Ambassadors. That is a way that we are keeping so many things running and helping Jennifer stay (hopefully) relatively sane and not doing things all by herself. They were instrumental in the Conference (the group of them) and then all of our Ambassadors have their individual kind of projects that they're working on with us. So they are volunteers supporting us. But Jennifer maybe you could talk more about ways that young people are getting involved.

### **Jennifer**

Absolutely! So one of the coolest things we've been doing recently is our Professionals Rising in Oregon meetings (our acronym is "PROs meetings"). And those were spearheaded by another one of our awesome ambassadors Elana. They are monthly Gatherings for either young folks or people who are just new to the development career path. And it's a place for networking, it's a place for resource-sharing, it's just a place for getting the juices flowing in this profession. It's a place that is sort of hard to crack into: I've already mentioned how different the career path already looks in a global pandemic when you're not actually out in the world, you're right here in Oregon (which for a lot of us is our home state). It doesn't feel like we're doing that much International work. So getting around a group of people who are interested in the same thing, reading the same books, listening to new podcasts you can tune into. It is really a way for us to sort of become a think tank around the work that we're interested in.

But we have lots of other programs as well that are virtual to engage with: we have our *Community Ally Catalog* which will match up our Mentees with a mentor who is interested in a similar topic or area of study. And we also have a ton of universities who are GlobalPDX members, and for you students out there (and professors as well) if your University or college or school is a GlobalPDX Member make sure you're taking advantage



of those benefits. We have free events, we have free resources, we have a member portal where you can network with Executive Directors of all of these cool organizations and share blog posts and all this cool stuff to really cut your teeth on your profession and your career path.

And then finally don't forget to [sign up for the GlobalPDX newsletter](#). We pack it full of all of these cool opportunities and I see so many job openings come through here that are just stellar and are all the way from entry-level to COO positions and Board positions. It is just a great way to dive in headfirst and get some experience, whether you're brand new at this or if you're pretty seasoned. There are so many opportunities there.

### **Andrea**

I would just add: I think the Ambassador opportunity as well, you know (you mentioned Jacob and Elana) and those are just two of the ambassadors but we have more and it's a great opportunity to get more involved with actually supporting and organizing some of these activities, if you're looking to have a volunteer engagement that gets you even more connected to the global development community. And then I also just want to give a plug that we will be bringing back some Development Drinks in person starting in March. We're probably not going to do them monthly right away we're going to continue to evaluate the situation (as everybody's doing personally and professionally) but we do want to plug that as well cuz I think that we would love to see some of our listeners in person for those who would be able to join. So I think the registration just went out so it should be on our website and you'll see it in the newsletter if you sign up.

### **Jennifer**

Yeah, it's a super secret location so you only get to see the location (which will be central Portland) but other than that you have to register to know the exact location.

### **Ted**

Well, those are all of the recordings that we had, that was everyone that wanted to share their insights and have a conversation with me back at that Development Drinks. Andrea, Jennifer any closing thoughts on what you heard, on Development Drinks in general?

### **Andrea**

I just want to say thank you so much for that idea. Showing up with your equipment really added a special flavor and it was fun to be in that answering questions seat for a podcast! So I appreciate the opportunity.



## **Jennifer**

We forgot to do like a “gottcha” question or something really hard for you.

## **Andrea**

Yeah, no. No “gottcha”. All right well with that I'll sign off. Thank you so much Ted and Jennifer and thank you to our audience.

GlobalPDX is dedicated to keeping you connected and engaged. For resources from this podcast and more, [check out our website](#). If you aren't already a GlobalPDX member, please consider joining our community, and feel free to email [Communications@globalpdx.org](mailto:Communications@globalpdx.org) with any questions.

Stay tuned and maybe we will see you in March for Development Drinks!