



The Climate Connection

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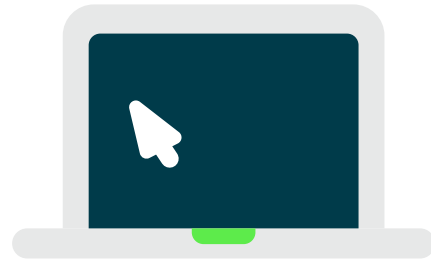
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Green careers guide

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Ireland



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My Windy Path Through Sustainability

I have brought sustainability in to my studies, working day, volunteering and everyday play over the last 15 years and there is no end in sight.

I studied manufacturing engineering and my first role was in the bio pharma industry, while it was interesting and useful I felt there was something else for me. This led to working in a waste management company. Working in this area showed me it wasn't perfect but it was where I needed to be and my career and volunteering work have weaved me in and out of the area of litter since.

I wanted to learn and experience as much as I could about sustainability at home and abroad and see where I could offer help and ideally make a living.

After two months backpacking in Australia awed by its vastness I was getting ready to study a Masters in Sustainable Development and I felt green energy was the answer and my path but while volunteering in a National Park in Northern Ghana I began to feel while big technological changes like energy are vitally important the real change was about people, especially seeing how man-made climate change affects those most vulnerable. Studying Sustainable Development really cemented in me the need for all walks of life to see the bottom line as not only profit but equally people and planet, especially those with the power to do so which includes all of us in our everyday actions.

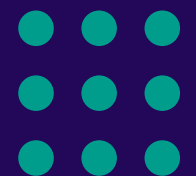
After graduating I veered in to environmental education and arrived for a while in wind energy before the recession hit. Jobs in wind farm development were few and far between and my path led me to community development, social entrepreneurship and sustainable

development with a stint in a company reimagining foodwaste before landing me where I am now working in Clean Coasts, the Coastal Programmes department of An Taisce. I work on an anti litter campaign educating people on the connection between their actions at home and the ocean. While these changes can seem small, combined they have great outcomes.

Volunteering has been a big part of my life, especially in the last 15 years. After Ghana I was lucky enough to be awarded a scholarship with EIL to work on environmental projects in Guatemala which earned me a Global Citizen Award. Seeing other parts of the world really cements where and how sustainability can be impactful and see who will really be the victims of climate change. I spent many years continuing my volunteering with EIL on various committees and the Board of Directors to promote the benefit of cross cultural travel, unfortunately something we cannot do at this time.

While my family is growing my travel is restricted, not to mention because of a global pandemic, but I sit on the Board of Directors of Engineers Without Borders. This allows me to feel like I am making an impact and maybe someday visit the projects in the Global South we have contributed to.

My path has also led me to some great projects and many adventures, as a Climate Advocate with the British Council a small team of us created a children's book about climate change and had the privilege of spending a week in Eden. I was a runner up in FameLab talking about the benefits of biochar, a topic I continued in a TedX talk which led me to competing in a social enterprise competition in Uganda with Ben and Jerry's and then a business pitching competition in Amsterdam with Climate Launchpad.





I am not looking to list my achievements, it is more to show where my decision to work in sustainable development has brought me, it has been a windy path but with a lot of fun and friends along the way. With 3 small kids my travel adventures aren't as many (we do however have many adventures at home) but I try and bring sustainable development in to our lives with our choices. After all change is our responsibility.

This current situation highlights how things can get out of control on a global level yet when we come together as a human race we make a change. Weather and climate change like a virus doesn't respect borders. While this virus has been devastating we can learn from it.

You might create the next big change or even just contribute to making small change. Either way it puts a smile on the face of the planet and we all need a smile right now.



Litter

Litter is completely man-made yet affects our water systems and biodiversity. A simple act is to dispose of waste correctly and do a #2minutebeachclean or a litter pick.



Rainwater Harvesting

This was a project we did in the Guatemalan Highlands as part of placement with EIL. We build a simple rainwater harvesting unit in an eco tourism park called Corozon del Bosque. A simple project to hopefully make a slight impact.

