



Alumni Profile

Skylar Franke

BA Hons '13 Social Justice & Peace Studies and French Studies

Current Career

Organization: London Environmental Network

Title: Network Coordinator

Career Overview

I work at the London Environmental Network, which is an environmental non-profit that works to build strong, resilient organizations so they can be more effective at creating positive environmental change over the long term. My day to day tasks include running events, meeting with members, creating collaborative opportunities and sharing the environmental sector's accomplishments with Londoners. I'm also responsible for creating access to shared resources, delivering training sessions, maintaining online portals (website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) as well as the daily operations and governance of the organization. I make the budget, hire staff, write grants and take out the recycling. I would say I do a little bit of everything. We are currently seeking to incorporate and become a registered charity, so recently I have been doing a lot of governance and by-law work. Becoming a legal entity requires a lot of paperwork, legal consulting and writing. We are also seeking to add a social enterprise to our organizational structure – so I've been having a lot of meetings and writing a lot of briefs on that topic.

How has SJPS helped prepare you for your current work?

Having a liberal arts degree taught me all the soft skills I needed to become a leader in the environmental sector in London. Having only taken one environmental science course, my academic education does not lie in the ecological or scientific side of the environment, but I did learn how to mobilize people and execute plans on a bare-bones budget. These skills are incredibly important to have in the non-profit and environmental sector as the environmental sector does not have a lot of financial resources.

I was most inspired by the experiential learning trips in the SJPS program. Going to El Salvador and the Dominican Republic to see how people with very few resources are able to make massive change in the local and national levels is something that still motivates me today. Local action means local change – which is where individuals have the most influence.

In El Salvador I learned how local communities are fighting to protect their environment against huge multi-national mining companies. I learned that protecting the environment is a local, national and international never-ending battle. In fourth year, I really focused all my papers on local food and food security. This work brought me to volunteer with Food Not Lawns, which is a local organization trying to get every piece of farmable land into use for food production, instead of grass or ornamental plants. I also started volunteering for ReForest London because I know that planting trees is one of the best things we can do to care for our planet. All of these choices led me to the career I have today.

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After volunteering for ReForest London for 2 years, I went on to work at the organization for 2.5 years and then recently switched into my role at the London Environmental Network. It's incredible to see the diversity of tactics to protect and preserve the environment, and I simply love what I do. SJPS encouraged me to seek a career that aligned with my values and passion – even if I didn't have a background in science.

Further Degrees / Certifications

Professional Certificate in Leadership
Western Continuing Studies