

Career Sheet: Co-founder Environmental Cooperative



NATASCHA WALHBERG, JESÚS IGLESIAS (CO-FOUNDER, SOCIAL CLIMATE)

Natascha Wahlberg:

I hold a Bachelor's in Environmental Sciences and a Master's in Water Resources and Environment. In addition, I have undergone training in quality and environmental management, gender, international R&D&i projects management, Nature-based Solutions, sustainable development, and human resources management.

Currently, I am co-founder, facilitator, and consultant at Social Climate - Social innovation for climate action, where I work developing initiatives related to climate resilience, gender, sustainable tourism, and local economies.

Jesús Iglesias:

I am a social entrepreneur, international consultant, trainer, and facilitator at Social Climate. Since 2008, I have co-founded various organizations committed to developing and scaling up disruptive, cooperative, and inclusive solutions to the climate and inequality crises, like Incubaeco, ECOVE, Ecopreneurs for the Climate, Social Climate, or multilateral initiatives such as The Climate Journey.

Education-wise, I hold a Bachelor's in Science from the Higher Technical School of Telecommunication Engineers of Valladolid (Valladolid, Spain), and Brittany's National School of Telecommunications (Brest, France); a Masters in Space & Planetary Science from the Paris Observatory (Paris, France) and the University of California Berkeley (Berkeley, USA); and an International Master in Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility from the EOI Business School (Madrid).

In addition, I have recently been appointed a European Climate Pact Ambassador, and I am an active member of various leadership networks such as Climate Reality, Advanced Leadership Foundation, 350.org, and the Mediterranean Nature-based Solutions Cluster.



OVERVIEW OF THE JOB

I work in eco, social, and business innovation developing projects focused on social innovation, environment and sustainability, Nature-based Solutions, local economy, sustainable agriculture, sustainable tourism, climate action and gender. Currently, I am developing an NBS Incubator to foster projects focused on implementing NBS. Besides, I develop training on NBS and social entrepreneurship, climate resilience and NBS, and climate resilience and gender. Likewise, I organise, coordinate, and moderate events and workshops in the different specialised areas.

I have also been analysing the impact of digitalization in rural development and the existing gender gap in digitalization and STEAM.

My relation to STEM starts with my professional education in sciences and engineering, and moreover, my constant contact with digital tools and new technologies.

At Social Climate we are committed to driving climate action based on science and social justice; through social innovation, economic localization, nature-based solutions, sustainable tourism, and international cooperation. We catalyse processes of social innovation for climate action and justice via consulting, training, capacity building, facilitation, project development, management, and evaluation services. More specifically, we engage local communities and ecosystems of stakeholders in designing and implementing climate action plans, based on science and social justice, for cities, communities, and regions.

Besides, we do a lot of outreach and awareness-raising, particularly via The Climate Journey: guided, walking tours across cities, towns, and territories, around the climate emergency to see the impacts, understand the causes and connections, and experience the solutions in terms of social mobilization, direct democracy, local wellbeing economies, nature-based solutions, critical thinking, regenerative cultures, and the arts. It is addressed to everybody but particularly residents, tourists, young people via educational centres and professionals.

I have taken part in the last five UN Climate Change conferences, from COP21 in Paris in 2015 to COP25 in Madrid in 2019; I am a regular contributor to major Spanish journals like *eldiario.es* and *El País*; and have translated and written the Spanish preface of “Local is Our Future”, Helena Norberg-Hodge’s latest book on local wellbeing economics.



WHAT INSPIRED YOU

I have always been curious about nature, how ecosystems work, how they are connected. This curiosity led me to study Environmental Sciences and focus my professional career on developing projects and actions with a real impact on the environment.

After more than ten years working for different companies in different fields and acquiring experience, the pandemic gave me the chance to associate myself with my business partner and start to work on our own projects and initiatives focused on climate change mitigation, climate resilience, sustainable development, climate justice, and sustainable local community’s development.

Many people such as Barack Obama, Nelson Mandela, Naomi Klein, Bill Mckibben, Rebecca Solnit, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, etc.

Social movements such as The Climate Justice Movement, Standing Rock, Feminism, Localization, etc.



TYPICAL WORKING DAY

My working day starts by reviewing my emails and checking my Google calendar. Since I work from home, I am used to digital tools to develop my job. For example, tools like Google Drive or Miro.

Usually, I have several online meetings through Skype, Zoom or Meet. Very often I develop online training and events that I work on through Zoom.

The rest of the day consists of preparing projects proposal, implementing the ongoing projects, and contacting collaborators and potential partners by email, LinkedIn, or WhatsApp.

Besides, some of the time is dedicated to publishing relevant information about our actions on LinkedIn where I am quite active.

Our priorities read as follows: team building and internal communication, partnership building and nurturing, financial management and fundraising, project management and execution, communication and outreach. Depending on the day, we perform tasks related to any or all of these areas.



STUDY & CAREER PATH

I first studied Environmental Sciences, and later a post bachelor's in Water Resources and Environment at the University of Malaga. It gave me the chance to develop my final project in Tuscaloosa (Alabama), which opened my vision of working on water management and environmental protection. I have a Master's in Quality and Environmental Management and Human Resources Management. I am an expert in international R&D&i project management, and I have studied different courses related to gender, NBS, and sustainable development.

If I could start all over, I would not change the career path because it has made me become who I am. Working in the US and different areas like waste management, fundraising or social innovation, has expanded my vision and knowledge. It also helped me to overcome the fear of not being able of doing different works.

Regarding my colleagues, many of them come from engineering careers. Some of them have followed similar study paths.

My career path has been different, so to say the least, always in pursuit of purpose and impact. I would not change anything as we all follow our own discovery and learning journey in life. If I am where I am today, it is because of everything I have done to get here.

In short, my early career in Space & Earth System Sciences (SETI Institute, Univ. of California Berkeley, Paris Observatory and French Space Agency) made me understand the magnitude of today's planetary crisis. My experience in social innovation and entrepreneurship of the last 12 years (Incubaeco, ECOVE, Ecopreneurs for the Climate, Social Climate) has given me direction: catalyzing social innovation for climate action and social justice, through multi-stakeholder cooperation, to drive systemic social transformations on our way to post-carbon, resilient, social, and local wellbeing economies.



KEY SKILLS

The professional and personal key skills needed to do my job are:

Consulting: used on proposal and project improvement.

Critical thinking: used to continuously improve what we do. It is necessary to be able to analyse how things are working and be prepared to face upcoming challenges.

Data analysis: used to define extract information from studies on climate change to develop projects out of it.

Problem-solving: used day by day to face any setbacks that may occur.

Research: used to define state-of-art and develop studies on climate change.

Business development: used to define and implement our business model and to define working lines.

Business management: used to manage the day by day of our business.

Active listening: used to detect needs and suggest adapted solutions in the communities we work on. Speaking with the local community to know what their needs and problems is needed.

Collaboration: is the core of our business model. Working with people and partners is needed to develop successful projects.

Presentation: used in our business communication and visibility.

Social skills: used to interact with all the different actors of the communities we work with. They are necessary to empathise with them and to know what they need.

Translation: used to develop our materials both in Spanish and English.

Writing: used to develop project proposals.

Delegating tasks: used to properly distribute the work according to the team expertise.

Leadership: used to boost the development of our projects and actions.

People management: used to properly select and manage the team working on a project.

The skills needed to do my job are strong communication and leadership skills, entrepreneurial nature, charisma, love of diversity, positive attitude, and deep understanding of the complexity and interdependence of all components of the Earth ecosystem.



CAREER PROSPECT

I can work in the following types of jobs and industry sectors:

Sectors:

- Climate change (adaptation and mitigation, resilience)
- Sustainable development
- Climate justice
- Waste management
- Environmental management
- Water management
- Agriculture and agri-food industry
- Forest management
- Biodiversity and conservation

Jobs:

- Consultant
- Project manager
- Environmental technician

Sectors:

- Social innovation
- Economic localization
- Nature-based solutions
- Sustainable tourism
- International cooperation



CHALLENGES

The main challenges in my job are to make visible the urgent need to act on climate change, to increase awareness of our society, and to boost and implement solutions beyond technology.

The challenges I face are fundraising, financial management and growth, given the fact that small organisations like ours constantly find themselves in a very tight balance between being overloaded with work and not having enough resources to hire and grow. We need to reach a certain scale to achieve viability, and also to be able to choose the projects we want. In this last sense, we want to work and focus on the local level, where impact, as well as personal satisfaction, are far greater, yet the business model is not always simple. However, the trans-local and international dimensions remain fundamental as well to share best practices and models with peers and the rest of the world.



YOUR ADVICE TO STUDENTS

My advice to students is to study something that you are passionate about that motivates you and leads you to work (as freelance or for someone else's) in things that allow you to continue growing as a professional. And above all, not be afraid of failure.

As Barack Obama says, *“focus on what you want to achieve, the change you want to enact in the world, rather than who you want to be”*. And then, with that purpose clear, you will find the way by following your instincts, which do get better over time. Surround yourself with like-minded, good-hearted, visionary, and entrepreneurial people. Do not lose your ideals but become more selective as you go and channel your energy into the most impactful projects.



YOUR ADVICE TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS

I think it is decisive to boost curiosity and detect students and children needs. Parents and teachers need to motivate them by highlighting their strengths so they can reach their maximum potential. Moreover, I think it is fundamental to teach and educate by supporting their decisions, letting them fail and learn from those failures.

Teach your heart. Be passionate yet factual, share your own story, and encourage curiosity, empathy, teamwork, and entrepreneurship in all its facets.



LEARN MORE

Natascha's LinkedIn profile:

[linkedin.com/in/natascha-wahlberg-macias-43b57528](https://www.linkedin.com/in/natascha-wahlberg-macias-43b57528)

Social Climate website:

www.socialclimate.es

The Climate Journey website:

www.rutaclima.city

Jesús' LinkedIn profile:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jesusiglesiassaugar>

His articles (in Spanish) in El Diario, a Spanish journal:

https://www.eldiario.es/autores/jesus_iglesias_saugar/

His personal blog:

<http://oneworldours.org/>

