

Meet a Sustainability Specialist: Claudia Garcia

Meet Claudia Garcia. She is a **sustainability specialist**. Claudia figures out how energy can be created with as little impact as possible on people and the environment.

Claudia works with a team to bring renewable energy projects to life. Claudia's role is to figure out the **carbon footprint** for these energy projects. We call the impact of a person, building, or activity on the environment its carbon footprint. Claudia aims for her projects to create the smallest carbon footprint possible.



What kind of projects does Claudia do?



Wind turbines in a field. Can you identify the turbine blades?

Energy that is harnessed from the wind or sun is called renewable energy. Claudia measures the impact of "wind farms" and "solar farms." Wind farms get energy from the wind blowing. Solar farms get energy from the sun. Claudia's job is to figure out how long wind turbines and solar panels will last before they wear out. She creates plans to recycle the blades and panels once they wear out.

What expertise does Claudia need for her job?

Claudia's job requires a lot of STEM knowledge. She must understand the science of renewable energy. She uses math skills to calculate how much energy is used — and saved — from her renewable energy projects.

Claudia also has business expertise. She studied business in school and understands how a company can help society be more sustainable. She uses her business knowledge to build projects in many different countries.

Read the interview below to learn more about Claudia!

More about **carbon footprints**: Human activity causes gases like carbon and methane to be released into the air. Too many of these gases in the air causes the planet to be too warm. Decreasing the amount of gases released by a building, for example, decreases that building's carbon footprint.

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What was your childhood like? Did you like science?

I grew up between the Southeast of the U.S. and Mexico. Both places had a lot of similarities — tons of farmland! I was always a curious child and interested in learning more about the basics of science, animals, food, etc. I enjoyed reading history and fantasy fiction. I remember my dad loving older cars and trucks and learning the difference between energy fuels early in my childhood.

When in Mexico, the homes in my family's town would often lose electricity and water. This was odd to me considering I had never seen this happen in the U.S. It was this first-hand experience that made me realize that people have different access to basic resources like light, water, and food.

Describe a typical day at your job.

I get to talk about different things in my job and learn on a daily basis. Mostly, I work on my computer putting together information that can provide a bigger picture of how my organization is giving back to the planet and to people. I do enjoy traveling and while I don't do it every day, I do appreciate when I do have opportunities to travel and I make the most of it!

Describe a time in your career when something did not go as planned.

I signed up once to get a scholarship, I went through the interview process and prepared a lot, however, I didn't get it. I look back and I'm thankful for the skills I improved on in the process. I used these skills later on in other applications where I was rewarded! If you think something is a bit out of your reach, go for it anyway, you'll gain in the process!

Is there anything else you'd like students to know?

I speak three languages: Spanish, English, and Italian. Speaking multiple languages allows you to connect with more people and understand a different group of people!

What advice do you have for students today?

Follow your interests, explore the subjects you like. Geek out confidently on whatever it is that you like!



Claudia works to support the environment during her personal time too! Here she is helping clean up a river.