



"Youth at the Forefront: Leveraging Science and Social Inclusion for Sustainable Development"

SIDE EVENT AT THE 2025 ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM

"Building a Gender-Just, Green & Future-Ready Tomorrow"

Organized by Imperial College London, University College London and the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth

[16th April 2025, 08:00-09:00 AM NY Time/EST]

1. Background

Convened by Imperial College London, University College London and the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth, this side event explored the integration of gender equality, youth empowerment and digital innovation within the frameworks of global sustainable development progress and just, green and future-oriented development policy and practice.

2. Objectives of the side event, including relation with the SDGs identified in the guidelines



Drawing on insights from researchers, practitioners and young leaders from academia, international organisations and NGOs, the event highlighted gender-responsive policy approaches and the latest research findings contributing to advancing inclusive and equitable sustainable development.

The event aligned with the thematic focus of the 2025 ECOSOC Youth Forum and will address several UN SDGs planned for discussion at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2025:

- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

The event was conducted in English with auto translation provided via MS Teams.

3. Programme and names of speakers/panelists


Building a Gender-Just, Green & Future-Ready Tomorrow
UN ECOSOC Youth Forum 2025 Side Event


Date: 16th April 2025

Time: 08:00 AM – 09:00 AM (New York Time/ET)/13:00 PM – 14:00 PM (UK Time/BST)

Location: MS Teams (online)


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SPEAKERS


Dr Yara Evans, Research Associate, Imperial College London




Dr Rohit K Dasgupta, Associate Professor of Gender & Sexuality, London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE)



Alana Pradhan, Knowledge Management Specialist, UN Women Liberia




Marta Koch, PhD Candidate, Imperial College London & Research Consultant, UNOPS




PANELISTS


Natalia Tellez Lara, PhD Candidate, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)




Kamya Choudhary, India Policy Fellow, LSE Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment



Maia Madani Davies, Vice President, Young European Leadership, UN Women UK Delegate & Co-Founder, Quadrumvirate Advisory



Luisa Franco Machado, Founder & Executive Director, EquiLabs & UN Young Leader for the SDGs




CHAIR

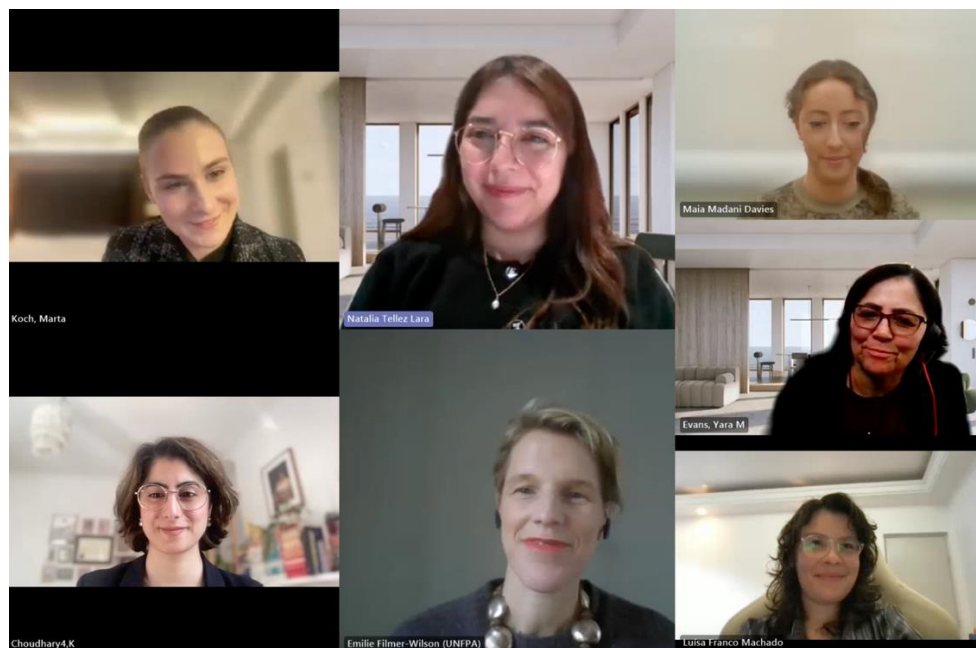
PANEL MODERATOR

Emilie Filmer-Wilson, Human Rights Adviser, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

#ECOSOCYouthForum #ECOSOCYouth #ECOSOCYouthForum2025

**ORGANISED BY IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
& UNITED NATIONS MAJOR GROUP FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH**





#ECOSOCYouth #ECOSOCYouthForum #GlobalGoals #ECOSOCYouthFourm2025

Date: 16th April 2025

Time: 08:00 AM – 09:00 AM (New York Time / EST) / 13:00 PM – 14:00 PM (UK Time / BST)

Location: Online (MS Teams)

Event Programme

Time (New York Time / EST)	13:00 PM – 14:00 PM (UK Time / BST)	Session
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08:00 – 08:05 AM	13:00 – 13:05 PM	WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS
		Chair: <i>Ms. Marta Koch, PhD Candidate, Imperial College London and Research Consultant, UNOPS</i>
		SPEAKERS
08:05 – 08:15 AM	13:05 – 13:15 PM	<i>Dr. Yara Evans, Research Associate, Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College London</i>
08:15 – 08:25 AM	13:15 – 13:25 PM	<i>Ms. Alana Pradhan, Knowledge Management Specialist, UN Women Liberia</i>
08:25 – 08:35 AM	13:25 – 13:35 PM	<i>Dr. Rohit K Dasgupta, Associate Professor of Gender and Sexuality, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)</i>
		PANEL
08:35 – 08:55 AM	13:35 – 13:55 PM	Moderator: <i>Ms. Emilie Filmer-Wilson, Human Rights Adviser, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)</i>
		<p>Question 1: How do gender inequalities impact access to green jobs and sustainable livelihoods, and how can young people help drive more inclusive and equitable opportunities within the global economy?</p> <p>Question 2: What role does technology play in advancing a gender-just green transition, and how can youth-led innovation help bridge digital divides and promote inclusive climate solutions?</p> <p><u>Panelists</u></p> <p><i>Ms. Natalia Tellez-Lara, PhD Candidate, Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).</i></p>

		<p><i>Dr. Kamya Choudhary, India Policy Fellow, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).</i></p> <p><i>Ms. Maïa Madani Davies, Vice President, Young European Leadership, UN Women UK Delegate and Co-Founder, Quadrumvirate Advisory.</i></p> <p><i>Ms. Luísa Franco Machado, Founder and Executive Director, EquiLabs, UN Young Leader for the SDGs and Rising Star in Apolitical's Government AI 100.</i></p>
08:55 – 09:00 AM	13:55 – 14:00 PM	CLOSING REMARKS & THANK YOU
		<p>Chair: <i>Ms. Marta Koch, PhD Candidate, Imperial College London and Research Consultant, UNOPS</i></p>

Chair



Ms. Marta Koch, UN ECOSOC Youth Forum 2025 UK Delegate, PhD Candidate, Imperial College London and Research Consultant, UNOPS

Ms. Marta Koch has attended COP UN Climate Change Conference and UNFCCC Technology Executive Committee meetings as delegate and has worked as a researcher and consultant focusing on sustainable development, climate action, digital innovation and international development for London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), King's College London, Oxford University, UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNOPS and UNESCO.

Speaker Biographies



Dr. Yara Evans, Research Associate, Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College London

Dr. Yara Evans is a Human Geographer who has been researching the bioeconomy for several years. This has entailed conducting social sustainability assessment of bioenergy and bioproduct projects in the European Union, including issues around gender equity, and policy assessment.



Dr. Rohit K Dasgupta, Associate Professor of Gender and Sexuality, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Dr. Rohit K Dasgupta's recent publications include the books *Desi Queers* (Hurst/OUP, 2025) and *India's Imperial Formations* (FDUP, 2025). He is also an elected councillor in the London Borough of Newham where he serves as Deputy Cabinet Member for social justice and culture.



Ms. Alana Pradhan, Knowledge Management Specialist, UN Women Liberia

Ms. Alana Pradhan has worked with UN RCO Nepal and numerous NGOs, advocating for gender equality and sustainable development. As a Knowledge Management Specialist at UN Women Liberia, she strengthens knowledge-sharing systems, supports learning initiatives, and drives gender-responsive policies. With a strong focus on youth, Alana, also a member of the UN Youth Council, is committed to ensuring young people lead efforts for intergenerational sharing, and a gender-just and sustainable future.

Panel Moderator



Ms. Emilie Filmer-Wilson, Human Rights Adviser, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Ms. Emilie Filmer-Wilson is an international human rights, gender equality and development expert with 15+ years of experience in advising on human rights, gender equality and inequality policies for development programming.

Panelists

Ms. Natalia Tellez-Lara, PhD Candidate, Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Dr. Kamya Choudhary, India Policy Fellow, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Ms. Maïa Madani Davies, Vice President, Young European Leadership, UN Women UK Delegate and Co-Founder, Quadrumvirate Advisory

Ms. Luísa Franco Machado, Founder & Executive Director, EquiLabs, UN Young Leader for the SDGs and Rising Star in Apolitical's Government AI 100

4. Guiding questions for discussion/s

Question 1: How do gender inequalities impact access to green jobs and sustainable livelihoods, and how can young people help drive more inclusive and equitable opportunities within the global economy?

Question 2: What role does technology play in advancing a gender-just green transition, and how can youth-led innovation help bridge digital divides and promote inclusive climate solutions?

5. Venue

Location: Online (MS Teams)

6. Event Summary

Chair Ms. Koch opened the event by welcoming attendees. She introduced the session as part of broader efforts to build a gender-just, green and future-ready tomorrow, aligning with key UN SDGs which are the focus of the agenda of the UN Pact for the Future and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. She presented an overview of the intersecting challenges and opportunities in gender equality, digital technologies and sustainable development, citing recent data showing that: 1 in 5 young people globally are not in education, employment or training (ILO); over 2.6 billion people remain digitally excluded, many of them women and girls (ITU); targeted digital innovation investments could reduce SDG implementation costs by up to 40% globally (UNDP); nearly 60% of women with internet access across 18 countries have experienced technology-facilitated violence (UNFPA). Ms. Koch cautioned that her research has found while digital tools can be transformative, they must be intentionally designed to be inclusive, equitable and rights-based. She called for digital innovation that is not just scalable, but also safe and just, particularly in the context of climate vulnerability and economic marginalisation. Ms. Koch also emphasised that progress across the 17 SDGs is fundamentally interconnected. Her work has examined the intersection of technological innovation, climate action and sustainable development policy and equity, showing that delays or gaps in one area are interlinked with the others. She underscored the need for youth leadership, cross-sectoral collaboration and digital governance frameworks that embed equity and human rights at their core.

Dr. Yara Evans, the first speaker, presented insights from the gEneSys Project funded by the EU Horizon Programme and conducted in collaboration with partners across Europe and Africa. The project uncovers gender bias in energy policy and proposes intersectional, inclusive pathways to sustainable energy. She explained that SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy lacks gender indicators and described the project's use of gender innovation frameworks, backcasting methodologies, and stakeholder workshops. Outputs include a systematic literature review, an ontology of energy systems, and citizen surveys. Dr. Evans emphasised the need to diversify the energy workforce and reverse gender inequality in research and innovation.

Next speaker Ms. Alana Pradhan focused on the intersection of gender, youth, and digital innovation in climate resilience, drawing on her work with UN Women Liberia, the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Nepal, and Paurakhi Nepal, an NGO supporting women migrants. She described her contributions to the UN Act Now campaign, which engages youth in climate action through digital platforms, and shared the impact of the Buy From Woman platform, a UN Women initiative that connects over 30,000 rural Liberian women to markets, finance, and agricultural data. Ms. Pradhan highlighted barriers faced by young women—such as access to land, credit, and skills—and stressed that digital and financial literacy, along with intergenerational knowledge sharing, are vital for inclusive green transitions.

Final speaker Dr. Rohit K. Dasgupta shared reflections from his grant-funded research on India's textile and garment sector. He spotlighted the story of Sudha, a woman artisan whose work with natural dyes and reused cotton challenges depoliticised, market-driven aesthetics. Dr. Dasgupta discussed a collaborative project between his research team and the University of Manchester, which supports women craftmakers in Gujarat through product innovation and cultural knowledge exchange. He called for authenticating artisanal labour, supporting digital access for creators, and valuing cultural and political expressions of sustainability as forms of resistance and resilience.

Moderator Ms. Filmer-Wilson then opened the panel session by introducing the panellists and framing the dialogue using two central guiding questions: 1. How do gender inequalities impact access to green jobs and sustainable livelihoods, and how can young people drive more equitable opportunities?; and 2. What role does technology play in advancing a gender-just green transition, and how can youth-led innovation bridge digital divides?

Panelist Ms. Natalia Tellez Lara discussed green transitions in agriculture, focusing on her research in Chile. She noted that the shift to sustainable practices like water-efficient technologies in drought-affected regions risks excluding young rural women due to unequal access to education, training, and land. Ms. Tellez Lara emphasised the role of youth in leading local adaptation projects and bridging the gap between policy and community needs, and called for frameworks that balance environmental and social justice goals.

Panelist Ms. Maïa Madani Davies spoke about the systemic barriers that young people—especially women and marginalised groups—face in gaining access to

decision-making spaces. She highlighted the importance of moving beyond tokenistic youth participation and called for sustained investment in intergenerational policy co-creation. Ms. Davies emphasised the vital role of youth-led advocacy and leadership in shaping more equitable and sustainable international policies, and urged for meaningful inclusion of youth perspectives in global governance processes.

Panelist Ms. Luísa Franco Machado spoke about the role of digital tools in climate resilience and inclusion. Representing EquiLabs, she stressed the importance of co-creating technologies with affected communities and warned against reinforcing inequalities through poorly designed systems. She argued that youth should not only use technology, but shape it—advocating for ethical design, inclusive governance, and community-led innovation that prioritises justice and sustainability.

Panelist Dr. Kamya Choudhary addressed structural inequalities that limit participation in climate governance. Drawing from her work at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, she discussed the importance of integrating intersectional perspectives into environmental adaptation planning. She highlighted decentralised climate solutions that empower communities and cited the SEWA solar panel initiative—a programme by the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in India that trains rural women in solar technology and improves access to clean energy. Dr. Choudhary stressed the need for gender-sensitive climate policy and equitable distribution of climate finance.

Moderator Ms. Emilie Filmer-Wilson opened and facilitated the panel session by introducing the speakers and posing key guiding questions about the role of gender inequality and technology in shaping equitable green transitions. She encouraged critical reflection on the intersection of climate justice, youth leadership, and gender equity, and helped frame a dynamic and inclusive discussion. She concluded the session by reaffirming the importance of intersectional and rights-based approaches in policymaking, and the urgency of embedding gender and youth considerations into sustainable development agendas.

Chair Ms. Koch concluded the event by thanking all speakers, panelists, the moderator and participants.

7. Full event recording can be viewed here

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ILPfM9JNGno5fCvqgm-s-rTfF-2SjX_z/view?usp=sharing