

Keynote Address

EMB Ambassadors - Juliette Aminian Biquet, Alexandra Hahn, Riwan Leroux & Alfredo Garcia de Vinuesa

Introduction

Before we say anything, early careers in the room: please let us hear your voice.

You are either very few and very loud or you are many. Either way it is exceptional and it is important.

Us four, we are ocean scientists in the beginning of our careers, just as there is or there should be many around you. We are Young Ambassadors from the European Marine Board, working hard to link early career scientists with policy making. Today is special. Because today we speak to you from the perspectives of 40 early career ocean scientists that gathered during the first Forum of our network. Together we built on what several generations of early careers have worked on and advocated for. Early careers from the European Marine Board showed during this Forum how skillful they are and how motivated they are to engage and link their research with policy making. They also expressed how difficult engaging with policy still is for us early careers. The EMB Young Ambassadors will now share with you how we early career scientists want to work together, across scientific and policy worlds, across generations. By improving our training, our connections to the policy landscape, and ensuring our representativity in decision making, we can act today and we can act together for our future and the future of our oceans.

Training

Good morning! I'm Riwan. I am a young researcher studying the impacts of human activities in the deep sea, in a European Marine Protected Area. I work every day in this field so I wanted to engage with policy makers, to make my work useful and inform you. To give you some recommendations - about how we could improve the management of this specific protected area. I wanted to make my research more impactful for the society. However, I didn't know the legal framework. I didn't know what policy makers to reach. I didn't know what organizations, facilitators or administrations could have been helpful. And - I didn't know either how to engage or just clearly communicate my science. You know that we don't speak the same language, don't you? We, the early careers, are not equipped to deal with these challenges even if we are eager to take part in the society issues. We have to learn by doing. This is stressful and we shouldn't have to choose between engaging with the society and our mental health. For now, we almost exclusively count on our supervisors. I have amazing supervisors! But what about early careers whose supervisors don't know anything about how to reach you? So, we need to be trained! We should learn how to link science and policy at the university. We want to have more opportunities like this Forum we just organized. We must be able to learn how is structured the policy sphere, what are the channels to be aware of, ongoing projects, who is in charge of what? We need training.

Connectivity

As my colleague Riwan has mentioned, training is a fundamental pillar for the development of young careers. However, even if we were trained, we would not succeed without having connections

to the world of policies.

My name is Alfredo. During my postdoctoral research, I am specializing in the importance of connectivity between different stakeholders to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources. During the Forum with early careers, we emphasized the necessity to connect with policy makers to ensure our work has the best possible application.

However, for us, it is practically impossible to establish connections. Our positions are changing continuously. The established hierarchy in scientific and political systems often doesn't allow for direct communication. And, the dreaded European bureaucracy complicates communication between us. Young scientists need tools to open communication channels with policy makers.

Our last Forum with early careers was an appropriate way to establish connections between young scientists. However, transdisciplinary forums are needed. Where young scientists can engage with other stakeholders, such as young policy makers, to share knowledge and achieve greater understanding and build long lasting partnerships

Social science has demonstrated that increased connectivity among people results in greater social cohesion. This ensures greater social resilience and better adaptation to the forthcoming changes. Then, we need to be connected.

Representativity

But even if we early careers were trained in how to engage and communicate with policy makers and were well connected within and across our own networks, this all would not mean anything until we are treated as equals, until our opinions are respected and taken seriously. We need to be represented not only by being invited to BE in a space but also to SPEAK UP and BE HEARD. Inviting early careers to the table means to invite diversity into our conversations. Not only in age but also in terms of gender, ethnicity, sexuality and so many more.

Even though we know about the efforts made for this conference, just have a look at the keynotes you have seen this morning. How many of them were given by young people? How many of them were given by women? It is a tragic but well-known fact that as you move up the hierarchical ladder, spaces get less and less diverse, minorities disappear even more and gender balances shift. So, if we early careers are included in the discussion you win our diversity, our ideas, our potential and ultimately our economic value.

It is your responsibility to ensure that early careers are represented, it is your responsibility to empower us. Help us bring change from the bottom-up. For the scientists in the room: We are motivated to be part of your scientific advisory boards, we are motivated to bring new ideas into your working groups and actively participate in creating relevant ocean science. So, let us in. For the politicians and policy makers: You could incentivize the inclusion of early careers in project proposals, you could even make it mandatory to have early careers represented in EU projects. For better ocean science and better ocean policies.

Because we early career scientists want to be, we HAVE to be part of the one voice we need - to achieve the one ocean we want. Thank you for your future actions!

