

Activity Report - Early Career Perspectives (ECP) panel (2022-2025)

The Early Career Perspective (ECP) panel (2022-2025) serves as the successor to the Early Career Taskforce within the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP). Its primary objective is to enhance the reach of IUSSP and empower aspiring scholars by focusing on three key elements crucial to early career development: skills, networks, and information.

The ECP panel at IUSSP establishes a worldwide forum catering to emerging scholars in Population Studies, encompassing individuals at various stages of their academic journey, such as master's and Ph.D. students, postdoctoral fellows, early career academics, as well as alternative academics. This platform facilitates connections, engagement, and mutual learning among these individuals. Recognizing the obstacles faced by early career researchers, the ECP panel endeavours to offer a platform that encourages global participation, fosters cross-cultural dialogues, and ensures more equitable access to expertise and methodological integration.

ECP Panel Team

Chair: Dr Ankit Sikarwar, Sciences Po (Paris)

Members:

Dr José Manuel Aburto — London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)
Dr Mayanka Ambade — Harvard University
Dr Donatus Yaw Atiglo — Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana
Marie-Pier Bergeron Boucher — University of Southern Denmark
Ms Michelle Eilers — University of Texas at Austin
Dr Qing Guan — Australian National University
Mrs Olutoyin Ikuteyijo — Universität Basel
Prof Vanessa Di Lego — Universidade Federal De Minas Gerais
Dr Moana Rarere — University of Waikato
Dr Samuel Araujo Gomes Da Silva — Demography Department, Cedeplar, UFMG
Dr Sergi Trias-Llimós — Center for Demographic Studies

Secretariat: Paul Monet (IUSSP)

Council Liaisons:

Dr Ann Moore — Guttmacher Institute
Mr Nico Van Nimwegen — IUSSP Council / Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI)

Activities:

Throughout the 2022–2025 period, the Early Career Perspectives (ECP) Panel convened regularly to plan and advance activities that strengthen the role of students and early-career scholars within IUSSP. Beyond organizing workshops and training sessions, panel members actively contributed to key initiatives aimed at expanding opportunities for early-career researchers. They played a central role in shaping IUSSP's dialogue on early-career engagement, advocating for greater visibility, increased student and early-career memberships, and the extension of the Early Career Research Awards for five early career scholars from five world regions. Key events of the ECP panel are listed here:

1. Extracting Spatial Data on Environment for Research (25 January 2023, online)

This workshop, organized by the IUSSP Early Career Perspectives Panel, was held online on 25 January 2023 from 12:00-15:00 UTC. The goal was to bridge methodological gaps in environmental-population research by giving early-career researchers hands-on experience with spatial environmental data. Ankit Sikarwar led the training, which covered how to locate and retrieve open international environmental data sources (especially remote sensing data), process them using QGIS, and extract meaningful environmental indicators aligned with desired spatial units. The workshop was free, open to IUSSP members and student associates, and places were limited to ensure good interaction with the trainer. The outcome was that attendees would gain the ability to retrieve, process, and extract environmental data under a GIS environment.

YouTube tutorial with slide: <https://iussp.org/en/iussp-training-workshop-extracting-spatial-data-environment-research>

2. Developing Your First Research Grant Proposal (29 November 2023, online)

This workshop, run by the IUSSP Early Career Perspectives panel, took place on 29 November 2023. It was a 90-minute session aimed at PhD students, postdocs, and early-career researchers who are planning their first grant proposal. Conducted in English and free of charge (for IUSSP members and student associates), the workshop was led by Natalie Papanastasiou of Outstanding Research Grants and moderated by Ankit Sikarwar. The content and discussion included: core principles of grant writing; why grants matter for an academic career; common challenges in crafting proposals; and features that tend to make a proposal stand out. About 63 participants attended live.

Link: <https://iussp.org/en/developing-your-first-research-grant-proposal>

3. ECR Rehearsal & Feedback Session at APA 2024 (26 November 2024, Kathmandu, Nepal)

The IUSSP Early Career Perspectives panel organized a preparatory flash session for presenters registered for the Asian Population Association (APA) Conference. The event took place on 26 November 2024 at the Central Department of Population Studies, Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu. The event was managed on site by Dr. Mayanka Ambade (Harvard University), whose commitment was key to its success. It offered a supportive, informal environment where early-career researchers could present their work in a concise format (five slides, 7-10 minutes), followed by 10 minutes of feedback. There were 40 participants, nine of whom gave presentations. Feedback was provided by a mix of senior researchers—including Dr Reiko Hayashi (APA President) and Dr K. S. James (APA Vice President)—and early-career panelists such as Dr Kajori Banerjee (Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata), Dr Punit Mishra (Population Council India), and Ms Ekaterina Zhelenkova (Vienna Institute of Demography). The session included guidance on effective research communication, including clarity, logical flow, and selecting relevant contextual examples. Overall, the session helped presenters refine their presentations and boost confidence ahead of APA 2024.

Link: <https://iussp.org/en/ecr-rehearsal-feedback-session-apa2024>

4. Training and Practice for ECR Presenters before IPC2025 (4 June – 4 July 2025, online and prerecorded mentorship)

To help Early Career Researchers prepare polished presentations for the International Population Conference (IPC) 2025 in Brisbane, the IUSSP Council together with the Early Career Perspectives Panel organized a training and mentorship series between 4 June and 4 July 2025. Shelley Clark (McGill University), member of the IUSSP Council, provided overall support and guidance to the initiative.

Sessions were led by Ankit Sikarwar and Moana Rarere, who ran two Zoom workshops: *How to prepare a good poster presentation* (4 June) and *How to prepare a good oral presentation* (11 June). These were recorded and are available on the IUSSP website. In addition, there were mentoring practice sessions for those with accepted papers in regular or flash sessions, offering feedback from senior researchers on presentation style—slide design, pacing, clarity, and audience engagement—rather than content. 98 ECR presenters and 62 mentors signed up for these sessions. A total of 18 sessions of 90 minutes each were scheduled between 17 June and 4 July, each with up to four presenters and two mentors. The initiative helped many presenters refine delivery and visual components, boosting confidence ahead of IPC2025.

Recordings and details: <https://iussp.org/en/training-and-practice-ecr-presenters-ipc2025>