

# IMPACT REPORT

Harvard Extension School Global Development  
Practice Student Society (GDPSS)

**2024-2025 Activities**

**JUNE 2025**



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[sites.harvard.edu/hesgdpss](https://sites.harvard.edu/hesgdpss)  
[linkedin.com/hesgdpss](https://linkedin.com/hesgdpss)  
instagram: [@harvardgdp](https://www.instagram.com/harvardgdp)

# A Message from the President



What a true honor it has been to serve my peers in this role and to work alongside such an inspirational and ambitious group of students. Our work as development professionals is more important than ever.

As we respond to global crises, seek to empower those historically silenced, and navigate complex challenges, we must remain grounded in our shared humanity and the immense responsibility this work carries — to improve wellbeing and to advance justice in the world. We should not take this lightly. This means approaching our work with humility, and recognizing that we do not hold all the answers. Instead, the greatest power lies within the communities we build and the voices we choose to center. This is something I have seen reflected time and again in this bright, passionate, and committed group.

Thank you for your trust, engagement, kindness, and for being part of this journey. It has truly been a pleasure.

*In service,*

**President, Harvard Extension GDP Society, 2024-25**





# The Executive Board



**Stephanie Borcea**  
President



**Nicholas Gjerde**  
Vice-President



**Widya Budisantoso**  
Marketing & Digital Engagement



**Max Genin**  
UN Global MDP Liaison & Communications



**Javier Jimenez**  
Alumni Liaison



**Michelle Kim**  
Past President Advisor



**Mark Nabong**  
Secretary & Communications



**Kate Vellucci**  
Alumni Liaison



**Anna-Maria Wohlgemuth**  
Director of Events

*Serving the HES Development Community*

# 2024-2025 **IMPACT** SNAPSHOT

## Serving the GDP Community

JUNE 2025



Since establishing our new board in May 2024, the **Harvard GDP Student Society (GDPSS)** has **scaled its reach and impact** through dynamic, cross-institutional, and high-caliber programming for our **Harvard Extension School (HES) Global Development Practice (GDP) graduate students at Harvard University**. Our mission—to convene the next generation of global development leaders—has been executed with rigor, strategy, and global ambition.



### Flagship Series & Strategic Initiatives

- **Power Hour Series:** A premier monthly forum connecting students with top-tier development experts from institutions like the UN, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, NYU, the ICC and BCG. Topics spanned sustainable finance, international law, fisheries, and private capital mobilization. One of our PowerHours sparked enough interest to be invited to host a class at HES in Winter of 2026.
- **UN SDSN Masterclasses:** Co-hosted with the Global MDP Association and broadcast to development students across 23+ countries. Featured speakers included a former Dominican Minister of Economy, Harvard Kennedy School Lecturers, and MIT J-PAL's policy leadership.
- **National Forest Foundation Fundraiser:** We, alongside other HES Teams, achieved Top 5 globally and became Harvard's #1 fundraising team, partnering with Harvard's Center for Public Service.
- **Capstone + Thesis Forum:** Our second annual event featured 13 student presentations that showcased the culmination of their graduate studies via their Capstone and Thesis projects, co-hosted with the Sustainability Club (HES3C).

### Collaborations & Global Presence

- **New York Climate Week Social:** Hosted in partnership with HES3C, the UN SDSN Global MDP Association with participation of Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA).
- **Representation at UNGA Summit of the Future:** Official GDPSS Representation by a Board Member.
- **MIT J-PAL North America, Harvard Kennedy School, and the ICC:** Speakers and advisors across events.
- **Cross-club partnerships:** We partnered with 8 Harvard student organizations across HES Sustainability, Management & Finance, and HESA proper.

### Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the 2024-2025 GDPSS Executive Board: Stephanie Borcea (President), Nicholas Gjerde (Vice President), Widya Budisantoso (Marketing & Digital Engagement), Max Genin (UN Global MDP Liaison & Communications), Javier Jimenez (Alumni Liaison), Michelle Kim (Past President Advisor), Mark Nabong (Secretary & Communications), Kate Vellucci (Alumni Liaison), and Anna-Maria Wohlgemuth (Director of Events). We are grateful to our partners, speakers, and the broader student community for their invaluable contributions throughout the year and wish for a very fruitful and impactful year for the incoming Board.



# 2024-2025 EVENT SNAPSHOT

## PowerHours with Experts

JUNE 2025



The Power Hour Series, launched in December 2024, emerged as a **flagship** monthly forum **designed to connect ALM GDP students with some of the world's foremost experts in development, law, policy, and sustainability**. Each 60-minute session featured a dynamic, off-the-record conversation with a thought leader from a range of globally respected institutions—including the **United Nations, Harvard, Yale, the International Criminal Court, Columbia, NYU, UC San Diego, and Boston Consulting Group**—offering rare, candid insights that bridged theory with real-world policy practice. Speakers include Dr. T. Alexander Puutio, Wasim Tahir, Cary Krosinsky, Anoush Baghdassarian, and Dr. Andrew Tirrell, hosted by our President *Stephanie Borcea* and our Director of Events, *Anna-Maria Wohlgemuth*.

From private capital mobilization for the SDGs to fisheries sustainability in traditional inshore communities, the series exposed students to a diverse array of career paths and thematic focus areas. Conversations delved into international criminal justice, sustainable finance, and cross-sectoral leadership, spotlighting the complex interplay of economics, law, and equity in global development work.

**The series was not only well-attended, but deeply resonant.** Student feedback consistently highlighted how these sessions demystified elite policy and development pathways and provided networking access that would otherwise be unavailable. Due to popular demand and its educational value, **one Power Hour session's interest led to the establishment of a formal Harvard Extension School course on SDG Financing** offered for credit in Winter 2026—a testament to the academic caliber and practical relevance of the series and the gap it fills. The Power Hours have **grown to be a community**, cultivating mentorship, interdisciplinary engagement, and an ethos of applied global problem-solving among the HES' development students.

### Our Speakers





# 2024-2025 EVENT SNAPSHOT

## Masterclasses with the UN MDP

JUNE 2025



The UN MDP Masterclass Series was a **high-impact** educational initiative co-hosted by GDPSS in partnership with **the Global MDP Student and Alumni Advisory Council (SAAC) under the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**. Designed to reach a global audience, the series was open to development students in 23+ countries, offering advanced, practice-oriented learning on pressing development challenges. **On average, more than 50+ participants across 20+ MDP programs in 20+ countries, attended each.**

The series featured **three exclusive sessions**, each led **by senior development professionals** with both academic and government expertise. Topics focused on strategic partnerships, public-private collaborations, and evaluation design—pillars of effective development practice. Speakers included Daniela Treviño at J-PAL North America, and Juan Jimenez and James Carras at the Harvard Kennedy School.

More than just webinars, **the Masterclasses created a global classroom experience, fostering real-time dialogue across continents.** The series strengthened the Global MDP’s commitment to applied learning, equity, and cross-cultural knowledge exchange in international development education.

These were hosted by our UN MDP Liaison, *Max Genin*, and our Director of Events, *Anna-Maria Wohlgemuth*.

### Our Experts

**GLOBAL MDP**  
Student and Alumni Advisory Council



**Masterclass: Designing Evaluations in Development**

#AGENDA2030

Masterclass Expert

**Daniela Gómez Treviño**  
*Senior Research and Policy Manager  
J-PAL North America (MIT)*  
  
*Former Policy Advisor  
Office of the President of Mexico*

17 April 2025 | 3PM EDT



**GLOBAL MDP**  
Student and Alumni Advisory Council



**Masterclass: Public-Private Partnerships in Development**

#AGENDA2030

Masterclass Expert

**Juan Jimenez**  
*Economist & Lecturer in Public Policy,  
Harvard Kennedy School*  
  
*Former Minister of Economy;  
Vice Minister of the Presidency,  
Government of the Dominican Republic*

21 February 2025 | 3PM EST



**GLOBAL MDP**  
Student and Alumni Advisory Council



**Masterclass: Strategic Partnerships in Development**

LIMITED SP

Masterclass Expert

**James Carras**  
*Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy,  
Harvard Kennedy School*

10 December 2024  
3 PM - 4 PM (EDT)



# 2024-2025 EVENT SNAPSHOT

## Strategic Partnerships & Global Engagements

JUNE 2025

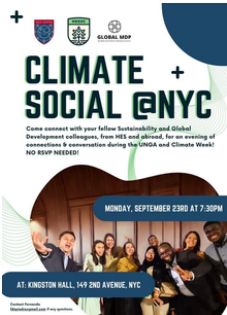


Throughout the academic year, **GDPSS expanded its global footprint** through high-impact events, partnerships, and representation. During **New York Climate Week**, we co-hosted a **networking social with HES3C and the UN SDSN Global MDP Association**, welcoming participants from various universities: Columbia University, Harvard University, University of Minnesota, and Trinity College Dublin. This event **fostered vibrant exchange and community** at the intersection of climate action and global governance. Our UN MDP Liaison, **Max Genin**, also **served as an official delegate to the UN Summit of the Future**, providing student representation at the highest levels of global policy dialogue.

We hosted several expert-led academic forums, including the **Capstone AMA** for GDP ALM students and the **Mini MDP Summit**, which convened faculty and students from around the world from the Global MDP's 35 Masters programs. Most notably, **the 2nd Annual HES3C & HESGDPSS Capstone and Thesis Forum**, taking place in the final weeks of April, **featured 13 speakers** and spotlighted student research on food systems, climate resilience, and sustainable development—creating space for peer learning, innovation, and offering a forum for dialogue on development scholarship and advice for future students undertaking their capstones and theses in the coming summer.

We also **partnered with 8 Harvard student organizations**, including HES Sustainability, Finance, Management Clubs, and HESA, the HES's official student government. Together, we **co-hosted Earth Day Cleanups** and **reached Top 5 National Fundraiser** status for the **National Forest Foundation**, in partnership with the Harvard Center for Public Service. These collaborations enabled interdisciplinary learning, event co-sponsorship, and broader student engagement across policy, economics, and systems leadership.

Collectively, these initiatives positioned GDPSS as not only **a convener of development discourse but as a bridge between Harvard and the world**—amplifying student voices in global development through equity, collaboration, and applied leadership.





# GDPSS 2024-2025

*Serving the Development Community*