NIKKA GERONA

Climate and Sustainability Specialist

Programme Management | Science Communication | Partnerships | Capacity Building

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PERSONAL STATEMENT

Climate and sustainability specialist with nearly six years of experience across UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank, the Global Center on Adaptation and the UNFCCC process. I manage grant portfolios, build partnerships and design capacity-building programmes that help early-stage climate and energy solutions scale. Also, as a science communicator, I translate complex climate and policy evidence into publications and narratives that move donors, partners and decision-makers to act.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Programme and Portfolio Management
Grant portfolio oversight, results-based management, milestone verification, tranche-based disbursement, risk and deadline tracking, donor reporting

Science Communication and Storytelling
Translating climate science, policy and technical data into flagship publications, campaigns, video, pitch materials and briefings for non-specialist audiences

Partnerships and Resource Mobilization
Private sector engagement, inter-agency liaison (World Bank, UNDP country offices, government), partnership packages, expert network building

Capacity Building and Learning
Mentorship and learning programme design, masterclasses and webinars, training resources, learning needs assessments, facilitation

Climate, Energy and Sustainability
Climate and energy portfolios, adaptation and National Adaptation Plans, marine biodiversity, impact measurement, UNFCCC processes

Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management
Indicator tracking, survey design and analysis, evaluation reports, dashboards, lessons learned and knowledge products

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Youth4Climate Associate: Communications, Project and Private Sector Engagement — Nov 2025 – Present

UNDP Rome Centre for Climate Action and Energy Transition | Rome, Italy

Global initiative co-led by UNDP and the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security that provides grant funding, mentorship and technical support to early-stage climate solutions.

Grant Portfolio Management

- Manage a USD 405,241 grant portfolio as Asia Focal Point across the Climate and Energy workstreams, track delivery against milestones, and act as primary liaison for awardees, UNDP country offices and partners.
- Verify inception and progress reports against contractual deliverables and coordinate tranche-based disbursements of up to USD 30,000 per grant with the finance focal point.
- Review Call for Solutions proposals as technical reviewer, lead the sustainable fashion portfolio, and analyse application data to surface portfolio-level trends for senior management.
- Draft donor reports, project updates and progress summaries from partnership data tracked against established indicators.

Mentorship and Capacity Building

- Lead the 2026 Global Mentorship Programme end to end, from design, global call and selection to matching, onboarding and monitoring. Expanded the expert pool to 81 mentors (up 29% year on year) and built a mentor catalogue platform with post-session tracking.
- Co-design and facilitate the Masterclass, Theory in Practice and Deep Dive Webinar series, and co-organized the Venice Climate Week adaptation mission.

Communications and Project Visibility

- Document the projects we support and raise their visibility through social media features, blogs, interviews and videos with climate innovators.
- Edited most of the communications materials for the 2026 Youth4Climate Flagship event (150+ participants, 40+ countries) across five Italian cities (Milan, Bologna, Naples, Venice, Rome), including teasers, social posts, graphics and merchandise, and built an Excel master tracker for event communications.
- Supported the event branding guidelines and led the youth-focused communications strategy and content, producing two Ask an Innovator interviews and a recap video for each day, and covering the event live on social media.

Partnerships and Private Sector Engagement

- Developed the programme master pitch deck and tailored engagement packages for private sector partners, including Casa della Moda, Generali and Sammontana, and prepared briefing materials for UNDP Viet Nam and academic delegations.

Communications and Project Support
May 2025 – Nov 2025

UNDP Rome Centre for Climate Action and Energy Transition, Youth4Climate | Rome, Italy

- Evaluated the 2025 Call for Solutions, which drew 2,618 proposals from more than 130 countries, and contributed to selecting 50 awardees for up to USD 1.5 million in seed funding.
- Designed and ran the end-of-cycle evaluation for mentors and mentees and produced an evaluation report that shaped the 2026 programme design; analysed Learning Needs Assessment data to define the capacity-building offer.
- Drafted and edited the Solutions Catalogue profiling 100 funded climate projects, a flagship publication presented at Pre-COP30, and coordinated content, design and quality with the World Bank Connect4Climate team.
- Managed the Y4C Knowledge and Engagement Platform, a 30,000+ member community connecting young innovators, experts and organizations. Served as admin and shared opportunities, built the alumni community group, and created a repository of Masterclass and Theory in Practice resources.
- Produced the communications materials for the 2025 Youth4Climate Flagship event in Brazil and covered the event. Beyond the event, supported the programme by managing its Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube accounts.
- Mapped and engaged 63 experts in climate finance, sustainable business, communications and partnerships, and matched them to awardee needs.
- Designed learning resources on climate project implementation and distributed them to all 2,618 applicants, extending programme reach well beyond the funded cohort.
- Represented the initiative at the Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB62) and led on-site photo, video and reel production for the flagship event.

Research and Communications Expert (Consultant)
Aug 2024 – Present

Research for Purpose | Remote | Clients: World Bank, African Development Bank, UNICEF LACRO

- Designed the user interface for the World Bank AI Toolkit Prompt Management platform, translating technical workflow requirements into an interface that lets non-technical staff run automated survey analysis.
- Developed the African Development Bank Social Media Use Handbook, restructuring text-heavy modules into a learner-friendly training resource with case studies, and produced templates and certification assets for 90+ trainees, including senior leadership.
- Produced a social listening report for UNICEF LACRO on online discourse about child rights across Latin America and the Caribbean, and standardized its format into a replicable in-house template.
- Edited a perception study on bottom trawling and the EU Common Fisheries Policy and adapted the findings into a stakeholder briefing presentation.
- Authored client-facing pitch decks for two AI products, the Misinformation Virality Detector and Agentry AI, positioning both for acquisition.

Digital Communications Specialist
Sep 2024 – Oct 2024

UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti | Florence, Italy

- Developed and implemented the digital communications strategy for the launch of the Young Visionaries report, a 10-month participatory foresight study on the future of children's rights, drawing on 50+ workshops with 800+ participants across 12 countries.
- Contributed to the global launch event on 16 September 2024, timed ahead of the UN Summit of the Future, which drew 465+ attendees from 75 countries and featured a UN Assistant Secretary-General, the Director of the School of International Futures, a Senior Vice President of the UN Foundation and the Head of the UN Futures Lab.
- Coordinated stakeholder inputs, delivering launch outputs on schedule and in line with institutional priorities.
- Led production and rollout of multimedia assets, driving dissemination and stakeholder outreach across digital platforms.
- Monitored campaign reach and engagement metrics, generating the evidence base for post-launch reporting.

Human Resources Communications Consultant
Sep 2022 – Jul 2023

UNICEF Headquarters | Copenhagen, Denmark

- Analysed the UNICEF Global Staff Survey 2022 across security, empowerment and internal communications, and presented findings that informed management action.
- Developed structured presentations and learning modules supporting the rollout of organizational performance and culture initiatives for a global workforce.
- Produced guidance materials for staff on organizational performance and culture initiatives.
- Produced an explainer video for the HR Manager's Dashboard, showing managers how to use the tool.
- Created a social media video for International Youth Day, "5 Reasons We Love Working at UNICEF," in partnership with the communications team to attract young talent to apply.
- Reviewed and updated organizational data and charts, safeguarding reporting accuracy through project transitions.

Communications Support
Aug 2022 – Nov 2022

UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS | Istanbul, Türkiye and Remote

- Revamped the regional YouTube channel with a new branding strategy, delivering a 30% increase in subscribers.
- Analysed digital analytics to pinpoint improvement areas, directly informing the design of targeted regional campaigns.
- Administered the UNDP regional website in Drupal and researched and curated weekly Eurasia news roundups across all regional channels.

- Formulated social media branding and produced materials for campaigns, reports and events, supporting regional conferences, policy dialogues and report launches.

Content Marketing Specialist (Consultant)
Jul 2021 – Jul 2023

Reshaping Work | Amsterdam, Netherlands and Remote

- Drove the promotion and marketing strategy for the Future of Work Conference 2021, which convened 300+ attendees from 50+ companies alongside expert panels from the European Commission, ILO and OECD.
- Produced the 2022 conference teaser campaign, generating 289,900 impressions and 77,913 website clicks at a 26.88% click rate within seven days.
- Led the communications strategy for the 2022 and 2023 flagship report launches in partnership with the marketing team.
- Strengthened the organization's social media presence by monitoring channels and producing the weekly Monday Brainer poster and video series, scripted from future-of-work trend research.

Project Officer, Creative Design and Campaigns
Feb 2021 – Nov 2022

UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Youth | Remote

- Headed content design and communications strategy across LinkedIn, X (Twitter) and Instagram, engaging 2,800+ members across 25 countries and 77 universities.
- Designed content for recruitment and fundraising campaigns across the global network.
- Coordinated with external partners and the Secretariat to deliver brand-aligned global campaigns, including the UNEP Anatomy of Action Challenge and the Social Shifters Global Innovation Challenge.
- Served as Head of Communications for the Global Summit and secured 400+ registrations through brochures, prospectuses, infographics, presentation templates and participant packs.

Layout Artist (UN Online Volunteer)
Sep 2021 – Apr 2022

UNDP Philippines, Climate Action Programme | Remote

- Designed and laid out the national Biodiversity-Friendly Enterprises Toolkit, developed under the SMARTSeas PH marine biodiversity project.
- Liaised with the UNDP Climate Action Programme and the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to secure design and layout approval.
- Produced publication materials for the country office communications team during Indigenous Peoples' Month.

ADVISORY AND MULTILATERAL LEADERSHIP ROLES

Climate Advisor, CEO's Youth Advisory Panel
Jan 2024 – Nov 2024

Global Center on Adaptation | Rotterdam, Netherlands and Remote

- Advised the CEO and senior leadership on climate adaptation programming, stakeholder engagement and strategic institutional initiatives.
- Researched National Adaptation Plans and developed an engagement toolkit aligned with international climate frameworks.
- Designed and facilitated a series of global adaptation forums, and supported the 2024 forum held alongside the Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB60) in Germany.
- Coordinated worldwide outreach for a global adaptation action day.

Fellow, Leading Minds on Climate
Mar 2024 – Aug 2024

UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti | Florence, Italy

- Co-designed the UNICEF Leading Minds Fellowship on Climate, shaping its programme structure, research outputs and synthesis reports.
- Contributed to a collaborative research project on climate breakthroughs, conducting data collection, scenario development and qualitative analysis.
- Developed engagement methodologies that embedded accountability and inclusion across the full programme lifecycle.
- Co-authored fellowship knowledge products, including the Conference Outcomes Paper, a future-scenario storytelling collection and a series of twelve climate thought pieces.

Fellow, Content Creators Hub
Oct 2023 – Jun 2024

Climate Tracker Asia, in partnership with Oxfam International | Philippines and Remote

- Selected for the second cycle of the Content Creators Hub under the Stories 4 Change project, a fellowship that trains storytellers from the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia to produce compelling, science-based climate content.
- Completed a three-day in-person workshop and a mentorship programme covering visual storytelling, interviewing, pitching and multimedia content for social platforms, including a field visit to the Manila Observatory on disaster risk resilience research.
- Produced an educational video on the environmental impact of bubble tea consumption, translating its environmental footprint into an accessible story for digital-native audiences.
- Pitched a collaborative film concept to mentors and fellow storytellers, refining it through peer and mentor feedback.

Communications Team, Steering Committee
Feb 2021 – Present

YOUNGO, UNFCCC Constituency | Remote and UNFCCC sessions

- Served on the on-site communications team at COP27, COP28, COP29 and SB60, leading graphic design, overseeing content management, and supporting team coordination and video production.
- Interviewed World Bank Senior Managing Director Axel van Trotsenburg at COP28 and UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Kitty van der Heijden at SB60 on the role of the next generation in shaping climate action, and supported the media team's interview with former US Vice President Al Gore.
- Produced daily reporting on the climate negotiations at the Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB60), translating technical negotiation outcomes into accessible updates for a global audience.
- Spoke on the We Don't Have Time daily broadcast panel at COP27 and COP28, and on a COPE panel at the Conference of Youth in Dubai on the role of children in disaster risk reduction.
- Supported the organization of a COP29 side event on expectations for the climate negotiations, co-hosted with the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) Secretariat and the Government of Pakistan, and featuring a poetry exhibition.
- Served as the Contact Point for YOUNGO and delegates relations in Asia and the Pacific Regional Conference 2022 of Youth where I secured a grant from the Singapore-ASEAN Youth Fund

Co-Chair, Young People's Action Team
Sep 2022 – Nov 2023

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) | Remote and Bangkok, Thailand

- Led the national rollout of a UNICEF advocacy training programme in the Philippines, coordinating with UNICEF Philippines and EAPRO to deliver a 3-day capacity building to 50+ university students in Leyte.
- Spoke as a panelist in the opening plenary of the ASEAN ICT Forum in Thailand on Child Online Protection alongside the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, presenting global trends and regional priorities on online safety to 220+ participants from multiple sectors, countries, and UN agencies.
- Moderated a session on digital, STEM, and green skills at the ASEAN Regional Dialogue 2023 in Indonesia, which convened 150+ government, UN, private sector, and social partner representatives and produced joint recommendations informed by a Pulse Check of 18,776 respondents (69% girls) across ASEAN and Timor-Leste.
- Coordinated regional advocacy campaigns on child rights and climate, overseeing blogs, visual assets and short-form video, and authored UNICEF blog articles on the climate negotiations, including Unmasking COP28: What is at stake for Children and Youth? and Youth reflections on the international climate talks in Egypt (COP27).
- Supported collaboration among national networks, aligning national, regional and global UNICEF advocacy priorities.

Member, Thematic Working Group on Environmental and Climate Action
May 2023 – 2024

Asia Pacific Inter-Agency Network on Youth | Remote

- Advanced the UN General Assembly resolution on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment across regional networks in Asia-Pacific.
- Coordinated with UN Secretariat offices and related global mechanisms to exchange information and align messaging on environmental rights and climate action.
- Exchanged analysis with UN advisory groups and environmental constituencies on environmental and climate justice.
- Identified partnership opportunities that enabled members to co-create initiatives and programmes across ASEAN.

EDUCATION

MSc, Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management (MESPOM)
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree | Lund University (Sweden), Central European University (Austria/Hungary), University of the Aegean (Greece) | Erasmus+ Scholar

BSc, Management
University of the Philippines | Cum Laude

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

- Solutions Catalogue: 100 Projects, From Ideas to Impact, UNDP and World Bank Connect4Climate (co-author and editor)
- Leading Minds on Climate: Conference Outcomes Paper, UNICEF Innocenti (contributing author)
- Unmasking COP28: What is at stake for Children and Youth?, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific (author)
- Biodiversity-Friendly Enterprises Toolkit, UNDP Philippines and DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau (designer)
- UNSTITCHED: Rethinking How Environmental Impact Is Measured in Early-Stage Fashion Ventures, MSc thesis, Lund University (author)

LANGUAGES, CERTIFICATIONS AND TOOLS

Languages: English, Fluent (Level C), full working and drafting proficiency; Filipino, Native

Certifications: Climate Reality Leader, The Climate Reality Project; Policy Negotiation, Advocacy and Awareness Raising on Climate Change, UNICEF; Fundamentals of Digital Marketing, Google Digital Garage

Tools: Microsoft Excel (dashboards, trackers, data analysis) and Microsoft Office; Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, Premiere Pro, After Effects); Canva; Drupal CMS; survey and analytics platforms; generative AI tools for research, drafting and analysis