



## Being a young scientists representative for the EGU

*Jennifer Holden, the young scientists representative for the Natural Hazards Division, writes about what it means to be a young scientists representative and what she's enjoyed about the role.*

I was asked to be young scientists (YS) representative for Natural Hazards (NH) in 2009 by the then President of the Division Bruce Malamud. I was a PhD student at King's College London and was involved in the division as a scientific secretary for one of the sub-programme groups.

My experience isn't typical as I also spent a year in the EGU Office in Munich focusing on outreach to young scientists (amongst other things). In my first year as a young scientist (YS) representative for NH, I emailed all the people in the division who we could identify as young scientists (generally by if they'd entered the student poster award). In that email I outlined some tips for attending the General Assembly, plugged attending the Division Meeting (and the lunch that came with it, naturally), made sure people were aware of events relevant to young scientists and set-up a couple of new things too.

One was a meet-up point at the Ice Breaker event before the EGU's annual conference. When I attended my first EGU General Assembly I was lucky enough to attend with quite a few people from my department. I shared an office with them back at Kings College London and we shared an apartment at the conference. This meant my first General Assembly experience went smoothly, but talking to other young scientists, I realised that a large meeting can seem a baffling and lonely occasion. So, I set up a meeting place where people could meet other young scientists. This worked so well that the next year I set up the same thing for all divisions across the Union and they've become a regular feature at the Ice Breaker. I also set up a lunchtime meet-up where people could come along, bring their lunch and have a chance to talk to others (and maybe not eat alone). I think this worked less well as there were too many people to have a coherent group and it clashed with other events at the meeting – you learn from what doesn't work so well too! That email I sent at the start morphed into the very first [first-timer's guide to the EGU General Assembly](#).

Things that work as a YS representative are things that complement existing General Assembly activities in content and time slot. In Geomorphology, the Meet the Master sessions set up by Jens

Turowski always get rave reviews. Hydrology also has a long history of organising activities for young scientists, such as a special short course on writing research proposals. Because there is young scientist representation in these divisions, I think people in the division think about young scientists a bit more.

What have I got out of being a young scientist representative? I've got to see how a division of the EGU works from the inside: it's a great international networking opportunity, with both your peers and more senior scientists, and I've met some people I wouldn't have done otherwise. As a representative you can organise things that you've seen work well in other divisions, or organise new things that you've always wanted to happen for young scientists at the General Assembly but have not happened before. A great aspect of the EGU is that it's a bottom-up organisation. The time spent on being a young scientist representative depends on what you organise (and this includes how spread out the time commitment is). Emailing all the young scientists in a division is a relatively easy process thanks to some extensive mailing lists, but organising an event with a senior scientist will take more time and planning before the General Assembly, especially as the programme is finalised several months before the event.

If you're interested in becoming a young scientist representative for your division, first check your division webpage and if one doesn't exist, contact the division president. You don't need to be already involved in organising things at EGU at all. I (and I'm sure other existing YS reps) are quite happy to explain what we do and answer questions. I'd definitely recommend it!

*Jennifer Holden  
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### More information

If you'd like to know more about being a young scientists representative for an EGU Division, please email EGU Communications Officer Sara Mynott at [mynott@egu.eu](mailto:mynott@egu.eu) or Jennifer Holden at [jenniferaholden@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferaholden@gmail.com).

If you have ideas or suggestions for activities for young scientists at the forthcoming General Assembly, get in touch with Sam Illingworth ([samuel.illingworth@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:samuel.illingworth@manchester.ac.uk)), the Programme Committee Young Scientists Representative for the EGU 2014 conference.

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