SUBOPTIC LISBON | 2025

Survey Results:

Student & Young Professionals Track

Summary

SubOptic Lisbon 2025

SubOptic Student/Young Track: Biographic Info

Calum Walsh

Irish
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Third-year degree apprentice in the submarine network engineering team for Vodafone. He is currently based at Vodafone's cable landing station in Bude where the Apollo North, Amitie, EIG, GLO1 and 2Africa cable systems land. He is currently on rotation in Vodafone's Global Network Acquisition & Economics team and has completed a rotation in the engineering team, where he was responsible for three upgrade projects and deployment of SLTE over the SHARP network. Calum is currently working towards a BEng in Electromechanical Engineering accredited by the University of Lancaster; he is a STEM ambassador and a working towards accreditation through the IET.

Rafael Alves Pereira

Portuguese
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Third-year student in the BSc of Bridge and Deck Operations at Portugal's Maritime University (ENIDH). I've been drawn to the sea from a very young age, and I've always known I wanted to work in the maritime field. Having said that, my interest in submarine cables was immediate. I'm particularly invested in the idea of connecting the world, ensuring broader access to information and possibly education. At my university, I've been involved in several projects, including co-founding a mentoring system for Erasmus students. I'm always looking forward to expanding my knowledge by attending conferences, and having attended numerous debates on the topics of shipping, energy, and automation. Having studied the maritime industry extensively, I see this side of it as one I'd love to work and start a career with.

Aidé Cabrera

Mexican
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Telecom Engineer with 4 years of industry experience. Focused on Optical Networks, I'm a Pre-sales Engineer at Nokia, running projects across Mexico and Latam. I am passionate about encouraging women and young people into the STEM world. Since 2014, I have been actively involved in the Tech community, taking on roles as staff, mentor, speaker, and director in various hackathons. Also contributing to initiatives such as Women Techmakers, Google Developer Groups, and local projects across Mexico and Latin America, promoting inclusive spaces for tech learning. Currently, I collaborate with the Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (DIB) working group at SubOptic, where I participate in the Spanish Mentoring Program.

Muhammad Khan

Pakistani
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Researcher with a focus on RF, Optical Communication, THz signal processing for terrestrial and satellite communication systems. He holds a PhD, where his research thesis was centred on the design and implementation of novel efficient control heuristic to optimise radio over fiber modulation process to overcome performance limitations and improve fidelity during optical transmission at a system level. Muhammad has extensive experience in RF, microwave photonics, and optical communication systems. In particular towards system design and testing, utilizing state-of-the-art RF and optical communication measurement instruments and simulation tools. His core research interests lie in RF, optical communication systems and electronics, particularly in system design and testing to address the ever-growing demand for data transmission. He actively seeks innovative methods to enhance data transmission efficiency for the telecommunications industry.

Hannah Ellis

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Second-year master's student at UC Berkeley's School of Information, researching community networks, digital infrastructure, and the intersection of technology, climate, and agriculture systems. Her master's thesis focuses on community mesh networks in the U.S. This past summer she was a researcher at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, where she supported the newly established Applied Social Media Lab. Before graduate school, she was a manager at Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), advising technology and telecommunication companies on human rights and sustainability topics. She is passionate about the appropriate technology movement, community empowerment, and resilient systems.

Federica Tortorella

(Dominican Rep / Italy
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Lawyer from the Dominican Republic with a Master's in Risk Management. She is currently the Policy Officer at LACTLD, overseeing policy development and governance issues related to domain names in Latin America and the Caribbean. Federica has been engaged in Internet Governance since 2016, participating in programs such as Youth@IGF by Internet Society and the ICANN Fellowship. She was co-founder and project leader of Embajadores de Internet, a digital literacy initiative recognized by Mozilla's Internet Health Report 2020 and the EQUALS Girls in Tech Talk 2022. She is also a Youth Advisory Board member at SubOptic Foundation, supporting research on regional resilience in the Caribbean. Federica has spoken at multiple Internet governance events and contributed to discussions on global digital policy. Fluent in Spanish, English, Italian, and French, she is passionate about digital rights, policy development, and fostering inclusive Internet governance.

Ana Carolina Haddad

Brazilian
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PhD student in Political Economy at ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon. She holds a Master's degree in Social Sciences of Science and Technology from the Nova School of Science and Technology in Lisbon. Research field linked to submarine cables as critical communication infrastructures and power relations involving large platform and technology companies in Latin American, European and African countries. Her Master's thesis analyzed the power routes related to submarine cables and their ownership in Brazil and Portugal. The Nuvem and Firmina cables, both exclusively owned by a platform company, were studied. The study also relates the different types of digital coloniality that occur in different countries. Special interest in the social intersections related to submarine cables and digital communication infrastructure ecosystems, namely data centers and landing points.

Caroline Crowley

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Undergraduate student at the University of California, Berkeley pursuing a degree in Environmental Economics and Policy. She works as a research assistant with the SubOptic Foundation's Sustainable Subsea Networks team. Her work analyzes global, national, and local policies regulating the environmental sustainability and resilience of data centers and other digital infrastructure.

Moyou Ngandjon Carrel Landry

Cameroonian
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Born on 27 August 1989 in Yaoundé, completed his primary and secondary education in Yaoundé before studying engineering in Douala. He graduated in telecommunications in 2018 from the Catholic University of Central Africa. With seven years' experience, he has worked on 2G, 3G and 4G network deployment and optimisation projects with Alcatel-Lucent and has held positions with Orange Cameroon first as assistant project manager, then as pre sales engineer before in charge of key accounts and finally as Senior Key Account. Since September 2024, he has been pursuing a specialised master's degree at Telecom Paris, focusing on subjects such as 5G/6G, cloud, AI and IoT. Passionate about football, reading and African history, he is also involved in supporting orphans.

Ninon Manighetti

French
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French Japanese student at the School of Public Affairs at Sciences Po Paris, where I am pursuing a Master's degree in European Affairs with a focus on Digital, New Technology, and Public Policy. Driven by a keen interest in the materiality of digital technology, I completed a research internship at the CSI Lab of École des Mines de Paris, where I explored the political implications of submarine cables in the Caribbean, and I am now starting a gap year to dig more into submarine cables related questions.

Amina Ibrahim

Tanzanian
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Technical Consultant at Vodacom Tanzania PLC, with over 1 year and 8 months of experience in the Network department. I earned my bachelor's degree in Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering from the Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) in 2022. In my role, I manage customer queries, troubleshoot technical issues, and collaborate with different departments to ensure effective resolution. I also support the integration and configuration of new clients for technologies such as MW, Fiber, and LTE. A key part of my work is ensuring that service level agreements (SLAs) are met by closely monitoring reported issues and escalating when necessary. I also provide technical advice to service managers to improve services. Passionate about technology, I am committed to continuous learning and professional growth.

SubOptic Student/Young Track: Biographic Info

Habiba Salem

Egyptian
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Senior Business Administration student majoring in Finance at the Canadian International College, graduating in June 2025. With a strong background in UI/UX design and digital marketing, she has worked on various projects, including designing e-commerce platforms and leading marketing campaigns for multinational brands. She is currently a research assistant as part of the global team at Sustainable Subsea Networks (SSN), a Google Developer Group on Campus Organizer, and the track lead for the Digital Product Design Track at GDG on Campus CIC. She actively contributes to entrepreneurship and technology communities and has been involved in sustainability initiatives, reflecting her commitment to innovation and impact. She is dedicated to leveraging technology and design to create meaningful solutions, bridging the gap between business and user experience.

Siobhan Toppin

British
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hird-year Submarine Networks Engineering degree apprentice at Vodafone, working towards a BEng in Electromechanical Engineering. Siobhan is based at Vodafone's Bude Cable Landing Station and has hands-on experience in the operations and maintenance of the five cable systems landing at the site. Most recently, she has completed a six-month rotation in the subsea business development and carrier sales team, working on the 2Africa SLTE deployment and gaining valuable commercial insight into the industry. Currently, she is in the CLS rotation of the program, supporting day-to-day operations on-site, customer requirements and new CLS builds. She is also an active member of the IET.

Yanik Traça Antune

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Enthusiastic young man in love with the Submarine Optical World. I strongly believe my youth is my biggest asset! It is what fires me up to keep on improving and learning! I took a Professional Course in Electronics and Telecommunications Level 4 in Lisbon, in which I invested everything in the things I saw as most important. They were all the technical knowledge I could get from the course, and the languages! I invested everything in improving my English and Spanish skills. Now I speak perfectly: Portuguese, English, and Spanish. Once I left the course, I went to work in 2 CLS here in Portugal, which gave me all the knowledge I have now, and I had the opportunity to meet amazing different people.

Xenia Zimmermann

German
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Fourth-year degree apprentice at BT, having begun her journey in telecommunications by learning about hardware and software testing processes within BT's core network. In 2022, she transitioned to BT Subsea, where she has been instrumental in running a subsea cable repurposing project. Her role involves liaising with key stakeholders and licensors, as well as co-representing BT in cable consortia sub-groups. Academically, Xenia is on track to graduate with a First in BSc Digital and Technology Solutions (with a focus on Software Engineering) in October 2025. Her passion for nurturing future generations of telecommunications and subsea cabling engineers is evident through her regular hosting of work experience students and her leadership in ESCA's NextGen university outreach initiatives.

Hesham Youssef

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Senior transmission engineer and CLS expert at Telecom Egypt, bringing over 14 years of experience in optical communications and submarine cable operations. He holds a master's degree in electrical, electronics, and communications engineering from Alexandria University, where he has published several papers on innovative optical amplifiers. Youssef is also a lead researcher at Sustainable Subsea Networks, a research initiative of the SubOptic Foundation, funded by the Internet Society Foundation, that is investigating the sustainability of the global subsea telecommunications network.

Ant Havenhand

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I am 27 years old and I currently hold the position of Graduate Tier 1 NOC Engineer at Aquacomms. I earned a degree in Computer Science from Sheffield Hallam University in July 2021, I then continued to work in the hospitality sector as I had done before and during my time at university. I am based in the NOC in Newcastle which I moved to from my hometown of Manchester in October 2023 after being offered the role. I believe in taking advantage of opportunities whenever they come along. I am responsible for monitoring and troubleshooting fibre optic circuits and services that customers have with us as well as managing access to sites in the UK and Ireland. I enjoy making music, playing bass guitar and cycling.

Tochukwu Egesi

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Head of Payments and Digital Financial Services at Genesis Analytics, a global African impact consulting firm based in South Africa, bringing extensive expertise in digital public infrastructure across Africa. He was formerly an associate manager at Mastercard based in Lisbon. As a consultant at Genesis Analytics, he has delivered several digital public infrastructure projects for the African Development Bank, Africanenda, UNICEF, IFC, Better than Cash Alliance, Google, several central banks, and national payment switches across Africa and Asia. He serves on the Payment Association of South Africa's Industry Learning Advisory Committee. He holds an MPhil in Inclusive Innovation with distinction from the University of Cape Town, where he is also pursuing a PhD in Computer Science. His research is focused on the impact of submarine cables on digital economy development.

Kami Nakazawa

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Enrolled in the School of Fundamental Science and Engineering at Waseda University in 2022. She was assigned to the Department of Information and Communication Engineering in 2023 and is expected to graduate in 2026, with plans to enter graduate school at Waseda University thereafter.

Ella Herbert

American
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Second-year undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley, working towards her B.S. in Environmental Science. She is a part of the Sustainable Subsea Networks research team, headed by Professor Nicole Starosielski. Her past work examines the sustainability metrics of data centers and cable landing stations. She aims to investigate the environmental impacts associated with the growing data center industry. She is a co-teacher of the course "Building a Sustainable Internet" which introduces students to the foundations of digital infrastructure and the accompanying environmental costs.

Anniki Mikelsaar

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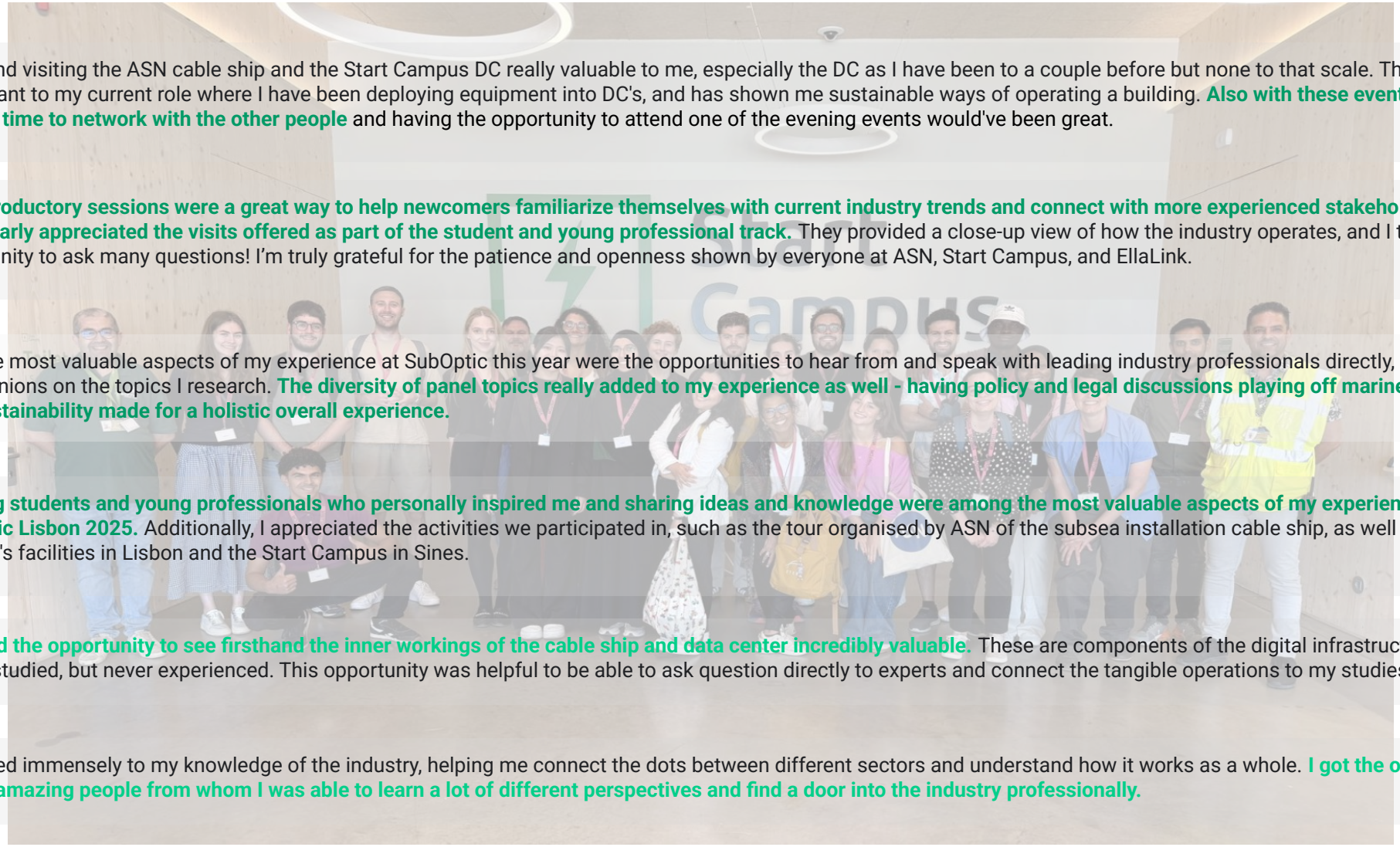
Doctoral researcher and a Dame Stephanie Shirley Scholar at the Oxford Internet Institute (OII) of the University of Oxford. Her research focuses on the governance of digital infrastructures with a particular focus on submarine data cable networks and public-private interaction.

What were the most valuable aspects of your experience at SubOptic Lisbon 2025?



I found visiting the ASN cable ship and the Start Campus DC really valuable to me, especially the DC as I have been to a couple before but none to that scale. This visit in particular is relevant to my current role where I have been deploying equipment into DC's, and has shown me sustainable ways of operating a building. **Also with these events it is important to have time to network with the other people** and having the opportunity to attend one of the evening events would've been great.

The introductory sessions were a great way to help newcomers familiarize themselves with current industry trends and connect with more experienced stakeholders. I particularly appreciated the visits offered as part of the student and young professional track. They provided a close-up view of how the industry operates, and I took the opportunity to ask many questions! I'm truly grateful for the patience and openness shown by everyone at ASN, Start Campus, and EllaLink.

The most valuable aspects of my experience at SubOptic this year were the opportunities to hear from and speak with leading industry professionals directly, and to get their direct opinions on the topics I research. **The diversity of panel topics really added to my experience as well - having policy and legal discussions playing off marine engineering and sustainability made for a holistic overall experience.**

Meeting students and young professionals who personally inspired me and sharing ideas and knowledge were among the most valuable aspects of my experience at SubOptic Lisbon 2025. Additionally, I appreciated the activities we participated in, such as the tour organised by ASN of the subsea installation cable ship, as well as visits to EllaLink's facilities in Lisbon and the Start Campus in Sines.

I found the opportunity to see firsthand the inner workings of the cable ship and data center incredibly valuable. These are components of the digital infrastructure ecosystem that I have studied, but never experienced. This opportunity was helpful to be able to ask question directly to experts and connect the tangible operations to my studies.

It added immensely to my knowledge of the industry, helping me connect the dots between different sectors and understand how it works as a whole. **I got the opportunity to meet amazing people from whom I was able to learn a lot of different perspectives and find a door into the industry professionally.**

Which sessions, workshops, or conversations stood out to you the most, and why?

I particularly found the "Introducing" sessions useful. As a newcomer to the industry, having a few sessions where I could learn the basics of a specific facet of the industry was very helpful. The presenters in these sessions were excellent at talking about these concepts in an approachable manner. Additionally, as I mentioned above, having the opportunity to visit the cable ship and data center campus were equally helpful. These outings allowed us to ask more direct questions and see, firsthand how certain digital infrastructure worked.

The sessions related to the sustainability of the Subsea network, as I am already involved in the research related to the same topic. Moreover, exploring new technologies such as multi-core fiber (MCF) and its amplification can enhance transmission capacity. MCF is considered a type of space division multiplexing (SDM) technology.

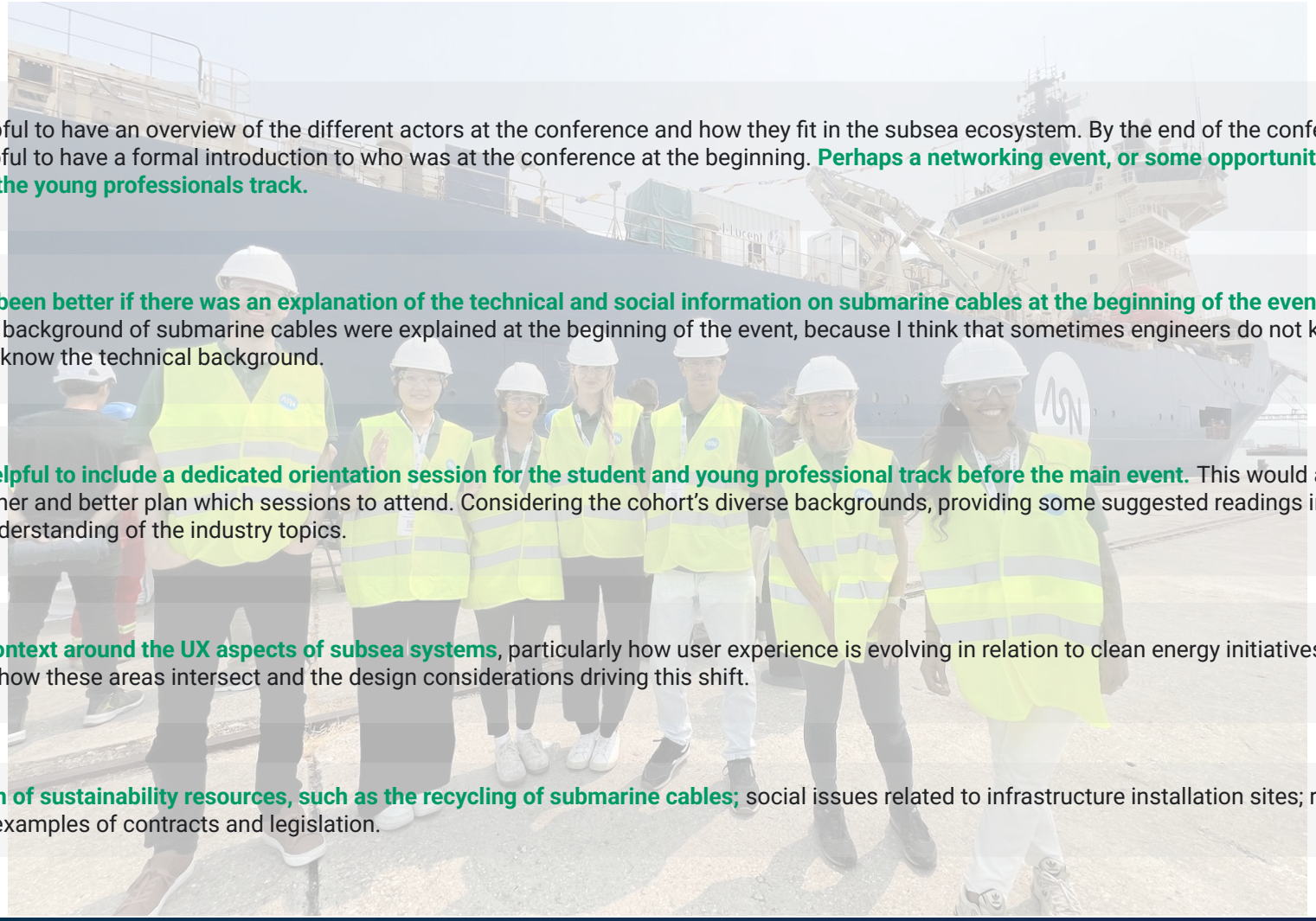
I'm currently working on my dissertation for which I work on AIS data BT gathers, so it's been a really fantastic opportunity to talk to subject matter experts in the field. **Conversations with Mike Cuddington and Sam Teasdale stood out the most on this and they've really helped my academic and professional development.**

The AI sessions stood out to me the most, as they provided valuable insights into how artificial intelligence is transforming the subsea cable industry. The discussions highlighted practical applications, emerging trends, and the potential for AI to improve operational efficiency and predictive maintenance.

The "Introducing" series was a wonderful way to explore more technical aspects of the cable industry that I don't have as much of a background in. **The keynotes on AI and emerging technologies also provided a big picture overview of the future of the industry that I really enjoyed.**

It was great to have the opportunity to interact with industry leaders in an open and friendly environment. **The presentations on Sensing on Fibre-Optic cables and the various talks on AI were very interesting as they are two areas that I am not very familiar with.**

Were there any concepts or areas where you felt you needed more context or background information?



It may have been helpful to have an overview of the different actors at the conference and how they fit in the subsea ecosystem. By the end of the conference we had a better idea, but it would have been helpful to have a formal introduction to who was at the conference at the beginning. **Perhaps a networking event, or some opportunity to specifically have the industry directly engage with the young professionals track.**

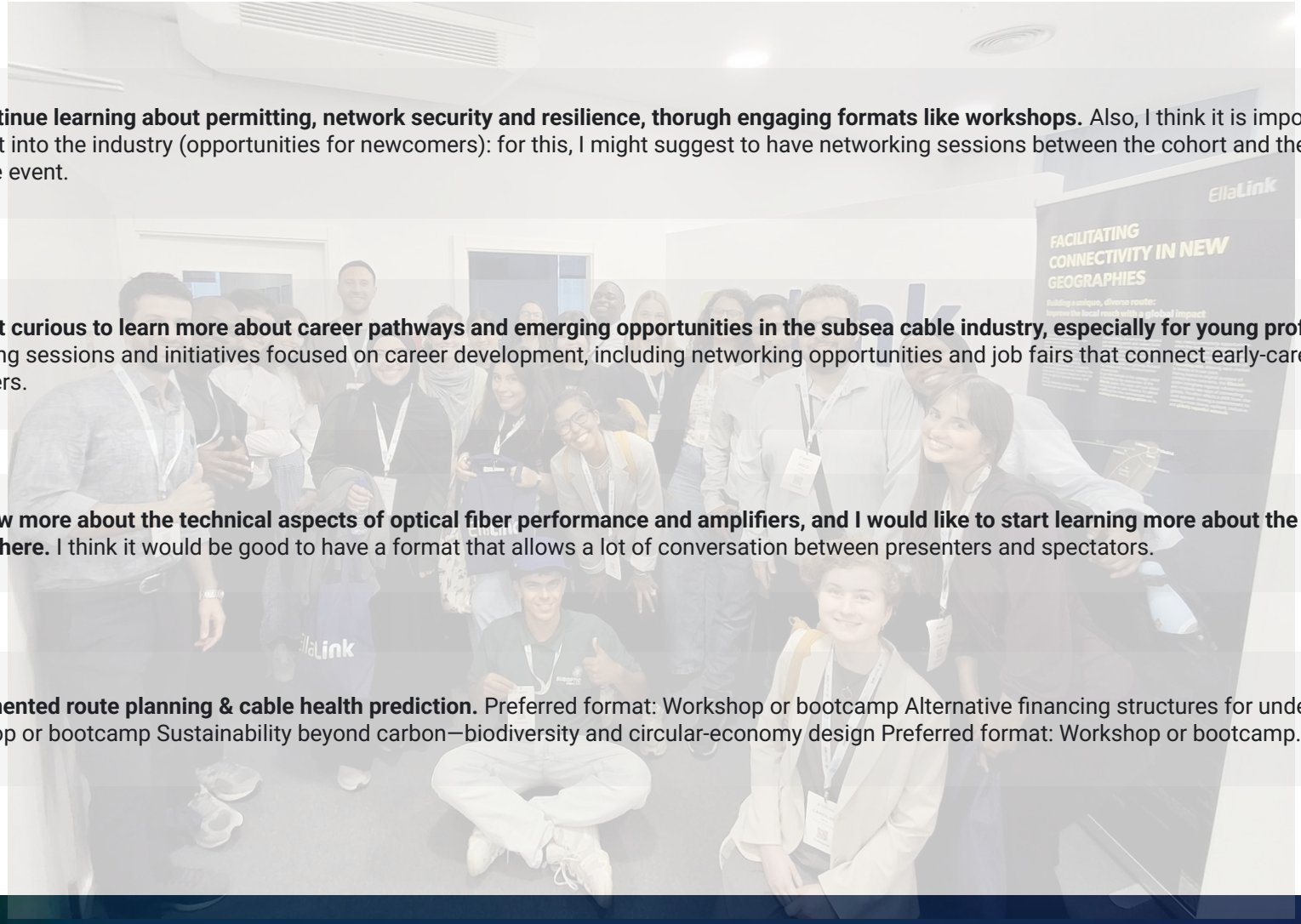
I thought it would have been better if there was an explanation of the technical and social information on submarine cables at the beginning of the event. I think it would be better if the technical and social background of submarine cables were explained at the beginning of the event, because I think that sometimes engineers do not know the social background, and sociologists do not know the technical background.

It might be helpful to include a dedicated orientation session for the student and young professional track before the main event. This would allow participants to explore the agenda together and better plan which sessions to attend. Considering the cohort's diverse backgrounds, providing some suggested readings in advance could also help ensure a more level understanding of the industry topics.

I felt I needed more context around the UX aspects of subsea systems, particularly how user experience is evolving in relation to clean energy initiatives. It would have been helpful to understand how these areas intersect and the design considerations driving this shift.

The application of sustainability resources, such as the recycling of submarine cables; social issues related to infrastructure installation sites; regulatory aspects, but with concrete examples of contracts and legislation.

What topics or areas of the industry are you most curious to learn more about, and how would you like to see them presented at a future SubOptic event (e.g., panels, workshops, mentoring sessions)?



I would like to continue learning about permitting, network security and resilience, thorugh engaging formats like workshops. Also, I think it is important to add spaces to address how to get into the industry (opportunities for newcomers): for this, I might suggest to have networking sessions between the cohort and the organizations or entities participating to the event.

I'm most curious to learn more about career pathways and emerging opportunities in the subsea cable industry, especially for young professionals. I would love to see more mentoring sessions and initiatives focused on career development, including networking opportunities and job fairs that connect early-career talent with industry leaders and employers.

I would like to know more about the technical aspects of optical fiber performance and amplifiers, and I would like to start learning more about the social impact of submarine cables here. I think it would be good to have a format that allows a lot of conversation between presenters and spectators.

AI-augmented route planning & cable health prediction. Preferred format: Workshop or bootcamp Alternative financing structures for underserved routes Preferred format: Workshop or bootcamp Sustainability beyond carbon—biodiversity and circular-economy design Preferred format: Workshop or bootcamp.

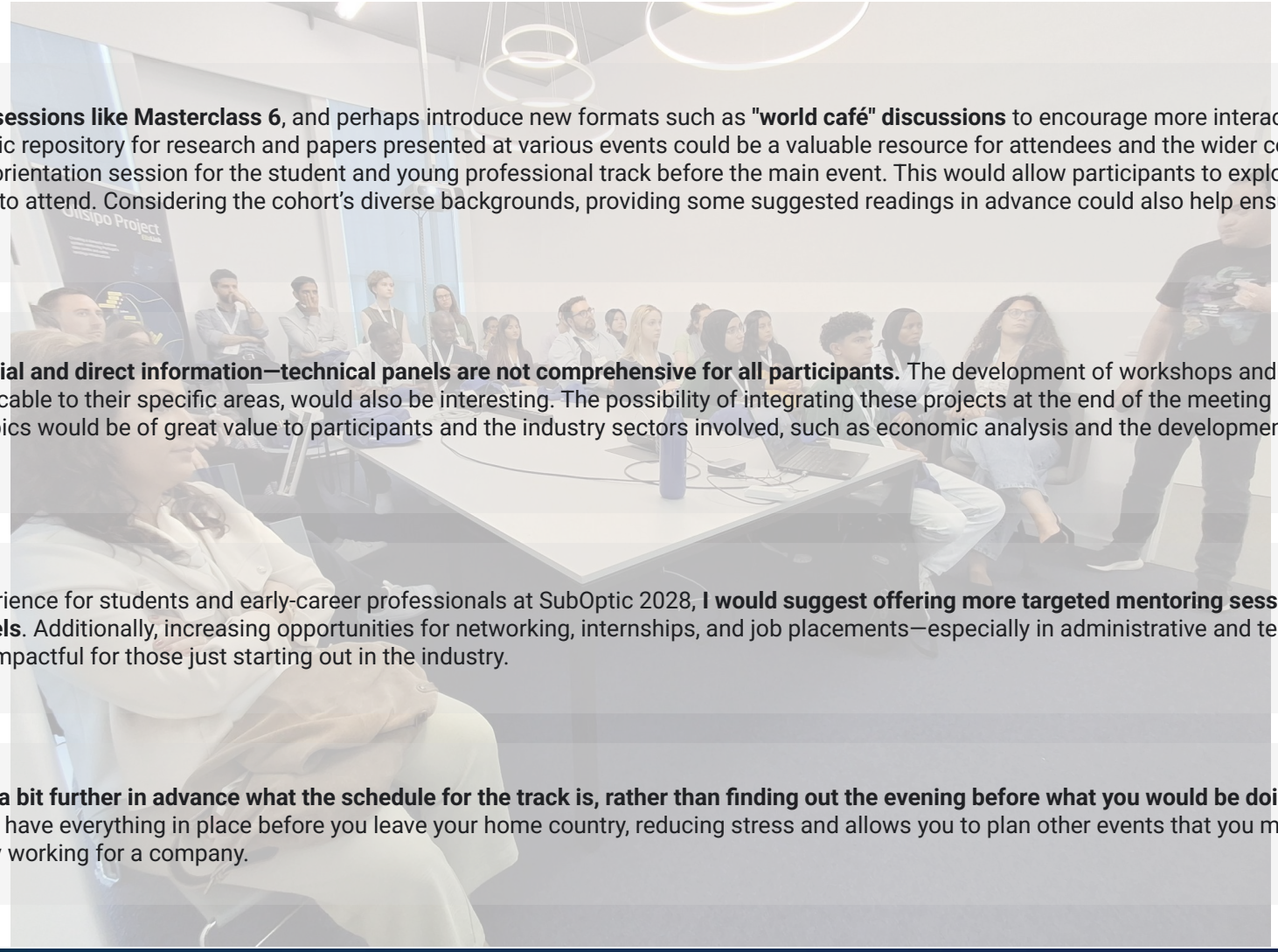
How has attending SubOptic influenced your future academic, professional, or personal interests?

Attending SubOptic 2025 has been a transformative experience that deepened both my academic curiosity and my professional ambition. As someone currently completing a Mastère Spécialisé in Enterprise Digital Architecture at Télécom Paris, I arrived at the conference with a solid technical foundation. But what I found at SubOptic was much more: a global ecosystem of infrastructure builders, innovators, and strategists engaging in rich, forward-thinking discussions. The sessions and conversations highlighted how subsea cable systems, data centers, edge networks, and cloud infrastructures are not just technical assets—but strategic, geopolitical, and environmental pillars of the digital era. For me, this was eye-opening. **Professionally, SubOptic helped me refocus my career path toward infrastructure strategy and systems architecture, particularly in the context of global connectivity and emerging regions.** Meeting leaders from ASN, Orange, and other major players made these ambitions more tangible and showed me where and how I could contribute. I now aspire to join a team where technical knowledge meets strategic governance, helping to design and manage infrastructures that serve both operational performance and global equity. **Academically, the experience has inspired me to explore interdisciplinary research on digital infrastructure resilience, regional disparities in connectivity, and the interplay between infrastructure and AI adoption—especially in Africa and the Global South**. On a personal level, SubOptic strengthened my motivation to become a bridge-builder between regions, disciplines, and sectors—and to pursue a career that's not only technically impactful, but socially meaningful.

Attending SubOptic Lisbon 2025 had a significant impact on my academic, professional, and personal outlook. As an engineer and a sponsored young professional, the experience broadened my understanding of the subsea telecommunications industry far beyond what I had previously encountered in academic settings. **Professionally, the conference deepened my interest in network security, Submarine Network Engineer, and fiber sensing technologies areas I now plan to explore further in both research and practice**. I left the event with a clearer vision of how I want to contribute to the future of global connectivity, particularly in designing more resilient and sustainable subsea systems. **Academically, the insights from technical masterclasses and discussions with industry experts have inspired me to pursue further training or specialization in fields like optical transmission or cable infrastructure monitoring.** I'm also considering collaborating on research or publishing in these areas. **On a personal level, being part of such a diverse and innovative community has strengthened my confidence and sense of belonging in the industry.** The support from the SubOptic Foundation and the opportunity to interact with mentors like Prof. Nicole and Erick Contag showed me the value of inclusive leadership and the importance of giving back as I grow in my career. SubOptic was more than just a conference—it was a launchpad for my development and a reminder of how impactful this field can be on a global scale.

Attending SubOptic has strengthened me in my goal of building my career in the subsea industry. I've met many incredibly smart people (both within our cohort and professionals from different companies) and I look forward to staying in touch with them for years to come. **Professionally, I've been really happy to get an insight into different subject areas within the industry** (e.g. cable construction, permitting, etc.) in case I ever need inspiration as to how I'd like to pivot my career in the future. **Academically, SubOptic has given me a platform to talk about AIS monitoring with different experts which has been a great opportunity given that I'm currently writing my undergraduate dissertation on this topic.** A fantastic experience through and through.

What suggestions would you offer to improve the experience for students and early-career professionals at SubOptic 2028?



I'd love to see more sessions like Masterclass 6, and perhaps introduce new formats such as **"world café" discussions** to encourage more interactive learning. Additionally, creating a centralized SubOptic repository for research and papers presented at various events could be a valuable resource for attendees and the wider community. It might be helpful to include a dedicated orientation session for the student and young professional track before the main event. This would allow participants to explore the agenda together and better plan which sessions to attend. Considering the cohort's diverse backgrounds, providing some suggested readings in advance could also help ensure a more level understanding of the industry topics.

I think panels with more social and direct information—technical panels are not comprehensive for all participants. The development of workshops and direct classes for students, with projects applicable to their specific areas, would also be interesting. The possibility of integrating these projects at the end of the meeting and then developing effective research on the topics would be of great value to participants and the industry sectors involved, such as economic analysis and the development of sustainability techniques

To improve the experience for students and early-career professionals at SubOptic 2028, **I would suggest offering more targeted mentoring sessions, hands-on workshops, and career-focused panels**. Additionally, increasing opportunities for networking, internships, and job placements—especially in administrative and technical roles—would make the event more inclusive and impactful for those just starting out in the industry.

I would appreciate knowing a bit further in advance what the schedule for the track is, rather than finding out the evening before what you would be doing the next day. This allows you to make sure you have everything in place before you leave your home country, reducing stress and allows you to plan other events that you may wish to attend, particularly for those already working for a company.

What kind of support (mentorship, preparation materials, funding clarity, etc.) would have enhanced the participation of the Student/Young Professionals Youth Track?

While the Student/Young Professionals Youth Track at SubOptic 2025 offered a valuable opportunity to engage with the digital infrastructure ecosystem, several forms of structured support would have significantly enhanced the depth, confidence, and overall impact of our participation: 1. **Pre-Conference Mentorship Assigning each student or young professional a mentor from the industry ahead of the conference (even virtually) would help demystify expectations, recommend relevant sessions, and offer guidance on how to make the most of networking opportunities.** Even a short pre-conference call could build connection and focus goals. 2. **Preparation Materials and Contextual Primers** A curated orientation kit or onboarding guide explaining the subsea cable ecosystem, key players, and current issues (technical, regulatory, geopolitical) would be extremely helpful—especially for participants from non-subsea backgrounds. Suggested reading, podcast episodes, or case studies would allow us to show up more prepared and confident in technical sessions. 3. 🌍 **Post-Conference Follow-Up** A lightweight, optional follow-up (e.g. alumni Slack group, learning community, shared resource hub) could help maintain momentum and build long-term connections between attendees.

I think prior mentoring would be useful, identifying each participant's skills and even recommending the best sessions for them to attend. Extra activities during the meeting to promote integration and contact between participants in a more comprehensive way - in the current format, some distinct groups ended up forming due to the accommodation arrangements. **Study groups** during the meeting to develop not only research but also possible topics that could be discussed in building an effective network.

I feel really positive about the students/young professionals Youth Track, so thank you for getting us involved! I would have loved to attend the networking event on the Wednesday. There were a few instances in which more experienced professionals mentioned they were looking forward to seeing us there which made it a bit confusing whether we were going or not (though if it's a cost issue, I can definitely understand that - the learning at the conference itself was definitely the most important!).

Initial sessions would've been good in the lead up to the event, get people who work in an area to explain simple fundamentals to key aspects of the industry to put everyone on a similar platform before attending. Some students were really thrown in the deep end as they had limited knowledge, and I feel they could've gained more if they had the basics well understood before attending. The sessions could be run by those on the track that are already working in the industry.

Everything was very well organized

Would you like to remain engaged in future SubOptic-related opportunities? If so, how would you envision your involvement or contribution?

Yes, I would definitely like to remain engaged in future SubOptic-related opportunities. Being part of SubOptic Lisbon 2025 as a sponsored young professional was an eye-opening experience, and I see it as the beginning of a long-term relationship with the community. **In the future, I would love to contribute by supporting other early-career professionals—whether through mentorship, panel discussions, or helping to organize youth-focused sessions.** I believe peer-to-peer engagement is powerful, especially for those entering the industry from diverse backgrounds. I'm also interested in getting involved in working groups or technical committees related to network design, digital infrastructure resilience, or sustainable innovation in subsea systems. As I grow in my role as I want become Submarine Network Engineer, Marine Data and Systems Analyst, Subsea Cable Maintenance Engineer I hope to bring a fresh perspective and actively contribute to knowledge sharing and problem-solving. **Whether it's through volunteering, contributing to future conferences, or collaborating on SubOptic Foundation initiatives, I'm excited to stay connected and give back to the community that has already given me so much inspiration and direction.**

I would be honored to! The first thing that comes to my mind, is to bring life to the project Hands-On the Job Simulation! The more I think about this, the more I imagine, and the more I can see its potential on the SubOptic 2028 Cape Town, and for the next students on the Track, it would be amazing. Because I remember myself learning parts of the operations on a paper and pen, and a whiteboard, sometimes not even a photo or video, and it was so difficult sometimes to imagine and to visualize things get done. Now imagine if you could see and try it, it would be so different and more interactive. I deeply believe it would make such difference! Imagine you have a tiny remote-control boat, and a tiny remote-control excavator, and literally simulate a shore-end! And then some sand... oh wow, just imagine the potential!

SubOptic as a Long-Term Professional Anchor I also see SubOptic as a space I'd like to remain connected to professionally—as I grow into roles related to digital infrastructure architecture, governance, or strategy. I hope to return not just as a participant, but eventually as a speaker, panelist, or collaborator. 2. Research, Content, or Program Contribution I would be open to contributing to panels, technical papers, or working groups—particularly on: Subsea connectivity in Africa, Infrastructure for AI/data growth in the Global South, Sustainable system design and inclusive access models.

Yes, I am keen to support early careers/students suboptic events going forward, such as wave and suboptic 2028. This includes support during the planning stage or participating in panels as someone with a few years experience. I have joined the Global Citizen working group and am keen to contribute to the CLS working group, with my experience in the station I hope to support and help shape he sustainable recommendations and contribute to the testing and implementation of these best practice guidelines.

Anything else would you like to share with the team?

I would like to sincerely thank the entire SubOptic team and the SubOptic Foundation for giving me this life-changing opportunity. Being selected as a sponsored young professional meant so much to me not just because of the access to knowledge, but because it showed that this industry values inclusion and believes in the potential of young professionals from all backgrounds. Coming from a country like Tanzania, where subsea cable technology is not part of mainstream education, I never imagined I would have the chance to sit in the same room with global experts and thought leaders. **SubOptic 2025 inspired me, challenged me, and made me believe that I truly belong in this industry. Thank you for investing in the next generation. I hope to carry this experience forward by continuing to grow, share, and eventually help others step into this space just as I was welcomed. SubOptic was not just an event for me it was the start of something much bigger.**

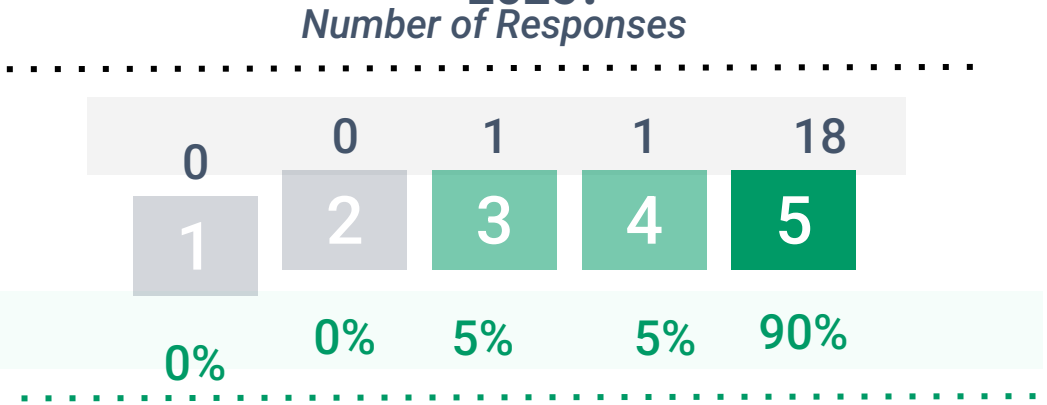
I would simply like to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to the entire SubOptic 2025 team for organizing such a high-quality, forward-thinking, and globally inclusive experience. As a student stepping into the world of digital infrastructure, this conference didn't just inform me—it inspired me. **What stood out most was the willingness of senior professionals to engage with younger participants, the diversity of topics bridging technology, policy, and society, and the sense of belonging you created for early-career attendees.** SubOptic has strengthened my motivation to help shape a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable digital future—and I hope to carry this spirit forward in both my studies and career. Thank you again for opening the door.

I just wanted to say a big, big thank you for having us at SubOptic 2025. You created an incredibly welcoming environment, facilitated an enormous amount of learning and you strengthened my commitment to a career in the industry. I'd also like to say an extra big thank you to Iago and Nicole who were so pivotal in bringing us in, and to everyone else both from the SubOptic Association and the SubOptic Foundation who welcomed us with open arms. I can't wait to catch up with you guys in the future! :)

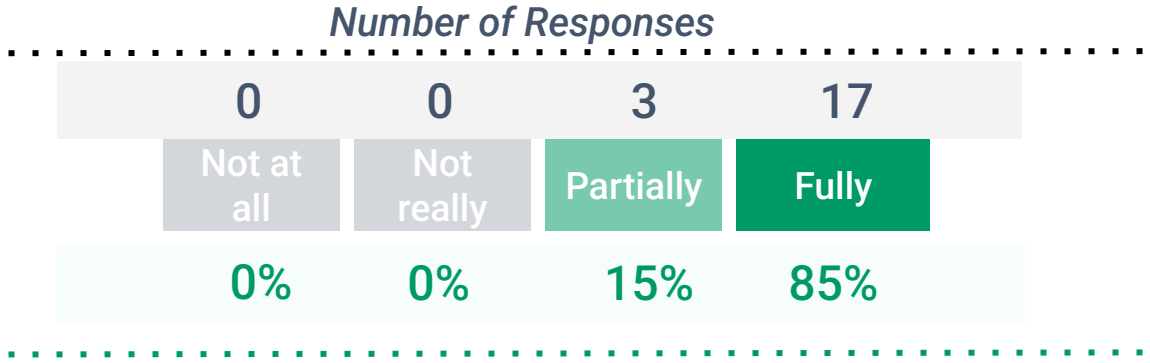
I am grateful to everyone I had the opportunity to meet through the event and to the event management. **It was a valuable experience and I hope to make the most of it in the future.** I would also like to study English harder so that I can communicate with everyone smoothly the next time I meet them. Thank you very much for the fun time I had!

Thank you for your efforts in making this track an amazing experience. **I am grateful faor this opportunity and happy to see great professionals who genuinely invest time and sources to help next generation to fit in this amazing and particular industry!**

On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your overall experience at SubOptic Lisbon 2025?



Did the conference meet your expectations?



Would you like to be involved with the planning of the Youth/Young Track for SubOptic 2028 in Cape Town?

Folder with photos taken by the team can be found here.

Potential Ideas for Future Iterations

BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

Pre-Conference Zoom Call with the Cohort: A large Zoom session could be held a few weeks before the conference to introduce students, share key logistics, and offer guidance from past participants. This would help build early connections and reduce uncertainty.

Glossary and Reading Pack: A short handbook could be shared in advance with key terms, concept overviews, and suggested readings to help students from diverse backgrounds follow technical sessions more confidently.

Structured Mentorship Track: Students could be paired with 2–3 mid-career mentors before the event for one virtual meeting and light ongoing support. This would offer early guidance, networking tips, and goal-setting support.

DURING THE CONFERENCE

Early Arrival Logistics: Bringing students in two days early could allow time for bonding, a welcome dinner, site visits, and a clear orientation. Participants stressed the need for early logistical clarity and more time to connect before the main event begins.

"Day in the Life" Spotlights just for the Student cohort: Short talks by professionals in legal, technical, policy, and commercial roles could show varied career paths. Many students wanted more clarity on how to enter and grow within the industry beyond engineering roles.

Regional Youth Panels: Students from could lead panels or talks on regional connectivity challenges and innovations. Several participants highlighted the need for more representation and local context, especially from the Global South.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

Youth Ambassadors & Regional Footprint: Students could serve as SubOptic Youth Ambassadors by giving a "Subsea 101" talk at their university or workplace and nominating a peer for the next cohort.

GDI Scholarships: Provide scholarships for top alumni to (in)formally enroll in Nicole Starosielski's GDI courses via UC Berkeley. This would extend their learning and offer academic credentials aligned with their interests. Where possible, include a small stipend (e.g., €500) to support students from under-resourced backgrounds.

Internship Pairing & CV Database:
Create a structured internship program matching students with industry partners for short-term, remote or in-person projects. As a pilot, 1–2 students could first be placed with the SubOptic Foundation/Association. For more advanced students, allow companies to check their CV for opportunities.

Full report is available here.