

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2019

#BALANCE FOR BETTER

WOMEN ENGINEERS SECTION

reported by



Ir. Mah Siew Kien



*Assoc. Prof. Dr
Zahiraniza Mustaffa*



Ir. Noorfaizah Hamzah



Ir. Tan Loo Yen



IEM team and student volunteers from UNITEN, USM, UTP and UKM

To mark International Women's Day 2019, Women Engineers Section (WES) co-organised two major events, one each in the Klang Valley and Penang. This year's theme for International Women's Day, Balance For Better, is aimed at encouraging gender parity in social, political, cultural and economic sectors of the society.

On 17 March, 2019, a one-day public forum, co-organised with Sunway Medical Centre, was held at SunMed Convention Centre, with a wide range of activities for the public. Participants were treated to Zumba fitness, a hospital tour, STEM activities and a piloxing session. In addition, Dr Sangeeta Kaur, founder of Emerging Journey Asia, gave a talk on gender and social inclusion.

Today, with more women and disabled individuals coming out to join the workforce, gender and social

inclusion are areas that the organisation is looking at. According to Dr Sangeeta, there are five types of inclusion.

1. Community – Social Inclusion is physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and a quality of life.
 2. Connection – Emotional Inclusion is beyond physical presence and into relationships.
 3. Contribution – Intellectual Inclusion is the dignity of contributing to the community.
 4. Contemplation – Spiritual Inclusion is the pursuit of meaning and purpose.
 5. Comprehensive – Comprehensive Inclusion happens in good health, quality of life and, when necessary, a cure.
- Dr Sangeeta said inclusion is one of challenges that organisations are facing today. We, as human beings, will have biases and stereotyping due to upbringing,



Students building a mini DIY pneumatic lifter to demonstrate that by using air, it is possible to provide a linear force capable of lifting a small object

environment and experiences. Even a tiny bit of bias will definitely contribute toward consequences in gender and social inclusion. She emphasised the need to look at ourselves and to evaluate our personal biases and stereotypes which may influence the gender and social inclusion in an organisation and added that we must not forget the five different types of inclusion mentioned above.

The hospital tour arranged by Sunway Medical was very impressive and enlightening for the participants, especially with regards to the latest medical equipment. For this event, our objective was not only to celebrate the achievements of women but also to promote women in all fields of science and engineering, starting with the young and STEM activities. Public awareness in health and the overall networking with people from all industries concluded the day's event.

WES also collaborated with the Penang Women's Development Corporation (PWDC), Tech Dome Penang and Intel Technology, for the event, Women in Zcience (WiZ) 2019, on 9-10 April. Participation in WiZ helped make WES more visible and for it to gain recognition in conveying the aspirations and message on the importance of STEM.

WES was provided with a booth to showcase our events, programmes and engineering display models. These engineering models were indirectly supported by the Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP) and Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) as collaboration efforts from the committee members.

As part of WES's contribution, a 2-hour Young Engineers Workshop was conducted, with six different activities – dynamics, flying contraption, vertical wind turbine, popsicle stick bridge, pneumatics and recycled bottle diver. These activities covered various engineering disciplines such as mechanical, renewable energy and civil engineering.

The 200 students involved were required to perform a minimum of 5 activities to complete this workshop. By engaging with these students, WES clearly sparked their interest in STEM and gave them an overview of the different

fields of engineering. Student volunteers from UNITEN and USM also engaged with the students and, in the course of performing the tasks as required, the latter had to put on their thinking caps, engage in problem solving and were exposed to a basic understanding of engineering principles, while having a fun-filled time. The workshop was made possible by the leadership and guidance of Mr. Chua Yaw Long, Chairman of IEM STEM Promotional Sub-Committee.

The two-day event brought together some 750 students from 9 schools in Penang. The students were of different ages and came from primary and secondary school to post-secondary institutions. They participated in self-guided and guided educational tours.

Ir. Mah Siew Kien, Assoc. Prof. Dr Zahiraniza Mustaffa and Ir. Noorfaizah Hamzah represented WES at the IEM booth exhibition and offered explanations of the posters and models on display. This proved to be a successful strategy that exposed the audience to the different learning experiences, following which the students showed a greater willingness to discover new things and a keen interest to know more about the displayed models.

Taking part in the various indoor games and challenges also gave them a different perspective of science and engineering. For the duration of the programme, the self-guided explanation regarding IEM and the execution of STEM activities were carried out by student volunteers from Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM).

WES aims to continuously raise awareness of and to increase interest in opportunities for women in the science and technology sectors. Through activities and collaborations, WES hopes to encourage the young generation of females to be game changers in STEM. This also ties in with our overall objectives as laid out at the WiSET conference to promote the advancement of women in STEM. ■
