

IEM WE Section Pre-AGM Talk on “Overcoming the Challenges of Gender Imbalance in the Engineering Industry”

WOMEN ENGINEERS SECTION

reported by



Puan Najiha binti Nadzru

The Women Engineers Section organised a pre-AGM talk on 23 September, 2017, which attracted a good turnout of over 40 participants. The event, Overcoming the Challenges of Gender Imbalance in the Engineering Industry, was presented by Puan Najiha binti Nadzru of Ranhill Bersekutu, Puan Noor Faizah Hamzah of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) and Ir. Suhana binti Abdul Majid, Managing Director of Prestasi Perintis. The session was chaired by Datin Sri Ir. Nor Asiah binti Othman of Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR).

Puan Najiha began the session with her views on gender imbalance in the engineering industry. She shared that while working as a contractor, she was the sole local female engineer apart from another female engineer from

Europe, out of a total of 40 engineers. As the company expanded over the years, a second female engineer was recruited, but only 4 years later. In recent years however, the number has increased, amidst growing interest and awareness on the importance of diversity globally.

She discussed the different problems faced by women engineers as compared to men and shared her ideas on how to increase the number of women engineers. This was to create greater awareness in order to get more support from society, government and industry for better work-life-career balance.

The next speaker, Puan Noor Faizah Hamzah, presented an academician’s point of view of the number of female versus male students in the Faculty of

Civil Engineering, UiTM. The academic performance of female students was found to be consistently higher than that of male students; however additional studies were needed to ascertain the number of female civil engineering students who actually practise engineering after graduation. Many women also dropped out of engineering career along the way to raise a family or to care for ageing parents and this is reflected in the even lower number of professional women engineers.

The third speaker, Ir. Suhana binti Abd Majid, spoke about the qualities that would help women engineers to excel. She shared her personal experiences in balancing work and family life while working as a site engineer for more than a decade, before she became the director of her own company.

The last and only male speaker of the day, Ir. Dr Tan Chee Fai from Universiti Teknikal Malaysia (UTEM), shared his thoughts on the contributions and impacts made by women engineers although there are, at present, only a small percentage. During the Q&A session, a male engineer confessed that he was one of those who voted against the setting up of IEM Women Engineers Section a few years ago as he did not think there was a need or relevance as such.



Group photo session



The speaker presenting the talk

Ir. Suhana highlighted that the engineering fraternity in general must understand and address gender imbalances proactively as intervention is needed because of market failures and social externalities that have failed to integrate more women engineers into the workforce over the years.

To realise the power and potential of the female workforce today, society needs to recognise the strategic importance of women in business transformation and growth while stepping up its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

In summary, there is still a large gap in terms of gender imbalance in the engineering industry. From the talk, the IEM WES committee hopes to create greater awareness that diversity and inclusion are important as we work towards a better future and a stronger nation. ■

IEM DIARY OF EVENTS

Title: ICTSIG Digital Class (May 2018) - Python Programming Language (Part 5 Numpy II)

12 May 2018

Organised by: Information and Communications
Technology Special Interest Group
Time : 11.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.
CPD/PDP : 2

Title: ICTSIG Junior Digital Class (May 2018) - S.T.E.M Fun Learning: Introduction to Physical Computing and Software Development

16 May 2018

Organised by: Information and Communications
Technology Special Interest Group
Time : 9.00 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.
CPD/PDP : N/A

Title: MRT Maintenance Depot, Prasarana Sungai Buloh (Siemens Inspiro Service and Maintenance)

16 May 2018

Organised by: Mechanical Engineering Technical Division
Time : 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.
CPD/PDP : Applying

Kindly note that the scheduled events are subject to change. Please visit the IEM website at www.myiem.org.my for more information on the upcoming events.

IEM DIARY OF EVENTS

Title: 2-Day Project Risk Management - Qualitative & Quantitative Approached

7-8 May 2018

Organised by: Project Management Technical Division
Time : 8.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.
CPD/PDP : Applying

Title: 2-Day Course on Effective Engineering Problem Solving and Decision-Making

7-8 May 2018

Organised by: Oil, Gas & Mining Technical Division
Time : 8.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.
CPD/PDP : Applying

Title: 1-Day Seminar on Power Distribution in Buildings

10 May 2018

Organised by: Electrical Engineering Technical Division
Time : 8.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.
CPD/PDP : Applying

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