



APEC Gifts Policy Workshop

by Ir. Prof. Dr Leong Wai Yie

Ir. Prof. Dr Leong Wai Yie is the past chairman of Women Engineers Section.

APEC GIFTS (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Gendered Innovation for Technology and Science) Promoting Women and Girl's Participation in STEM Workshop was successfully held in Taipei, Taiwan from October 24 to October 27.

APEC GIFTS is the policy forum organized by Taiwanese Government after recognizing that recent gender inequality issue in science and technology can impede the participation of woman scientists and engineers in the industrial fields and eventually obstruct economic development. Its purpose is to find the ways to improve the utilization of next-generation woman scientists and engineers in STEM fields for sustainable economic growth.

In the session "Innovative strategies for inspiring and spreading STEM knowledge" on October 25, Dr. Leong Wai Yie was invited to presented the leading activities and outcomes of Malaysia in STEM. She introduced the initiative and programmes conducted by woman scientists and engineers for the elementary, middle, and high school students, International Conferences, National Science Challenge 2017 and CEO Talks Series for the next-generation woman scientists and engineers. She highlighted Academic Science Malaysia (ASM)'s programs to establish the ground for the next-generation young scientists and engineers of all ages to help them entering the STEM fields.

Leong Wai-Yie shared the innovative strategy for retaining women in STEM in Malaysia. She mentioned that compared to other Asia-Pacific countries, the women labor force in Malaysia is lower, let along in STEM industries. In order to solve this problem, the ASEAN foundation has made a great effort. It cooperates with EU, funding women who want to join in STEM industries, holding ASEAN science and technology award to recognize outstanding women in STEM, and make them be the role models to women and girls. They publish books about women scientists in Malaysia, give speeches at school, and network with other related domestic and foreign organizations.

Amy Chen, L'Oréal Taiwan, Headquarter, Chinese Taipei

During the keynote speech, Amy Chen mentioned that in Taiwan, parents still have prejudice of that male performs better in science than female, doubting the capability and suitability for girls to pursue science, and concerning about the impact on family and marriage life, though it is improving gradually. To promote and support women and girls in science, L'Oréal establishes "Taiwan outstanding women in science (TOWIS)" award to honor splendid female scientists and set role models for young women. L'Oréal also published a book called "They are amazing" to make the stories of TOWIS winners to be heard. In empowering youth, L'Oréal also holds the "Girls high school science program" with WCS foundation, and in 5 years there were over 5,000 students participating this project. In the past 10 years, the proportion

of women major in science and technology has increased by 3%. Though the change is small, Chen still believes that only when we still try our best will the world become better for every woman and girl.

The distinguished speakers from Asia Pacific including Prof. Supapan Seraphin, Senior Advisor, National Nanotechnology Center, Thailand, Meenam Shinn, President of Doosan Corporation, Republic of Korea, Leonie Walsh, Inaugural Ambassador of Women in STEM Australia, Australia, Sylvia Kegel, German Association of Women Engineers (DIB), Germany, Leah Alvino Macatangay, Dean of College of Engineer, Central Colleges of the Philippines, the Philippines, Nguyen Thanh Phuong, Co-Founder, FABLAB Hanoi, Viet Nam, Jane Shih, CEO of WeTogether.co and Managing Director of Girls in Tech Taiwan, Chinese Taipei, Haryoung Poo, Principal Investigator of Korea Research Institute of Bioscience and Biotechnology, Republic of Korea, Anna Shen, Startup Advisor and Journalist, the United States, Chia-Li Wu, Chair of INWES – APNN, 2018-2020, Chinese Taipei, Kuo-wei Cheng, Chief Editor of PanSci Asia, Chinese Taipei and Magdalena Claro Larraín, Co-Founder of HackGirls, Chile.

The APEC GIFTS workshop has successfully gathered lots of meaningful feedback and sharing on women's participation in STEM fields in Asia Pacific region. The gender inequality and women underrepresentation in STEM fields should not prevent women from contributing to an economy's long term and inclusive growth



Ir. Leong delivering the sharing



Group Photo with the invited speakers and guests