



Women Engineers Riding on the Wave of IR4.0

by Ms. Choong Pooi Ying

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“A sister is a gift to the heart, a friend to the spirit, a golden thread to the meaning of life.”

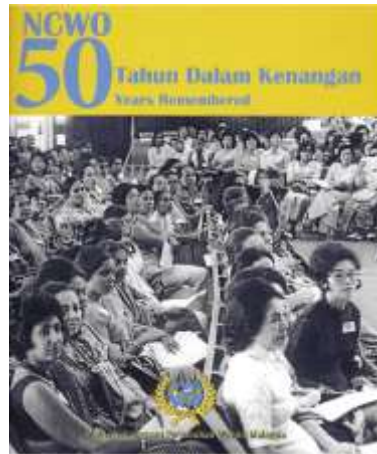
- Isadora James. Women Engineers Unite!

The 6th IEM Women Engineers Section (WES) AGM was held at KidZania theme park, Mutiara Damansara on 27th July 2019. This was the very first time an IEM AGM was held at a children’s theme park, breaking the traditional gathering means. The main aim of this approach was to ensure that while mothers are attending the meeting, their children can have fun, as well as gain different careers perspective by participating in role play activities.

The day started off with a breakfast networking session at McDonalds with all WE committee members, AGM participants, their children, also including our honorable guest speaker, Tan Sri Dato’ Seri Prof. Emerita Dr. Sharifah Hapsah.

The pre - AGM talk titled ‘Empowering Women in IR4.0: Role of Women Engineers’ was delivered by our honorable guest speaker, who’s currently the president of National Council of Women’s Organizations, Malaysia (NCWO), an umbrella organisation, with 87 national organizations and more than 170 affiliates, working to raise women’s status in Malaysia. She was the first woman Vice Chancellor of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM).

On top of the introduction about NCWO, Tan Sri gave a very powerful talk on empowering women in the workforce, encouraging women to fight for their rights, such as quality early childhood education and care facilities in workplace, organizational cultures, governance and practices that value gender diversity and enable women to stay ahead in their careers and most importantly, women engineers must syndicate with others in the innovation ecosystem to improve the quality of life of all. Many of the benefits and policies today that women are enjoying resulted from decades of NCWO’s effort in advocating for women’s issues to be integrated into all public policies.



The milestones of NCWO were documented in 'NCWO 50 Years Remembered'



Attendees of the pre- AGM talk

The AGM proceeded after the talk, with a total attendance of about 30 women engineers. Ir. Mah Siew Kien, Chairperson of Session 2018/2019, made the opening address, followed by the confirmation of the minutes for the 5th AGM held last year. All other typical process proceeded accordingly and finally with the announcement of the new office bearers for session 2019/ 2020. The newly elected Chairperson, Ir. Rusnida Binti Talib gave her address to the crowd and lastly the AGM ended with a scrumptious luncheon. All attendees networked amongst each other as well as many discussions and exchange of new ideas.

After the AGM, these engineer mums joined their children in their activities. It was heartwarming to witness a strong mother- child bond amongst these working women. The children shared their experiences of the day, and as any parent would, these mums were very happy to hear their children's stories and experiences.

By empowering women engineers, providing them with feasible working options, it can ensure that more women engineers would remain in the workforce even after they build their family.



Engineer mummy having an intimate time.

As a budding female engineering student that will be graduating soon, I wish to have a good work life balance where I can spend quality time with my family, at the same time being able to contribute to the economy and the development of our country, Malaysia. It was relieving that in a male dominated profession, WES thought outside the boundary and provided such a wonderful platform for activities that supports women engineers to be successful in not only with their careers, but also with their family development! It was a privilege for me as a university student to work closely with the WES team, assisting them in their activities and also observing their meetings. Working with WES has also given me the opportunity to build my network not only among other women engineers, but also amongst the male engineers in industry.

The WES team takes the initiative to encourage and ensure that women engineers are empowered. Male engineers are always welcomed to join our activities as all activities, may it be technical or non-technical, and it is all about inclusion. And even at our pre-AGM talk, we had a male attendee.

Lastly, to my dear fellow women engineers, out there, do join us! We do hope to reach out to more women engineers in building a strong network, here in Malaysia, and around the world, and we have already started with our network through WE-AFEO and APNN. Women may not have the same physical abilities as men, but our mental and technical competencies are on par with our male counterparts. It is all about diversity and inclusion, which then brings out the best respectively to achieve the overall goal.



Office Bearers for the Year 2019-2020