

Volunteering and Global Skills: A Young Engineers Perspective

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Abstract

The work of an engineer is increasingly global. Whether working on projects based in other countries or working in international teams, employers demand engineers who can work globally (The Royal Academy of Engineering, 2007).

Global skills are the non-technical skills needed by engineers to solve today's engineering challenges. Bourn and Neal (2012) list global skills as: critical thinking, multi-disciplinarily, team working, the ability to work across cultures and contexts, systems thinking and strong inter-personal and communication skills.

Universities are under pressure to add global skills development to an already overloaded curriculum. Should universities be solely responsible for preparing their students for employability? Many young engineers volunteer, not only to contribute to the engineering community, but to enhance their employability. Volunteering is known to develop skills, for example team work, public speaking, project management and communications.

European Young Engineers (EYE) is a voluntary organisation made up of young engineers from 22 engineering associations across Europe. EYE volunteers organise two conferences a year which focus on professional development, cultural leaning and networking. They also publish the EYE Contact magazine, which focuses on similar issues.

Young engineers can take responsibility for their own professional development. EYE provides an affordable and enjoyable way for young engineers to develop these global skills.

References

Bourn, D and Neal, I (2012). *The Global Engineer: Incorporating global skills within UK higher education of engineers*. London: Institution of Education (University of London)

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