



IABSE: an opportunity for Young Engineers to develop their social skills

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Abstract

Universities rarely have time to develop a major tool for Civil Engineers: their social skills. As a result, recent graduates usually have troubles in presenting their work to different groups of people. During the last years, the internationalisation of Civil Engineering has increased their difficulties as they need to work in a common language that may differ with their first language. In addition, young engineers need to learn how to interact with people from other cultures around the world. These social skills demanded in the current labor market are traditionally learnt by young engineers themselves in a process that might be overwhelming.

Being a member of IABSE, and specially participating in their conferences and annual meetings, offers a unique opportunity for young engineers to develop their social skills as they can get in contact and talk in front of a broad spectrum of engineers from both the industry and academia. Furthermore, young engineers can discuss topics and exchange ideas with senior and junior engineers in a friendly atmosphere.

Keywords: Social Skills; Young Engineers; Past Present and Future;

1 Introduction

The International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering (IABSE) is a scientific/technical Association that covers all aspects of structural engineering taking into consideration technical, economic, environmental, aesthetic and social aspects [1]. The Young Engineers Programme (YEP) within the IABSE organisation is focused on issues relevant to young engineers, fostering the participation of young engineers and facilitating their international networking. YEP, and also this paper, looks at the future of IABSE by looking at the role of Young Engineers within the organisation. However, quoting the IABSE Foundation Past President Jean-Claude Badoux, "No history, no memory, no future!" and therefore this work starts remarking the milestones in the foundation of IABSE and YEP.

There is probably no better reference to explore the history of IABSE than the book authored by [1]. IABSE was born in 1929 as an attempt from

many people, but mainly Arthur Rohn, Mirko Roš, Leopold Karner, Gaston Pigeaud and Friedrich Bleich, to overcome the professional isolation of engineers after World War I. The mere roots of IABSE are based on the internationalisation and the exchange of knowledge, focusing on the interests that we have in common and bridging our differences. Social networking has always been important to IABSE and it is one of its distinguishing characteristics. Figure 1 shows an excursion of the Permanent Committee and accompanying persons in Stockholm in 1949. The integrative nature of IABSE is apparent in the third article of its bylaws in 1929:

"Every individual person interested in bridge- and structural engineering may become a member".