



Lessons learnt from the IEEE R10 SYWL Congress

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My experience of the IEEE Region 10 SYWL Congress

Indeed, it was my immense pleasure to be a part of the IEEE Region 10 SYWL Congress and I am very thankful to Prof Donald Baily for suggesting me to attend this event. Given the Congress was informative, I felt like sharing my experience with you all. The IEEE Region 10 SYWL Congress was held in Sanur-Bali, one of the beautiful islands in Indonesia, which is popular for its rich history, culture and sandy beaches.



Figure 1. Tourist attractions in Bali

Day 01

The Congress started on 30 August 2018 and went for four days until 2 September 2018 at Prime Plaza hotel, Sanur-Bali. Dr Deepak Mathur (General Chair of IEEE Region 10 SYWL Congress) opened the plenary welcoming the guests and participants. Then, a number of Balinese cultural events were staged which were really entertaining.



Figure 2. Opening ceremony

In between the cultural events, the Director of IEEE Region 10, the Indonesian Section Chair, the Congress Co-Chair and the Director of Oracle Academy addressed the audience. Although the talks from the IEEE officials were mostly

about the activities undertaken at the regional and country level, the talk by the Director of Oracle Academy (Damian Haas) was a bit different. He discussed the philanthropic activities of the Oracle Corporation (an American multinational computer technology corporation headquartered in Redwood Shores, California, USA) and the Oracle Academy is one of them. The **Oracle Academy** provides a complete portfolio of software, curriculum, hosted technology, faculty training, support, and certification resources to K-12, vocational, and higher education institutions for teaching use, and particularly for free, which is not known by many academic institutions. However, it was fortunate to hear that Massey University has already registered and they access many of the resources provided by them. I am doubtful whether the students are aware of this service.

Day 02

The Congress resumed with the keynote by IEEE President-James Jefferies, where he discussed the history of the IEEE and explained how it evolved as the world's largest technical professional organization. Following his talk, Prof Kukjin Chin talked about the industry-academic relationships in South Korea, which brought a number of academic institutions



Figure 3. Keynote by IEEE President

and industries under one roof to develop a modern sensor manufacturing facility in the country. Additionally, Prof Maike Luiken and Dr Rafal Sliz added their values representing IEEE Region 7 and IEEE Region 8.

Following the plenary session, three parallel tracks were organised: Student, Young Professionals (YP), Woman in Engineering (WIE) and Life Members (LM); I attended the Student track particularly. James Jefferies started the session by stating that the student members are the backbones of the IEEE, stating that they start building their leadership skills and networks to achieve their career goals. He shared his personal experiences and highlighted the importance of creating and using opportunities for

development. He also emphasised that the engineers should not see academics and industries as two different things; in contrast, they need to treat them complementarily. Later, Prof Kukjin described the research opportunities and how to engage the industries in different research projects. Moreover, by referring to some of his own experiences, he highlighted the importance of a student-supervisor relationship and distinguished the roles of supervisors and students. In another talk, Prof Akinori Nishihara (IEEE Director-elect) discussed the ethics in publishing and highlighted the point that despite all the strict guidelines and high-tech software, people are involved in plagiarism. Then, Pasan Pethiyagoda (Student Representative for the Congress) discussed how the Students Activities Chapters (SACs) are performing in different parts of the Region 10 and what are the best and poor practices. Among the several aspects, assigning appropriate members for different positions of a SAC, updating the website frequently and posting the events on the websites were significant.

Afternoon student track was aimed at networking, and the student members were groups and asked to perform a number of group activities, which were interactive and fun too. On the same day, the Awards Night was organised and the SAC and YP chapters were recognised for their activities during the last couple of years. Bangladesh received almost all of the awards for their outstanding contribution to both IEEE and the local society. I then realised that, as SACs, Massey University and the Victoria University of Wellington have to go a long way, which require setting up objectives and member participation.

Day 03

Opening the plenary, Prof Shaikh Fattah (IEEE Region 10 Education Chair) addressed the importance of tackling community challenges using humanitarian technologies. He showed a number of exemplary humanitarian projects that were undertaken by him and his colleagues to promote the social well-being of people in need. The talk was engaging and thought-provoking. This also motivated me to think about New Zealand's potential in addressing social challenges in the Pacific, where the Islanders need to face a number of socio-economic and environmental challenges, particularly with climate change. Next, Prof Toshio Fukuda talked about the use of robotics in medicine, referring to his some of the on-going projects in

Japan. Hassaan Idrees raised the awareness about the grand challenges for engineering in the 21st century, which included multiple socio-economic and environmental issues that need urgent



Figure 4. Meeting with Subodha and Dr Mehdi



Figure 5. Cultural night

attention. He also engaged the audience to take part in a survey to understand the barriers to addressing the so-called grand engineering challenges, particularly in Region 10. Following that, Subodha Charles (South Asia Chair for IEEE Industry Applications Society (IAS)) described the IAS and its activities. In his talk, he indicated that there are several benefits in joining IAS, which include conference registration fee waiver, travel grants, funding for student projects and free access to the IAS magazine. From his talk, I understood that there is no IAS student chapter in New Zealand and hence, many of these benefits are not received (even not known) by New Zealanders. I then went and discussed with Subodha and Dr Hussain Falih Mahdi (Region 10 Chair for IAS) about the possibilities of forming an IAS student chapter. They were very happy. They encouraged me to find six student members and form the chapter. As a first step, they will waive the first year membership fee of 10US\$ per head. I am currently discussing with my colleagues at Massey to go ahead with this.

The afternoon session had four different tracks: Academia, Industry, Humanitarian and IEEE Activities; I was in the IEEE Activities track. A set of representatives from different IEEE societies (e.g. IAS, Power and Energy Society (PES)) were present and discussed the activities of each society. In the evening, the cultural night was held, which was colourful. Participants from different countries represented their culture in terms of their traditional dress and food.

Day 04

On the final day of the Congress, Beno Kunto Pradekso opened the plenary and talked about the use of big data analysis. There were some additional talks that mainly focused on different aspects: fine arts, yoga and personal skills. Following that, the Congress came to an end with the closing remark by Prof Kukjin and a traditional Balinese dance.

Overall, the Congress was a success, where a large number of participants from several countries networked and learned a lot about the IEEE activities, structure and future goals. From my perspective, I realise there are many opportunities that we have not identified or used, particularly at a SAC level. Moreover, as a SAC, we

need to set our objectives clear, design an agenda for the future and work accordingly, and I strongly urge your support in this regard.