

# Young Engineers Leadership Day and Engineering a Better World

On September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Annelies Tjebbes and André Marchildon attended the Young Engineers Leadership day followed by the Engineering a Better World conference in London, England. This incredible opportunity was made possible by the Canadian Academy of Engineering who kindly nominated both of them to the Royal Academy of Engineering event.

The Young Engineers Leadership Day was a gathering of engineering students and recent graduates from countries including the UK, South Korea, India, South Africa the United States amongst others. Throughout this day, the 100 attendees were tasked with coming up with solutions that would contribute to addressing the Global Sustainable Development Goals. Three SDGs were targeted: SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Renewable Energy), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and participants were challenged to develop technical, social and economic solutions.

Here's what André had to say about his experience at the Young Engineers Leadership Day:

*The task of finding a way to provide power to the Zaatari refugee camp was daunting. Even by limiting the scope of the project, the logistics involved still rendered this a very complicated problem to solve. As my team worked through the workshop we began to realize that the intention of this workshop likely wasn't to find actual solutions, but rather to get us young engineers to realize how complicated of a problem this really was.*

The Engineering a Better World conference was a gathering of leaders from around the world who are passionate about leveraging Engineering to address complex global challenges. Voices of international development experts, engineers, and young entrepreneurs were highlighted to show how a diverse group and diverse approaches are need to tackle these challenges. Again, the themes of weaving the SDGs into the work of engineers, and of broadening what it means to practice engineering were displayed prominently. The speeches and panels were thought provoking and inspiring.

Here's what Annelies had to say about the Engineering a Better World:

*It was an honour to be part of such a transformational day for engineering. This conference highlighted beautifully how engineering can act as a catalyst and support for positive global change, and it made me proud to call myself an engineer. As a staff member of Engineers Without Borders, I was also proud to see engineers in attendance start to see their role as broader than just technical innovation, and to see leaders thinking creatively about how to contribute to the global SDGs. I was also proud to see the topic of gender equality come out as*

*a strong theme in the conference, as this SDG (SDG 5 - Gender Equality) is near and dear to my heart, and a key in my opinion to achieving many of the other SDGs.*

It was an honour to be able to attend such an inspiring and enlightening conference. Young engineers need more opportunities like this to see the bright future of the profession and world we're heading into, and the profession needs youthful energy and innovation to help it evolve in the necessary direction. It was a beautiful marriage of minds, and hopefully will have served to plant seeds into the minds of attendees around the roles they can play in tackling global challenges.