



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH



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Merry Christmas



Interview with Engr. Kunle Adebajo FNIStructE, MNSE, on Young Engineers

Engr. Kunle Adebajo FNIStructE, MNSE, is a structural engineer. He is the CEO of Arup Nigeria a consulting engineering firm. He has a particular passion for training and for developing the standards in our industry.

Engr. Kunle served as the president of the Nigerian Institution of Structural Engineers and the chairman of NSE Ikeja Branch simultaneously.



Engr. Kunle Adebajo

E-Newsletter: *Sir, what can you tell us about the challenges young engineers are facing?*

Engr. Kunle: Well I think there are challenges to the whole new generation, this generation that is coming up now really has the major challenges. The Country is not what it is used to be, the economy is not what it used to be and therefore in this competitive time where there is large numbers and it seems to be fewer available opportunities for growth. The educational system seems to have lost lot of its shine. So really when you look at it all, everything looks gloomy but I think there is hope. It is just that you need to search for how that hope can be exploited. One of the things I always tell the younger engineers now is that, whilst things may not be what it used to be but as long as you can be good in your profession, as long as you can aim for the height and make a difference, you can still be successful. For the fore fathers of engineering; soon after they graduated from the university, success came their ways but now it is not like that.

Graduation is just the start. It is like getting a passport and you are not yet on the plane. You still need to get your visa, buy your ticket and fly. So getting a qualification now is just a bare start. The young engineers need to now chart his course; they need to go against all the odds, against lots of challenges and those challenges are quite significant but with determination, good training and good mentorship the young engi-

neer can still make it and I think one of the biggest advantages that a young engineer has now is that technology is on their side. In our days, you have to actually make effort sometimes to get information. Right now, as long as you are interested in getting information, you can get it either on the internet, by sending messages, speak within a few seconds on Skype or by sending an e-mail. I can get information from Australia concerning a project that was done there and I can use it here. So technology is very useful and for those who do not follow along will be left behind. Another thing about our own engineering challenge is that the days when it was just ok to do calculations and do technical work and then be good has gone. Software has replaced a lot of that. Now you need different kind of skills, we need what we call soft-skills, you need to be able to communicate, you need to be able to right reports, you need to be able to get your message across, you need to be able to negotiate, you need to be able to understand and articulate things fast, so unlike those days where you will be inside your office, just doing your calculations up till midnight, now you have to go out there and explain to a clients exactly what your design is all about and so the clients also expects a lot more from the engineers. There is a big change but it does not mean that young engineers cannot surmount those challenges. They just have to redirect their focus and skills. Before an engineer does not need to talk but now if you cannot talk you are not going to be successful. Before an engineer probably did not even need to be smart in dressing, now he needs to understand that his image is also important. Before an engineer did not need to think about business, entrepreneurship, balance sheet and all that but now all that are important if not you will be left behind.

E-Newsletter: *Thank you very much sir. What advice do you have for the young engineers when they meet the senior engineers?*

Engr. Kunle: Well let me even just say what advice I will give the young engineers? The biggest advice is they should not settle for anything less than the best. They should not allow these challenges to hold them down. You can be the best but you have to work at it, so do everything possible.

The Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch EXCO and staff end of year party was held on Thursday 15th December 2011 at Engr. Prof. Y. O. Beredugo hall of the Engr. Ishmael A. Banigo secretariat, Water Works Yard, #3 Bernard Carr Street, Port Harcourt.





The Nigerian Society of Engineers

2011 International Conference & Annual General Meeting

COMMUNIQUE

The Nigerian Society of Engineers held its 44th International Engineering Conference and Annual General Meeting tagged “**CANAAN 2011**” at the Tinapa Business & Leisure Resort, Calabar, between 5th and 9th December, 2011. The theme of the Conference was “**Effective Transportation System In Nigeria: The Way Forward**”.

1. The conference deliberated on the following Sub-themes: Road Transportation Systems, Waterways, Rail, Aerospace and Conveyance, Pipelines, Power Systems. The Conference also looked at Policy and Developmental Framework, Technology and Innovation, Safety, Security and Environmental Issues, as well as Maintainability and Sustainability of Transportation Systems.

2. The Conference recognizes that:

- i. Road development and maintenance lack adequate engineering design and funding in many instances.
- ii. The haulage by road of fuel, construction materials (Cement, OCTG pipes and Iron rods etc) cannot be globally price competitive. This causes wear and tear of our roads, leading to rapid collapse of our Road Structures.
- iii. There is need for continuous review of codes and standards for road construction, specification of materials and supervision of roads.
- iv. The current level of Road Accidents in Nigeria ranks among the highest in the world.
- v. The bicycle represents an affordable, effective and healthy mode of transportation, but Nigerian road layouts do not have such provisions.
- vi. Nigeria is an agrarian nation and rural road network development is directly linked to improved agriculture production, food security and economic development. However, most of the rural roads in the country are in a deplorable state.
- vii. Problems facing the maritime transport sector are considerable; hence, the impact of this sector is yet to be fully felt.
- viii. Traffic carrying capacity of our roads is grossly inadequate leading to

prolonged congestion and economic wastes through huge Man-hour losses

- ix Existing dry dock facilities do not operate at optimal capacity because Dock and Ship building are capital intensive.
- x. Railway system is the cheapest, most efficient means of carrying heavy, bulk goods and mass movement of people.
- xi. Our key international airports are in a deplorable state due to poor maintenance, obsolete equipment and severely limited capacity both in aircraft, cargo and passenger handling.
- xii. The operations of the domestic commercial airlines are not responsive to traffic demands in various levels of demand.
- xiii. In connection with the Aviation services in Lagos, the existing link road between MMA2 and MMA International is problematic and constantly congested. Similar situations exist in Abuja.
- xiv. There is a need for well equipped Transport Institutions and trained personnel for Nigerian transportation systems.
- xv. It is observed that there is lack of information to provide fast response when an accident occurs.
- xvi. Human factors contribute significantly to road accidents more than any other factors like mechanical and environmental. Most of the existing roads lack appropriate signage and safety signs.
- xvii. Over the years, Nigerian transportation system has been characterised by lack of effective planning and management that seem to favour automobile travel over other modes. The land use development practice also tends to create automobile dependent communities.

Presently, there is no authoritative data on Power demand in the country.

the remaining part of this communiqué will be published in the next edition

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Their destiny is in their hands. It's no longer somebody is going to come and feed you. You have to take it. If you are hungry, quench the hunger, if you are thirsty quench it and that is by self determination. The young engineers must be thinking all the time and must be proactive. Now you asked a question, when they come in contact with the senior engineers; my advice is that they should recognize that whilst the senior engineers may not know everything but he has had a lot of experience. Experience doesn't come easy because a lot of them don't even have jobs. So they will say how am I going to have the experience. I can tell you something, by talking to somebody who went to Badagry and came back today, you can find out whether there was traffic, you can find out if that is the day the market was opened, you can find out what is the latest on the road that they are buildings. You didn't even leave Ikeja but you can get enough information. So similarly, the young engineers should try and extract as much experience from the older engineers without having to go through it himself. So if the older

engineers have had thirty years experience, in one hour or three hours, the young engineers may be able to get five years of experience from the older engineers without going through those five. Young engineers should not be afraid to ask the older ones for information, they should be talking, they should be thinking. They should realize that they have to be professional engineer to really succeed in today's environment. As long as they can be professionals, as long as they can do things properly, they will always have market and they will always succeed.

E-Newsletter: *Thank you very much.*



Engr. Kunle Adebajo & Engr. Otunte Otuneh

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