

EEG organises 9th Students' Workshop focusing on education and job creation in low-carbon world

October 20, 2009

UAE -With the hope of changing existing mindsets when it comes to future vocational prospects for the youth of the UAE, Emirates Environmental Group organized its 9th Students' Workshop. Attendance for this annual workshop has been the highest so far in the history of this event with the participation of over 600 students from more than 100 Schools and Colleges, over the four consecutive days of the workshop.

Under the banner of 'Tomorrow's Environmentalists' the theme of this year's workshop was 'From Green Education to Green Jobs- Opportunities in a Low -Carbon World'. The topic was selected to educate the students on diverse leadership roles that integrate sustainability into the communities and provide a hands-on introduction to the growing green jobs market.

The workshop is also centered on the different aspects of the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), its high relevance to the changing markets, addressing environmental challenges and how it should be incorporated in mainstream curriculum.

This year for the first time in the history of EEG the Students' Workshop was conducted at the university level as well. This was due to the growing demand to increase the level of the workshops to include students from the universities, at the request of the student community as well as numerous faculty members from esteemed institutions. Therefore to address this need the Student's Workshop which comes under the banner of 'Tomorrow's Environmentalists' hosted the event at the Dubai Women's College on the 19th of October 2009 and on the 20th, 21st and 22nd of October 2009 at the Rashid School for Boy's for students from schools.

'Green Education to Green Jobs' was conducted with the aim of promoting the green jobs movement by investing in training young people with the critical thinking skills, stewardship ethics, and practical know how that will empower them to implement solutions and create new approaches to the social and ecological problems and opportunities we face as a society.

Dr. Howard Reed, Director of Dubai Women's College, stated:

"Dubai Women's College is proud to hold the Emirates Environmental Group's first university level workshop at its campus. We, at DWC, believe that green education will flourish in UAE and will grow in order to create a new generation of responsible Emiratis. And this can only be achieved through engendering knowledge and understanding the importance and difficulties of sustainable development and environmentalism."

Some of the important highlights of the workshop were that it interweaves theory with practice. A lot of emphasis was given to asking questions and having group discussions. The junior category was asked to participate in an activity called - what I want to be when I grow up? As for the seniors, several sessions held great interest; some of which were - Green Jobs from the UAE's perspective, Skills required for the future, educating on closed loop economy, what needs to be changed? What can be easily changed?.

Opening the event EEG's Chairperson Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi quoted that 'Greening the

nation's workforce, enough for training up to half a million existing students in schools and colleges every year for jobs in emerging 'green' sectors is no easy task. But this workshop is one small step in a series of efforts that are slowly emerging to create awareness. What we are witnessing in this very room is the start of a dream team of solutioneers'.

A growing concern about global warming and human impact on the environment has led to a dramatic increase in services, products, and technologies that are considered 'environmentally sustainable' or 'green.' Together, these new services, products, and technologies are creating a huge market, and consequently, a new sector of our economy. This blossoming 'green economy' is spreading quickly across the world. Therefore the greater need to address this new phenomenon at the grass root level i.e. with students.

Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi introduced the speaker and main facilitator Mr. Ken Webster, supported by Ms. Caroline Walker both of who had travelled from the UK for this event. Mr. Kenneth Roy Webster is an international consultant in ESD. He has authored 15 books and resource packs so far. Ms. Caroline Walker has done her MSc in Environmental Education and is an ESD consultant and advisory teacher.

Three of EEG's youth members were also introduced at the event: Elie Nasr, Muna Al Amoudi and Jaffar Owainati, who were present at the Workshop to contribute to the event by sharing their personal experiences. The speakers took on the spot light for the duration of 4 days to educate students on various issues that the topic touched up on.

Appreciation was well in order for the sponsors of the event. Al Safi Club for Friends of the Environment for giving their constant support to EEG's events and special thanks was extended to Rashid School for Boys for hosting the event at the school level for three consecutive days. Adding to this list would be Drake and Scull International, who came on board this event for the first time, the British Council, a committed supporter for EEG's workshops and Dubai Women's' College for hosting the pilot workshop on their campus for the university level.

Before ending her speech, EEG Chairperson drew the attention of the students to the Seal the Deal Campaign and explained the importance that the youth play in this UN Led initiative. She urged each and every one of them to go online and sign the petition for a fair climate agreement at the Copenhagen conference which will be held on the 7th of December 2009. The UN-led Seal the Deal Campaign aims to galvanize political will and public support for reaching a comprehensive global climate agreement in December.

(AME Info)