

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
SPACE WORKFORCE DEVELOPEMENT – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES (7)

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BUILDING A WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT A NATIONAL SPACE PROGRAMME

Abstract

The workforce is an essential building block of a space programme. Hence, a well structured and properly implemented strategy for building this workforce is an indispensable first step in the creation of such a programme. In Malaysia, careful mapping of the way forward and strategic tapping of resources were the reasons an increase in capability and capacity was achieved in a relatively short time. International linkages and programmes which were deliberately harnessed served to shorten the development time, while spreading the capacity over a wide range of human capital groupings, from primary and secondary schools to universities and to the private sector, ensured that a robust workforce pool was brought forth. Just as importantly, the environment for the creation and retention of this human resource had to be given due consideration, especially as this critical-mass workforce had to be multi-talented and well trained, and they had to be resourceful, creative and innovative as well, given the fact that the space programme was continuously under pressure to justify itself. Today Malaysia has the critical number of scientists and engineers with the skills to execute the entire development and operation cycle of a satellite programme and has a large human resource base related to space applications. From the United Nations perspective, the seeds for cultivating a workforce to support a national space programme are sown in our capacity building programmes that cover space science, technology and applications and space law and policy. A space policy, in particular, is a very important component of a space programme as it will ensure the sustainability of institutions established and will be able to specifically address issues related to nurturing of a sustainable workforce and a space industry.