

**Report to the 33rd General Assembly
FIG Congress in Sydney, Australia 2010**

FIG Young Surveyors Network

Report of Activities 2009



1. FIG Working Week Eilat, Israel

The main event during 2009 was the FIG Working Week in Eilat, Israel. The conference had a quite low number of attending students but there was a group of approximately 15 students that had been brought down to Eilat thanks to a committed teacher.

From the Young Surveyors core group there were four of us participating, me, Cemal Özgür Kivilcim, Kate Fairlie and Thorsten Schwing.

During the General Assembly the fourth of May the FIG Young Surveyors Working Group officially became the FIG Young Surveyors Network. With the new status we hope to engage more members and put pressure on national organizations to involve young surveyors in their work. And as an effect of this we hope to get more engaged young surveyors in to FIG. One could say that we are a way in to FIG for young members that are involved on a national level. We have had so many during the three years up to now saying how can I be a part? And how can I be involved? At the same time there have been older surveyors saying that we challenge you to get a young surveyor involved, this makes me angry and I'm convinced that if this person went home and asked a young surveyor if they would like to be involved nationally they would say yes. If a young member gets the question from their national president or chair one would hardly say no.

Our task as a network is to create these contact points within FIG, and create ways for young surveyors in to FIG. An example is the speed mentoring that we arranged last year in Stockholm that was very appreciated by all ages. Unfortunately this did not work out as planned in Eilat to our great disappointment. The great Israeli students who had come to Eilat were though very interested in our work and I hope to see one or several of you in Sydney in 2010.

We also held two sessions during the Wednesday, one where we got to hear about experiences from France and Ordre Géomètre Experts president Pierre Bibollet and the Chair of the Danish Landinspektoerforening Henning Elmstroem who is also the president of CLGE. Both of them were talking about experiences when it comes to student engagement and how they work in each country to make young people interested in the profession and then how to get the young surveyors involved on a national level.

Another important part of the conference was the extended engagement in Africa.

2. FIG Workshop, Navigating the Future of Surveying Education, Vienna February 2009

It may seem that the title for this workshop was somewhat ambitious, but as far as I am concerned I believe that the organizers did a great job and that we had really good discussions. The goal has to be put high in order to get somewhere.

One of the big topics was how to spread awareness about the surveying profession and in particular to schoolchildren, as awareness needs to be created early in life. In the U.K. kids believe that a surveyor is somebody standing outside the stores asking you what kind of products you bought. Well this is not wrong as these persons are doing a survey. Or if they do know a bit more they think that it is someone standing and looking in to their equipment. What happens then with the collected data they don't have a clue.

To generalize a bit this unawareness problem seems to be widely spread in the western world and the countries where we have a well developed property system that might have gotten to difficult for the average person to understand. In countries where this is still under development as Romania and Slovenia they are not facing the same kind of difficulties. They are not agreeing on that the profession has lost its status and it is either not difficult to attract students to the education. In Turkey they have had to cut back on the number of students this despite the fact that there is a large demand from the industry and a large number of students applying for each seat. This as there is not enough teachers available.

In the US the average age of a Land Surveyor is 57. And with the hope to do something about this problem there are campaigns in several states where surveyors go out to schools when the kids are 5-6 years to tell them about what a Land Surveyor is. The idea is to create awareness from an early age, all of them want to be fire fighters and policemen or princesses why not land surveyors? Among other things a teacher married to a surveyor have developed a colouring book with surveyors that have been distributed and children have been able to colour surveyors in action. If this has given any result in university applications is though unclear.

But why is the profession so unsexy? All of us that participated at the workshop were agreeing, and I don't think that there were any exception to that, we have the coolest profession in the world. But why is this so hard for the rest of the world to understand, or let me rephrase the question, why is this so hard for us to communicate? One participant from the U.K. was sharing a problem he often faces at dinners. He stands there mingling with a glass of wine and as the question about his profession comes and he says that he is a surveyor. A regular response from the other person is aha ok and then he or she turns to the next person asking about his or hers profession. And if this next person turns out to be a lawyer or doctor there is not the least hard to understand what this person is doing for a living. Personally I believe that if I introduce myself as a soon to be ready engineer it would be a lot easier for people to understand what I am doing despite the fact that this description involves a almost infinite field of possible work tasks.

Another problem discussed was that with the techniques of today everyone thinks that they can be a surveyor; it is a piece of cake. Just open Google maps and you will have it all there, well it is not that easy and we know that, but not your average person out there. They don't know anything about the legal, economical or technical aspects. And they have no clue how the maps on the web were produced.

The FIG Young Surveyors Working Group was invited to Vienna to host a part of the workshop with the theme "*students today – status and vision*". As an introduction I choose to talk about the me-we generation prior to the discussions. For anyone unfamiliar with the expression just put it on Google and loads of information will come up. An interesting thing though is that this as well also seems to be valid for the western part of the world. Then we divided the audience in to four groups where two discussed studies, what is prioritized, experiences from the Bologna process and the opportunities to foreign exchange it was said to create? The two other groups discussed networking and soft skills, how important are these and how well student organizations are working in reference to the industry during the time in University.

The four groups were lead by Thorsten Schwing, Germany, Kate Fairlie, Australia, Eva-Maria Unger Austria and me Cecilia Lindén, Sweden. Discussions were intensive and this is some of the outcome:

In most of the countries that was represented it exists some kind of interaction between local student organizations and the industry, in very varying forms though. But all agreed on the thought that for this to be possible the students themselves have to have an established and stable student network. There were also discussions around the fact that that there are two types of network, those who are outgoing and those who are introvert. When it comes to the Bologna process many teachers felt, despite the new opportunities there are not so many more students that go abroad on comparison to before. The experience from those who do take the chance to go abroad is that they will experience an incredible personal development and growth. A problem is though the credits transfer from those who have been outside of Europe, it is difficult to convert to the European system.

A conclusion out of all of this is that no matter how many possibilities are created by others it is always up to the individual to take the chance and do something out of it. You could make the largest "smorgasbord" of opportunities but you can never force anyone to eat out of it. The Young Surveyors Working group hopes that we can inspire others to take these opportunities. Our profession is truly global and we hope that the transition from working group to FIG Young Surveyors Network will make us truly global as well. But we will need the help of all the existing students' networks on a national level.

3. Publications

When it comes to communications the Network have been working towards a platform via the FIG webpage. The layout and the content have been done during the year and now we hope to get it up and running as soon as possible. This as you do not really exist unless you are on the Internet.

The number of newsletters has been lower this year as the focus has been to collect and put together the data for the webpage. In December there was a news blast for the upcoming congress in Sydney sent out by Kate Fairlie.

Cecilia Lindén

Chair of FIG Young Surveyors Network

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Website: www.fig.net/ys/