

on 07 October 2013

## From Charles Darwin to leaders for 21st century



LIGHT MOMENT: (From left) Former vice chancellor of Unimas Datuk Prof Dr Khairuddin Hamid, Boyce and Tin in a conversation.

KUCHING: The International Conference on Transnational Collaboration in STEAM Education 2013 held in Unimas, started yesterday with experts swinging from Charles Darwin to roving science buses and aviation.

According to the organiser, Science House Foundation's executive director and chairperson of Transnational Collaborative STEAM Education Summit Joshua Fouts, the conference explores the world of cross-cultural, collaborative science and arts education and how to prepare tomorrow's leaders for a 21st century workforce.

He said the conference is about gathering keynote speakers — leaders of industry, policy and academia — joining in to share their insights, wisdom and ideas.

Some issues that this summit will address include Cultural Collaboration and Science, ICT and Science Education: Crossing Borders with Technology, The Future of Education: Seeking Synergy in a Transnational Context and Toward a Transnational, Collaborative Science Curriculum.

One of the exciting speakers, science advisor to Daw Ang San Suu Kyi from Myanmar, Dr Tin Hliang while presenting his talk themed 'Transnational Science for the Global Grassroots', said an example of transnational science is Charles Darwin, who explored lands and seas to discover scientific facts.

He said many fields of science have developed because of multinational efforts.

He also said that children can become science ambassadors as they generally love science and they like exploring science themselves, and can induce scientific interests in parents.

Getting science to the grassroots, it can be taken in two ways, one via science exhibitions and organised along with public festivals and two, via schools, according to Tin.

His idea is to hold science circuses with roaming science buses, carrying science equipment and volunteer students and adults.

Also speaking at the conference, president of Boeing Southeast Asia, Ralph L (Skip) Boyce, said Boeing's 2012 Global Giving total combined investment was US\$179 million comprising US\$71 million in business related donations, US\$42 million for employees and US\$66 million on charitable grants by focus areas.

He said one example of sharing best practices around the globe was Boeing community investor in Dubai working with Boeing community investor in Seattle on designing STEM programmes for the Middle East, learning from experience of US programmes.

Other key aspects of their international education investments, he added, are need-based: assessment of needs and gaps in the educational programmes of a specific country, alignment with national education policy priorities, inquiry-based with focus on hands-on learning that include teacher training component, partnership with local stakeholders like school districts, ministry of education and other community members.

Meanwhile, he said in China, an aviation education programme for elementary schools was launched in 2009, participated by over 45,000 students, 900 teachers and 645 schools from 2009 through 2012.

He said Boeing also has partnership with Kenan Institute Asia in Thailand.

"Outside the USA, we are increasingly building programmes that span a broad range of educational levels, from early childhood through university," he said.

The conference is supported by Sarawak Convention Bureau, The Richard Lounsbery and Ford Foundation among others.

Source: The Borneo Post