

Being part of the power source

NATION

Sunday, 4 Mar 2018



By Kelly Tey



TNB president and chief executive officer Datuk Seri Azman Mohd receiving the SL1M 2017 Diamond Employer silver award from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak during the opening for SL1M at Maeps.

FOR as long as Ng Zhun Yong can remember, he had always wanted to be a part of the Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) workforce.

“Every home needs power supply, and I’ve known TNB to be this power source all my life.

“My first thought was to go to this place that provided this energy source to my family and many other households,” said Ng.

The 24-year-old business administration and human resources student from UNITEN spared no time in applying for the six-month 1Malaysia Training Scheme (SL1M) under TNB upon graduating.

“I was placed under a team project department which was quite unexpected.

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(From left) SL1M-IBE trainees Ng, Nurul and Tamil reflected on their training journey at TNB so far.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and aspiring SL1M-IBE trainees are given a walk-through of TNBs SL1M training highlights by Azman Mohd (right) and Muhammad Razif (fourth from right).



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"I trained under a team leader who gave me opportunities just like other staff. I was not held back because I didn't have the right credentials, or that I was just a SL1M trainee," expressed Ng.

Ng's university coursemate and fellow trainee Tamil Selvan Raja shared the same thought, adding that training at TNB's leadership development centre has given him an invaluable experience.

"I learned a lot about working efficiently and even got to partake bigger scale projects together with other TNB colleagues, some of whom were senior management members of TNB.

"I was humbled by the fact that despite being senior management members, they were approachable and willing to teach," said Tamil Selvan.

"One of the biggest takeaways I got from the experience was humility."

Tamil Selvan said his perception about a career in this industry has changed, thanks to the words imparted by TNB president and chief executive officer Datuk Seri Azman Mohd.

"He once said that it's not just about the performance of an employee, but also his potential; a good company will recognise and nurture that," he recollected.

Changing lives

Since 2011, TNB has trained 2,622 SL1M candidates with allotted training funds from Akaun Amanah Industri Bekalan Elektrik (AAIBE) under the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry.

To date, AAIBE has approved a total of RM56mil to carry out the SL1M-IBE (Industry Bekalan Elektrik) programmes.

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"Our main objective is to prepare a skilled workforce for the energy supply industry, and not just solely for TNB," said Tenaga Nasional Bhd chief people officer Datuk Muhammad Razif Abdullah.

"We spend about RM25,000 on each trainee; that's why we pick candidates who are interested and proactive as well as have the enthusiasm to change their lives for the better," said Muhammad Razif.

He said a big part of TNB's focus for the programme is also on giving training opportunities to those who come from financially challenged backgrounds.

"We believe with the right training and education, we can change a family's socio-economy. We want to make SL1M trainees more desirable in the job market."

Different skills

University Malaysia Sarawak communication graduate Nurul Farhanah Saffinye got into the SL1M-IBE programme immediately after graduation.

But unlike Ng and Tamil Selvan, Nurul Farhanah did not harbour any expectation when she was accepted.

"At first I didn't care which company accepted me, but later I realised just how fortunate I was."



SL1M-IBE trainees Roslina and Clare.



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Nurul Farhanah said the programme equipped her with soft skills and communication skills in the first month before settling her into the technology and common enablers department.

"TNB runs the programme differently in the way we are exposed to various courses, the guidance we receive and the way we are treated like a real staff.

"Even if I don't end up working for TNB when I complete my training, I have gained experience and confidence to be able present myself to other employers – I don't feel inferior," noted Nurul Farhanah.

Roslina Rosli, 23, initially heard negative comments from friends when she opted for the SL1M training with TNB but shrugged them off.

"I wanted to see what I could get from the training and the experience so far has been rewarding."

Building confidence

The Universiti Teknologi Petronas electrical engineering graduate felt there is no limit to trying. Being placed with the Energy Commission, Roslina trained in Energy Audit, it was a completely foreign field for her.

"Through the training I've gotten certifications, one of which was to work at TNB sites while another was for energy audit."

To pay for this certifications would have been costly, said Roslina, but the training programme covered the costs.

"It's really challenging in the job market these days; when you get a degree without soft skills and added value points, you don't really shine.

"SL1M-IBE trains and changes us – it makes us more employable."

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Since SL1M was established in 2011, TNB has accepted and trained 2,622 candidates for the electricity supply industry.

Things were different for University of East London graduate Clare Adriana Stanley as the 28 year-old electrical and electronic engineering graduate already had two years of working experience before entering TNB's SL1M-IBE programme.

Clare had left her career to tend to her mother who underwent a major operation, and while looking for a new job after, she applied for the training.

"It's a big shift for me, but I believe working people should explore this.

"Even if you're a fresh graduate, you don't have to go straight into a job; entering programmes like these helps with your performance, enhances your soft skills as well as communication prowess.

Clare said that for those already in the workforce, it is good to refresh oneself and not be confined to a certain field of expertise, career, or company.

"Soft skills aside, TNB placed us in various areas to learn its different products and it was very good exposure."

Attached to the asset and planning department, Clare said it helped her to foster good personal growth.



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Career path

"Just because I'm from an engineering background doesn't mean that's all I should focus on. TNB takes us out of our comfort zone to see what we're capable of," she said.

"It helps build confidence and overcome fear – we learn to believe in ourselves."

The SL1M training may be a stepping stone for her, but Clare hopes to continue to build a career with TNB, following her father's footsteps who worked with the company for 37 years.

"I grew up knowing this company and I've decided TNB is the way for me," she concluded.

Tenaga Nasional Berhad was named the SL1M 2017 Diamond Employer silver award recipient.

The award, which recognises recipients for their commitment to the SL1M programme and its trainees, was announced during the opening of this year's Central Zone level of open interviews for SL1M at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang (Maeps).

TNB has since absorbed about 5% of its trained candidates, and 94% of 342 SL1M trainees in the first phase have already gotten placements within six months after the training.

In the second phase, 80% of trainees have found jobs, while in the third phase, 76% out of the 600 TNB trained candidates have secured a job.