



Hands-on approach: A Robin Resources Sdn Bhd employee explaining the raw materials used in producing Medium Density Fibreboard.

MTC's programme offers lecturers better understanding of industry

THE Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) recently organised a familiarisation programme for local university lecturers that gave them the chance to create a greater understanding of Malaysian forestry and the Malaysian timber industry.

Through on-site learning opportunities with various companies, the four-day programme saw the participation of eight lecturers who specialise in the fields of forestry, interior and furniture design as well as architecture from five institutions of higher learning — Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Mara, International Islamic University of Malaysia, SEGi University College and KBU International College.

The lecturers visited seven wood-working factories in the Klang Valley and Mentakab, Pahang to obtain insights into current industry practices and the actual workings of the local timber industry.

The visits provided them with invaluable networking opportunities with key industry players to help them enhance their teaching curricula by incorporating practical case studies and real-world experience into classroom learning.

MTC chief executive officer Datuk Yeo Heng Hau said the programme would not only enable the lecturers to learn about the current trends, opportunities and challenges facing the industry, but also facilitate a working relationship between the industry and academia for future potential collaborations such as industrial internships and R&D initiatives.

"Tertiary educational institutions can greatly benefit from working closely with these companies and share the knowledge and experience gained with their students.

"Keeping the students updated on issues in real-world settings means equipping the students with relevant, practical knowledge on the industry's latest technologies and innovation, thus setting a strong foundation for the start of their career in the industry," said Yeo.

A participant from Universiti Teknologi Mara's Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying Centre of Studies (Interior Architecture) head Dr Mohd Zafrullah Mohd

Taib commended MTC for organising the familiarisation programme.

"The visits to the factories were very insightful especially for lecturers like us who hardly have the opportunity to observe the actual work involved in developing timber-based products," said Mohd Zafrullah.

"A hands-on approach to experience the workings involved in the manufacturing of a product during the programme has definitely improved my understanding of the techniques and mechanical processes that take place. The programme provides new impetus to my teaching module," he added.

Another participant, SEGi College Subang Jaya's Faculty of Creative Arts & Design Senior Lecturer/Interior Designer Marliana Mansor found her maiden field visits to the factories an eye opener as they enabled her to get a better understanding of actual on-the-ground experience.

"There is a lack of awareness on Malaysian timbers among local architects and designers, including myself. Thanks to this programme, I am now aware of the technical terms of timber and have also learnt many do's and don'ts on working with timber.

"The programme also gave me an insight into the wonderful and interesting world of engineered timber and I believe 'Glulam' as well as other innovative products have immense possibilities in our country. I will definitely try to integrate more timber elements into my designs," she added.

Yeo added that to provide width and breadth to the programme, they were exposed to the technical processes involved in producing doors, furniture, window frames and wooden flooring.

MTC also organised talks on "Sustainable Forest Management in Peninsular Malaysia" by the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia and "Forest Certification in Malaysia" by the Malaysian Timber Certification Council.

Lecturers from architecture and design, forestry, wood technology faculties from other tertiary institutions are very much welcome to join MTC's Familiarisation Programme. To register, email council@mtc.com.my.

The real deal:
Mentakab Veneer
and Plywood Sdn
Bhd was among
the companies
visited by the
lecturers.

