



## Campus Life

### CAMPUS LIFE

### ARTS AND CULTURE

### SPORTS @ NUS

### ▼ CAMPUS FACILITIES

- [NUS Coop](#)
- [Dining](#)
- [Health, Wellness & Counselling](#)
- [Security](#)

### ▼ CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

- [Student's Accommodation](#)
- [Guest Rooms](#)
- [Staff Housing](#)

### ▼ CAMPUS RESOURCES

- [Campus Networking](#)
- [IT Resources](#)

### ▼ TRANSPORTATION

- [Internal Shuttle Bus](#)
- [Parking at NUS](#)

### ▼ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- [Clubs and Societies](#)
- [NUS Students' Union](#)

### ▼ STUDENT SUPPORT

- [Careers and Employment](#)
- [Counselling Centre](#)
- [International Student Services](#)
- [Student Affairs](#)
- [Student Service Centre](#)

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

#### Useful Links

- ▶ [IVLE](#)
- ▶ [NEXUS](#)
- ▶ [Registrar's Office](#)
- ▶ [Office of Student Affairs](#)
- ▶ [Library](#)
- ▶ [Radio Pulze](#)

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# An energy conference for the youth, by the youth

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By Sarabjeet Singh

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On the 17-18th of September 2009, Energy Carta successfully organised and hosted its second instalment of the Asian Youth Energy Summit (AYES). AYES 2009 expanded upon AYES 2008 to include Singapore's first clean energy case challenge - the Chevron Case Challenge, consisting of a 35-strong foreign youth delegation with members from as far as Egypt who formed part of an enthusiastic audience, and a lively career fair with partnering and participating energy industry representatives for the entire second day.



AYES: The organising committee of this year's summit

It was no simple task getting all of this to work together on the conference date. For an observer, a seamless successful event deceptively masks the work behind the scenes to pull it off. This also hints at the many sleepless nights the other members of the organisational team and I had during the planning stages and building up to the conference. To say that this was "a conference to remember" would be to understate its importance for me as part of the AYES 2009 organisational team.

As one of the Assistant Directors in the Conference Programs Team, I was assigned the responsibility of being the subject matter expert and liaison for an entire panel of speakers (Solutions #2 - A Glimpse of the Sustainable City) for Day 1 of the conference. This was one daunting task, having to be constantly on my toes liaising with speakers on my panel who were high profile representatives in the domestic energy eco-system. It also gave me the sense that there were no rooms for mistakes, not major ones at least, that could jeopardise the success of AYES 2009. Throw in the fact that I had no prior experience in organising any major events and you will realise that this kind of stress is not healthy for an undergraduate, who at the same time has to juggle school, attend lectures, tutorials and submit assignments.

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I survived thankfully, and the main reason for this is the "Energy Carta blend" of teamwork. With the amount of time spent together, fellow Energy Carta members became very close friends, having spent much time together for meetings, pizza dinners after meetings, etc.. It was especially amazing to me how during those times when I felt I was stretching myself thin, friends with bigger boulders on their shoulders would step in to help me lift mine. I also found inspiration in many of my peers in the organisational team, comprising a good mix of local and foreign students at NUS themselves.

Special mention must be made of my interactions with Bharath Seshadri, Director AYES 2009, and Thet Lin Thu, Director Conference Programs - both exceptional student leaders in their own way who initially approached and invited me to be a part of Energy Carta and AYES 2009. Both Bharath and Thet mentioned to me on a few counts, how AYES 2009 would be a rare opportunity for youth from abroad to come to Singapore - some of these youth would otherwise never have an opportunity to leave home to travel abroad or to Singapore. They made me realise how they considered themselves very fortunate to be able to come to Singapore to study as foreign students. What particularly struck me was their eagerness and passion in wanting to provide more youth such opportunity by organising AYES 2009. In a pleasant irony of sorts, AYES 2009 and part of its tagline "Opportunities, Solutions, Policies..." was very befitting for all, from Energy Carta event organisers to all our local and foreign participants.

On a final note, as one of the two Arts and Social Sciences students in Energy Carta, my takeaway from AYES 2009 was that anyone and everyone can find a fit in the energy sector. My skills learnt thus far as a third Year Geography Major were applicable when it came to understanding the work that speakers in my panel are involved in as part of Singapore's domestic energy eco-system - creating sustainable urban environs with clean technologies and efficient uses of energy resources.

I look forward to my future involvement as a member of Energy Carta, and to the next instalment of AYES in 2010, to build upon my knowledge learnt from organising AYES 2009. As a conference for the youth, by the youth, I am certain that I will learn many more exciting things from AYES 2010, which will see me a long way as I pursue my personal dreams and ambitions.

[▲ top](#)