

# “Science can be ‘vibey’ and ‘dynamic’ and make a difference”

writes Caradee Wright after her experience at the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in China



At this year’s World Economic Forum Annual Meeting of the New Champions – commonly known as the ‘Summer Davos’ – the theme was Driving Growth through Sustainability. The event took place in Tianjin, China, at the newly-built Meijiang Convention and Exhibition Centre – built in less than nine months, in time for this event.

For more information, visit the following websites:  
[www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org)  
[www.chem.ufl.edu](http://www.chem.ufl.edu)



The aim of the programme is to create an international network for scientific and cultural exchange with the underlying theme 'Committed to Improving the State of the World', which is also the motto of the WEF. The programme will be supported and coordinated by present and future cohorts of young scientists and includes a focus on cascading knowledge and skills between developed and developing countries.

Caradee Wright was one of 55 young scientists from all over the world to participate in the WEF's Annual Meeting of the New Champions in Asia this year. She writes about some of the innovative ways scientists, entrepreneurs, government officials and television personalities were literally mixed up and thrown together to create some amazing synergy.

As one of 55 young scientists from many countries all around the world, we were afforded the opportunity of interacting with several communities such as technology pioneers, young global leaders, thought leaders and labour leaders about the theme 'Driving growth through sustainability'.

We discussed hot topics in exciting and innovative sessions such as WorkSpace, TV debates and IdeasLabs. The WorkSpace was really the 'workshop with a difference' facilitated by a confident, well-known individual such as a TV presenter. We had discussion leaders driving interaction in breakout sessions, while the participants – us – played the role as the main 'actors'.

A team of knowledge workers worked behind the scenes, drawing up large cartoons on white boards on what they heard being discussed, to help focus the participants' thoughts during the feedback session and whole group discussions.

One particularly interesting WorkSpace session focussed on 'The Female Factor': how and why women should play an integral role in the workforce. I worked in a breakout group with the Minister for Human Resources in India and we spoke about the importance of the right 'mindset' to encourage women to have the confidence to become involved.

The IdeasLab was a dynamic, vibey space bringing together unusual combinations of people in one group. For example, young scientists and young global leaders mixed with technology pioneers and thought leaders. Four young scientists delivered punchy, five-minute overviews of a science idea and then all of the participants broke up into smaller groups to discuss ways to 'realise' these ideas in the real world. It was a rare opportunity for a young scientist like me to sit beside a chief executive officer of a global growth company and discuss a research idea with a business endpoint in mind. Final ideas were delivered to the audience and captured in graphic form as we spoke to capture the essence of the points made. In this way, the IdeasLab tries to assist leaders in their understanding of key economic, industry and technological developments that are reshaping business and society today.

The young scientists worked together as a team and decided to leave a legacy that lives on beyond the final session of 'Summer Davos 2010'. We created the 'Young Scientist Ambassador Programme'.

Caradee Wright (seated on the right), surrounded by a variety of interesting people from the Chulalongkorn University, Thailand; the Manhica Health Research Centre in Mozambique; the Center for Studies on Sensory, Impairment, Aging and Metabolism, Guatemala; the Osaka University in Japan; Nestle; and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

