

A Blueprint for an Organization Chapters 1-5

Ten years ago, no one identified engineers and engineering students as social agitators. And now, in 2009, an organization that set out to engage engineering students has become one of the most – if not the most – active organizations on university campuses. EWB professional chapters in seven cities are tantalizing the workplace engineer with opportunities to contribute to social good. And EWB’s overseas work, in four countries in Africa, is driving innovative changes in the development sector.

In this section, we try to find where all of this commotion came from. We trace this energy back to the original idea, when George Roter and Parker Mitchell, EWB’s co-founders, grabbed a pen and scribbled “Engineers Without Borders” (on a napkin in a coffee shop, as the story goes). We travel across the country to see the excitement at university campuses as eager engineering students responded to the notion that something was missing in their engineering education, and then to the moments where our initial energy and naivety crashed headlong into some hard truths and hard questions as we realized what a difficult path we had chosen. Along the way, you’ll meet some of the people who made up EWB in those early days, and hear their stories and memories of the beginnings of this organization. 💡