

# I Am a Volunteer and I Do...

## Beth Fitzpatrick



### What activities have you undertaken as part of your volunteering?

I have done a variety of different types of volunteering; from giving my time for STEM Activities to taking on a more leadership position. I am currently the Deputy Chair of the INCOSE UK Early Careers Forum, which is a really fun and exciting role – it has so far involved running events, organising quizzes and engaging with lots of different people! As an example we recently ran a joint workshop at the Energy Systems Interest Group – where ECF participants gained skills in facilitation, as well as learning about the problems facing the Energy Systems industry and how Systems Engineering can help.

I was also the Outreach Chair on the organising committee for the recent INCOSE EMEA Workshop. It was great fun, I chaired several sessions that I was passionate about and also hosted a summary session at the end of the first day! I had the opportunity to work

with impressive systems engineers from across the world, from academia and industry, and collaborated on a brilliant virtual event – unfortunately covid put an end to the physical event in Seville, Spain!

### What Originally inspired you to volunteer for INCOSE UK?

I wanted to get involved and learn more about Systems Engineering, and how it is used in other industries. I come from a Physics background so I was keen to learn as much as I could, and meet people from across the Systems Engineering community! I didn't know anything about Systems Engineering before I applied to a graduate scheme to become one – I hadn't even heard of it before! Yet I have really enjoyed my career so far, so I am motivated to raise the profile of the industry to get more people involved from an earlier age.

The world is also facing so many large complex problems in these current times – climate change, for example – and Systems Engineering will be a vital skill in solving these difficult issues. It is only through getting more people involved, not just in systems but engineering and STEM subjects in general – that we will be able to solve these important problems.

### What do you feel you get out of your volunteering?

On top of growing really important skills that I may not otherwise be able to practise, it is great fun! I am growing my confidence in chairing, leading and speaking in many different circumstances, from children to seasoned professionals.

I also get exposure to a vast community of brilliant people and their skills – I learn a lot about different industries and the social and technical application of Systems Engineering. I am able to network and ask questions, expanding my view which also helps me shape what I might want my own career to look like!

### Do you have any advice or feedback to offer anyone who is considering volunteering?

My advice would be to get involved! Most opportunities are pretty flexible to fit around your existing commitments, so be honest with the people around you, and I can guarantee you won't regret it. Think about what you enjoy, what you might be interested in getting stuck into; and reach out. People understand that volunteers are exactly that – giving their own time – so as long as you communicate what you are able to do, they will be glad for your support - whatever you can give!