

Nurul Noor



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Photo: Siemens Energy

Dorotea Filipan: Hello. My name is Dorotea Filipan. I am the Project Manager of Women in Power Systems, an APC Media global organization that advocates for women in all different positions in the energy industry. My guest today is the wonderful Nurul Noor. She is a Special Projects Manager of Siemens Energy Malaysia. Nurul, welcome, thank you for being here.

Nurul Noor: Thank you for having me, Dorotea.

DF Now, you are a Special Project Leader for Cybersecurity in Siemens Energy Malaysia, is that correct?

NN I actually work together with a counterpart in Singapore. We work hand in hand, very much looking into strategic alliances and partnerships. We work very closely with researchers and universities, and we look forward to working closely with stakeholders in the energy industry. We are also working towards a sort of energy ecosystem in which we will all collaborate and help each other. Regardless of what business somebody is in. If they are in the energy industry, we would want to work toward a partnership.

The power industry is so important that I am often inspired to be part of the creative energy innovations.

DF That sounds ground-breaking! Something that we as WPS strongly advocate for is this interaction and collaboration. We believe that networking is the way to a better future. Now, would you tell us a little bit about your journey? What inspired you to dive into a career in the energy industry?

NN The power industry is actually one of the largest in the world and it is a sector that's vital to the life of a lot of people across the globe. Our economy and culture are only possible thanks to a steady stream of energy. This means, that in this industry you are automatically a part of something big. Therefore, I was truly inspired to be a part of it with the hope that I could be involved with energy innovation. Currently, I'm involved with several special projects for the company, which we've called the *Online Energy Shop and Strategy Alliance and Partnership*. Our current focus is on cybersecurity as the pandemic has taken the world to a totally different level of digital presence. This represents a major potential threat that needs urgent attention worldwide. So here again, part of

my team's effort is to build a solid ecosystem of collaborations and together to tackle this and other problems in this field. That is what inspires me every day.

DF Wow, that really is a vital cause you and your team have taken on. Not to mention a big one. What were some of the greatest challenges that you have had to face and overcome, specifically for this cybersecurity project and in your career in the energy industry as a whole?

NN My greatest challenge was actually curbing my own drive. I was doing a team project and taking over too much responsibility on the management side. I was a little too enthusiastic and started trying to handle as many items for the group as possible, believing that the more I did for the group, the better it would be. But as a result, I stretched myself too thin. So I started sacrificing a lot of my personal time and ended up being sleep-deprived. In the end, I realized that I could not do everything by myself and that having a competent team to divide the tasks of a large project is the best thing you can have and I'm very thankful for my team. We work very closely with everyone across the globe, especially with the US team. They have a totally different perspective in terms of cybersecurity and are very generous in exchanging information with us.

DF This is excellent and it brings us back to the importance of networking and global collaboration to create a better energy future for everyone. I would like to go back to what you said about stretching yourself too thin because you felt that you have to do more and more for your team. It's something we've all had to happen to us at



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least once. So it is very important to be conscious of it and try to nurture a healthy work/life balance.

NN Exactly, this balance between home and work and work and pleasure is something that we try to promote as well because we are aware of the problem since we're all guilty of it in some way or another.

DF That is so important, isn't it? To have that sort of support from your professional environment.

NN Very much so. I started off this career journey with my manager, who has been very motivating and supportive. She encouraged me to complete my Microsoft Certified Azure AI Engineer Associate certificate. It was difficult but she was there for me every step of the way and I cherish that support to this day. And even more recently, because of all my participation, the VP has been very kind to write me a personal letter of recommendation to apply for the Cambridge Rising Women Leaders Program Scholarship 2022. So that's the kind of amazing support that I get from my company and the reason why this topic of support and acknowledgment is very close to my heart. I would encourage women in our industry to keep doing their best, keep vibing, good energy, and sooner or later the universe will place all the right people around you who will see it and who will help you to fly high.

DF That is fantastic. Congratulations on this letter of recommendation and on this acknowledgment, because that is what being valued and supported looks like: Your superior acknowledging your effort and your quality and rewarding it.

NN Thank you. Yes, exactly, it makes all the difference.

DF But this Cambridge program is not the only way in which you have been expanding your abilities if I remember correctly. You also quite recently returned to school and started your PhD in sociology.

NN Yes, this is a very personal thing for me. I've always had this question about people understanding people. So that is why I decided to study humans through sociology. My recent research was based on understanding millennial women.

DF That sounds very interesting. And do you feel that you will be able to apply this knowledge to the position and the business that you're currently in?

Strategy, alliances, and partnerships are not just straightforward, they also involve a lot of understanding and people skills and reading people's body language. My knowledge in Sociology will definitely help me strategize better when I meet people in a business capacity.

NN Oh, definitely. I'm currently handling strategic partnerships and alliances and am deeply involved in relationship-building. We have been meeting a lot of universities recently, talking about numerous kinds of relationships and collaborations. We agreed that our experts would visit each other and exchange knowledge and skills. The universities have got grad students working on new inventions, so they want the industry to be part of it. Strategy, alliances, and partnerships are not just straightforward, they also involve a lot of understanding and people skills and reading people's body language. My knowledge in Sociology will definitely help me strategize better when I meet people in a business capacity.

I'll give you one simple example. We have many engineers on the team and when they communicate, they used to speak in technical jargon and our Managers couldn't understand them. But when they were asked to simplify and explain, it was difficult for them. That's where the communication breaks and it will create unnecessary frustrations. But that is something that can actually be worked on successfully.

DF Yes, that is a very frequent issue in our industry. Technical people talking to salespeople and vice versa and each side has its own language so to say.



And then when those two worlds collide, communication issues happen. It is excellent to hear that companies and individuals are becoming aware of it and are looking for solutions. I would like to go back to the letter of recommendation from your VP, commending you for your work. Would you consider that to be the proudest moment in your career or would you like to add another one?

Even as a mother, I am still learning a lot from my children. My daughter taught me to 'Kill them with kindness!'

NN Oh, yes, that was very heart-warming for me and definitely one of my proudest moments. But the proudest moment in my career would be when I was put in charge of a new team and was able to present my interpersonal skills and deliver the best that I can. I was able to prioritize large workloads and share learning across diverse teams. I was immediately able to communicate all the problems, present potential solutions, improve interpersonal communication and improve problem-solving, all with a clear head in a fast-paced environment. We handle a lot of requests, we have to analyze a lot of details when it comes to coming up with a proposal for big companies, for big clients. But at the same time, I was appointed as the main committee for the launch of a ground-breaking ceremony of a cybersecurity hub in Asia Pacific for Siemens Energy. This was the first step for me into cyber security. And that same VP saw me being passionate about it. That's where he started to pull me into the next project, which is the strategy, alliance, and partnership focusing on cybersecurity. So this is my most recent achievement that I am very proud of.

DF And once again, a big congratulations from every one of us at WPS because again, one of the things that we do is to celebrate each other's achievements and hold each other up high. Now, I would like to switch gears a little and go back to some of your earlier points. You are clearly very passionate about your work but how do you stop it from dominating your life? How do you balance it out?

The company often send memos and videos on wellbeing issues to constantly remind us to keep the balance in life.

NN Our top managers here are very good at reminding you to keep the balance. If you send an email outside of office hours, eventually somebody will reach out, and remind you in a very considerate way that you shouldn't be working outside of your hours and that you should use this time for yourself. We also receive a lot of well-being memos from our HQ. They come up with fantastic videos to remind you that the job is not everything and that life has got so much more to it. On top of that, I make sure that my weekend is dedicated purely to my family and myself. On a Friday night we head to the movies and catch whatever is running at the cinema and we come back so happy. Over the weekend, I purely dedicate myself to my kids' karate and swimming, helping them with school projects which again can be challenging but fulfilling at the same time.

Photo: Siemens Energy

DF That sounds absolutely wonderful. I would like to continue with this perspective of you as a mother. You have one daughter and two sons, correct?

NN Yes, correct.

DF So from the perspective of a business-woman in energy, but also the perspective of a mother of a girl who is someday going to enter the business world and potentially the energy industry, do you feel that your daughter is going to have the same opportunities and the same ease or difficulty entering the business world as your sons?

RF Oh, I love this question! Coming from Asia, we probably are slightly backward compared to other countries, in the world. Equity is something that is probably not widely accepted yet. In fact, even my daughter

had to face this already. There are times that I am very impressed with my daughter's patience when she faced difficulty and remained calm and gave back kindness. I don't think I would have had that strength at her age. I love it that even though I am their mother, I am still learning from my children. There's a saying that you *kill people with kindness*. That's something I learned from my daughter.

DF It's always so inspiring when we can learn something from a younger generation. Especially when they teach us how to be better. It really makes you feel like they are that next, better version of us that we will leave behind. And there is always something that you are able to learn from another person, no matter how much younger or older you are.

And it is exactly wonderful young people like your daughter who are going to be the driving force for the future. You said she already

faces adversity and you yourself have seen how important support is when you enter the industry. Are you perhaps active in that field privately? Are you perhaps a member of some organization or program that offers that kind of support and encouragement?

NN Very much so. In fact, I've been recently approached by the top manager who is currently leading the women club in the company. We spoke about collaborating with the Girl Guide Association schools and universities on CSR knowledge sharing and how energy can be part of the activities within the community.

My daughter is deeply involved with the Girl Guides and I frequently share videos about their activities on my LinkedIn profile. We created a parent group that supports the program and after my daughter was awarded two Disney Princess awards, (the only one from the state), the next year we helped 18 other girls to be awarded as well. I shared the ceremony in one of my videos. The manager saw it and approached me about wanting to collaborate with the Girl Guides. Helping young girls get recognition, and acknowledgment in Asia is a very important personal goal for me.

We also organized a lunch and coffee session recently with the women of Siemens Energy Malaysia. Because the company is so big, we didn't even know each other in many cases, or because of Covid had never met face-to-face. This gave us a chance to get to know each other and share a lot of things. We talked about work and simply connected with a lot of mutual respect on that day. And now when we email each other, the communication is just so much warmer and clearer.

DF Everything that you have said has been so inspiring for us women who are already in the energy industry, but you also have given me so much enthusiasm and so much hope for what positive things await the next generation. And I very much look forward to continuing working with you in the future to help achieve that networking and those goals and help leave behind a better power industry than we found it. Thank you so much for being here today, Nurul. I have enjoyed this interview very much and I hope that it is only the first of many.

NN Thank you so much for having me. I hope we will work together again in the future.

DF This has been a Women in power systems interview with Nurul Noor from Siemens Energy Malaysia. Thank you very much and goodbye.



Photo: Siemens Energy