

Podcast - How to Hochschule VOICES



Show transcript

Ropafadzo Juliana Matuzulat

Women Tec Club - Ropa Interview

00:00:00: Stephan: Welcome to How to Hochschule Voices. Here, we bring you full-length interviews, personal stories, and a collection of conversations with people from Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, Kleve, Kamp-Lintfort, and the entire Lower Rhine region. In this episode, we meet the Vice President of TechWomen and experience her metamorphosis from mechatronics to industrial engineering and her passionate advocacy for women in STEM, embodying a compelling highlight and symbolising the dynamic and resilient spirit that thrives at our university.

Ropa: My name is Ropa Fadzo Juliana Matuzula. And I'm part of the Tech Women Club. I'm currently serving as the vice president. And the president right now is Dipal Kumar. Yeah, I grew up in Zimbabwe in Harare and I did all my high school, my parents were everything. And then I only came to Germany in. About 2017, 2018 actually, I'm studying industrial engineering at the moment and I'm in my fifth semester. I actually started in another degree program, then I ended up switching to industrial engineering.

Ropa: Ropa: Like I always enjoyed business, I've enjoyed talking and even from a young age, I always thought about in, I always wanted to be in STEM, I just like sciences, like from a young age, I first thought I was going to be a doctor.

Ropa: Ropa: I remember when I was in grade two. So that's eight years, when I was eight years old. Um, In school, when people get hurt, I'll try to be the one, trying to put a bandaid

on, like trying to fix them up, you know. and then people used to call me the doctor in [00:01:00] class. I kind of remember that from, I know it's a long time, but I kind of remember that.

Ropa: Ropa: And for a long time, I thought I was going to be a doctor. at some point in time, I realized, nah, I don't really like blood. So I realized I like talking. I like business, but I didn't know what's the link. And I also like STEM. So I didn't know what could link those. three interests together.

Ropa: Ropa: So it's only when I got here after some time I realized, wait, industrial engineering sounds like what I like. So what I, I've always wanted to do because another thing was because I realized engineers are reserved. They have fantastic ideas. I know students with really good ideas, but presenting it in front of people, investors and all that's like my. My vision for later on in life that's why I saw that, okay, industrial engineering could be where I want to go into, because I do love the business side, the engineering side, everything, but I'm not very good at making the stuff.

Ropa: Ropa: So that's the reason why you switched to, yeah, that's like the switch to the, to industrial cause the mechatronics was like a bit. [00:02:00] I guess boring for me, but for some people, I saw how passionate they are and I was like, how come I'm not so passionate about mechatronics? So I think some students do struggle with that as well because you, when you come to uni, you're a bit young for some people and you don't really know what you want to become.

Ropa: Ropa: You, you, people tell you, okay, you can figure it out when you get there, but figuring out is difficult, so I, I feel like even though, yes, it took some time to, for me to realize it. But those times when I was in mechatronics, when I didn't really know what I want to do, it was a really big struggle for me, like mentally as well.

Ropa: Ropa: And also having to find someone to talk to about it. Like your friends like, ah, come on, keep on pushing. You know, It's just that, nah, stop being lazy. It's stop being lazy. It's really because I, my brain is not really linking all this to what I want to do in life. Like it was not really linking. Yeah. In uni is also a bit difficult because most students are also going through the same thing.

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah, they're [00:03:00] all searching for something, right?

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah, they're all searching for something. So sometimes talking to, I think the best is talking to people who've been there, like who've been there for a while.

Ropa: Ropa: I think that's better than. Just your friends. Your friends can give you good advice, but I think they also have a limited perspective Because you're going through the same thing. You're sort of going through the same cleaver lifestyle But as if you talk to me

people who are older than you have been there for a while I think it can help you a little bit more.

Ropa: Stephan: What was like your first experience here in Germany. Cause I think it was the first time, right?

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah, it was my first time. Yeah, it was my first time. My first experience I came here alone and my parents didn't come with me. So I came here alone and I didn't have anywhere to live.

Ropa: Ropa: So I had to live in an Airbnb. So when I got here, it was the first time using a train, surprisingly. In Zerm, we do have a train, but it's not really, how can I say, not a lot of people use it. It's like maybe you're taking a long distance journey, something, but most people use cars or buses. [00:04:00] So it was my first time.

Ropa: Ropa: So I even struggled with the language because I only knew. Ich kann nicht sprechen Deutsch. Hahaha. Yeah, I can't do English expression, something like that, but it was probably way less than that. So that's what I was maneuvering with and I was just, if I found someone speaking in English, I'm like hanging on to that person please help me.

Ropa: Ropa: But when I did get to Cleaver cause I came from Dusseldorf, I was like, okay, this is a big city. So I was like, okay, maybe Cleaver is the same thing because the pictures I had seen of the university, it looks really wow, this is a really nice place. I didn't see the rest of Cleaver, but when I did get to Cleaver, I was like, okay I came on a Sunday, the shops were closed.

Ropa: Ropa: I was like, this is totally new for me. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know where I should go to go eat. So the lady was just like, just go to the pizza place. You find your way there. It shouldn't even direct you. You'll find it there. But that experience already was like a first cultural shock. Like Sundays, they're not, everything is quiet. That was really shocking for [00:05:00] me on the first day. And also seeing Cleaver, how small it is. I was like a bit surprised because I thought, okay, it's going to be a big city. Cause I know in my head, I had made up this idea of what CLE would look like.

Ropa: Stephan: So I think people living here, the number isn't that low, but how it's structured, it seems smaller than it actually is.

Ropa: Ropa: I think it also helps because I think if you're studying engineering, you don't really want to have so many distractions. That's my, my own perception. I think you need to invest more time, especially in your first semesters, your first and second.

Ropa: Ropa: Those are the really crucial ones for you to be able to do the fourth and the fifth and to even graduate. Because those are the I guess the foundation which they end up connecting somehow like, for the fourth and the fifth. It's just a continuation, but if the foundation is terrible, then I guess the fourth and fifth won't really work out for you.

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah. Yeah. But yeah, I did find that also, I think because also where I've come from, universities, this whole [00:06:00] third attempt thing was also not there. Oh,

Ropa: Stephan: yeah. Yeah. We had the whole episode about

Ropa: Ropa: the topic. Yes. Yeah. , yeah, I listened to that. But I didn't know that until after the first semester.

Ropa: Ropa: I don't know where this information, how I missed it, but I didn't know that because I also came late, so I missed the whole freshers update. Like them letting them know what to expect in Germany. I missed that whole freshers week. So I didn't actually know a lot of things.

Ropa: Ropa: So some of the things like bits and pieces from people. Yeah. So I didn't know that only, I'm just second sense was like, Oh wow. So I have to be serious about school, like really serious. I think people coming from where I'm coming from, you can write I think as many times as you like till you finally get it.

Ropa: Ropa: And also maybe another culture shock was that all the exams at the end, which I think for me, I found that a bit challenging because For example, math, if I'm allowed to talk of math, it's like a big subject of which I think if it was broken down, it would be easier [00:07:00] to digest. So it's you've taken all this information and somehow you have to remember all of it for six or seven other subjects that you're writing this semester.

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah, right. it's like a lot of pressure that I think you're not really prepared for. You think you're prepared, but you're not really prepared for it. And also, I think the way I was also told, because I also heard from uh, the episode with Professor Kralidad, he was also talking about how the perception of people think you come, you write your exam, it has to be the exact same thing.

Ropa: Ropa: That was me. I thought it was going to be the same thing. You do the past papers, you go into the exam, you're fine. No, it's only when I realized, no, you need to actually understand, you need to apply the knowledge. University of Applied Science, Applied Knowledge. So I think that was like another shock, because the way I had studied before had to completely change, I had to reconfigure my brain a little bit.

Ropa: Stephan: That's true. That's how you should approach it because it's easier for you later on, because if you [00:08:00] just copy and paste, you won't succeed very far with that strategy, I think.

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah, you won't. I think especially for the big subjects like math, physics, I think you, for engineering that is I don't think you can apply the whole copy paste situation. You won't really go far with that. But yeah, I think.

Ropa: Ropa: But you'll survive. Yeah, I

Ropa: Stephan: mean, but this is I think that's in general, STEM is very famous for that, that it's really hard to pass not only the technical, but natural science, but also like the technical stuff. I don't know where it wasn't in the podcast we did, but I remember once I think probably I read it somewhere online.

Ropa: Stephan: Someone said actually my studies were harder than my job afterwards because yeah. Yeah. Because it's like the pressure of. Of writing papers and was so much content you need to understand and getting more and more complicated. I don't know how true it actually is. It probably depends on the [00:09:00] person.

Ropa: Stephan: But the workload is that what you think is the most difficult aspect of

Ropa: Ropa: it. I agree with that. I think. Studying is, it takes a lot of time and energy because like I said, like when I did move to industrial engineering, I also realized like I was, because now I'm doing something that I'm really passionate about, like I'm really interested to.

Ropa: Ropa: I realized the semester I took a couple of courses, like I had to take a lot. I had no social life at all. fOr me to completely understand everything, it was, I had to I think I was studying all the time. I don't remember other than taking little breaks, but I feel like every day. It was just studying.

Ropa: Stephan: One of the main reason why we met today is your tech club.

Ropa: Stephan: And I think the special thing is because you've got other fields where it's completely different, the ratio, women and men, but this field, the STEM field, especially the engineering part, tech part is very male dominated.

Ropa: Ropa: It is. Do you know the statistics of our university? I don't

Ropa: Stephan: know.

Ropa: Stephan: [00:10:00] That's a good point.

Ropa: Ropa: Oh, for TNB. I only know for TNB. I don't know for the whole university, but for TNB alone is 13 percent are only women. Yeah, which is really low. So

Ropa: Stephan: what about childhood? Kindergarten pedagogic. That's the German word. English is childhood development, I think. Yeah. Probably it will be different.

Ropa: Stephan: Yeah. Oh, the same with, I don't know that many men will study. I

Ropa: Ropa: don't think yeah, I get like some fields are mainly women dominated and some are male dominated because yeah, I wouldn't expect to see so many men there. But yeah, I think they would also need a club, quite honestly. Maybe, yeah, that would be interesting.

Ropa: Stephan: Yeah, that would be interesting. Yeah, but

Ropa: Ropa: it's it could be different. Yeah, that's probably, yeah, but yeah, it's 13%. Yeah. It's T and B. So I think it's quite crazy to think about it because And the whole faculty, not

Ropa: Stephan: just

Ropa: Ropa: one subject. Yeah. T and B, like the whole faculty of technology and bionics is just 13%.

Ropa: Ropa: And I think compared to like when it started, because the club did start with I don't know if [00:11:00] Phyllis. She's the one who started the club in 2017. And back then she also had the same feeling that us girls are having right now. You are in a class and you feel, either you're feeling intimidated or someone is looking down upon you, like, okay, because you're a woman, you're not really supposed to be here already.

Ropa: Ropa: I even had it personally as well. Like, Let's say some labs, I would try to contribute, but because I'm a girl, it's like, there'll be doubt and okay, really should we go that way? Because, I don't know if it's because the majority admits that they all think that our way is the only way of thinking.

Ropa: Ropa: I think it needs to be studied. But yeah, yeah, but that, from that struggle to yeah, for example, even Phyllis also like, I was even reading an article about her that they had about her she was also experiencing the same thing besides feeling intimidated, they were also like looking down upon her because she's a woman.

Ropa: Ropa: And she was also like already, she finished in her seventh semester, like seventh semester, she graduated. So she was really performing really well. [00:12:00] Outperforming, I would say. Yeah, outperforming, exactly. And there were only two girls. who graduated from TNB from, I think, only a few girls who had started in the beginning.

Ropa: Ropa: So imagine, only two girls graduated that year, and then she was the only master's student who started as well, and she was the only girl there. So imagine, that's even more difficult. Before you had a girl, now you're the only one. So that's where she started the back then it was called Mint. The men club and basically to look for support for other women who are going through what she was going through because sometimes you need someone to understand because if you can tell, you can't tell a guy like, oh, school is hard.

Ropa: Ropa: People are not understanding me, you know, all these problems. The thing are you just complaining, but. Having women who also understand what you're going through that was I think crucial as well So that's how she started and they also called the big sisters because literally they were big sisters They had gone through it So they're now like mentoring other students other female students who are interested in coming into the tech Industry in the stem industry [00:13:00] and while studying stem as well.

Ropa: Stephan: And how does it work, like how is it structured?

Ropa: Ropa: In the beginning, they did have roundtables where they would just meet up, have, snacks and then just talk about life, talk about different things.

Ropa: Ropa: And then now as it has been evolving, we basically meet up for workshops and also support groups. The last event we even had, we had some professors. who came, female professors who came and we had a nice chat in the houseboat, you know, just talking about, expectations after you grad, cause they're already in the industry.

Ropa: Ropa: So they understand a little bit better what they go through as women in STEM and also giving us advice about, okay, what should we also do? Like If we're experiencing certain things and also just sharing it sounds like a rant club, like we're just ranting, but it's not really like that.

Ropa: Ropa: It's like just. supporting each other. If you have a problem, then this person's Oh yeah, I've gone through that. Okay, mate, this is how I dealt with it. Like literally that was basically what it was like, okay, no, this is how you deal with it. This is how you deal with it.

[00:14:00] And it was really inspiring to see a lot of first semester students who came to that event as well.

Ropa: Ropa: Because you could see that, okay, at least they're lucky. They're already starting with the tools already, to prepare them for. What's coming, because sometimes you won't, maybe they're experiencing it now, but sometimes you're not really prepared for that because maybe you came from a school where, the structure is totally different, but now you're the only girl in your class.

Ropa: Ropa: I think for some, even up to now, they might be the only, especially with study electrical engineering. usually still quite male dominated. I feel like industrial, I do see a lot of girls, but in terms of electrical and some of the, these courses still really male dominated. So basically our structure is like we meet up, we have different workshops or we have sessions.

Ropa: Ropa: Where we just, set a date where everyone is available, obviously, and then we also do have a WhatsApp group also. So if you have issues on that WhatsApp group, we just text and someone can help you. And we also do have network of alumni as well, who also try and come [00:15:00] in to help us as well when we have issues.

Ropa: Ropa: So that's, it's like a big network now from when it started in 2017 till now, which is really good. And even um, if you have problems, even with internships or whatnot, you can always like text in the group or find an alumni who can just help you with that, which is really good. I think the club is mainly like a support system like, a place where you feel like you belong somewhere. Because I think maybe in class you might feel like you, yeah, you're not really belonging there. It's like maybe you are, you're trying your best to belong. Like you have to put an extra effort to belong to show that, okay, I'm smart enough to be here.

Ropa: Ropa: But here it's like. It's like your own group, like people who also know like somewhere where you belong as well, but you don't have to feel like you have to overdo things, over prove something, yeah that's why the club is here.

Ropa: Ropa: And just having people who are going through the same thing you're going through, that's essential part. It's like a support system. Which I think that's the message we're trying to put across. It's a [00:16:00] support system for women in STEM.

Ropa: Stephan: Do you have the feeling that from the male students, their perspective changed a little bit?

Ropa: Stephan: Thanks to the club or thanks to what you as a club give the female students in your faculty?

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah, I mean we've had situations where we do advertise an event and then guys be like, oh, why is this only for women? Why is it only for women I think the fact that Because they, actually when it started, they did get an award by BDI.

Ropa: Ropa: Which that kind of put them on the map, the school map. So actually people do know a little bit about tech women. And we've had situations where even some guys come in. They also want to contribute, but it's okay we will find some time for you. And even some male professors even try to find ways to even collaborate with us, for some workshops.

Ropa: Ropa: Like they're really open to that, which is amazing to see, like the allies or the support, from [00:17:00] men. It's like you, you see us , which is yeah, it's important to also feel seen because we are humans. We have feelings, and. Yeah, to have that support system is really good.

Ropa: Ropa: And I think it's helping to have this club. Because a lot of people now know about it because from when it started, it's been a long journey, but people are starting to recognize and know about it as well, especially in the TNB faculty. Yeah.

Ropa: Stephan: So it's not only that you actually can help female students, but also just raising awareness of the fact it's already helping. I think that's something that we have to distinguish. It's not a study group, right? That's not what it is. No, it's not a study group. Yeah. Yeah. Because some people maybe think that. It sounds like a study group, but it's actually not the

Ropa: Ropa: idea behind it, right?

Ropa: Ropa: No, no, No. That's not the idea behind it. I mean, You can find a study group in the, yeah, but the main thing is a support system for people, for women studying STEM. Because it's just us, the collective, just going through the same thing and just trying to help each other out. That's mainly the [00:18:00] idea of women in STEM, or tech women,

Ropa: Stephan: I think what's also interesting about the club is that there are so many people, women from so many different countries and cultures in there as well, right?

Ropa: Stephan: It's like probably also mirror from the university. That's so international, but it's also like the woman perspective, I think it's really completely different sometimes. Right.

Ropa: Ropa: Yes, ah, we have so many different cultures and I think trying to learn it's like you're also learning other people's cultures yes, you're a woman, but we also think differently because of the way we were raised, which is pretty, pretty, I think that's the essential part of learning at an international university.

Ropa: Ropa: I think it's supposed to open your mind up a little bit more and become more open minded to understanding your environment, understanding other people, because I think if you decide to stay even here in Germany. I think you do need to have a little bit of an open-minded, 'cause you're coming from outside.

Ropa: Ropa: You need to adjust and learn other people's cultures as well. I think most of the time we're just talking about how we should handle [00:19:00] situations. I think that's also the other thing I could highlight because it's mainly how to survive being a woman in STEM.

Ropa: Stephan: Can you, can you give me an example for that?

Ropa: Ropa: Yes. Oh, yeah. For example, For example how to, let's say you're in a class, like maybe what I just said about you, you're doing a project with other guys and how should you also stand out, that situation, that's a pretty tough situation to be

Ropa: Stephan: in. Because they just don't want to give you any.

Ropa: Stephan: Yeah. Responsibility

Ropa: Ropa: in a project. Yeah. And a responsibility or they might, or you might find yourself being the secretary, yeah, the one taking downloads, you're the one doing all the writing, or sometimes you're actually the one who doing, who's doing all the work, which is actually, yeah, that's very typical.

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah. But it's like one of those, how did I end up with the situation? But yeah, in that type of situation, I think. We're trying to teach each other how to also speak up for ourselves. Yes. Yes, to also speak up for ourselves, know what to say, and [00:20:00] Just be confident in yourself. Like, I actually know, what I'm, what we're doing in this group. So just speak up for yourself. Be confident in who you are because you, you also have a right to be there as an engineer, you had the grades to be able to come to university to be an engineer.

Ropa: Ropa: It's not like they favor because you're a woman. Or a man, no, it's because you have the good grades, so you're capable of doing that. So you need to show that as well when you're in class, that you know what, I'm capable of doing that. Doesn't matter that I'm a woman, doesn't matter yeah, what I look like, nah, I can also do it as well.

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah. So maybe just having those topics, even sometimes, besides just handling. About okay, how to handle guys in class, even how to study. We also have those questions come up a lot of times because some students do find it like the struggle of how to

study because they're coming from a totally different system of studying of okay, you can just focus on past papers and you're fine.

Ropa: Ropa: And now coming to a totally different system, which you have to, like I said, apply your knowledge. So how to do those [00:21:00] things. So those are the kind of things that we also talk about. It's not just always about men but, but yeah, but also how to handle life, even jobs, even like, you know, how to find them.

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah, those kinds of topics.

Ropa: Stephan: Yeah. And language is probably also a big question, right? German language.

Ropa: Ropa: Yes, German language is a big issue. It's a very big issue for

Ropa: Stephan: Especially if you're planning to stay in Germany

Ropa: Ropa: afterwards. Yes, Yes. I think you feel it the first day. I think Cleveland now is a bit better because I think you can even enter some shops and you can hear someone speak English, like you can find someone who can speak English, but I think back then it wasn't as easy because I think, yeah, it's getting there slowly, which is good.

Ropa: Ropa: I think for most people, I

Ropa: Stephan: would say people under 50 in general can speak a few words in English. Yes. Yes. Over 50 can

Ropa: Ropa: be. It can be difficult. You'd be surprised if you find one, you'd be like, Oh, yeah, it was like, Oh, wow, you can actually speak fluent English. Yeah. [00:22:00]

Ropa: Stephan: And the other way around, like learning German, is that something that's probably right now, not now, but especially if you're planning after your studies to work in German industry.

Ropa: Stephan: Some German probably need, right? Yeah,

Ropa: Ropa: you definitely need it. I think most students also have to realize there's the Language course in the university. Yes. Yeah, so I think you need to utilize it like from the

first semester You're starting you're registering for other courses and remember to register for German course or German intensive courses like that happen during the holidays Because you can't really go far with Ich kann nicht, you need to say a bit more.

Ropa: Ropa: Even if you're looking for jobs, especially in NRW, I think most of them mention English and German. If you do find one that says English only, then I think you're very lucky. But most of them are even German only. Yeah. So you need, you definitely need German.

Ropa: Ropa: it. I think we should also highlight that for women, like to not be afraid to go for the highest skill like, especially in STEM don't be [00:23:00] afraid to go to the highest level that you can go to, because Germany, I think, is a very open, right now for women in STEM.

Ropa: Ropa: Definitely. Even some companies, I think there's a company that I always look up to. There's a I always forget her name, but I know the company. She's one of the CEOs, yeah. RVA, like another division? There's a female CEO for a certain department. I always look up to her.

Ropa: Ropa: I'm like, wow, imagine like a woman who is a CEO. So women can actually do that. So you shouldn't underestimate yourself if you're a woman. Even if you're studying, it feels like it's daunting. Don't give up. You've got this. And join TechWomen. We'll support you.

Ropa: Stephan: But you don't want to stay in academia, right afterwards

Ropa: Ropa: maybe if I changed my mind, you never know, but I definitely want to go in the industry to work in the industry.

Ropa: Ropa: Definitely. Yeah. I don't want to stay in academia.

Ropa: Stephan: But do you think but, so for you, first step is after bachelor, you're done

Ropa: Ropa: or? After bachelor I might work a little bit or [00:24:00] just go for master's, but I haven't really made up my mind yet, but I'm definitely thinking about working for a little bit.

Ropa: Ropa: I'm definitely sure about master's. I would definitely do that, but the timeline, I'm trying to

Ropa: Stephan: figure out. It's three semesters also in your faculty

Ropa: Ropa: or is it more? Yes, it's three semesters. Yes, Yes.

Ropa: Stephan: So I don't know if it's doable or not. It depends a little bit, I

Ropa: Ropa: think, but Yeah, I think we might need a gap year.

Ropa: Ropa: Because, yeah, I feel like I've applied myself too much in school for a little bit. I just need a little breather and then maybe see what's out there, then come back. Yeah, of course. But I've heard other people in the industry who have also advised like, I think it's better to just do everything at once.

Ropa: Stephan: That's a good argument to be made, you know, because the problem is if you're out of studying to get back to it can be really

Ropa: Ropa: hard. Yeah, after earning a little bit more money. It's wasted money. So it's Oh, now I have to go back to the student life.

Ropa: Stephan: Yeah, I heard a few people said, I want to do, I always want to do my PhD.

Ropa: Stephan: Some people manage it, but other people, they come back to it but it depends on the [00:25:00] person. I think it's really complicated. It is complicated. Do they have a straight answer? It's not going to work.

Ropa: Ropa: Yeah. Some find it fine to just take a break and then do master and something.

Ropa: Ropa: Going straight all the way. It's fine. Yeah. I think I need to see the application of what I'm studying to see the yeah, I need to see that application. I think. Yeah. But I don't know if it's only me. But when I heard of this University of Applied Science, I thought I would be mainly in the lab all the time, because it's like applied science.

Ropa: Ropa: And then when I got here, it was like, Oh wait, we're actually doing a lot more studying than actually being in the lab. So is it because the definition or is it because maybe it's

Ropa: Stephan: more practical? That's like the easiest definition is it's more practical than the normal. Normal university. Okay. The normal university has more theory, even less [00:26:00] practical stuff.

Ropa: Stephan: Even more than this? Yes,

Ropa: Ropa: yes, yeah. Wow. Because I thought that it should be more practical. I feel like, yeah, we do have practical, but I think way more than

Ropa: Stephan: that. No. Sometimes it depends a little bit what you're studying. I know that there are a few, especially in life sciences. But not in the first semester.

Ropa: Stephan: I don't know about the first semester. I have to ask. I don't know. I'm not sure about that, but the lab you have to go into the lab, the practicum. Yeah. Yeah. But I think it starts after you do like the basics, but I'm not quite sure about that. So don't pinpoint me, but it depends what you do.

Ropa: Stephan: You know,

Ropa: Ropa: Another thing I also wanted to say like just highlighting on the passion like having passion for what you're doing. If I, for me, I find some subjects now really interesting compared to studying them in, let's say, mechatronics.

Ropa: Ropa: Let's say mechatronics is bad. Mechatronics is good, but for me, because I now like industrials, some topics, even like, let's say physics or some math sometimes, I find it [00:27:00] quite interesting because I'm trying to connect it to what I'm doing. So it makes it a lot more interesting to do. I don't know if that makes sense at all.

Ropa: Ropa: Like I also tried to figure, I tried to figure it out. Like, why am I interested more now in what I'm doing than, when I was studying something that, maybe I didn't have a lot of interest in. So I think maybe it is hard to say that, okay, know what you want to do when you start, but if you have a passion in something, I think it's way easier to enjoy what you're doing, even if there's some boring stuff in it, those boring stuff will be boring, maybe, but not so boring.

Ropa: Ropa: You can find some way of connecting and making it interesting.

Ropa: Stephan: I got one, one last question. If you look back on, the tech hub is quite new but still, what was like your main lesson that you learned from Rubin Tech Club?

Ropa: Stephan: Like running as a vice president.

Ropa: Ropa: The main thing I realized with it is that women, how can I say this, they don't know what they want until they have it. [00:28:00] I don't know if that makes sense because I think before TIC Women started, like before I joined it, is what I'm trying to say.

Ropa: Ropa: I didn't know that I needed it. I think I've actually gained more confidence because of TechWomen, because besides just also being part of the club, talking about issues and problems, I do have time where I also have to present or talk to students, for example, and that is built my confidence.

Ropa: Ropa: I can see a little bit of self esteem. development in myself, because even in our club, we do have positions that we're looking for people to do, for example, the social media. Right now there is someone doing that, but like those like soft skills that you don't really see you might think, okay, I'm just doing it for the club, but it's actually helping you in a way, it's building confidence.

Ropa: Ropa: In a certain area, like giving you like you're learning something new, that's maybe outside of your comfort zone. Because right now I'm on a podcast, I may be feeling nervous. But yeah, but I'm actually learning something new. I'm getting out of my [00:29:00] comfort zone. So I think that's something that.

Ropa: Ropa: Because I, there has been how can I say an average ads for TecWomen and all that stuff, but some women might think it's not necessary because I think now there are definitely way, way more women than in the beginning. So they might not see the necessity of it, but I think they need to join it to understand like how necessary it is to have.

Ropa: Ropa: A place where you can call like, yeah, your own or a place where you have a community. Because a community really builds and helps you to be a better person, to be quite honest. Because there's a saying that it takes a village to, to raise a child. But I also think that community also is important for you to raise yourself as well as a person.

Ropa: Ropa: Because, yeah, the community has really helped me a lot. Most of the women that are helping me right now, I meet them through tech women, for example, even the alumni I talk to. Take women, you know, so it has really helped my confidence. It [00:30:00] has definitely helped me in terms of even when I have like smaller problems.

Ropa: Ropa: I have someone to talk to I have a big sister to talk to and I think it has definitely helped a lot for me especially for a small university that doesn't have For example, I'm pretty sure some people have this mindset of all these American university culture ideas that they think when they get here, they're going to see, which is totally different.

Ropa: Ropa: I think this is sort of like our own culture, like our own thing that we are building, but we also need other women to join in and see the importance of it as well. Yeah, I would

encourage more women to join, more women starting out in their first semester and also try and. Get involved in the club as well.

Ropa: Ropa: Like, Yeah, it's important to also, rant and all that, but also find other things that you can contribute, whether it's a workshop, whether it's a project that you want to do. There are other women who can also help you do it. So I think that's the important thing, like we're just a society there to help each other, [00:31:00] because yeah it's a male dominated area, but we can also make it, and it we do have a place and a say in it as well.

Stephan: Thank you for listening. We welcome your feedback and are always open to suggestions for improvement. You can contact us directly at podcast@hsrw.eu. Please see the show notes for links and more information about today's topics and guests. My name is Stephan Hanf. Thank you for listening. See you next time. Tschüss