



Returning HOME

An offer she could not resist

Bio

Name
Emeliana Rice-Oxley
Nationality:
Malaysian
Company
PETRONAS
Position
**Vice President,
Exploration,
Upstream Malaysia**
Years Overseas
7

Having already decided to settle down in Houston, Texas for a while longer before possibly returning to Malaysia, a job offer from PETRONAS changed Emeliana Rice-Oxley's plans. The company is the pride and joy of Malaysia, as she puts it, and it was an offer she could not refuse.

What were the key factors behind your decision to return to Malaysia?

The sense of pride and the opportunity to contribute to the nation, through PETRONAS, were the catalysts of my decision to accept the position and return home. The thought of leaving my children, Khalif and Khalisa on their own in the USA to continue their studies, was a heart-wrenching one. However, with the support from my husband, Robert and my family, I made the decision to return home. Working for PETRONAS and being with family members in Malaysia, whom I have not been with for years, helped provide comfort in that decision.

How has your experience abroad made an impact on your professional life?

Living abroad offered a different lifestyle as well as different social and cultural perspectives. I had the good fortune to experience a diverse and inclusive work environment that encourages open and constructive feedback. The supportive and collaborative way of working made me more tolerant, adaptable and empathetic and I appreciate and welcome different ideas and views and social norms.

What was your initial reaction when you were told of the opportunity to return to Malaysia?

Mixed feelings of happiness and sadness – happy that we would be returning home to work for the pride of the nation, PETRONAS, and to be with our family and friends. We missed our parents, brothers, sisters and friends. But we were also very sad as we were leaving our children and friends we made in the United States behind.

You've been working in the international oil and gas industry for 25 years. How has the local O&G scene changed within that period?

The challenge of finding and monetizing discoveries in terms of success rate, efficiency, cost optimization and commerciality remains. The big and easy finds however, have already been found. The remaining opportunities are harder to find and require new ideas and novel technology to image, identify, discover and develop.

Despite these challenges, the various Petroleum Arrangements offered by PETRONAS have created a conducive investment environment and attracted not only the big international oil and gas companies but also many smaller, independent local and foreign players, each bringing their own niche capabilities and healthy competition. This helps create a vibrant upstream business, selected service industry and the spin-off development of Malaysia's O&G industry. It certainly makes Malaysia attractive for returning experts and expatriates alike.

Sept 16 is Malaysia Day. What would you say to other Malaysians who are considering a return home?

Home is where the heart is, regardless of where you are – but as Malaysians, there is 'something' that ties us together and make us uniquely Malaysian. Malaysia is a relatively young country but we have come a long way since 1963. The way of life and opportunities that we get abroad is now available in our own backyard. Malaysia has so much to offer beyond the *teh tarik*, *nasi lemak*, *rendang* and family. And because of this, returning home should be an exciting decision to look forward to – to be a part of the Malaysian success story!

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THE RETURNING EXPERT PROGRAMME CAN FACILITATE YOUR RETURN HOME

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