

From Manila to Dubai with Porsche

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14/03/2016 What happens when professionals in After Sales from Porsche, a Porsche importer and a Catholic educational institute come together in Manila? The result is educational qualifications and more opportunities for young people, in Dubai, for example.

Jayson Supan is the name of one of these young Philippine citizens who has been carrying out maintenance work for the last six years as an automotive mechatronics engineer on vehicles at the booming Porsche Center in the desert Emirate of Dubai. Cars from a brand that he had never even heard of in his former life. A life that foresees for many young people an insecure existence as a day labourer in the rice fields before the gates of Manila. But life had other things in store for him. One of Jayson's uncles told him about a school in the city. A school where children from poor families could get an education. The Don Bosco Technical Institute (DBTI), run by the Salesians of Don Bosco, has been helping for many decades to ease the situation of people living in poverty by making it possible for them to get an education.

And Jayson was given his chance at Don Bosco in 2008 and at the just-opened Porsche Training and Recruitment Center Asia (PTRCA). This is a training institute with the help of which the sports car manufacturer from Zuffenhausen has, since then, aimed to cover the greatly increasing demand for qualified personnel in After Sales, in particular in the workshops of the Porsche Centers in the Middle East. During his several months of basic technical training at the DBTI, it became clear that Jayson would be a good candidate for the PTRCA. The PTRCA trains people in the second qualification phase, during which qualified apprentices gain their Porsche-specific skills. This is also something they achieve at the Porsche Center of Porsche importer Robert Coyiuto Jr., an important supporter of the PTRCA, where they can get a taste of the practical side of things.

Since 2009 the now 25-year-old has been working as an automotive mechatronics engineer at the Al Nabooda Automobiles Porsche Center in Dubai. This car dealer from the United Arab Emirates, like many of his colleagues in the growing Middle East market, relies on Porsche specialists like Jayson. The likeable young man has just managed the leap from systems mechanic to diagnostic specialist. Working daily with state-of-the-art equipment is no problem for the Filipino. And yet at the beginning it was difficult for him to be thousands of kilometres away from his family. But thanks to his strong faith and the soon-established close friendship with his colleagues, it was not long before the desert country and the Porsche Center became his second home, allowing him and his family a financial basis that lies far above the Philippine average. “I looked at my first pay check lots of times, because I couldn't believe how high my salary was,” Jayson says with a warm laugh.

Team-building activities for people of very different nationalities

Richard Carvalho, After Sales trainer, is something like a mother to the group of young technicians. A citizen of India and with an unusual hairdo, he has a very cheerful disposition. Thanks to his warm nature, he is able to drive away the first feelings of homesickness among the new arrivals. When new technicians are needed, he immediately allocates them to colleagues from other countries. Pakistanis, Indians, Filipinos are the largest national groups in the large Porsche team in Dubai. His team-building activities work for people of very different nationalities. What he appreciates among young people from the East Asian island state above all is “their good manners and their disciplined attitude to work,” he says. The highly qualified technicians are a great support from the very beginning. And thanks to their very hard-working nature, they manage to develop themselves further in only a few years. On the weekends the men from Pakistan and India cheer on their Filipino colleagues at a basketball tournament. And they return the favour as loud fans at a cricket game. “It's a sport that Filipinos really can't play,” says Carvalho laughing.

Porsche has been cooperating with the Salesian Society of Don Bosco in Manila for eight years. Young people from the poorest of backgrounds and a sports car manufacturer. The combination of Don Bosco and Porsche – does it work? He felt a little like a doubting Thomas at first, says Christian Osterhaus, Managing Director of the NGO Don Bosco Mondo e.V., which is based in Germany. But Osterhaus is absolutely certain about one thing, not least since his visit to Manila at the end of last year: “Yes, it works!”

A model of success sets a precedent. The brands Audi and Volkswagen are to become new cooperation partners of the PTRCA via Audi Volkswagen Middle East. Instead of the recent 32 apprentices per year, in 2016 there will be 120 and in 2017 even 145 young men and women being trained to become automotive mechatronics engineers for state-of-the-art technology, and from 2017 bodywork engineers as well. At the present time, a new 6,000-square-metre training centre is being built on the grounds of the Don Bosco Institute. A surface area of 1,500 square metres alone has been designated for theory rooms and workshops for Audi, Volkswagen and Porsche.

“It is nothing unusual for the inhabitants of the Philippines to work all over the world. They benefit here from their English language skills and their good work ethic,” explains Michael Drolshagen, Head of After Sales at Porsche AG, when naming the most important reasons for choosing Manila as a location for the PTRCA. Jayson Supan's story shows that this was and is the right approach. Jayson is one of the 250 young people who, since the launch of the PTRCA, have made use of the opportunity to gain a better life for them and their families by training to become an automotive mechatronics engineer.

Spreading the success further

In his home village, Jayson is seen as a person who has helped his family to achieve modest affluence. For example, the family's new two-storey, solid brick house is witness to Jayson's success. His parents have two model cars from Porsche on a small table in their living room which they treasure, along with the framed school certificates that hang on the wall. The Supans have set up a micro business with the money sent home from Dubai. The typical vehicle used by Filipinos stands in the driveway: a Jeepney. This relict from US colonial times is a converted Jeep that is generally used as a collective taxi. The colourfully painted vehicle is used by the Supans to transport goods. They have painted the words “fruits and vegetables” in curved letters on the body. Every Saturday morning in the very early hours, the Jeepney is driven to the market of a neighbouring town loaded with mangos, pineapples, bananas and watermelons. The father employs a neighbour as his driver, thus spreading the family's success further. He does not have a driving licence himself.

Back to Jayson Supan at the workshop in Dubai, directly on the highway between the huge Dubai Mall, which boasts the world's tallest skyscraper, Burj al Khalifa, and the eastern outskirts of the city. Jayson now feels quite at home in the glamorous metropolis. Of course he still misses his family, even though he has many contacts among the Filipino community in Dubai. No weekend goes by without the guys cooking and partying together. That eases their feelings of homesickness: “What I miss most is the shared meals with my parents and brothers.” But when he sees what his family has achieved during his annual four-week holiday at home, he knows: “It was the right decision. Thank you, Porsche, for this fantastic opportunity!”

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Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart