Girls' Day as motivation

23/04/2015 Approximately 15 years ago Filiz Akkaya took part in Girls' Day. A pathfinding experience: The 27-year old is now a Ph.D. student at Porsche AG.

A total of 139 girls from different types of secondary schools are seizing the opportunity to gain an insight into technical occupations at the sports car manufacturer on today's April 23. That is almost 50 per cent more students than last year. At the Porsche sites in Zuffenhausen, Weissach, Leipzig and Bietigheim-Bissingen the girls will change brake pads, paint vehicles and fit engines. In addition, this year for the first time the girls will also be able to take a look behind the scenes in the workshops of several Porsche centres: in Leipzig, Hamburg and Zuffenhausen they will have an opportunity to use tools and tinker with all different kinds of sports cars.

Filiz Akkaya, who now develops testing methods for vehicle powertrains at the test station in the Weissach development centre, is convinced that Girls' Day can open up new perspectives. When she herself took part she saw women "doing really good work in male professions. They were mentors and role models for me. They reinforced my decision and brought me this far." Today she is standing in front of the group herself and looking forward to "opening other girls' eyes to the fascination of technology."

She comes from Stuttgart and has loved cars and engines ever since she was a small girl. Incidentally, it was her own father who really opened her eyes: "He allowed me to help him to change oil and repair cars." To change inlet and outlet valves her father had even been known to disassemble a whole engine in the family's living room.

"Engineering is a tangible and graphic world – and it's certainly more than just the formulas you learn at school", says Akkaya. After leaving secondary school she gained university entrance qualifications at a technical college. Whilst studying mechanical engineering she became a member of "Femtec", a career network for women in technical professions. Porsche AG is a founding member of the network established in 2001 that supports young women on their way to a typically male occupation. And it is successful as the proportion of female employees at Porsche has been growing for years – also and especially in technical areas.

This is a good signal for Filiz Akkaya, as building sports cars is also a woman's job. But on the other hand she knows that there are still too many girls without enough confidence in themselves. She is motivated to change this: "I want to encourage girls to apply and get started." This means that the forty students who Filiz Akkaya will guide through the development centre in Weissach can not only look forward to a varied tour, but also to a highly motivated guide.

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