



The Jal Academy by Grohe in Mumbai

Michael Mager, Executive Director Personnel and organization at Grohe AG, on the Jal Academy launched by Grohe AG and Don Bosco Mondo e.V. in Mumbai.

What kind of training have you been imparting under Jal Academy and from when on?

Launched in the year 2009, Grohe Jal Academy, in association with Don Bosco Learning Center has been training plumbers for more than 5 years. We offer unskilled and underprivileged youth a vocational training and make them employable through skill training on world-class Grohe products and further education in Plumbing and the latest technologies.

How many people have you trained and what is your target in terms of number of trainees?

So far we have trained more than 700 people and we intend to train another batch of about 300 apprentices this year.

What led to this unique initiative?

At Grohe, we believe in making a positive difference in the lives and lifestyles of those who are less privileged. We started the Jal Academy in association with Don Bosco with a vision to helping people help themselves and contribute to their upliftment. The project „Grohe Jal Academy” originated from the awareness that a company focussing on sustainability has a social responsibility as well as an environmental responsibility, which is not limited solely to their own employees. The idea for commitment in India was developed by Grohe with young management trainees during their training. From the start, the intention was for the company to not just play a part with donations alone. Members of staff also help in person. The Jal Academy gives young people from the poorest families or without any relatives training the chance to be a plumber culminating in a recognised

certificate. Grohe needed an experienced partner for this and Don Bosco has many different support services set up in India. At the Don Bosco Institute of Technology in Mumbai teenagers from the surrounding slums receive a school education and afterwards a vocational training. It is a place of order and quality amidst an environment of chaos and poverty. The perfect place for the Grohe project.

Why do think there is a need for training? What kind of skill gap do you find in this space?

As there is a great shortage of skilled workers here, training is the perfect basis for a career prospect. Grohe also benefits from the new, well-trained craftsmen because there are not enough qualified fitters in India who are able to professionally install high quality products. With the existing local contacts, we can also offer graduates good employment opportunities. The endeavor is to make the industry more organized by training plumbers and upgrading their skills to fit the rapidly growing and changing demands of the luxury sanitary ware market. We plan to keep upgrading the training further by developing the technology in the segment.

How do the people who get trained benefit in terms of skill upgradation?

The training qualifies the young people to become professional plumbers. It gives them the opportunity to start a career as skilled tradesmen so as to financially sustain themselves for the future. This in turn will strengthen the plumbing profession like never before, as these trained professionals are more likely to meet the

1

Don Bosco Mondo e.V.
Straesschensweg 3
53113 Bonn
Germany
www.don-bosco-mondo.com


DON BOSCO MONDO
JUGEND • HILFE • WELTWEIT

The Jal Academy by Grohe in Mumbai

demands for international standard services by urban Indians.

What does the training entail?

Training in the field of water installation is a two-stage process, i.e. it comprises the basic plumbing training and subsequently the foreman training. According to Indian standards, the qualification measures take between three and twelve months. The final exam leads to officially recognized certificates as qualified plumbers from India's national certification authority.

Do you absorb those who are trained and till now how many and how many more will be absorbed?

Our extensive reach amongst the developers and our leadership position in retail allows us to regularly offer the students options for regular as well as contractual employment. The industry at large has also whole-heartedly supported this first-of-its-kind initiative in India and has absorbed these trained plumbers wherever possible.

Are there other companies who are into skill development in blue collar jobs?

Grohe's initiative is the first-of-its-kind in India.

How does your training improve their employability and the wage structure?

As mentioned earlier, the professional training allows the young people from impoverished backgrounds to become skilled plumbers and sustain themselves well in a market where their demand is burgeoning every day. The training by a name like Grohe also helps them to

negotiate a better price in the market for their services.

How has the response been so far?

The Grohe Jal Academy has achieved great success and an overwhelming response with many apprentices attending the training workshop every year. The present batch roughly comprises 24 youths who are attending the preparatory course for the plumbing training and the numbers have been subsequently rising every year since inception. Till date, we have a total number of approximately 700 youths successfully graduating from the Jal Academy.

Is such an initiative unique for India?

In 2015, Grohe will not only continue to run this award-winning project in Mumbai but will also roll it out to New Delhi. In addition, Grohe and Don Bosco are cooperating on a project in Manila-Tondo in the Philippines where they are setting up a training workshop under the name Grohe Dual Tech.