

Diving Makes us all EQUAL

I would like to tell you the story of my greatest inspiration for teaching. This is a story about a staff member who became a student who became a mentee who has become a college.

Made (Mad-eh) Partayasa, casually known around the island as Made P joined our dive team in April 2012. He was a passionate diver with a keen eye for safety and customer service. Made P comes from humbled beginnings. His family started their lives on Nusa Lembongan however, during the Indonesian years of transmigration policies were moved to Southern Sulawesi, over 649 km away. The family made a living seaweed farming. Made P was the middle child, all boys. One night during an electrical storm Made's father was out tending to the farms and was struck and killed by lightning. The family struggled, they were surviving on what they could find – mostly roots and small portions of rice. Made's oldest brother wrote to their grandparents of their situation and their grandparents came to their rescue.

The family provided the best they could, Made was always promised that after his eldest brother finished school, he would be next. Only being able to afford one child in school at the time the younger boys worked. When it was time for Made to attend school he decided that it was too late for him – he was only 13 years old – so he decided to pass on the opportunity for a formal education in favour of his younger brother. Made continued to work in seaweed farming and learning to surf and then to captain a boat.

One day Made was given an opportunity to try scuba diving. He immediately fell in love with what he saw. Made was brought up through the diving programs when standards were a little loose – he was never made to complete the theory or exams – although he could read and write the materials were only in English at the time – and he was a good, safe, competent diver so his instructors signed off his certifications. This was also true for his first professional rating of PADI Divemaster. During this program there is diving physics, physiology, dive tables, equipment and diving and the environment. All come with exams and reading – again Made was signed off no exams ever given.

In November of 2012 it was decided that Made would become a PADI instructor, the next level. This rating would allow him to provide for his family more than anyone had been able to in the past. PADI diving instructors in Indonesia make more than other professionals (doctors, lawyers, nurses, etc). Made worked day in and day out to learn diving theory. Up from 0600 to 2400 studying, asking for help, learning all he could learn and comprehend.

At the end of the PADI Instructor course there is an examination completed by a PADI examiner. There is timed written exams in dive theory and diving standards, a structure classroom teaching presentation, a structured pool teaching presentation, a structured open water teaching presentation, and a demonstration of a rescue.

In December 2012 try as he may, Made failed 2 theory exams which would mean he would not be successful at this exam and would have to write all the written exams again in the new year. It was devastating, all that work, and now all the tears. Made had a lot riding on passing – he was “blazing a trail” he was the first local lad to be completing this process and everyone was looking up to him, the weight of the island was on his shoulders.

There were tears, a lot of tears. In the PADI system failing one section does not mean you cannot complete the others and Made was successful in the remainder of the exam process.

After a small break Made and I were back in the classroom. Studying dive theory and dive standards – finding new and creative ways to help him learn, understand, and apply the theory to what he knew – Diving. In February 2013 he was ready again... again he failed diving physics – more tears. But this time he would not have to wait, he could sit a remake of the physics exam the following morning, and there would be no time limit to complete the exam.

More overnight studying.

The next morning he wrote the exam... 30 mins goes by, 40 mins....45...55...60... Finally, the door of the exam room bursts open HE HAS PASSED. Made’s journey and subsequent passing of the PADI exam has inspired 100s of local people to go on and become PADI instructors. My mentoring did not stop there.

Made went on to become one of our most successful instructors. Teaching a 1000 people to dive. It was time for the next challenges. I continued to mentor Made up the PADI ladder to finally mentoring him to his PADI Course Director, a rating earned by only 2% of PADI members, a program that accepts only 60 people globally each year. Made again was a trail blazer and was the first Balinese Course Director.

It was a triumphant and rewarding journey and I am now happy to have Made as an equal and a colleague within our dive centre. Made teaches 10 Instructor courses a year where he gets to mentor and share his journey and knowledge with 100s of students each year.

THIS is why diving is the great equalizer, no matter your background, no matter your challenges, diving is for everyone and once you enter our classroom everyone has the same opportunities to succeed and be a success. Everyone can learn.

From humbled beginnings to one of the top PADI professionals in Indonesia. What an amazing journey it has been.

