
The local boy who dreamed of working for Oil Search

Feature

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The mountains appear endless. Behind them lie rolling grassy hills, banana trees, sweet potato fields and thatched huts. There are pigs, cassowaries and dogs, no cars but dug-out canoes on the lake, with people fishing and traveling to the nearest village, and the constant sound of the crash of the breakers from the lake.

This is Harabiyu village located near Lake Kutubu, Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. It is also the focus of the Kutubu oil project, PNG's first commercial oil field development. Oil was first discovered here in 1986 with commercial production in June 1992.

The operator of the project is Oil Search. Established in January 1929, it has become PNG's largest company and investor, operating all the country's producing oil fields with an extensive appraisal and exploration portfolio.

The success of Oil Search is built on balancing business and social operatives governed by its strong values and high standards. Respectful, open relationships with local landowners, community members and all levels of government are at the heart of its current and future success.

One of its strategic objectives is developing organisational capability through several initiatives such as the Apprentice Program which continues to provide apprentices with the best opportunities to commence their careers and offers excellent hands on technical experience, training and development paired with competitive salaries and benefits.

For 2019 novice, Morris Hoffrey, the story is simple: do well in school, attain technical skills training and be part of the workforce for a company that has been operating in his home even before he was born. Morris is one of 20 young Papua New Guineans who have joined Oil Search's 2019 Apprentice Program.

"I had a dream growing up - to be part of the 'blue uniform' and see first-hand how the company operates in my region. Getting into this program is a privilege and I am very excited for this opportunity," Morris said.

Apprentices are assigned to different facilities to ensure exposure to a broad range of skills. Morris is attached with the Process Technology team as an Apprentice Process Technician.

"This is a great opportunity for me and it has been a great experience so far. I work alongside skilled tradesmen and women who openly share their knowledge and provide the support necessary to help me grow in my current role."

The Production Trainer, Matt Booth has been a pillar of strength for Morris. "Matt constantly reminds me that nothing is impossible and that I can do anything. He encourages me to do my best and I have learnt a lot from him."

“I would like to say that though I come from the project area, I wasn’t expecting any special treatment. I went through the normal screening process. I came for the interviews, did the aptitude tests and passed my medical tests. I proved that I have the skills and knowledge to do the job. Morris said the achievement is not only for him and his family but for his tribe, clan and community.

“The community is proud that one of their own is working for the company that is doing work in their area. I am now representing both the company and my community. I am representing my community in the company and when I go for my break, I will be representing the company.”

The Oil Search apprentice program runs for four years and begins with a one-year training course at the *Institut Teknologi Petroleum PETRONAS (INSTEP)* campus in Malaysia. The technically intensive course is designed to give trainees underpinning knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be highly effective in their role.

As part of the program Morris flew to Malaysia to begin his one-year training with other Oil Search apprentices at INSTEP.

“This is my first time to leave my village and travel overseas,” an elated Morris said. “I never thought I’ll be going overseas to study in a world class facility.”

Morris wants to take ownership of his skills development and contribute to the oil and gas industry for many years to come.

“It will be a challenge for me, but I am committed to learn new things and approach people to seek advice and guidance when needed.”

Morris would like to encourage young aspiring apprentices to work hard and showcase their technical skills in their line of work.

“There’s a great opportunity for aspiring apprentices to be part of the growth of the company and the industry. It is all about commitment and perseverance.”

Oil Search’s Apprentice Program consists of three streams: Process, Electrical and Mechanical trades.

Ends.

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Photos



Oil Search Process Technician apprentice Morris Hoffrey at the INSTEP training facility in Malaysia.



Oil Search Process Technician apprentice Morris Hoffrey.