

## **TUI Care Foundation supports Pikala: Moroccans cycling the road towards a better future**

- A program promoting a green way of mobility in Marrakesh trains 90 young unemployed Moroccans as mechanics and tourist guides
- Focus on women inclusion through special bike riding classes and courses

**Berlin, 17 August 2017:** To generate future opportunities for young Moroccans and promote a green way of mobility, TUI Care Foundation and Dutch NGO Pikala – which means bikes in Moroccan street language – join forces. Both organisations will work together to train 90 young Moroccans to become a bike tour guide in their home city, to get in-depth knowledge of bike mechanics and learn the basics of how to run their own bike tour business eventually. 36 of the participants will be employed throughout the project. Young people do not only learn how to ride or repair a bike, but also how to organize their life and to take responsibilities. Through education and trainings for the public, the initiative also raises awareness on the potentials of bikes among local inhabitants: They are an environmental friendly and fun alternative to scooters and taxis and provide an exciting new way for tourists to experience the city. Furthermore, as being a guide is still a typical male job in Morocco, Pikala puts a focus on women inclusion by offering special bike riding classes for them and introducing women to the craft.

Thomas Ellerbeck, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of TUI Care Foundation, highlighted: “Certainly unemployment is a main issue, but this project goes beyond it to encompass a comprehensive approach where environmental, social and gender issues meet economic needs. We are proud of our partnership with Pikala and inspired by the enthusiasm with which the local community has welcomed this project.”

In a country where – according to the High Commission for Planning – 22 per cent of young people from 15 to 24 years old are registered unemployed and less than 15 per cent of first grade students are likely to finish high school, Cantal Bakker saw a chance for her passion: the bike. She explains with enthusiasm: “When holiday makers book a bike tour with Pikala, they kill two birds with one stone. Together with a local guide they discover the wonders of the city – besides from the famous Djemaa el Fna plaza. Now, while biking they are also supporting these youths’ effort to build a better future for themselves. So let’s bring on those kilometres!”

During her holidays, Cantal Bakker was cycling to get around Marrakech. She was surprised how many times people would ask her where they could buy her bike. Bikes are not a common means of transportation as known from Western cities like Amsterdam or Berlin. They stand for poverty - why should one take a bike if you can afford a car instead? Cantal Bakker saw the potential of cycling for transformation and TUI Care Foundation decided to join and support her in this adventure to empower over 90 Moroccans and transform the city of Marrakesh. From the beginning it was clear that the project needs to focus on young people as well as the wider public as their attitudes towards biking needed to change to unleash the full potential of cycling for a greener Marrakesh.

Morocco is a major touristic destination in Africa, and tourism represents the second largest source of income for the country, being as well a main job provider. But challenges remain. Youth unemployment is high, there are insufficient levels of education and air quality is an issue due to the wide-spread use of badly maintained scooters, busses and taxis generating high levels of CO2 pollution.

Cantal Bakker explains: "Together with TUI Care Foundation we wanted to inspire the Moroccan youth and combat the high levels of unemployment in Marrakesh. Pikala would teach young people the craftsmanship of bicycle repair and the art of making the bicycles really special together with artists. In this way, we not only teach them a profession, they learn to work in a company structure and we trigger their creativity."

Morocco has hosted the COP (Conference of the Parties) 22 in 2016 –which gathers the governing body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change– and lead the discussions on how to advance towards a "Sustainable Tourism in a Changing Climate." The symposium aimed at increasing awareness and encourage the sector to engage in actions that reinforce national commitments to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. As a matter of fact, it was during the celebration of that summit that the Pikala project was launched, transforming containers into bicycle workshops where volunteers would do free bike-fixing for local Moroccans. Since then, the project has grown steadily reaching more people and changing the habits of both locals and tourists.

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### **About TUI Care Foundation**

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates partnerships and projects which create new opportunities for the young generation and contribute to thriving destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, the TUI Care Foundation fosters education and training initiatives to open up new opportunities and perspectives for young people, the protection of the natural environment in holiday destinations and sustainable livelihoods in thriving destinations where local communities can benefit even more from tourism. TUI Care Foundation works global and acts local - it builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long lasting impact. The charitable foundation values transparency and the efficient use of funds. Therefore; 100% of the donations go to partners and projects with all operating costs of the foundation covered by TUI. TUI Care Foundation was founded by TUI, the world's leading tourism business, in 2011 and is based in the Netherlands.

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