

## **Empowering women whilst promoting sustainable transportation – TUI Care Foundation launches new TUI Futuroshapers programme in Namibia**

- *TUI Futuroshapers Namibia introduces a new fleet of electric vehicles in Windhoek*
- *12 women receive training through the programme to become drivers and tour guides and a total of 100 livelihoods are supported through this programme*
- *The initiative is launched as part of the TUI Care Foundation's Entrepreneurship October, a month dedicated to highlighting support for sustainable businesses in tourism destinations*

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**Berlin, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024.** *In Namibia, where unemployment rates are high and vehicles are predominantly gas-powered, TUI Futuroshapers Namibia aims to break barriers and create jobs by training women as drivers and tour guides. The new initiative addresses socio-economic challenges and promotes environmental conservation by replacing gas-powered vehicles with electric ones.*

This pioneering initiative, which is a partnership with local start-up LEFA, is aimed at transforming the transportation sector in Windhoek, Namibia. The project focuses on sustainable transportation, female empowerment and socio-economic progress by introducing a fleet of ten electric vehicles in Windhoek, driven exclusively by skilled female drivers. Women will receive training to become professional tour guides and to offer unique and enriching tours of Windhoek to locals and international visitors. LEFA is one of TUI Care Foundation's first partners to be supported through a low-cost loan rather than a grant.

By empowering women in this traditionally male-dominated field, the programme helps to reshape societal norms and advance gender equality. The female guides will preserve Namibia's rich cultural heritage whilst also providing diverse perspectives and authentic experiences to tourists. In doing so, the participants will contribute to boosting local tourism and economic inclusion.

The initiative also supports local economic growth by creating new job opportunities in electric vehicle maintenance and the renewable energy sectors. Additionally, the project will drive infrastructure development by expanding the number of electric vehicle charging stations and encouraging innovation. Overall, the programme is expected to support 100 livelihoods throughout its implementation.

Melkies Ausiku Founder and CEO of LEFA Transportation Services says "At LEFA, we are proud to be at the forefront of a transformative initiative that not only advances sustainable transportation in Namibia, but also empowers women to take on new roles in our community. Through the TUI Futuroshapers Namibia programme, we are breaking down barriers and creating meaningful opportunities for women in a traditionally male-dominated industry. This programme is more than just about reducing emissions; it's about driving change, fostering economic growth, and reshaping societal norms in Windhoek and beyond."

Alexander Panczuk, Executive Director of the TUI Care Foundation: "The TUI Care Foundation celebrates the capabilities of Namibian women and the unique contribution they bring to the tourism sector. This programme is an opportunity to uplift and empower women in Windhoek through skill building whilst creating green jobs to support economic growth."

TUI Futureshaper Namibia is a part of the global TUI Futureshapers Programme, which is empowering people to turn social challenges into entrepreneurial opportunities in destinations such as Cape Verde, Zanzibar, Senegal, Portugal, Greece and Tunisia.

The TUI Care Foundation's 'Entrepreneurship October' is a month of activities dedicated to supporting sustainable businesses in tourism destinations. Through a series of project launches, it highlights the importance of empowering small businesses in tourism destinations with a holistic approach of financial assistance, mentoring and access to the tourism market.

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### ***About the TUI Care Foundation***

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands. [www.tuicarefoundation.com](http://www.tuicarefoundation.com)

### ***About LEFA***

Founded in 2018, LEFA is an urban mobility company in Windhoek that facilitates passenger transportation through technology, making passenger transportation safe, reliable, efficient and convenient. The LEFA app is a true pioneer as a ride-hailing platform in Namibia. The name LEFA was derived from the Oshiwambo word *lefa* which translates to the action of asking for a 'lift' or 'ride'. LEFA is Windhoek's most trusted local cab and airport transfer operator in Windhoek. Often called the 'UBER' of Namibia – whether you need a LEFA for your everyday commute, an airport transfer or a delivery service – LEFA ensures a safe, reliable, and convenient ride every time. <https://lefa.com.na/>

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