

## **TUI Care Foundation launches three cultural projects in Least Developed Countries to empower creatives and boost tourism**

- *TUI Colourful Cultures Battambang and Siem Reap empower over 200 creatives in Cambodia through artisan training and support urban art festivals to strengthen cultural tourism*
- *TUI Colourful Cultures Zambia & Rwanda trains 120 young storytellers to promote cultural heritage and inspire travel through digital content*
- *Programmes are launched as part of the TUI Care Foundation's 'Tourism for Development Month', which focuses on projects that empower Least Developed Countries through sustainable tourism initiatives*

**Berlin, 4 September 2025.** *Tourism can play a vital role in advancing sustainable development in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), where communities often face challenges such as limited job opportunities, informal economies and under-resourced cultural sectors. In Cambodia, despite the country's rich cultural heritage, artists and artisans face limited access to markets, training, and visibility. In Zambia and Rwanda, young creatives often lack the professional opportunities and platforms needed to share their stories and promote their cultural identity. To address these challenges, the TUI Care Foundation is launching three new projects to empower local talent, strengthen unique cultural heritage, and connect communities to the benefits of tourism.*

In Battambang, a culturally rich city in northwest Cambodia, local artists struggle to gain visibility and economic stability due to the city's historically low tourism profile – which is overshadowed by more prominent destinations like Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. TUI Colourful Cultures Battambang addresses these challenges by revitalising the city's artistic identity and promoting it as a cultural tourism destination. In partnership with Phare Ponleu Selpak, a Cambodian non-profit arts school, the project organises two large-scale urban arts festivals in 2025 and 2027, featuring over 20 public performances - including circus, dance, and live music - and 20 workshops involving students and professional artists. These events aim to engage 30,000 people and bring arts into public spaces through murals, street performances, and interactive installations. Additionally, student artists from vulnerable backgrounds will receive scholarships for professional training in visual and performing arts, whilst upgraded facilities at the artist residency space will support ongoing skills development and provide a platform for student artists to showcase their work.

Siem Reap with its world-renowned Angkor Wat temple complex attracts millions of tourists annually, yet many local artisans struggle to benefit from this influx. The handicraft sector - though vital to the local economy - remains largely informal, leaving artisans without stable income or social protection. TUI Colourful Cultures Siem Reap supports 200 artisans through a hybrid business model that combines incubation and a cooperative system. It provides vocational and entrepreneurship training, guaranteed income and access to social benefits. Delivered in partnership with the Satcha Handicraft Incubation Center, the programme includes education in marketing, business creation, language skills and design techniques. Artisans produce high-quality handmade goods

using locally sourced materials, which are promoted through partnerships with 50 tour operators and over 50 hotels. The project also hosts 50 cultural dinners annually, featuring craft demonstrations and traditional performances, and offers DIY workshops for visitors. Expansion to two rural areas, including Kulen Mountain, will ensure broader community inclusion.

In Zambia and Rwanda young creatives often lack the tools, training, and networks to turn their storytelling talents into viable careers. TUI Colourful Cultures Zambia & Rwanda builds on a successful first phase in Zambia and expands its reach to Rwanda. The programme targets young people who are passionate about arts, conservation and tourism and provides training in photography, videography, and digital storytelling. Participants take part in field trips to apply their skills in real-world settings and are connected to tourism organisations that can benefit from their expertise. Six-month fellowships in both countries offer stipends, mentoring and practical experience to develop Destination Ambassadors. The project supports over 120 jobs and engages 30 organisations, including cultural institutions, creative hubs and tourism stakeholders.

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Both initiatives are part of the global TUI Colourful Cultures programme which includes projects in Mexico, Zanzibar, Croatia, Morocco, Lisbon, Bulgaria, and Egypt and empowers artists and artisans to gain access to new income opportunities and promote their cultural heritage through tourism offers.

The TUI Care Foundation's 'Tourism for Development Month' is a month of activities dedicated to projects in Least Developed Countries. Through a series of project launches and educational activities, it focuses on how sustainable tourism can increase the capacity of destination communities and empower them to improve their livelihoods, conserve and regenerate nature, and create market-based solutions that benefit tourism destinations. The projects are supported through the TUI Care Foundation's Tourism for Development Fund, which commits €10 million by 2030 to empower Least Developed Countries, a joint TUI Care Foundation and UN Tourism pledge.

### ***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. Website: [www.tuicarefoundation.com](http://www.tuicarefoundation.com)

### ***About Phare Ponleu Selpak***

Phare Ponleu Selpak – in Khmer, The Brightness of the Arts – is a Cambodian non-profit arts school located in Battambang, offering support to children, youth and the

surrounding communities through artistic, educational, social and community outreach and engagement programmes. Over 800 students are empowered every year through schools and programmes: performing, visual and applied arts leisure classes, and vocational training aid children and young adults to develop their creativity, communication and concentration skills, and to access a sustainable artistic career whilst preserving and promoting Cambodian arts and culture.

***About Satcha Handicraft Incubation Center***

Satcha is a Cambodian handicraft centre that incubates local artisans, mixing traditional knowledge with contemporary design to showcase Cambodian' talents to local and international visitors and to transmit this know-how over time while having a sustainable social, economic, and environmental impact.

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***About Discover Zambia***

Discover Zambia is a leading digital tourism marketing company. Its platforms are dedicated to showcasing the very best of the stunning African country, from its breathtaking natural wonders and diverse wildlife to its rich cultural heritage and friendly people. Discover Zambia is rooted in the largest social media travel community showcasing Zambia with the goal of helping people discover the very best of Zambia and create memories that will last a lifetime.

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