

Supporting the sustainable development of tourism in Jamaica - TUI Care Foundation launches new TUI Academy and Destination Zero Waste programmes

- TUI Care Foundation pledges over half a million Euros to support hospitality education for underserved youth and upcycling initiatives to reduce waste in Jamaica
- Destination Zero Waste Jamaica sets up a waste collection system and an upcycling centre which will transform discarded glass and plastic waste into new products, creating employment for up to 300 locals
- TUI Academy Jamaica provides 120 young people with vocational training and connects them with employment opportunities

TUI Care Foundation
Pariser Platz 6a
10117 Berlin

www.tuicarefoundation.com

Berlin, 26 June 2025. *The city of Montego Bay provides locals with multiple opportunities to build a livelihood in the tourism sector. However, for this leading Jamaican holiday destination, environmental sustainability and youth unemployment are prevalent issues. With this in mind, the TUI Care Foundation is launching two programmes to tackle glass and plastic waste pollution and to equip local youth with valuable skills for the tourism and hospitality sector, respectively.*

Much of the waste produced in Jamaica either ends up in already-limited landfill space or is improperly discarded, polluting oceans, rivers and gullies. As a major tourist destination, Montego Bay, tourism businesses - hotels, restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues - produce thousands of metric tonnes of plastic and glass waste that also end up in landfills. To address this challenge, the TUI Care Foundation has partnered with the local NGO Smilozone Cares to launch the Destination Zero Waste programme in Montego Bay. This initiative includes the setup of an innovative upcycling centre, which will support youth development. It will offer training in recycling techniques and empower young people to create marketable products from discarded materials, fostering environmental stewardship, income generation, and employment for up to 300 individuals. Tourists and other visitors to the centre will also be encouraged to participate in eco-friendly practices through interactive scavenger hunts and immersive upcycling tours offered by local tour operators.

The programme also mobilises tourism businesses, restaurants, entertainment venues and local communities to establish a robust recycling and waste collection network. Destination Zero Waste Jamaica emphasises community engagement through workshops on waste management and establishes environmental clubs in schools to educate and inspire young people.

The project is part of the TUI Care Foundation's Destination Zero Waste Programme, which inspires new ways to reduce and reuse waste in tourism destinations that create jobs and promote a circular economy. Projects are currently active in destinations like Curacao, Mauritius, Zanzibar, Cyprus, or Tunisia.

In its educational field of engagement, the TUI Care Foundation is now collaborating with the Institute of Vocational Education and Skills Training (INVEST) to launch the TUI

Academy in Jamaica, which will train 120 disadvantaged young people with the knowledge and skills essential to succeed in the competitive job market. The programme is responding to a critical shortage of skilled labour in the tourism and hospitality industry to meet its growing demands. Against this backdrop, communities in the vicinity grapple with social challenges, poverty and a deficit in essential skills.

The new TUI Academy aims to tackle this challenge head-on by focusing on young people from underserved communities, providing them with targeted vocational training as well as practical skills that align with the needs of the sector, whilst fostering personal and professional growth. The programme offers courses in Housekeeping, Food and Beverage Service, Culinary Skills and Tour Guiding. All of them combine theoretical education and transformative life skills coaching, focusing on essential areas such as conflict resolution, emotional intelligence and social support, including substance abuse prevention. The classroom component is succeeded by a practical placement with partner tourism businesses, which allows trainees to receive invaluable work experience and potential internship and job placement opportunities after graduation.

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This programme is part of the TUI Care Foundation's TUI Academy, which offers vocational training for disadvantaged young people to access high quality education, work experience, life skills coaching and a brighter future. Projects are currently active in Thailand, Kenya, Zanzibar, Morocco, Dominican Republic, Montenegro, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Cape Verde.

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

About the Institute of Vocational Education and Skills Training (INVEST)

The Institute of Vocational Education and Skills Training (INVEST) is located in Montego Bay, Jamaica. INVEST seeks to provide world class skills training and professional development for individuals who desire to distinguish themselves in their Industry. The team of highly skilled professionals and qualified Instructors work to empower individuals to achieve their fullest potential in an environment that is vibrant, engaging and conducive for learning. INVEST seeks to transform potential into success by giving people opportunities to build their confidence, skills and connections for the future. Website: <http://invest-ja.com/>

About Smilozone Cares

Smilozone Cares based in Montego Bay, St. James is a non-profit organization founded in 2020 that is dedicated to the sustainable environmental development of Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region. Their vision is to promote a sustainable future by reducing, repurposing and reusing waste.

They strive to make a positive impact on society and the environment through initiatives that focus on recycling, green jobs and creating more sustainable communities. They hope to create an eco-system for innovative solutions to the growing waste management challenges faced by society.

Website: <https://www.smilozonecares.com/>

Contact:

TUI Care Foundation

Manuel Ferreira

Head of External Communications

+44 7471 260915

manuel.ferreira@tui.com

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