

Empowering young people through vocational training and environmental education in Sri Lanka – TUI Care Foundation launches new TUI Academy and TUI Junior Academy programmes

- *TUI Junior Academy Sri Lanka increases access to environmental education and promotes eco-friendly practices to 600 children and their communities*
- *TUI Academy Sri Lanka opens doors to career opportunities in tourism to 250 disadvantaged youth*
- *90 TUI Academy students graduated after the first year with 85% securing employment in the hospitality sector*

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Berlin, 30 April 2025. *In Sri Lanka, there is a significant gap in both environmental and hospitality vocational education, which makes it challenging for young people to actively participate in sustainability efforts and secure meaningful employment in the tourism industry. The TUI Care Foundation has launched two new programmes to provide access to inclusive and equitable education and unlock the full potential of young Sri Lankan people.*

Environmental education and awareness are critical to the future of Sri Lanka's ecologically and touristically significant regions of Gampaha, Jaffna, and Nuwara Eliya. Despite the importance of these regions, there is a considerable knowledge gap amongst the local population about the value and vulnerability of their ecosystems. To tackle this issue, the TUI Junior Academy programme, in partnership with Surya Foundation, promotes environmental education and action amongst school children and their families.

Over a two-year period, the programme engages over 600 students in 36 schools across the three regions by implementing eco-centric curricula and hands-on learning experiences. Students engage in local clean-ups and environmental campaigns such as how to reduce meat consumption, tree planting or plastic-free challenges, promoting sustainable living practices within the community.

The programme further engages adults, teachers and parents through a variety of educational opportunities, including webinars, networking events, and online courses on eco-friendly practices and sustainable living. Additionally, it establishes 100 home gardens to teach sustainable food production, fostering a deeper connection with nature and equipping participants with essential gardening and self-sufficiency skills.

The TUI Junior Academy Sri Lanka is part of the international TUI Junior Academy programme, which empowers children to become Eco Champions through environmental education and enables learning opportunities for young people from disadvantaged communities in holiday destinations such as Greece, Jamaica, South Africa, Turkey and Zimbabwe.

In Sri Lanka, 20% of young people are unemployed, and many struggle to secure work. The tourism industry offers a pathway to a more positive future by providing a wide

variety of job opportunities. Through the TUI Academy Sri Lanka, the TUI Care Foundation seeks to address the high unemployment rate amongst young people by providing education and practical training in the tourism sector. The programme builds on the remarkable achievements of the previous three-year phase of the project implemented by the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance and Aitken Spence Institute of Hotel Management. The project combined classroom training with hands-on experience to help young people aged 17-24 find work in Sri Lanka's growing tourism sector. Through this project, 155 young people graduated, with over 70% finding employment in the hospitality sector.

The project's second phase extends vocational skills training to an additional 250 young people, with a particular focus on the involvement of women. The two-month classroom-based training includes soft skills and theoretical learning, followed by vocational training at hotels and support to graduates for placement into employment. The programme also improves the hospitality curriculum by integrating life skills, including communications skills, financial literacy, self-discovery into existing curriculum and courses.

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Dagmar Wöhr, Member of the Board of Trustees of the TUI Care Foundation congratulated the graduates and shared: "Leveraging tourism to create new opportunities for vulnerable youth is central to the TUI Academy programme in Sri Lanka and globally. The successful graduation of the TUI Academy trainees is a testament to the resilience and dedication of the students. This milestone in their lives will guide them towards a promising and self-reliant future and empower them to shape the future of Sri Lanka's tourism industry."

Glenn Mandziuk, CEO, of the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance comments; "The hospitality industry holds immense potential to drive sustainable development and create meaningful career opportunities. Through initiatives like the TUI Academy Sri Lanka, we are equipping young people with essential skills to build resilient, eco-conscious communities. By bridging the gap in vocational and environmental education, we are not only shaping the future workforce but also creating a tourism industry that thrives in harmony with nature. Together, we can create lasting impact, both for the sector and the community."

This programme is part of the TUI Care Foundation's TUI Academy, which provides 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, Jamaica, Montenegro and Senegal.

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.

About the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance

The TUI Academy Sri Lanka has been set up with World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance which brings together engaged hospitality companies and uses the collective power of the industry to deliver impact locally and on a global scale. Working with leading hospitality companies and strategic partners to address key challenges affecting our planet and its people, they develop practical resources and programmes to enable the wider industry to operate responsibly and grow sustainably.

About Surya Foundation

Surya Foundation is a registered charity in Sri Lanka, which has been operating since 1992. Its aim is to support and foster social integration in the country through a set of programmes reaching underprivileged members of the society and promoting equal and better access to education, employment opportunities and healthcare (among other crucial aspects for integration). The foundation has a special focus on integration STEM education into its programmes, aligning with the foundation's commitment to providing comprehensive and contemporary learning opportunities.

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