

TUI Academy Dominican Republic creates new employment opportunities and promotes formalisation of childcare services in the country's tourism industry

- *Four-year initiative addresses inequality by training 200 unemployed young people from vulnerable backgrounds and providing vocational and life skills training as well as English classes*
- *Project promotes formalisation of childcare services in hotels, addressing a critical employment barrier for young mothers in the tourism industry, while creating new employment opportunities*
- *Local community members will be involved through workshops and sensitisation campaigns on positive parenting, violence prevention, youth rights and employability*

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Berlin, 8 January 2025. *In the Dominican Republic's eastern region, tourism is the primary economic driver, yet many young people face significant barriers to accessing employment opportunities in the sector. Despite increasing efforts to train the next generation of tourism professionals, there is still a shortfall of more than 20,000 trained employees in the hospitality industry. This is due to lack of quality education programmes particularly for young disadvantaged people coming from vulnerable backgrounds who could be absorbed by the sector. In addition, there is lack of training on specific technical skills, including English language proficiency, as well as the social skills necessary for a career in tourism.*

To address these challenges, the TUI Care Foundation has launched the next phase of the TUI Academy Dominican Republic in partnership with Plan International. After almost 10 years successfully implementing the programme in the Dominican Republic, this four-year initiative will now run in more than 40 communities across seven districts of Altagracia province, until 2029.

The programme provides students (60% of whom are female) vocational training along with English language classes focused on hospitality. This is complemented by extensive life skills education emphasising career planning, job readiness, and violence prevention strategies. Participants then complete internships in partner hotels, gaining valuable hands-on experience that enhances their employability and facilitates job placement.

A unique component of the project is the incorporation of early childhood care in the training curriculum, with a focus on the hotel industry. The project expands employment opportunities for young people by formalising and promoting child-care services within the hotel industry, ensuring that roles in this area are acknowledged as a legitimate career path with professional training and certification. At the same time, it provides childcare services to young TUI Academy students, offering them the opportunity to attend training courses without worrying about the safety of their children. In addition, parents, caregivers and other local community members will benefit from workshops on

positive parenting, gender-responsive and youth-friendly training, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and decent work principles.

Through partnerships with the national vocational training institute INFOTEP, the Ministry of Labour, and hotels in the region, the project ensures sustainable outcomes. The initiative aligns with the Dominican Republic's National Care Policy, supporting the government's efforts to formalise care services and create new employment pathways.

2026 marks the 10-year anniversary of an ongoing collaboration between the TUI Care Foundation and Plan International that has supported over 600 young people in completing technical and professional training, and more than 400 to undertake internships in hotels, improving their access to decent jobs.

The project is part of the global TUI Academy Programme, which offers vocational education and career opportunities to young people from vulnerable communities in tourism destinations around the world.

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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

About Plan International

Plan International is an international development organisation working in over 80 countries worldwide to support vulnerable children, with a particular focus on equality for girls and young women. With the support of thousands of sponsors, companies and (institutional) donors, Plan International works to improve the lives of children and young people on a global scale. <https://www.planinternational.nl/>

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