



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

The UWI Open Campus Signs MOU with Countrystyle Community Tourism Network

Office of the Principal, Bridgetown, Barbados. 03 May 2017: The University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus and the Countrystyle Community Tourism Network (CCTN) signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Wednesday, May 3, 2017 at the Open Learning Centre on the Mona Campus. The agreement was formally signed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of The UWI Open Campus, Dr Luz Longworth, and the President of Countrystyle Community Tourism Network, Mrs Diana McIntyre-Pike at the event and came into immediate effect for an initial period of two years.

This newest partnership aims to provide organizational capacity development and individual capacity building of its clientele in support of advancing community tourism as “community development” through tourism. Through this agreement, both parties will commit to the facilitation of programmes aimed at realizing the full potential of persons in the community tourism industry, and the desirability of advancing community tourism as both a recognized academic discipline, and as an effective tool for holistic, equitable and sustainable development.

In remarks before the signing, Dr Longworth indicated the agreement intends to create a pipeline to progress the training and wealth creation of community members throughout disparate communities in Jamaica initially and, subsequently, across the Caribbean region “as you build a nation one community at a time. “Through this collaboration, we intend to support community tourism in innovative ways though

museums, innovation centres, technology training, to add value to the tourism product within the University's newest strategic plan to build our economies and communities", she stated.

Mrs McIntyre-Pike spoke directly to the great potential of the new partnership with the CCTN and the Open Campus. She highlighted the critical nature of community tourism in the sustainable development of a country in a holistic way, with the expansion of the CCTN's 'Villages as Businesses' concept through this agreement. "We are going to work together and make this collaboration work around Jamaica and the wider Caribbean through education and training for a diverse tourism experience."

The Open Campus and the CCTN shortly will begin the implementation of this agreement with the offer of several short training courses for community tourism entrepreneurs offered through symposia, workshops across the 11 UWI Open Campus Jamaica site locations.

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Photo Caption: Mrs Diana McIntyre-Pike, President/Founder of Countrysyle Community Tourism Network (l) with Dr Luz Longworth, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of The UWI Open Campus (r) shake hands after signing the formal agreement between both organizations to expand the training of persons in community tourism in Jamaica and across the Caribbean over the next two years.

About The UWI

Over the last six decades, The University of the West Indies (UWI) has evolved from a fledgling college in Jamaica with 33 students to a full-fledged University with over 40,000 students. Today, UWI is the largest and most longstanding university in the English-speaking Caribbean, with main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and Centres in Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Christopher (St Kitts) & Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent & the Grenadines. UWI recently launched its Open Campus, a virtual campus with over 40 physical site locations across the region, serving over 17 countries in the English-speaking Caribbean. UWI is an international university with faculty and students from over 40 countries and collaborative links with over 60 universities around the world. Through its seven Faculties, UWI offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree options in Engineering, Humanities & Education, Law, Medical Sciences, Pure & Applied Sciences, Science and Agriculture, and Social Sciences.

About Countrystyle Community Network

Countrystyle's vision is to see communities as destinations and community tourism as the vehicle for sustainable development and prosperity through its Villages as Businesses programme with the support of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) Caribbean. In a heavily tourism-dependent region in the world, every community and citizen is a potential business partner to be trained in hospitality skills, entrepreneurship, environmental awareness, product development and marketing. But to become an effective partner, every community and every citizen needs to understand how to value their natural, cultural, heritage and human assets and add value to them through conservation, creativity, education and collaborative management.

The Mission Statement for the Countrystyle Community Tourism Network/Villages as Businesses (CCTN/VAB) is to support the development of community tourism in Jamaica, the Caribbean and internationally while educating all stakeholders of its importance to the cause of peace, poverty alleviation and sustainable development and to offer local and foreign visitors diverse 'community experience' vacations and tours.

The Academy for Community Tourism (ACT) is: "Develop future hospitality leaders through education and practical training while fostering goodwill and friendship."