

Out and About in Montego Bay



CASE STUDY

This case study shows how the Travel Foundation, with funds from the TUI Care Foundation, worked to increase the scale and spread of tourism's economic benefits in Montego Bay, by encouraging tourists to explore and spend money in the resort area.

Tourism is the main engine of growth for the Jamaican economy, but as tourists often stay within the comfort of their all-inclusive hotels, many local people do not get the opportunity to benefit directly. By exploring outside their hotels and spending money with small local businesses, for example on gifts, activities and food, tourists can contribute to the local economy and help spread the benefits of tourism.





Our approach

We conducted extensive research in Montego Bay, including visitor surveys, which focused on understanding the perceptions and expectations of visitors, as well as the factors that discouraged tourists from exploring and spending money outside of their hotel.

This survey, coupled with research conducted in other destinations has highlighted that the key factors that influence tourism spend outside the hotel include:

- The availability of information about what's on offer.
- The perceptions and expectations that tourists have of the destination.
- The quality of the product outside the hotel.
- The ability of local businesses to meet consumer demands.

The main reason given in our visitor survey for not leaving the hotel was that "the hotel has all that I need". In response we focussed on:

- Increasing awareness amongst tourists of what there is to see and do in the area.
- Improving the quality of the local attractions offered by small enterprises and improving their links to mainstream tourism.
- Increasing knowledge and skills across the agency responsible for tourism development and encouraging collaboration between the public and private sector.

This approach was rolled-out across two projects:

- **A 'warm welcome' campaign to encourage tourists outside their hotel**
- **A 'crafting livelihoods' project that aimed to improve the quality of local attractions, focusing on the largest local craft market.**

“The Warm Welcome initiative is great for tourism in Jamaica, and particularly for Ocho Rios which is where I am, because it allows our individuals both directly and indirectly involved in tourism to feel a part of the product, to feel that tourism really does benefit them.”

Anna Reader, TPDCo



Warm Welcome (2017 - 2018)

The Warm Welcome campaign encouraged tourists to explore outside of their hotel by improving tourist communications about what there is to see and do in Montego Bay.

Pocket Map & Insider Guide

We developed and distributed a pocket map and guide of Montego Bay which made a significant impact on getting tourists out and about in the area. The map contains 'insider' tips from local people, advising tourists about what to see and do in the city, alongside practical information on how best to access the places of interest.

In total, over 40,000 of these pocket maps have been distributed through tourist information kiosks, hotel desks, information kiosks in the airport

and cruise port, plus through international tour operators, including TUI, and local ground agents.

Warm Welcome Ambassadors

Our annual visitor surveys showed that tourists view front-line staff, such as hotel staff, as their principal 'go to' resource to provide recommendations about what to see and do locally during their visit. The information provided by these individuals therefore has a significant influence in guiding tourist behaviour and spend. In response, we trained front-line

tourism staff, including hotel staff and district constables to become ambassadors for the local area and encourage tourist exploration.

In total, we trained 138 tourist facing staff, including 96% of the entire cohort of district constables.

Hotels were given an option to provide either face to face or online training for their staff, enabling managers to cater for shift patterns. The training improved understanding of why visitor exploration is beneficial, how to establish a good rapport with tourists and how to provide practical and interesting tips and recommendations.



In total:

Over 40,000 maps were distributed.

We trained 138 tourist facing staff:

- 90 hotel staff
- 48 district constables

Working with the public sector

A key goal for this campaign was to ensure its lasting impact at a greater scale after our input ended. In order to achieve this, we engaged and worked with the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo), an agency of the Ministry of Tourism that is responsible for tourism development. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work with TPDCo on several sustainable tourism initiatives, including the Warm Welcome campaign.

As a result of this partnership, TPDCo has taken over the continuation of the campaign in Montego Bay and has begun to replicate it in other resorts, starting with Ocho Rios, using our designs, training and methodologies.

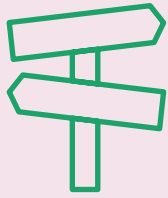
We also participated in the Destination Assurance Committee for Montego Bay. This enabled us to change perceptions around the value that enabling tourists to explore outside their hotel can bring to the resort.

“The Travel Foundation’s work in Montego Bay has been extremely effective in that not just the spend that we’re seeing on the ground [has increased] but they have broken the back of what was a hesitation of a lot of people in the industry to actually embrace this as a part of the growth in Jamaica.”

John Byles, Managing partner, Chukka Adventure Tours and Chairman, Destination Assurance Committee.



Results



90,000 tourists are estimated to have received access to better information about what to see and do in and around Montego Bay.



4000 tourists a week are estimated to be receiving improved advice and communications about what's on offer in the area.



14,000 more tourists are estimated to have visited an attraction that they wouldn't have otherwise visited.



64% of tourists who had access to the map used it.



90% of those who visited an attraction said it enhanced their holiday experience.



100% of hotel staff surveyed following the warm welcome training, are making recommendations to tourists about local attractions.



TPDCo has rolled out the warm welcome campaign to Ocho Rios, producing 5000 maps and training 200 tourism staff.



Crafting Livelihoods (2016 - 2018)

The 'crafting livelihoods' project increased the number of tourists visiting and spending money in the Harbour Street Craft Market by improving the visitor experience and product quality.

The Harbour Street Craft Market was selected as our focus for the project as it is one of the key local attractions that could gain most benefit from increased visitors and tourist spend. It is the largest craft market in Montego Bay and is home to approximately 250 stall holders who are dependent on tourism for their livelihoods. However, over the past decade, it has experienced a steady decline in visitors and income. This has led to more competition among traders for visiting customers, resulting in tourists feeling increasingly hassled to buy, negatively impacting visitor experience.

Key to the project, was our focus on working with TPDCo to enable them to support both this and other attractions in Jamaica, to spread the benefits as widely as possible.

Improving the product

We developed bespoke training for craft traders to equip them with the business skills and sales techniques to run a more profitable business. The workshops particularly focused on helping traders to ensure that customers had a positive experience (for example not feeling hassled to buy) and on improving product quality.

The training was delivered by 6 TPDCo staff, who were themselves trained by our experts. These trainers are now able to use this training workshop to deliver initiatives with other small, local businesses. In total, 250 traders at the Harbour Street market benefitted from a combination of face-to-face workshops, follow-up mentoring and marketing support.

We also delivered leadership and governance training to 14 members of the craft market's Executive Committee, to support

improvements to structures and practices within this and other markets.

We organized a craft expo, as part of the Chamber of Commerce's Business expo, enabling 70 traders to find out about quality products made locally that they can sell on their own stalls.

We also supported the market to develop a series of themed events showcasing Jamaican culture, music, food and crafts. Feedback from tourists who attended the events was positive.

- 76% strongly agreed that experiencing the activities made them more likely to recommend the market to other visitors and
- 69% strongly agreed that experiencing the activities made them more likely to want to return to that market for another visit.

"We have seen growth in many areas, visitors want to come back to the craft market because of our training, our customer service and also the way that we display our goods and how we treat visitors." Melody Haughton, Harbour Street Craft Market trader.



Promoting the market

We encouraged local and international tour operators to bring more customers to the market. As a result, four local tour operators are now including the craft market in their tour itineraries.

We also provided marketing advice and support for local traders and created a series of initiatives to increase awareness of the market and attract more customers, including the design

and distribution of new flyers and brochures.

Building local capacity to support small businesses

In order to ensure that other local attractions could benefit, we trained over 56 government agency staff from TPDCo from several regions of Jamaica. This included training for some staff on how to support local businesses to meet international requirements,

for some on how to roll-out a 'warm-welcome' campaign in other resorts, plus training for six trainers in how to support craft traders to improve their businesses.

The TPDCo department that received market readiness training is responsible for auditing attractions. They undertake site visits and have agreed to use some of the tools and knowledge gained in the training course on future site visits with attractions.

"The Travel Foundation have been of tremendous help; not many people take the time to train and work with us. The training has improved my customer service with the guests a great deal. When I use what I have learnt, it helps me in building that rapport with guests."

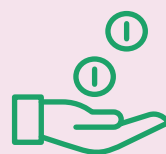
Audrey Purchass, Harbour Street Craft Market trader and Vice President of the market's Executive Association



Results



400% more visitors to market stalls are expected compared to 2016.



50% increase in the average spend per tourist.



98% of visitors stated they were satisfied with their experience in the market, more than double the figure before the project.



100% of visitors said they would recommend this market to others, compared to 47% before the project.



75% of those who took part in our train the trainer initiative stated that their capacity to help small businesses meet market requirements increased greatly.



92% strongly agreed that the training had motivated them to enhance their support for small businesses.



Wider impact

Overall, our programme achieved its objective: to increase the scale and spread of tourism spend to local businesses, most notably in the Harbour Street Craft Market, but also to other small, local attractions through the Warm Welcome campaign.

Importantly, the capacity of the local government agency to improve the benefits of tourism for local people has also increased. The roll-out of the Warm Welcome campaign in Ocho Rios by TPDCo, highlights the value they feel this approach brings to the destination. This

is a major positive development for the destination. Meanwhile government trainers are now equipped to support local businesses across Jamaica to improve their offer and thereby attract the international market and increase their income.

Our partnership with TPDCo continues with the delivery of a new TUI Care Foundation project, to improve the ability of small, tourist-facing businesses across Jamaica to access the tourist market. This project will build on learnings from the Warm Welcome and Crafting Livelihood initiatives and will seek to

improve further the ability of local government agencies to enable a thriving, local tourism economy.

We hope that the learnings and positive results from this project will inspire other destinations to put in place measures that ensure economic benefits from tourism are spread to local communities. Through this and other projects, we aim to highlight that a thriving tourist destination can only exist if local businesses and communities directly benefit from tourism. Without thriving, vibrant destinations, the people and places that make tourists want to visit, there would be no tourism.

