

Clean-up at Île aux Bénitiers: An environmental protection project

On Saturday April 14th 2018, ahead of World Earth Day, the environmental organisation Project Rescue Ocean Mauritius held an event to clean up Île aux Bénitiers with the support of Beachcomber Resorts & Hotels. The intention was to help restore the island to its original beauty. Île aux Bénitiers is a favourite stop-over for both tourists and residents during boat trips on the west of Mauritius.

Over the course of the clean-up, a group of thirty environmentally-concerned volunteers picked up litter that had been left on Île aux Bénitiers. Paradis Beachcomber Golf Resort & Spa, which is located nearby, provided a boat to ferry volunteers to the island and remove the over fifty bags of waste collected on the day. The project was also supported by the Ministry of the Environment, which provided garbage bags, cleaning gloves and a skip.

According to Cédric Jules, Project Rescue Ocean Mauritius' local ambassador, "Île aux Bénitiers is a stunningly beautiful island that is extremely popular with tourists and Mauritians alike. Unfortunately, it is not treated the way it should be. With the help of volunteers who are keenly aware of the impact of litter on the environment, we wanted to help restore the island to its original state." The organisation is planning another clean-up of Île aux Bénitiers in the near future.

Project Rescue Ocean was founded in France five years ago. Thanks to social media and the efforts of Benoît Schumann, its founder, the organisation now has branches in a dozen countries around the world. Its Mauritian branch, which was set up two years ago, organises twice-monthly beach cleans across the island and communicates about its projects via social media. The organisation also runs regular awareness campaigns with local communities: "We frequently hold talks in villages and schools to raise awareness of the importance of protecting the environment among Mauritians, and among young people in particular. It's now a matter of working together and of showing how much stronger we are when we do so", explains Cédric Jules.

The association's values align perfectly with those of Beachcomber Resorts & Hotels, which is deeply committed to sustainable and responsible tourism development. Each of Beachcomber's Mauritian hotels has been awarded EarthCheck's environmental sustainability certification and the group continues to demonstrate its commitment to the environment thanks to a wide range of sustainability and conservation projects.

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About Beachcomber

Beachcomber Resorts & Hotels is the pioneer and leader of the Mauritian tourism industry. Since the creation of Park Hotel in 1952, a collection of 9 resorts have emerged over the years, including the mythical Royal Palm Beachcomber Luxury Mauritius in 1985, considered by everyone as the reference in hospitality for luxury holidays in Mauritius.

The Group recently expanded its collection, with the integration of the Beachcomber French Riviera, situated on the Côte d'Azur, in France.

The collection of 9 resorts affords a choice of accommodation options ranging from rooms and apartments to suites and villas. Each hotel is imbued with a particular history and cachet, embodying an image of discrete luxury.

Social responsibility – Fondation Espoir Développement (FED), by Beachcomber

Set up and financed by Beachcomber since 1999, with the participation of hotels and employees, this foundation takes care of these main projects:

- *Projet Employabilité Jeunes (PEJ)*: professional insertion of school drop-outs through a training programme and industrial attachments.
- Collaboration with NGOs, schools and associations
- Regional projects – youth mentoring: the “Amour et Espoir” NGO; IT initiation; youth monitoring via the “Duke of Edinburgh International Award” programme, participation of regional sports clubs in the organisation of the Beachcomber UTRB Trail 2015

Social responsibility – Local Hands

Programme launched in 2006 to support small local artisans by providing them with training and guidance as they embark upon the process of creation, production, marketing and sales.

Sustainable development – our environmental actions – EarthCheck label

Sustainable development and environmental protection constitute real considerations within the Group, which has set up, amongst other initiatives, practices that ensure energy savings and favour renewable energy sources. These initiatives in favour of sustainable development have been recognised and rewarded, with two of our hotels recently obtaining the EarthCheck Benchmarked Silver accreditation for their ongoing commitment to environmentally responsible practices.