

## **359 success stories: Reserva Conchal celebrates the tenth anniversary of its dual education program**

- In alliance with National Learning Institute (INA), the educational project has specialized since 2014 in training personnel for the tourism sector in Guanacaste.
- 75 graduates of the program work in the facilities and hotels of the complex.

**Santa Cruz, Guanacaste.** The graduation of 30 new specialists in tourism sector occupations marks a milestone for Reserva Conchal's dual education program, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this month. In total, we have 359 success stories since 2014 in Guanacaste.

The program, developed jointly by the National Learning Institute (INA) and FIFCO's hospitality division, offers high-quality technical training that opens doors to qualified and well-paid positions in a key industry for the region. Of the 359 people graduated in the last decade, 190 have specialized as cooks and kitchen assistants, 153 as waitresses and bartenders, and 16 as waitresses.

Kevin Carballo, a resident of Cartagena, Santa Cruz, was part of the most recent generation of students who received their degrees on December 10. There are 17 new kitchen assistants and 13 waiters, as well as bartenders who are ready to start working.

"We learned about wines, assemblies, different types of tableware, cocktail making, customer service, etiquette, and protocol. I was motivated to enroll in the program to grow, have more knowledge and be a better person," said Carballo.

In total, 185 men and 174 women, mostly young people between 18 and 25 years of age, have completed the training process. The call is mainly for people from Guanacaste, however, over the years the program has come to convene people from all provinces.

Reserva Conchal, FIFCO's hospitality division, provides its facilities and equipment for students to put into practice the knowledge transmitted by INA's teachers. Additionally, it provides scholarships to participants so they can study while taking care of their family responsibilities.

### **A driver of employability and entrepreneurship**

The alternative, a pioneer and benchmark for dual education in Costa Rica, offers not only a path to employability, but also to personal empowerment and economic stability for hundreds of families.

Historically, Reserva Conchal has hired more than 80% of the graduates of each generation. Currently, 75 graduates of the program work in the resort's facilities and hotels.

Others have found employment in nearby communities such as Tamarindo, Flamingo and Papagayo, and even in international destinations such as Mexico, the United States and Brazil. The skills developed during the program have also spurred the emergence of new businesses, ranging from catering services and event organization to coffee shops, restaurants and innovative gastronomic offerings.

### **Ongoing impact**

María Pía Robles, FIFCO's Corporate Relations Director, sustained that the company celebrates this anniversary with the commitment to continue making a positive impact through education in Guanacaste, as part of the company's Expansive Sustainability philosophy.

Reserva Conchal and INA are already prepared to receive a new generation of students in 2025, who will study the specialties of Kitchen Assistance Operations and Food and Beverage Operations Services.

Thus, this initiative continues to position itself as a reference in technical education and entrepreneurial action in favor of the communities, reaffirming the commitment of Reserva Conchal and FIFCO with the sustainable development of Guanacaste and the country.

### **About FIFCO**

FIFCO is a beverage and food company with 116 years of history. It has operations in Costa Rica, Central America, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and the United States, 5 manufacturing plants and 13 distribution centers. It has 3 business divisions that include *Florida Bebidas* (food and beverages), *FIFCO Hospitality* (real estate sector) and *FIFCO Retail* (retail sales). It exports to over 10 countries around the world and has a portfolio of 2,000 products.