GuateCruises: Training for Guatemalan workers to open job opportunities in the cruise industry as an alternative to irregular migration

SUMMARY: Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP) with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) implements an intervention to catalyze the creation of a labor migration pathway from Guatemala to the cruise industry. This project consists of a 14-month pilot program for 100 Guatemalan workers. The results will lay the groundwork for a larger pilot and the establishment of a stable, large-scale pathway that will help address the structural causes of irregular migration.

CONTEXT AND MOTIVATIONS

The cruise industry currently employs more than 250,000 workers per year. However, as with other jobs in the hospitality sector, cruise lines face a recurring shortage of skilled labor. Guatemala, along with other Central American countries, is well positioned because of its proximity to the Caribbean and capabilities, to offer these personnel competitively, especially to U.S. cruise lines through the C1/D visa. These visas represent a channel for circular, safe and legal labor mobility that mitigates the pressures of irregular migration. In addition, working in the cruise industry offers economic benefits, international experience, growth opportunities and professional development for workers.

PROPOSED SOLUTION AND COMPONENTS

The demonstration project seeks to activate cruise ship labor opportunities while boosting the merchant seafarer workforce in Guatemala. The main components of the project are:

Establishment of an ethical recruitment and referral pathway

Implementation of learning and continuous improvement system

Generation of partnerships to stimulate demand for cruise ships for Guatemalan workers

Design of sustainable financing mechanisms to support the training and hiring of Guatemalan cruise ship workers

Development of flexible training in Guatemala for the cruise ship industry in collaboration with Work Without Borders (WWB), a non-profit training institute in Guatemala, part of ISMBR-Group

IMPACT AND EXPECTED RESULTS

In the short term, the project will be measured by the successful insertion of 100 Guatemalan workers qualified to work on U.S. cruise lines. In the long term, it is intended that this pilot project will grow and evolve into a regular, large-scale labor migration pathway.