

Guate Cooks on the Move: Job-readiness training for the international tourism industry

SUMMARY: Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP) is implementing a proof-of-concept project to generate new opportunities for Guatemalan cooks to work abroad. The project provides experienced cooks with job-readiness training for international kitchens and links to the recruitment pipelines for the international hospitality and tourism sectors. The current pilot stage of this project seeks to ensure that 60 or more cooks are hired by international employers within a 10-month period.



CONTEXT AND MOTIVATIONS

The international tourism industry, such as large hotel chains, resorts, and cruise lines, are increasingly in need of seasonal cooks with the right level of technical and language skills. At the same time, Guatemala is home to a dynamic culinary industry that stands to gain from closer ties with international tourism. Circular labor mobility could help foster such collaboration. Guatemala can provide qualified cooks on a seasonal basis to employers in countries such as the United States, Canada, and Spain, and in doing so, strengthen knowledge exchange and best practices that enhance the local culinary industry.

CURRENT PROJECT AND COMPONENTS

This proof-of-concept project seeks to bolster orderly and effective labor migration pathways for Guatemalan cooks in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The project consists of three components:



“Cooks on the move” training for international kitchens (1 month)

- Specialized and tailored training for international kitchens
- Tailored “kitchen English”
- On-the-job experience in high-volume kitchens



Direct recruitment and hiring by the industry

- Job opportunities for training graduates with a variety of international and local employers
- Promotional cooks competition event



Long term financial sustainability and growth of the program

- Train the trainers model, licensing & certification, etc.
- Private financing models

This initiative represents an opportunity for both professional and personal development for Guatemalan workers. It will also position Guatemala’s local culinary talent on an international level and foster the development of new skills and experiences. Upon returning to Guatemala, workers will bring new international knowledge back home, accelerating the development and elevating the prestige of Guatemala’s own culinary industry.

IMPACT AND EXPECTED RESULTS

In the short term, the pilot project will be measured by the successful placement of 60 or more Guatemalan workers qualified to work in high-level international kitchens. In the long term, this pilot is the first step in establishing a regular, large-scale labor migration pathway, where thousands of Guatemalans can have the opportunity to work in the international culinary sector.

This project is being implemented by Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP), in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Guatemala, under the project “Addressing the Root Causes of Irregular Migration” which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

