

Opening New Labor Pathways from Latin America to Spain: Elderly Care Sector



OVERVIEW: Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP) completed an eight-month scoping effort to design new labor mobility pathways from Latin America to Spain for workers (including nationals, migrants and refugees). This work focused on identifying viable, and scalable program models across sectors facing acute labor shortages, including trucking, hospitality, construction, and elderly care. This document highlights the elderly care sector program designed through this effort.

Through this process, LaMP strengthened cross-border partnerships and developed practical financial and operational approaches to address the cost, coordination, and regulatory barriers that have historically limited the viability and scale of international labor mobility pathways.

CHALLENGE & OPPORTUNITY

Spain faces a rapidly growing demand for elderly care workers driven by population aging, longer life expectancy, and rising dependency rates. The Spanish Ministry of Social Rights estimates that more than 260,000 additional certified nursing assistants and elderly care workers will be needed by 2030 across residential facilities, home-based care, and long-term care services. Despite ongoing recruitment efforts, employers continue to struggle to fill these roles, resulting in persistent staffing gaps that strain care systems and frontline workers alike.

At the same time, Latin America is home to large populations of workers, many with prior caregiving or related experience and strong motivation to access stable employment abroad. For these workers, elderly care in Spain offers a pathway to **formal jobs with predictable conditions and incomes that are often around three times higher** than those available at home. Yet access remains constrained by high upfront training and certification costs, limited affordable financing, and complex migration processes, underscoring both the scale of unmet demand and the opportunity for well-designed labor mobility pathways to bridge this gap.



High Labor Demand of elderly care workers in Spain



Barriers to Matching Supply & Demand, including high costs and complex processes



Untapped Opportunities to connect workers with stable and decent jobs



Large pool of motivated and prepared workers in Latin America

IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Elderly care enables safe migration pathway into stable, formal jobs with predictable incomes, often around three times higher than those available at home. By enabling certification and employment, the pathway allows workers to move from informal care into dignified, skilled roles that strengthen household security, support remittances, and enable long-term mobility. Over time, this pathway creates opportunities for long-term residence and family reunification, supporting stability and worker integration.

PROPOSED PROGRAM DESIGN



LaMP designed a labor mobility program to connect workers in Latin America with elderly care assistant (gerocultor) jobs in Spain through a structured, end-to-end model. This program aligns employer demand with worker supply by combining cross-border financing, legal and migration support, and coordinated service delivery.

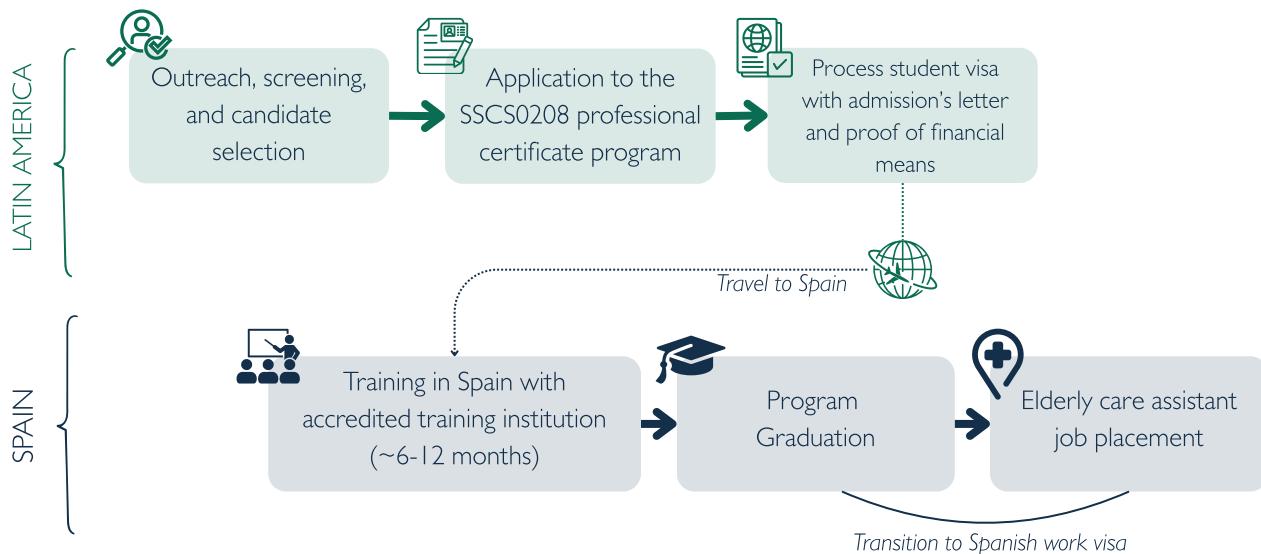
Under this program, access to a student visa enables workers to complete the required elderly care assistant (gerocultor) certification in Spain (Certificado de Profesionalidad de Atención Sociosanitaria a Personas Dependientes, SSCS0208). Upon certification, workers transition to a work visa by linking directly with employers seeking care professionals.

Key components: To operate the program, LaMP coordinates a cross-border ecosystem of partners that support workers at each stage of the process, including:



We anticipate that financial support will be provided through patient cross-border financing to reduce upfront costs (e.g., visas, travel, training, etc.), with repayment linked to post-employment income. Together, these components form a safe, affordable, and sustainable labor mobility route for elderly care workers from Latin America to Spain. The program can be adapted to different countries of origin in Latin America (e.g., Colombia, Ecuador, etc.).

Illustrative visual: Operating Model for Elderly Care Program



FROM CONCEPT TO PILOT

The elderly care program demonstrates the feasibility of targeted labor mobility programs to address labor shortages while expanding access to safe, legal employment for vulnerable workers. Designed as a scalable proof of concept, this model represents an opportunity to move beyond short-term or ad hoc responses toward durable, market-based solutions that align worker protection with essential care needs. LaMP welcomes active partnerships and invites organizations ready to collaborate and contribute to pilot this initiative.