

Update on IH&RA-ILO Joint Programme addressing

INTERNATIONAL WORKER SHORTAGE & WORKER MOBILITY

INTRODUCTION & CONCEPT

The labour-intensive hotel & restaurant industry is challenged to find skilled and semi -skilled workers in all parts of the world. This is particularly severe in the developed countries where shortages have reached extraordinary proportions. Conversely, young workers in developing countries suffer from lack of exposure - most of them have never travelled far from their villages or communities and have never been exposed to other cultures or hospitality styles.

OBJECTIVE

To create a process by which skilled and semi -skilled hotel and restaurant workers can migrate to areas of need under short and medium-term contracts during high-season periods or periods of unexpected unemployment (due to natural or man-made disasters) to recover employment and gain international experience while earning competitive wages under internationally acceptable working conditions.

BACKGROUND

While some bilateral agreements designed to promote worker mobility do exist, no international program has been established.

INITIAL STEPS

At the beginning of 2005 in the wake of the 26 December 2004 Tsunami, IH&RA approached the ILO to propose joint work with other international agencies to encourage international worker mobility.

The proposal was discussed at a meeting on 1 July 2005 at ILO headquarters in Geneva bringing together representatives of the interested parties in the areas of labour and migration..

This consortium of international organisations agreed to facilitate the mobilisation of two million skilled and semi -skilled hotel and restaurant workers. The initiative anticipates:

1. A pilot project involving 25,000 workers.
2. A needs analysis & prioritisation.
3. A technical training component.
4. Transportation subsidies.
5. Visa coordination.

In 2006, IH&RA established a Pilot Project of the program in which young hotel and restaurant workers with 18 months experience in the industry will qualify for an exchange visa. The Pilot Project is attempting to access funds earmarked for areas affected by disasters such as the 2004 Tsunami, war in Lebanon, etc.

CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

Discussions have been taking place between the following five groups:

1. International Hotel & Restaurant Association (IH&RA)
2. International Labour Organisation. (ILO)
3. International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
4. International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
5. International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco & Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The International Hotel & Restaurant Association will be the prime mover and will
 - a. Provide Management services.
 - b. Coordinate partner services.
 - c. Coordinate client needs.
2. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) will be a full partner and will:
 - a. Act as the liaison between the source country and the recipient country.
 - b. Assist to secure the public funding for the project.
3. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) will facilitate contacts with governments on interviewing, visa processing and national quota issues
4. The International Organisation for Employers (IOE) will facilitate contacts with potential private sector sponsors
5. The International Union (IUF) has expressed interest in being associated, which would ensure worker support