



WORKER VOICE-DRIVEN ETHICAL RECRUITMENT



Ethical recruitment, or **responsible recruitment**, has become a recent focus and concern of responsible sourcing and ethical trade. More and more global brands and retailers are encouraging their suppliers to use ethical recruitment channels when hiring their workforce. In this way, companies can be more confident that risks of human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, and exploitative recruitment are eliminated from their supply chains.

This is especially important for brands and retailers importing into countries with **laws prohibiting the import of goods made with forced labour**, for example the U.S. Tariff Act – because workers having to pay for their jobs and possibly being indebted by these recruitment fees is considered sufficient evidence for customs law enforcement action.

Ethical recruitment is also increasing in importance for companies engaged in strengthening their **human rights due diligence (HRDD)**, which requires functioning, credible grievance mechanisms and ongoing engagement with workers and communities. The aim is to ensure that jobseekers and workers themselves, and not just audits and certifications, shape a more authentic and accurate view of workers' recruitment and working conditions—to in turn shape more authentic and accurate views of corporate and industry human rights footprints.

As of 2023, most labour recruitment in Asia is far from being ethical recruitment. Over the past decade, the practice of many employers and recruitment agencies has been to push many (and sometimes all) of the costs and fees of recruitment and migration onto workers, including the costs of agency fees, travel, visas, and work permits. Because while the standard for more and more global brands and retailers is to have zero-fees recruitment in their supply chains, national laws in most of the Asian countries do allow for some fees to be charged to workers.

The Issara approach to ethical recruitment is a true **ecosystem engagement and transformation** approach that meets Asian supply chains where they are at – essentially, engaging stakeholders to remove barriers that have led to a relatively small pool of employers willing to pay the recruitment costs of their workers, despite growing corporate commitment to operationalize and validate responsible recruitment. Our approach is both **high tech and low**, to positively engage and impact all the key actors and influencers in the labour recruitment process.

ISSARA WORKER VOICE-DRIVEN ETHICAL RECRUITMENT

ETHICAL RECRUITMENT NETWORKS (ERNs) & TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGIES CAN EFFECTIVELY ELIMINATE EXPLOITATIVE LABOUR RECRUITMENT & LABOUR TRAFFICKING, TRANSFORM LABOUR RECRUITMENT SYSTEMS & CORRIDORS, AND IMPROVE THE LIVES OF MILLIONS. HERE'S HOW . . .

1 WORKER VOICE & EMPOWERMENT

2 TRANSFORMING SUPPLY CHAINS

3 TRANSFORMING ECOSYSTEMS

AT THE VILLAGE / PROVINCE...

1 **Jobseekers** are engaged and empowered by **CSOs in the ERN** and actively avoid exploitative brokers by finding and applying for overseas jobs on the Golden Dreams smartphone app.

2 **Exploitative recruiters** are displaced by ERNs and by more accurate and comprehensive job info on Golden Dreams. ERN members report cases to government and into ILM.



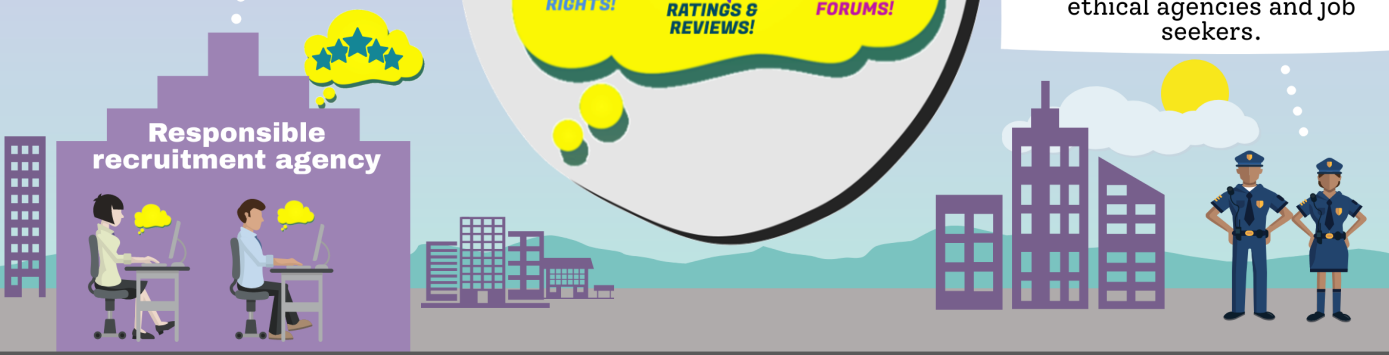
3 **Responsible recruitment agencies in the ERN** post comprehensive, transparent job descriptions (in coordination with the hiring supplier) on Golden Dreams, are transparent about costs and fees, and collaborate with other ERN members to crowd in more responsible recruitment agencies.

TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGY: GOLDEN DREAMS APP



AT THE ORIGIN COUNTRY CAPITAL...

3 **Government** improves regulation and enforcement of legal recruitment, and acts on reports of exploitative recruiters filed by ERN members and prospective migrants. A safe and more level playing field emerges for ethical agencies and job seekers.



ETHICAL RECRUITMENT NETWORKS:

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS LEVERAGING A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH



AT THE DESTINATION COUNTRY WORKPLACE...

1 **Workers** continue to actively report issues to worker voice channels which are logged in ILM, and also rate and review employers and recruiters on Golden Dreams.

2 **Employers and global brands and retailers** track and remediate worker-reported issues, supported by ILM and NGO partnership on the ground.



TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGY: INCLUSIVE LABOUR MONITORING (ILM)

TRACKING WORKER-REPORTED ISSUES AND REMEDIATION IN REAL TIME

GRIEVANCE MANAGEMENT

SAFEGUARDED WORKER VALIDATION

MULTILINGUAL INTERFACE FOR SUPPLIERS AND ERN MEMBERS

NEW! PUBLIC DASHBOARD TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF GOVERNMENT, NGO, TRADE UNIONS, ADVOCATES, ACADEMICS, CONSCIENTIOUS CONSUMERS

IN IMPORTING COUNTRIES...

2 **Global brands and retailers** require and incentivize ethical recruitment from suppliers, as verified by worker voice which they can monitor through ILM as a part of their human rights due diligence.

3 **Government/law enforcement** can also monitor the ILM public dashboard to track risky exporting countries and sectors.



CSOs (NGOs and trade unions) educate and empower job seekers and communities.



Government detect and intervene on illicit brokering as reported by job seekers and Network members.



Recruitment agencies (and suppliers) work together for best-fit matching for zero-fees and legal-fees workers.

TOP 12 ACHIEVEMENTS OF WORKER VOICE-DRIVEN ETHICAL RECRUITMENT TO DATE

1. **Reduction in fees charged to workers**, verified by workers, and increasing fees being covered by employers that were not previously covered.
2. **Reduced indebtedness of migrant workers**, verified by workers.
3. **Increased repayment of recruitment fees** when it is found that workers were overcharged, verified by workers.
4. **Improved responsiveness to workers' queries and grievances** on the part of recruitment agencies and suppliers, verified by workers.
5. **Improved quality and accuracy of job advertisements of participating companies**—they are more detailed and comprehensive, and verified by workers as more useful and transparent.
6. **Reduced fraud/deception and greater congruence between job advertisements and what is offered in reality**, documented by employer and recruiter ratings in Golden Dreams, and verified by workers.
7. **More (and better) written service contracts between recruitment agencies and employers**, explicitly outlining ethical recruitment policy and principles, recruitment-related costs and fees, and roles and responsibilities of recruiters and employers including who pays what.
8. **Greater accountability and transparency throughout the recruitment process**, measured through discussions workers and ERN members on emerging good practice.
9. **Strengthened enforcement of company policies**, documented by company partners and verified by worker voice.
10. **Worker voice integrated throughout workers' entire process and journey**, from origin community through recruitment, migration, work, and repatriation—for greater worker engagement and HRDD.
11. **Transparency and engagement in both origin and destination countries** for global brands and retailers to operationalize and validate responsible recruitment down to the first mile.
12. **Greater awareness of migrant rights and steps in the process, of all actors**—employers, recruiters, civil society organizations, and workers.

NGOs ARE ABLE TO BUILD AMAZING TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR MIGRANT WORKERS WHEN THEY HAVE AMAZING DONORS. BIG THANKS TO THESE DONORS THAT HAVE SUPPORTED ISSARA'S TECH DEVELOPMENT OVER THE YEARS!

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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ABOUT ISSARA INSTITUTE

Issara Institute is an independent non-profit organization based in Asia and the United States tackling issues of human trafficking and forced labour in global supply chains through worker voice, partnership, and innovation. Reach out to info@issarainstitute.org for more!

ISSARA MEANS FREEDOM > WWW.ISSARAINSTITUTE.ORG