



► Promising practices for fair recruitment

April 2021

Code of Conduct on the fair recruitment of Filipino migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong (China)

Key points

- Associations of recruitment agencies in the Philippines and Hong Kong (China) adopted a Code of Conduct (CoC) on fair recruitment of Filipino domestic workers for work in Hong Kong (China)
- An online worker feedback system allows for monitoring of compliance to the Code's principles and identification of corrective action where needed
- In the absence of labour inspection of domestic workers in household settings, the online worker feedback system allows for monitoring of worker wellbeing
- Branding of fair recruitment practices serves as a leverage for other agencies to come clean

Focus

FRI pillar: Promoting fair business practices

Sector: Domestic work

Countries: Philippines, Hong Kong (China)

Responsible organizations: The Fair Hiring Initiative Inc. (TFHI), in collaboration with Association of Hong Kong Manpower Agencies (AHKMA) and Society of Hong Kong-Accredited Recruiters of the Philippines (SHARP)

Description of the practice

Following promotional work on the ILO's General Principles and Operational Guidelines (GPOG) for fair recruitment, a global milestone was achieved in June 2019 when the Association of Hong Kong Manpower Agencies (AHKMA) and the Society of HK-Accredited Recruiters of the Philippines (SHARP) signed the first ever Code of Conduct on the fair recruitment of domestic workers from the Philippines to Hong Kong (China). Both associations have committed to enforce the Code and seek to validate compliance to the Code through a survey of workers.

ILO FAIR Phase II project and The Fair Hiring Initiative (TFHI) supported the initiative to develop an online worker feedback system, which monitors recruitment agencies' compliance to the Code principles and commitment of AHKMA and SHARP. Survey questions were developed that are in line with the core principles of the Code of Conduct (which are in line with the ILO GPOG). The findings and analysis from the pilot workers' feedback survey will inform both recruitment associations about the recruitment experiences of the workers they have deployed and identify a corrective action plan to address recruitment issues in the corridor.



Philippine Labor Attache Mr Jalilo Dela Torre welcoming the participants during the signing of the AHKMA-SHARP Code of Conduct in June 2019. © ILO

Proof of impact/progress

While the Code of Conduct and preceding training on fair recruitment holds promise, they will gain further meaning through a follow up mechanism that includes a worker survey, baseline information system and corrective action plan. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions, the survey was put on hold, thus delaying the collection of necessary evidence to demonstrate that the practice is making a difference in the lives of migrant workers. Once undertaken, the survey will feed into a baseline information system that will in turn inform the Corrective Action Plan of AHKMA and SHARP. The baseline information for domestic workers in the Philippines-Hong Kong (China) corridor will also be of use for other sectors in other countries of destination, including the impact of COVID-19 on these recruitment corridors.

Other promising features

Non-discrimination/inclusion of hard to reach and/or most vulnerable migrants

This initiative brings the monitoring of working conditions of workers in a household setting into focus, a place of employment that is otherwise inaccessible to labour inspection.

Potential for replication or extension

This voluntary initiative emphasizes what branding fair recruitment practices can do to separate the good from unscrupulous recruitment agencies and thus serve as leverage for change (currently 1 out of 8 recruitment agencies in Hong Kong (China) is a member of AHKMA). Other associations of recruitment agencies have taken interest in developing a similar Code of Conduct, which offers scope for collective branding of good recruitment practices.

Resources

[Philippines, Hong Kong agencies ink fair recruitment code.](#)

[AHKMA & SHARP – Code of Conduct Ceremonial Signing.](#)

[Text of Code of Conduct.](#)

[ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs \(GPOG\).](#)

Five years of the Fair Recruitment Initiative

- This promising practice is part of a series, and results from a stocktaking exercise undertaken five years after the launch of the Fair Recruitment Initiative (FRI).
- The FRI aims to ensure that recruitment practices nationally and across borders are grounded in labour standards, developed through social dialogue, ensure gender equality. Specifically, they:
 1. Are transparent and effectively regulated, monitored, and enforced;
 2. Protect all workers' rights, including fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW), and prevent human trafficking and forced labour; and
 3. Efficiently inform and respond to employment policies and labour market needs, including for recovery and resilience.

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