2020 IMPACT REPORT

MIGRASIA GLOBAL SOLUTIONS LTD.

migrasia

Letter FROM THE TEAM

Greetings from the team at Migrasia!

The past year has been tough for everyone, with migrant workers being among the most vulnerable and hardest hit. With Covid-19 exacerbating the exploitation of migrant workers, external pressure on Hong Kong from foreign governments and international bodies, and positive actions taken by Hong Kong law enforcement, there appears to be a window of opportunity for engagement and creating positive change. Various international NGOs and governments, including the US government via its annual TIP Report, specifically identify Hong Kong as a source and transit jurisdiction for human trafficking and bonded labor and call on Hong Kong to take proactive action.

But amidst the uncertainty and increased challenges, we have been inspired by the resilience and positivity of the migrant worker communities. We at Migrasia remain committed to supporting the city's migrants, and excited to share some of the great news and impact that is being made in the migrant worker space.

In the last year, Migrasia and our partners have made significant headway with our investigations into illegal and unethical practices by migration intermediaries such as money lenders and employment agencies. Through our Client Support and Enforcement programs in 2020, we reached 210,000 beneficiaries and disrupted approximately HK$80,800,000 in illegal loan payments, leading to asset seizure and the arrests of multiple parties. Migrasia has established itself as a key contributor to leading research on migration and anti-trafficking interventions in Asia with multiple ongoing assessments and big plans for 2021. Now more than ever and with the challenges presented by Covid-19, data and technology have been at the heart of our efforts to meaningfully combat debt bondage and forced labour. We have also adapted and expanded our client support strategies to reach migrant workers digitally and to make redress mechanisms more accessible.

Our 2020 annual Impact Report will update our stakeholders on the past year's milestones and achievements. As a supporter and friend of migrant workers, we invite you to learn more and join in our next phase of growth.

We hope you will join us in working to empower Hong Kong migrant communities.

Sincerely,

The Migrasia Team

Impact at a GLANCE

CLIENT SUPPORT

1M monthly social media impressions

210K current, former and prospective migrant domestic workers assisted through social media

~85K online inquiries responded to

16K+ similarly situated individuals benefitted online

8K+ individual clients received direct assistance online

800+ individuals assisted in-person to take remedial action against unethical migration intermediaries

200+ case referrals

ENFORCEMENT

2000+ complaints filed with local and overseas law enforcement

80 reports on suspected money laundering submitted to regulators

80.8M HKD in monetary recoveries and illegal proceeds blocked

30+ convictions, prosecutions and administrative actions

6+ arrests

RESEARCH

553 MDWs assessed on employment agency and training fees via Facebook

140 MDWs assessed on medical fees via Facebook surveys

530 MDWs in the Philippines assessed on their pre-departure migration phase via online research panels

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

50 HKU students trained

Venture Philanthropy Fund proposal for Ethical Employment Agencies drafted

20 research reports and case reports produced by students

Migrant Worker Law Library created to compiling resources on domestic worker issues in HK

4 suspects arrested as a result of students' case reports

Outstanding Teaching Award winners

7 NGO Partnerships for ongoing civil society and private sector capacity building initiatives

Redress Letter submitted to the Hong Kong Legislative Council

6 stories published in collaboration with media outlets

Build a Better Agency Toolkit created by students

4 virtual workshops held with partner NGOs and corresponding training workshop materials produced

DATA & TECHNOLOGY

Social Media reach expanded

Data sources diversified

Innovative technology solutions integrated to generate actionable datasets and maximise operational efficiency and effectiveness

I. WHO ARE WE

Migrasia is an incubator for solutions to migration-related problems in Asia. Migrasia supports a wide-range of solutions within the fields of education, technology, investigations, advocacy and research within Hong Kong, the Philippines, Taiwan and throughout Asia. Migrasia's solutions leverage technology, novel legal strategies, and data sharing to promote industry wide change within the labor migration industry.

II. OUR MISSION

Migrasia seeks to eliminate the pervasive and systemic exploitation of migrant workers around the globe.

THE PROBLEM

Migrant domestic workers ("MDWs") in Hong Kong and across Asia face myriad challenges, starting with the recruitment process. The vast majority of MDWs are recruited via a non-transparent regime of employment agencies, resulting in the exploitation of tens of thousands of workers every year. Fragmented recruitment schemes often lead to excessive fees, working conditions akin to forced labour, ineffective complaint and grievance procedures, restrictions on freedom of movement, isolation and limited access to justice.

As workers enter and proceed to work in Hong Kong, they face an inadequate support system and underutilization of existing laws. Most victims are identified only after the exploitation occurs, making enforcement of laws and punishing the guilty parties difficult, if not impossible. Although many NGOs strive to help victims of trafficking and modern slavery, for the most part civil society lacks the capacity to make data-driven decisions and has been unable to drive industry-wide change.

As populations across Asia are aging, continued economic growth will depend upon automation of the workforce and importing of outside workers, with jurisdictions such as Hong Kong reliant on overseas migrant labour. MDWs currently make up around 10% of Hong Kong's working population and the Hong Kong Government has projected that over 600,000 FDWs will be added to this workforce by 2047. In view of such substantial numbers, for this intended growth to take place without incurring detrimental societal effects, it is critical that Hong Kong institute proactive policies, practices and enforcement mechanisms to combat labour exploitation and related issues.

OUR SOLUTIONS

While there exist pervasive and systemic problems that urgently need redress, the fact that Hong Kong has seen some improvements in measures to address exploitation and bonded labour suggests there are opportunities for change. Migrasia has found the Hong Kong government to

Migrasia

OVERVIEW

be receptive to working with civil society to combat labour exploitation, which presents a great opportunity to focus on sustainable and scalable impact-driven systems change, particularly in the areas of:

(i) facilitating real-time migrant worker engagement,
(ii) enhancing strategic collaboration, and
(iii) the sharing of actionable data.

With over 35 million migrant workers across Asia, and almost a quarter of the world's female MDWs hosted in Asia and the Pacific, this problem is not unique to Hong Kong, and Hong Kong provides the perfect opportunity to create a scalable solution and plant a seed for driving more widespread social change.

To that end, Migrasia supports a range of innovative and data-driven education, technology, investigation, advocacy, and research projects within Hong Kong, the Philippines, Taiwan and across Asia, with the goal of eliminating bonded labour and exploitation in Hong Kong and throughout Asia.

OUR BENEFICIARIES

Migrasia's programmes target the nearly 400,000 MDWs in Hong Kong and between 100,000-200,000 prospective MDWs that plan on migrating to Hong Kong over the next 36 months. More broadly, however, Migrasia programmes have the ability to benefit more than 1.2 million MDWs over the coming decades. While focusing primarily on ending exploitation and forced labour in Hong Kong, Migrasia's strategies are sustainable and scalable to the larger Asian market. According to projections, by 2100 over one billion people will undergo migration within Asia, meaning over one billion people could benefit from Migrasia's efforts to combat trafficking and abuse throughout Asia.

III. MIGRASIA'S STRUCTURE

Migrasia's core programmes include direct **client support** to victims of human trafficking and debt bondage over social media and via our in-person clinic, **enforcement** of anti-trafficking laws and investigation of unethical migration intermediaries, and primary **research** into anti-trafficking interventions and migration solutions. **Data** aggregation and analysis are integral across Migrasia's core programmes, providing essential evidence-based inputs that fuel programme activities. Across programme pillars, innovative **technology** solutions are harnessed to ensure effective and efficient implementation of programme activities. Core programmes form the foundation for Migrasia's **thought leadership** and **community engagement** within the Migration field to promote education, knowledge sharing and collaborative solutions. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: Migrasia's Operational Structure

IV. CORE PROGRAMMES

Client Support

We identify victims of human trafficking and debt bondage and provide access to referrals and redress mechanisms, including highly specified in-person legal assistance. We provide victims and potential victims with actionable information via social media to prevent exploitation.

Enforcement

We conduct investigations into unethical migration intermediaries and provide assistance to law enforcement and government. We utilise wide-ranging novel intervention strategies to disrupt unethical recruitment practices.

Research

We conduct primary research to address information gaps in migration literature and identify anti-trafficking intervention points for action. We aggregate, analyze and share data to provide transparency and certainty.

V. MIGRASIA'S CYCLICAL SYSTEM

Migrasia has developed a cyclical system that allows us to provide support and improve our services by actively including the feedback and voices of victims and NGOs that serve migrant workers. Through ongoing data collection and engagement, the target groups provide insight and feedback that has guided the development and structure of our organisation. Migrasia's cyclical system consists of four interrelated components that allow Migrasia to:

(i) identify potential victims,
(ii) provide support to victims,
(iii) collect information, and
(iv) improve the support services offered by the public sector and NGOs.

This system is unique within the migrant worker industry, particularly in terms of how Migrasia uses data and social media to identify and empower victims, triage cases and engage the target groups. The process has been designed as a positive feedback loop: data generated and collected from each of the four components improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the other components, which in turn increases the quality and quantity of data and results throughout all system components.

Figure 2: Migrasia's Cyclical System

Victim Identification & Triage

- Social media engagement (FB Pages & Groups)
- Data collection
- Triage process
- Referral to in-person clinic

Client Support & Investigations

- Personalised assistance
- Data collection
- High impact & complex cases
- Law enforcement reports
- Legal partner referrals

Education & Community Engagement

- Trainings for government
- Trainings for NGOs
- Community outreach & advocacy
- Public & private info sharing
- Storytelling

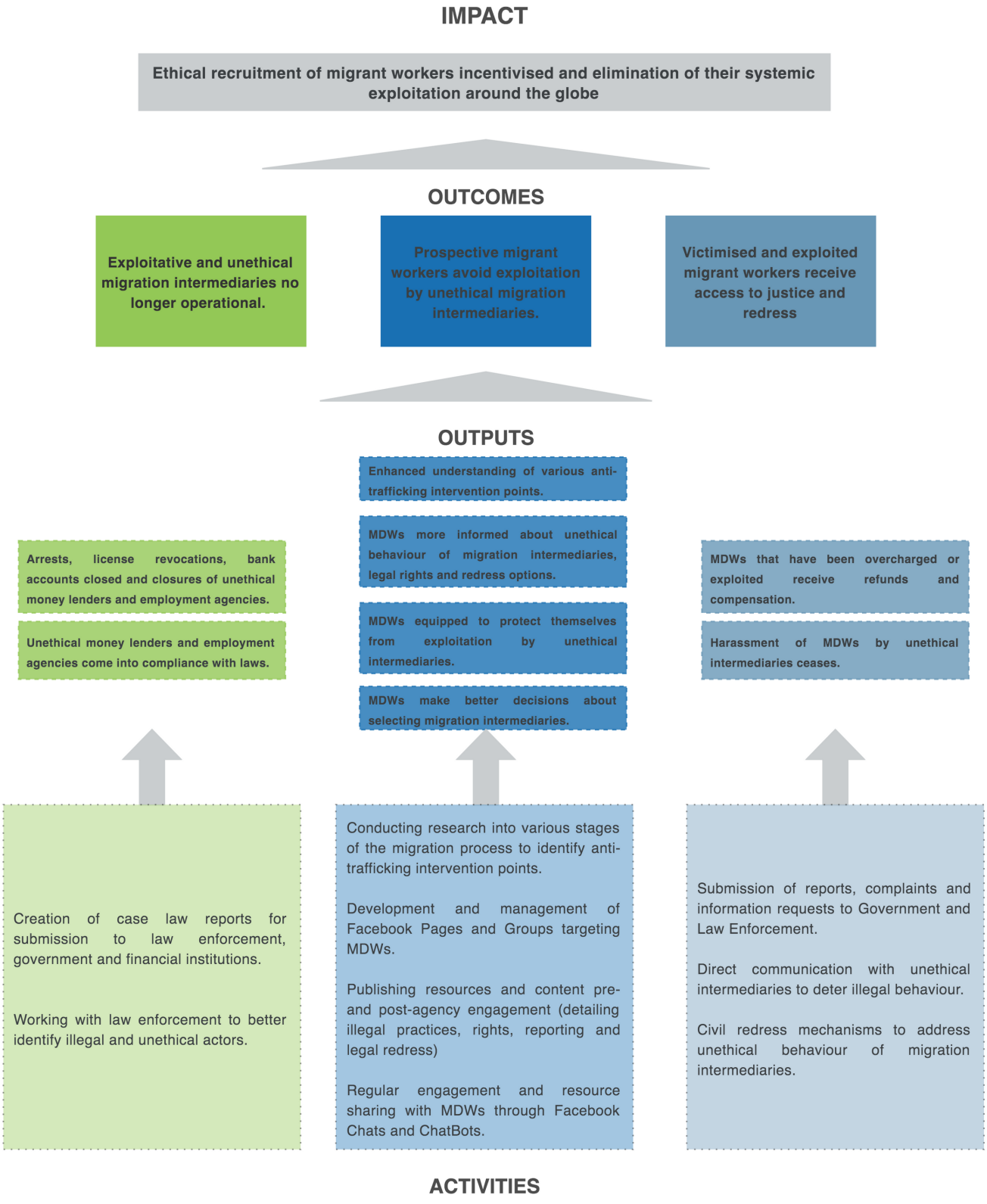
Research

- Surveys & data collection
- Conducting primary research
- Secondary research
- Authoring case studies
- Data & access to information requests

Case Study: Migrasia's Cyclical System in Process

- MDW volunteers and virtual assistants manage Facebook pages and groups, curating and **posting highly specific and actionable content** for victims of exploitation seeking redress, and information for potential victims of trafficking;
- **Victims of trafficking are identified** via Facebook pages and redirected to Facebook Messenger Chats where inquiries are answered and direct instructions are given by a combination of ChatBots and social media administrators;
- Clients are provided with a **range of support services** online including support letters, instructions on filing complaints and reports with law enforcement, quick reference documents for support on common problems and other avenues for redress. Where necessary clients are **referred to our in-person clinic** for further assistance;
- Client **data and documentation is collected,** both online and at Migrasia's in-person clinic, stored and aggregated to inform future interventions and overall programme strategy;
- Data collected from social media and new complaints is used to **produce research and case reports** that serve as the foundation for further investigations into exploitative actors as well as for information products, and government and nongovernment training;
- Insights from client support, investigations and internal surveys direct areas of focus for primary research and aid in the **identification of key information gaps in migration literature** that Migrasia research seeks to address;
- **Case reports, useful strategies, and legal research are shared** with government and non-government partners for enforcement and advocacy, to improve law enforcement, access to justice, technology solutions, and client services.

VI. THEORY OF CHANGE



I. ONLINE CLIENT SUPPORT

Migrasia uses social media as the key avenue for reaching its beneficiaries, and our social media channels include a network of Facebook pages, Facebook groups and Messenger Chats. Our online client support programme aims to empower victims and potential victims of trafficking and debt bondage by providing actionable information to prevent exploitation. This includes information about redress mechanisms, written and video support guides, and where appropriate and necessary, referrals to our in-person clinic or other civil society organisations for further tailored assistance. Our victim identification and triage process adopts a beneficiary-driven strategy, as our social media operations are primarily managed by volunteer migrant workers who have been trained on victim identification and client intake.

85,000 inquiries (questions) responded to

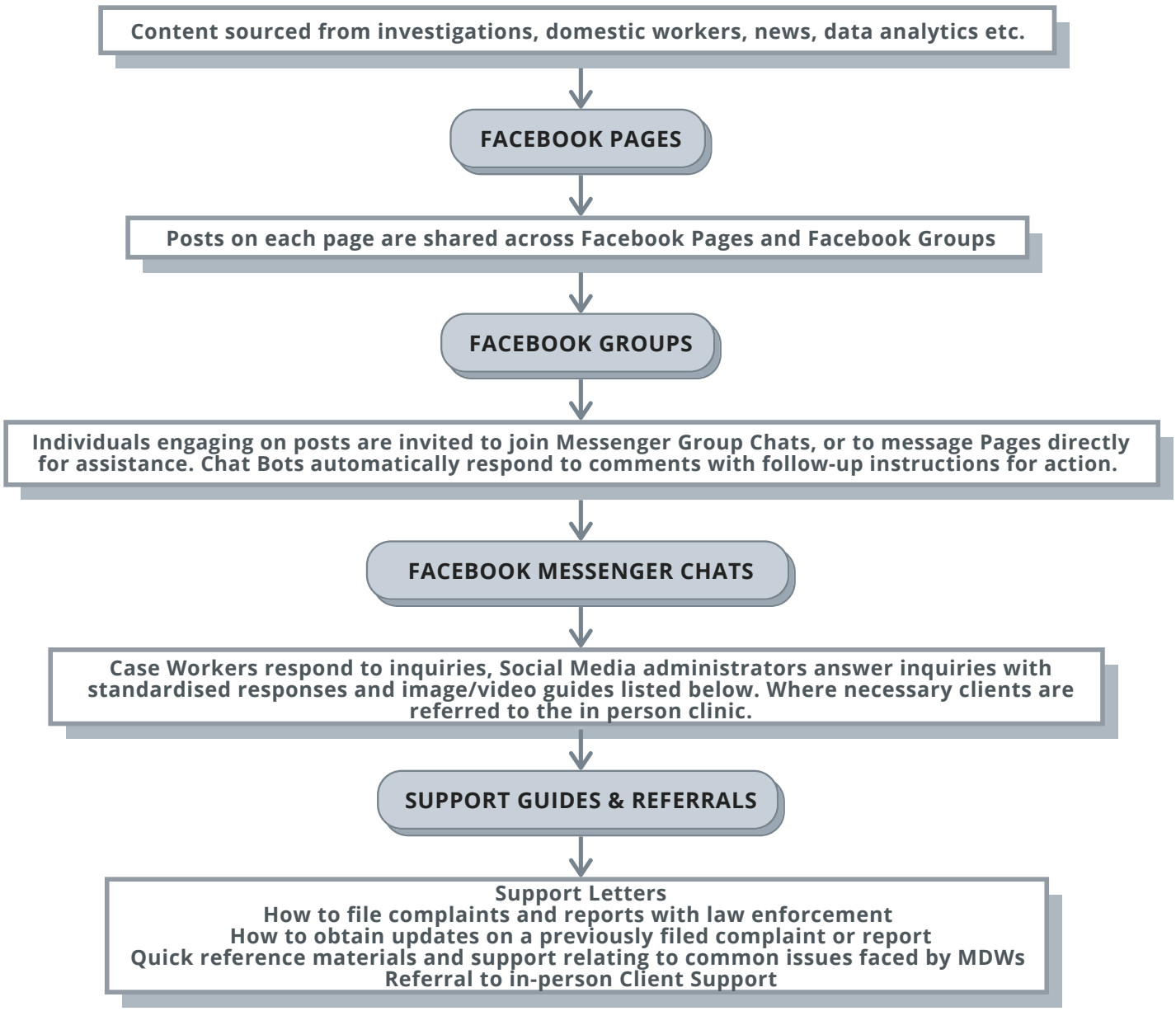
16,000+ similarly situated individuals benefited from our case work

8,000+ individual clients received direct assistance

200+ case referrals

Migrasia's current social media reach and engagement includes 210,000 current, former, and prospective MDWs participating in Migrasia's Facebook groups. In addition, Migrasia obtained over 100,000 Facebook page followers and an average of 1,037,000 Facebook page engagements per month. Migrasia's extensive social media reach, allows us to engage with and provide online support to vast numbers of potential and actual victims.

Figure 3: Online Client Support Process



II. IN-PERSON CLIENT SUPPORT

Migrasia's in-person clinic provides highly specialised assistance to victims of exploitation by unethical migration intermediaries through a range of redress mechanisms that enable victims to directly enforce their rights. Our main avenues for assistance include:

- Direct communication with unethical migration intermediaries to enforce the rights of victims by way of sending demand letters, cease and desist letters, data access requests and other civil redress mechanisms;
- Providing support letters and assisting victims in communicating with employers to encourage transparency, support, mutual understanding and in many cases, to prevent termination of employment due to harassment by agencies, lenders and debt collectors;
- In some instances, assisting employers in sending cease and desist letters to lenders and debt collectors to prevent further harassment.

As a result of our in-person clinic more than 800 victims have been able to take both preventative and remedial action to combat the exploitation they face at the hands of unethical migration intermediaries in 2020 alone.

Figure 4: Client Support Programmes in 2020

ENFORCEMENT

The use of technology driven data aggregation methods has enabled Migrasia to detect large-scale labour trafficking and debt bondage syndicates. Migrasia has developed novel, intelligence driven strategies to conduct investigations, enforce the law and hold unethical migration intermediaries accountable. By detecting suspected violations and sharing the findings with government and non-government stakeholders through case reports, Migrasia has been able to target a range of actors who often hide behind networks of corporate entities, to create industry-wide impact.

Filed 2000+ complaints with local and overseas law enforcement

Submitted 80 reports on suspected money laundering to regulators

Over 80,800,000 HKD in monetary recoveries and illegal proceeds blocked

30+ convictions, prosecutions and administrative actions

6+ arrests

I. A BROADER SYSTEM FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

While the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) has long been the primary avenue for legal recourse for migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, there exist substantive and procedural lapses in the Ordinance. For instance, it only targets employment agencies, and the Labour Department, which enforces this Ordinance, has no arrest power. After observing these gaps, Migrasia identified several alternative intervention points within the ecosystem of business activities that perpetuate debt bondage and labor trafficking. Our enforcement strategy entails targeting a range of unethical migration intermediaries using multiple legal frameworks in several jurisdictions. Some of our most successful cases have involved reporting entities for unfair trade practices and money laundering, filing for compensation from employment agencies for unexpired portions of employment contracts after unlawful termination, and private sector reporting of suspected money laundering. By successfully implementing these novel legal strategies, Migrasia has been a key player in prompting industry-wide change and fostering a more comprehensive ecosystem for accountability.

I. IMPACT DRIVEN STRATEGIES

1) HONG KONG COMPLAINTS

STRATEGY

Trade Descriptions Ordinance, enforced by the Customs & Excise Department: 8+ Complaints

Money Lenders Ordinance, Theft Ordinance, Crimes Ordinance, enforced by the Hong Kong Police: 112 Police Reports

- **6 Informal Money Lender Objections drafted**
- **19 Case Reports, covering over 10,000 illicit transactions involving unethical migration intermediaries,** prepared and shared with Law Enforcement Authorities.

Employment Ordinance, enforced by the Labour Department: 11+ EAA Statements

- **Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, enforced by the Privacy and Data Protection Commissioner:** 100+ data access requests and 19 complaints
- **Immigration Ordinance,** enforced by the Immigration Department: 3 Immigration Statements
- **Companies Ordinance,** enforced by the Companies Registry: 104 Complaints

IMPACT

Trade Descriptions Ordinance

- 200,000 HKD in refunds for false trade descriptions
- 1 arrested for suspected violations of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance.

Money Lending and Money Laundering

- Several arrests and a pending prosecution against a money lender and its staff for charging excessive interest and financing excessive placement fees. Suspects have also been charged with money laundering. Over 4,000 individuals directly benefited from this action due to effective cancellation of debt.
- Numerous pending prosecutions of money lending cases
- 1 arrested for a suspected illegal lending operation

Employment Agency related actions

- 3 employment agencies convicted by the Hong Kong Labour Department and 1 ongoing prosecution.
- In 2020, our cases accounted for 100% of agency convictions and 50% of total agency convictions for overcharging and unlicensed operation.
- 2 employment agency licenses revoked or refused renewal, accounting for 66% of the total license revocations and refusals in 2020.
- 1 arrested for multiple suspected unlawful agency activities.
- 100,000 in Labour Tribunal recoveries
- 150,000 HKD in other recoveries, such as illegal fees not paid, scams avoided, etc.

2) PHILIPPINES COMPLAINTS

STRATEGY

- **Securities and Exchange Commission:** 800+ Complaints regarding illegal lending
- **National Bureau of Investigation**: 2 Notarized Statements
- **Philippines Overseas Labour Office:** 400+ Overcharging Complaints
- **Philippines Anti-Money Laundering Commission**: 600+ complaints
- **National Privacy Commission:** 13 complaints
- **Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas**: 20+ Complaints

- **R.A. No. 8042 laws** against exclusive referrals by employment agencies, enforced by POLO, DOLE, DOH, TESDA, and the SEC: 6 Show Cause Orders Issued By POEA With 2 Agency Suspensions
- **R.A. No. 8042 laws** requiring employment agencies to grant compensation for unexpired portions of contracts as a result of unlawful termination, enforced by National Labor Relations Commission: 14 Cases with 4 being decided by the NLRC and others pending or settled.

IMPACT

- 350,000 HKD in agency fee refunds from the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, Philippines Overseas Labor Office, and National Labor Relations Commission.
- 260,000 HKD in refunds ordered by the National Labor Relations Commission from employment agencies for unexpired portions of contracts.
- 7 employment agencies suspended by the Philippines Overseas Labour Office.
- 5 employment agency licenses suspended or cancelled in the Philippines.

Figure 4: A broader system for accountability

3) PRIVATE SECTOR REPORTING

STRATEGY

Reporting suspected money laundering to private sector entities in Hong Kong and the Philippines. Over 80 reports were submitted. This included reports to banks, financial intermediaries, convenience store payment systems, digital payment systems and other entities that have anti-money laundering obligations, and involved requests for:

- Closure of accounts involved in suspicious activity
- Freezing of illicit funds
- Blocking of illegal payments and remittances
- Nullifying blank bank checks confiscated by money lenders

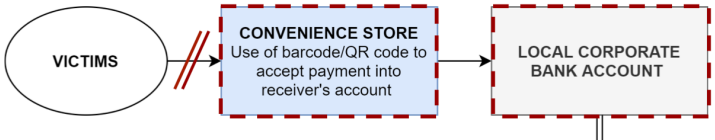
IMPACT

- Over 80,800,000 HKD in illegal debt cancelled, blocked transfers or proceeds frozen
- Over 40 bank accounts closed or frozen
- Multiple multi-national online lending syndicates closed down

II. HIGH IMPACT CASES

PRIVATE SECTOR REPORTING OF SUSPECTED MONEY LAUNDERING

One of Migrasia's most impactful cases involved shutting down an illegal cross-border money lending syndicate which operated for over 30 years, targeted more than 4200 victims and made over HK$23,000,000 in loans just between 2019 and 2020. The scheme involved collusion between Hong Kong and Philippines based money lenders and employment agencies, wherein victims were forced to take out loans carrying interest rates as high as 195% per annum to finance excessive and illegal agency fees. In 2011, members of civil society objected to the renewal of the Hong Kong lender's money lenders license due to its involvement in the illicit lending scheme. Unfortunately, the objection was not granted and the lender was allowed to continue its unscrupulous activities.



- After taking actions, the convenience store **suspended the QR codes** and the local bank **suspended payments** to the corporate account.
- Suspension of convenience store payment **creates confusion** and **impairs cash flow** of the money lender.

COLLECTOR COMPANY & LICENSED MONEY LENDER IN HONG KONG

Refusal to conduct proper due diligence on collections made.

Failure to produce evidence that the loan does not contain excessive interest rate or is in compliance with the Money Lenders Ordinance.

In 2019, when Migrasia started receiving complaints about the syndicate, Migrasia coordinated with the civil society members to obtain historical records, learned from the prior strategies, and reapproached the case by investigating suspected violations of the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 455).

Migrasia also reported suspected illicit transactions to financial intermediaries processing payments for the syndicates. These involved banks and convenience store operators.

Within several months of reporting, over 30,000,000 HKD in illegal loan payments were effectively blocked and the perpetrators' ability to facilitate trafficking via abusive loan arrangements was significantly hampered. Within four months of reporting the case, arrests were made and bank accounts **were frozen by the Hong Kong Police force preventing perpetrators from accessing millions of HKD in funds** they could otherwise have used to continue their schemes.

Hong Kong / Law and Crime

Hong Kong police bust loan shark syndicate that targeted Filipino domestic workers with interest rates as high as 195 per cent a year

借八千還萬四 專榨外傭放債公司四人落網

2020年08月06日 04:14

【年利率高達195%】涉向外傭放貴利 洗黑錢逾2000萬 財務公司4男女被捕

Featured Hong Kong News

Four locals arrested in loan shark ring targeting Filipino helpers

TRADE DESCRIPTIONS ORDINANCE (CAP.362)

Starting in 2014, roughly 100 migrant workers reported an employment agency for offering fake jobs to migrant workers. At this time, the agency was solely being reported for violations under the Employment Ordinance which is enforced by the Labour Department. The Labour Department does not have arrest power and therefore was powerless to stop the activity of the employment agency. The lack of action resulted in hundreds of additional victims. One of the perpetrators was ultimately convicted but refused to attend Small Claims Tribunal cases and ultimately disappeared for a number of years in an attempt to avoid legal obligations. Despite having multiple judgements against the Defendant none of the victimised migrant workers were able to obtain any compensation or refunds of the illegal feeds.

In 2019, the agency restarted the scam offering fake jobs to migrant workers and charging up-front fees ranging from 4,000 HKD to 16,000 HKD. After learning about the history of the case, Migrasia reported to the Customs & Excise Department for suspected violations of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance. **The Customs & Excise Department has arrest power and took law enforcement action within weeks of receiving Migrasia's detailed reports of suspected violations.** The use of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance rather than the Employment Ordinance also stripped the suspects of their ability to disappear, dodge court proceedings, or avoid arrest. As a result, the suspects were unable to continue the scam and were charged with violations of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance and the Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance.

TACKLING EMPLOYMENT AGENCY SYNDICATES BY IDENTIFYING CHOP RENTING

In 2018, Migrasia received hundreds of reports about several unethical employment agencies exploiting OFWs who sought employment as migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong. Through a process of large scale data collection, aggregation and analysis, we identified a common link between these employment agencies. Our analysis revealed that these entities were operating as part of a chop renting scheme, wherein the licensed employment agency illegally processed employment contracts and placement paperwork for a syndicate of several unlicensed sub-agencies operated and controlled by the same person. Migrasia realised that the most effective strategy to combat this syndicate was to report the licensed agent, as any action against them would impair the operations of all sub-agents, by preventing them from processing further employment contracts or paperwork.

Migrasia assisted over 100 victims in obtaining over 750,000 HKD in compensation, and obtained multiple agency convictions for entities involved in this scheme. As an example of how powerful our process can be, after identifying numerous victims on social media starting in October 2018, Migrasia assisted 20 victims in the agency complaint process and prepared them to be prosecution witnesses. As a result of our efforts, the bad acting agency was convicted and ordered to pay the **largest ever criminal penalty along with over 60,000 HKD in compensation to the victims.**

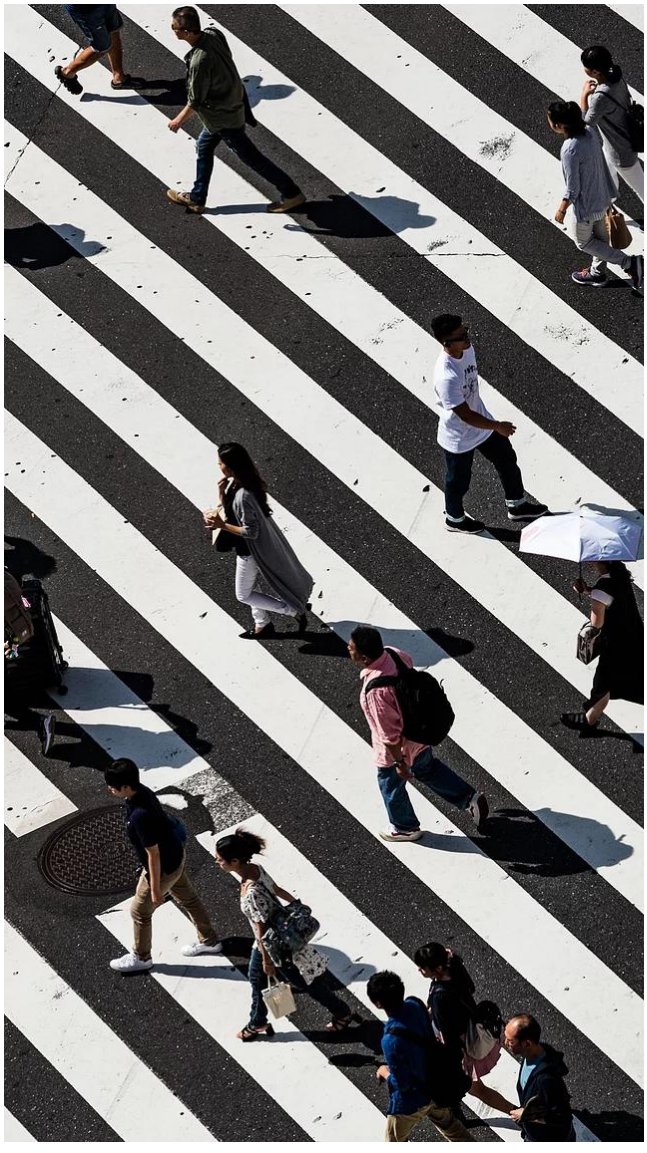
MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS ACT OF 1995

Migrasia has identified a number of agency-money lender syndicates where victims are often coerced by employment agencies to use specific training centers and medical clinics which charge extortionate fees. Agencies then force these victims to take out loans carrying excessive interest, from a specific money lender, in order to pay for these fees. These entities are often owned and controlled by the same persons/entities which utilise this syndicate to circumvent the Philippines' ban on employment agency placement fees. Victims face continued harassment from these lenders while they are in Hong Kong, and are coerced into sending back most of their monthly earnings to pay for these illicit loans.

In order to combat these syndicates, Migrasia has been helping victims file complaints under the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, which contains several provisions governing the conduct of employment agencies, money lenders, training centers and medical clinics providing services to prospective OFWs:

1.Laws against exclusive referrals

It is illegal for an employment agency to impose a compulsory and exclusive arrangement whereby an overseas Filipino worker is required to go to specifically designated medical clinics, training centers and/or money lenders. Migrasia has assisted over 400 victims in filing complaints with the Philippines Overseas Labor Office, Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, Securities and Exchange Commission, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Department of Health and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. This has resulted in numerous ongoing investigations and prosecution of entities involved.



2.Compensation for unexpired portion of the employment contract:

In cases of illegal dismissal of overseas employment, the employment agency may be required to provide compensation equivalent to 3 months of each unexpired year of the victim's employment contract. In 2020, Migrasia assisted victims in filing cases with the National Labor Relations Committee. Three of these victims were awarded substantial compensation by order of the National Labor Relations Committee. This led to the employment agencies being ordered to pay compensation equivalent to HK$83,790, HK$ 86,000, and HK$94,000 to three victims, respectively.

III. INDUSTRY WIDE IMPACT

PRIVATE SECTOR REPORTING & DISRUPTING INDUSTRY FROM WITHIN

Private sector reporting effectively paralyses illicit operations on a fundamental level by impairing cash flow within the network of bad acting entities, making it impossible for these schemes to continue operating. Migrasia's reports of suspected money laundering to banks and financial intermediaries processing illegal loan repayments led to the blocking and freezing of over 80,800,000 HKD in illicit funds in 2020 alone. In other instances, these reports led to money service operators blocking the remittance of illegal loan repayments and at least three law firms no longer representing unethical migration intermediaries over concerns of inadequate due diligence.

More generally, we have observed that Migrasia's reports have increased awareness of human trafficking and debt bondage related crimes among private sectors players. Financial institutions and intermediaries such as banks and convenience store operators have become increasingly more responsive and proactive in blocking the flow of proceeds arising from debt bondage and human trafficking syndicates.

OPERATION PHANTOM AND INCREASING RECEPTIVENESS AMONG LAW ENFORCMENT

In November 2019, Migrasia reported an employment agency for offering non-existent jobs to job seekers and suspected violations of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance. Upon receiving this report, the Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department launched a special enforcement action called "Operation Phantom" to investigate and combat unfair trade practices by employment agencies.

Hong Kong Customs mounts special operation against unfair trade practices by employment agency

****

Hong Kong Customs mounted a special enforcement action codenamed "Phantom" in recent months against unfair trade practices by employment agencies. During the operation, two saleswomen were arrested for being suspected of having applied false trade descriptions in the course of selling employment agency services, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). The service contracts sum involved was about $180,000.

More generally, we have observed that law enforcement agencies have become increasingly more proactive in investigating and prosecuting crimes related and incidental to labor trafficking and debt bondage.

- We have observed that the Hong Kong Police have become more interested in tips regarding debt bondage, and have proactively been asking the Employment Agencies Administration and Labour Department to share intelligence regarding potential money laundering cases.
- The Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data in Hong Kong has also, on occasion, implemented a more expedited complaint handling mechanism. Rather than going through the formal and lengthy complaint process, the Privacy Commissioner has, in some instances, proactively sent letters to agencies and lenders warning them of suspected Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance violations upon the initial receipt of complaints.
- The Hong Kong Money Service Operators Association has used reports of money laundering submitted by Migrasia to share information of related crimes with member Money Service Operators.
- In the Philippines, the National Privacy Commission has proactively been probing money lenders, and the Securities and Exchange Commission has forwarded complaints to the Anti-Money Laundering Commission.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

With Migrasia exploring previously under-utilised avenues for legal recourse, a large number of migrant domestic workers are now filing complaints with multiple law enforcement authorities. This has significantly increased their chances of receiving refunds and compensation from the parties involved. Those physically located in Hong Kong have started proactively reporting legal violations to authorities in the Philippines. This has forced law enforcement agencies to create new avenues for submitting complaints online. For instance, the Philippines Overseas Labour Office in Hong Kong has changed their form to include an email section so that Overseas Filipino Workers abroad can receive case updates over email. The Department of Labor and Employment in the Philippines now accepts online agency complaint forms. In Hong Kong, an increase in the number of victims reporting large criminal syndicates has led the Hong Kong Police to implement standardized witness interviewing mechanisms. Migrasia's investigation and reporting of an illegal lending syndicate led the Police to reach out to thousands of victims using a two-page questionnaire to effectively gather material facts and information. Overall, the changing landscape and mechanisms of complaint intake in both jurisdictions has meant improved access to justice for migrant domestic workers.

I.INFORMING ANTI-TRAFFICKING INTERVENTIONS: INSIGHTS INTO THE PRE-DEPARTURE MIGRATION PHASE FOR ASPIRING FILIPINO MIGRANTS

Migrasia in coordination with the University of Hong Kong (HKU) has commissioned a research project to address critical information gaps in the existing migration literature regarding the pre-departure phase of migration for aspiring Filipino migrant domestic workers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this research was to assess the level of knowledge of MDWs around the migration process in their pre-departure phase, identifying key information gaps and preferences around further training, as well as identifying the primary communication channels utilised by MDWs to access information relating to their migration. In understanding how best to reach MDWs in the pre-departure phase, and their primary information needs, the research aims to inform information campaigns promoting safe migration and migrants rights and support strategic interventions to influence the decision-making of MDWs and prevent exploitation from unethical employment agencies and migration intermediaries.

METHODOLOGY

The research employed a simple random sampling approach, disseminating the survey via online research panels utilising the research platform Lucid. Respondents were incentivised to complete the survey in exchange for rewards, points, gift cards or small cash payments depending on the platform used.

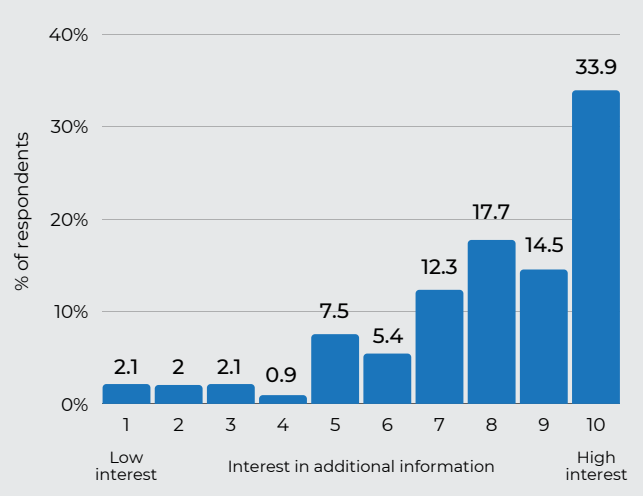
This research methodology was effective at targeting the hard to reach population of aspiring MDWs, as the demographics of the sample population, particularly with regards to age, gender and geography, corresponds with the user segment of online research panels. This methodology allowed for a total of 5,495 questionnaires to be electronically fielded within the period of one week, gathering a total of 560 complete surveys. Among respondents, 62% were considering becoming a MDW, 24% were undertaking training while 14% were currently deploying. Our sample is representative of the prospective MDW population residing in the Philippines at a 95% confidence level, with a 4% margin of error.

KEY FINDINGS

Access to information and degree of knowledge of the migration process

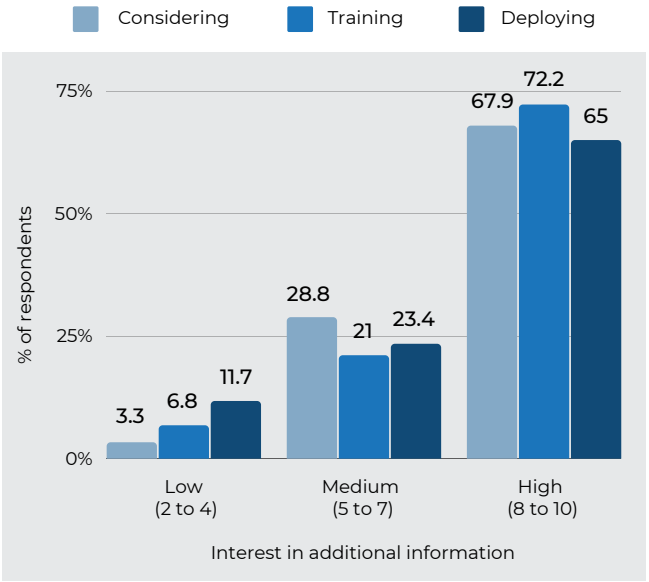
Information needs: A majority of migrant domestic workers (61%), reported needing additional information about migrating as a caregiver or domestic helper, suggesting that prospective migrants lacked sufficient information regarding their migration (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Proportion of population interested in receiving additional information about migration



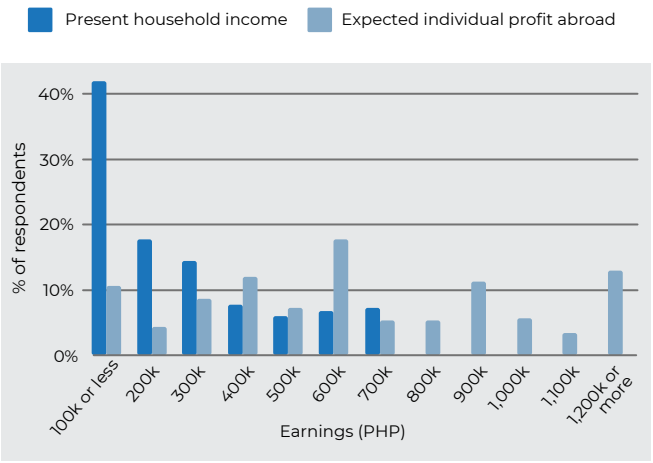
A majority of respondents across all three phases of the pre-departure migration phase, (considering, training and deploying) reported being highly interested in additional information regarding the migration process. Findings indicate that prospective migrants in the training phase needed additional information to the same degree as those that were merely considering migration (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Proportion of population interested in additional information, by pre-departure phase



Expected income: An increase in salary was the most commonly reported motivation for migrating overseas, cited by 71% of respondents, with a majority (87%) of aspiring migrants expecting to receive an income in the destination country exceeding their combined household income in the Philippines (Figure 8). Findings suggest that MDWs expectations around future earnings could be based on expected salaries in destination countries in North and South America, rather than Hong Kong and the Middle East, likely a result of misinformation spread online relating to migration prospects, destination countries available to MDWs and attainable wages.

Figure 8: Expected annual individual income compared with current annual household income



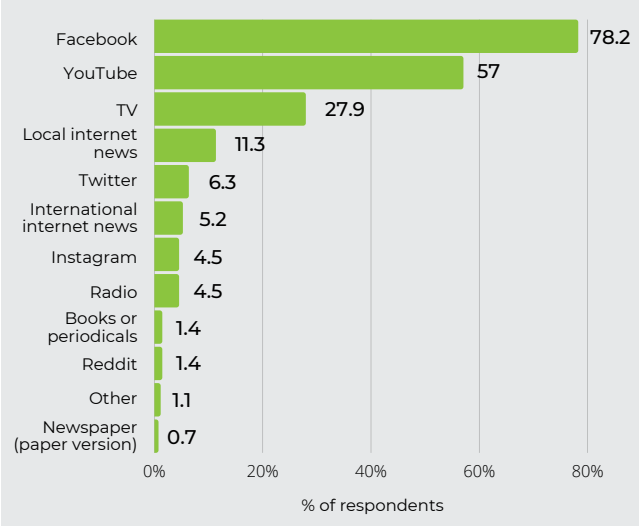
Knowledge gaps: Respondents most commonly reported inadequate knowledge about the migration process, expectations about the destination country and their rights as migrant workers. The most commonly reported preferred subjects for additional training as reported by respondents were OFW application processes; wellbeing in destination country; expected costs overseas and potential earnings in the destination country. Gaps in knowledge clearly overlap with topics included in mandatory Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars (PDOS), suggesting that information provided during the PDOS was insufficient. Further, findings indicate that the timing of the PDOS training renders it ineffective, as the topics covered by PDOS are of interest early in the pre-departure process, but training is not provided to migrants until they have utilised the services of an employment agency to secure a job and visa.

Findings suggest that accurate, existing information is not reaching prospective MDWs in an efficient and timely manner during the pre-departure phase of migration.

Preferred communication channels

Prevalence of social media use: A majority of aspiring MDWs surveyed were accessing information most frequently using social media (Figure 9), particularly Facebook (78% of respondents) and Youtube (57% of respondents), both of which have a high penetration rate among the Filipino population. Only 6% of respondents reported that they did not use any form of social media frequently, while over half of respondents (57%) reported using only social media as their main source of media consumption.

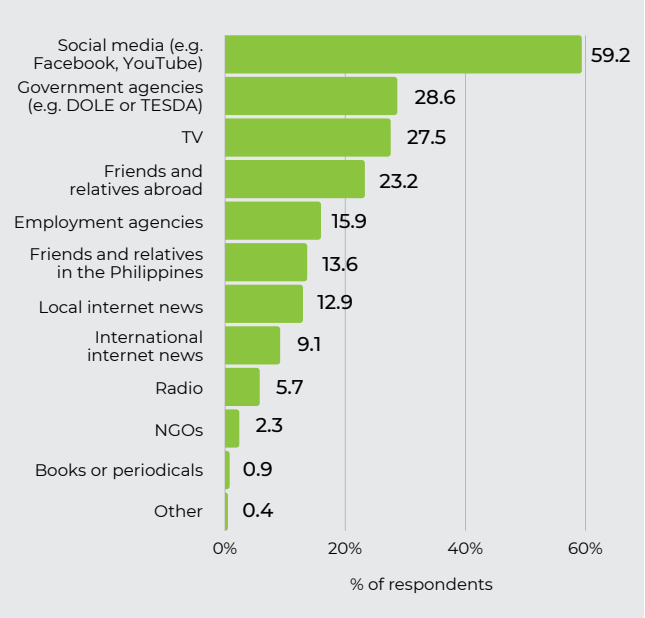
Figure 9: Media most visited, watched or read



Sources for information on migration: When asked to report on their two main sources for accessing information relating to migration, a majority of respondents (60%) reported using social media, while other sources of information reported by less than a third of respondents included government agencies (29%), Television (28%) and friends and relatives (23%). Only 16% of respondents frequently sought out information on migration from employment agencies. (Figure 10)

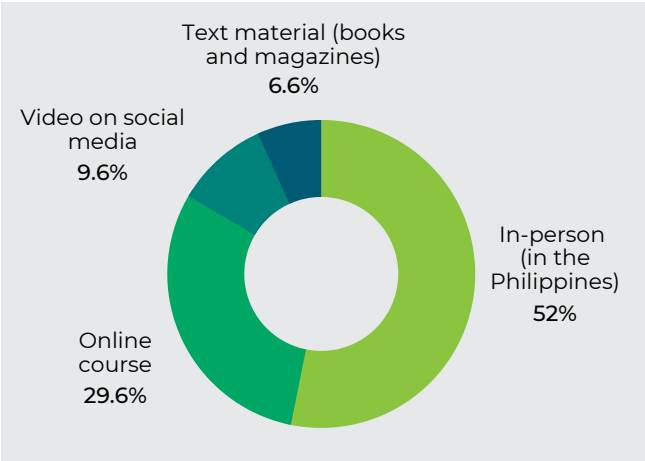
Preferences around training delivery channels: Over half of respondents reportedly favoured in-person training (53%), while roughly 40% of respondents had a preference for training via a digital platform, whether online (30%), or

Figure 10: Principal source of information about migration



over social media (10%). Findings suggest that additional training material disseminated online could have a substantial user base among aspiring MDWs (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Preferred training delivery method



Vulnerabilities in the pre-departure phase

Unmet information needs: When asked which topics related to migration they would be interested in learning more about, roughly half of respondents reported interest in the migration process generally, while roughly a third of respondents were interested in how to select an employment agency, legal rights, and resources or services for OFWs. (Figure 12)

Exploitation by migration intermediaries: A large majority (over 90%) of respondents expressed little interest in gaining knowledge about how to select training centres or money lenders, and in the ratings of service providers. Findings may reflect the centrality of employment agencies in referring MDWs to other intermediaries, triangulated by Migrasia casework which finds that forced referrals to training centres and money lenders are often facilitated by employment agencies, which is illegal under Philippines law.

Perceived levels of mistreatment: Respondents were asked directly about how oppressed they felt during their current phase of migration. (Figure 13). Findings suggest that perceived feelings of oppression increased as MDWs moved further along the migration process, while feelings of low or no mistreatment decreased. Findings confirm that perceived levels of oppression increased around the training pre-departure phase.

Figure 12: Proportion of population who want additional information, by migration topic

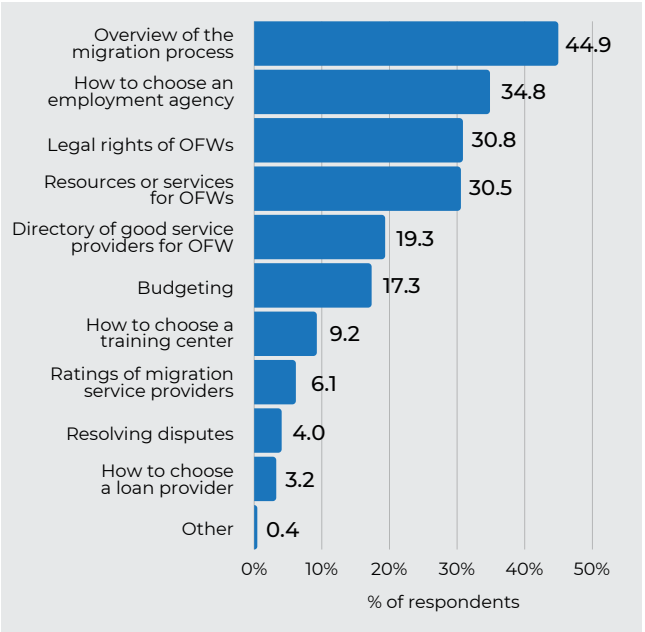
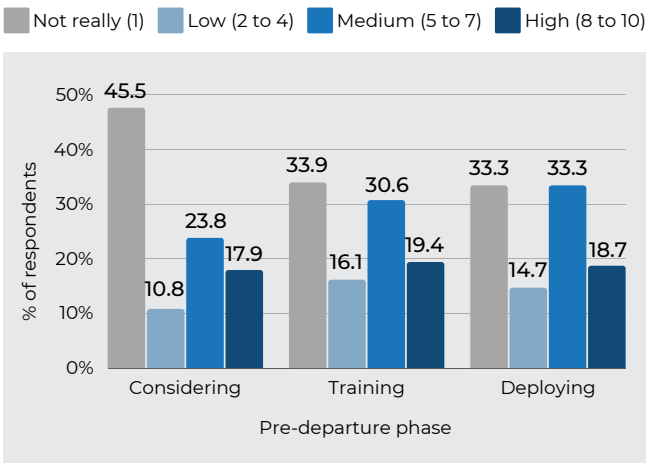


Figure 13: Proportion of OFWs reporting varying levels of oppression, by pre-departure phase



II.INFORMING ANTI-TRAFFICKING INTERVENTIONS PT.2: EVALUATING FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION BY PHILIPPINES MIGRATION INTERMEDIARIES IN THE PRE-DEPARTURE PHASE OF MIGRATION

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Migrasia has secured funding from Winrock International, funded by USAID, to conduct a follow-up research study, as part of their Counter Trafficking in Persons "From Evidence To Action" Programming. In 2021, Migrasia will conduct further primary research using our novel research methodology to decrease gaps in knowledge around OFW decision-making and exploitative methods employed by migration intermediaries in the pre-departure phase of migration, and to identify strategic intervention points for action.

The following specific objectives for the research have been identified:

- Assess the influence of employment agencies, training centres and money lenders in informing the OFW population,
- Identify and measure common coercive methods employed to exploit OFWs,
- Assess knowledge of the legal migration process among the OFW population, their level of satisfaction with services and perceived preparedness for migration,
- Identify barriers to accessing accurate information and ethical services.

POPULATION OF INTEREST & SAMPLING

The population of interest for this research is MDWs originating from the Philippines, a key sending country for MDWs migrating across Asia and the Middle East. Specifically, the target sample are MDWs that have engaged in overseas work within the last 5 years, that have directly utilised the services of an employment agency, currently residing within the country of origin, as well as destination countries including Taiwan, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates. The sample of randomly selected respondents will include current migrants, returning migrants and re-hires.

METHODOLOGY

The research will employ Migraisa's novel data collection strategy of questionnaire dissemination among the target population through online mobile video games, after seeking informed consent. In exchange for participation in the survey, respondents will be rewarded with indirect financial incentives corresponding to the Freemium model of the video game platform used. The proposed sample size of 1000 respondents per geography will ensure that research findings are generalisable to the total population of overseas Filipino MDWs with a 95% confidence level and a 3% margin of error.

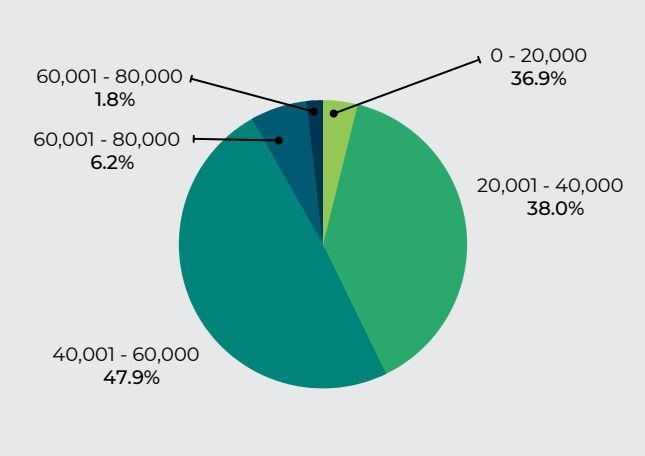
III. INTERNAL SURVEYS & DATA COLLECTION

Migrasia has conducted a number of formal and informal surveys on topics such as: (i) agency fees; (ii) referrals to money lenders; (iii) referrals to training centers; (iv) referrals to medical clinics; (v) and other aspects of the migration process. Many of these surveys are shared with NGOs partners and others are used as the basis for formal reports and publications.

EMPLOYMENT AGENCY & TRAINING FEE SURVEY

Throughout 2020, Migrasia conducted research into excessive fees charged by Philippines employment agencies and training centers during the recruitment phase of migration, assessing 553 MDWs via an online Facebook survey.

Figure 14: Total Training, Agency, Medical and Other Development Fees (in PHP)

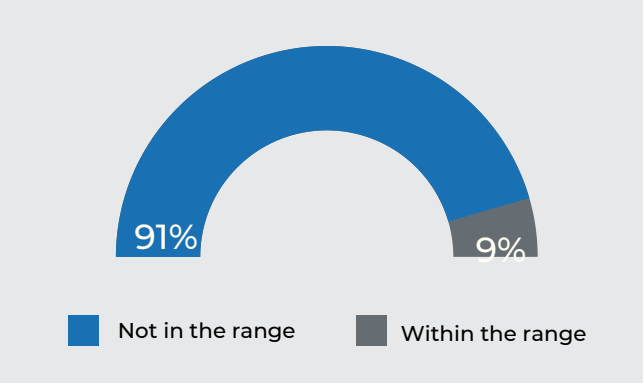


Findings indicated that the average worker paid a cumulative total of 45,753 Philippine Pesos (PHP), equivalent to roughly 7,400 Hong Kong Dollars (HKD), for fees charged by training centers, employment agencies and medical clinics. More than a third of respondents paid between 20,000-40,000 PHP for all fees related to their migration, while nearly half of respondents paid between 40,000-60,000 PHP. (Figure 14)

The data revealed the most commonly used employment agencies and training centers charging excessive fees, enabling Migrasia to prioritise investigative and enforcement efforts and target the unethical actors engaging in the most widespread exploitation of MDWs. Further, analysis of referral pathways between migration actors indicated the commonality of exclusive referrals between training centers and employment agencies, enabling Migrasia to single out the suspicious and likely illicit activities of specific unethical actors. The identification of actors engaging in exclusive referrals, which is illegal according to Philippines law, provides an evidence base which directs Migrasia's anti-trafficking interventions and enhances the effectiveness of our enforcement.

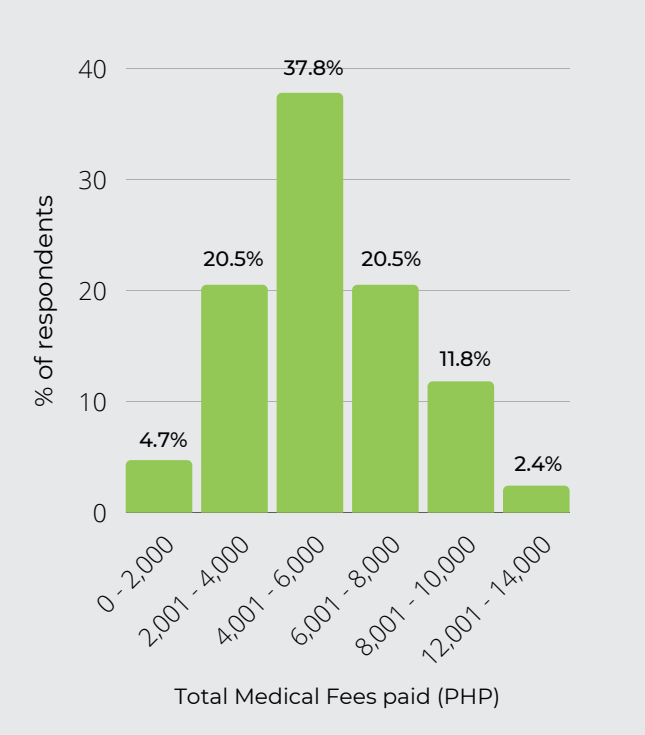
MEDICAL CLINIC FEE SURVEY

Figure 15: Percentage of Workers Who Paid within the Legal Range for Medical Fees



Migrasia fielded a survey among 140 respondents, distributed via Facebook, to assess OFW experiences with the pre-departure medical evaluations necessary for overseas migration. Survey findings indicated that roughly a third of respondents paid between 4001-6000 PHP in total for medical fees, while 20% of respondents paid between 2001-4000 PHP and 6001-8000 PHP respectively. The most commonly reported price range per medical evaluation was between 2001-4000 PHP, reported by roughly half of respondents. A third of respondents were required to conduct only one pre-departure medical examination, while over half of respondents conducted two. An overwhelming majority of the assessed OFWs (96%) were referred to the medical clinic they used by their employment agency, indicating the commonality of employment agencies collaborating with medical clinics. The Philippine Department of Health has specified that the basic Pre-Employment Medical examination package should cost within the range of 2000 to 2200 PHP. A comparison between this legally allowable range and the actual cost of fees as reported by respondents, indicates that 91% of assessed OFWs are paying fees in excess of the prescribed legal limit.

Figure 16: Total Medical Fees Paid (in PHP)



9 OUT OF 10 MIGRANTS
interviewed paid excessive medical fees

Community Engagement & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

I.COLLABORATIONS

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Through Migrasia's partnerships with HKU's Business School's Impact Lab and the Faculty of Law's Global Migration Legal Clinic ("GMLC"), Migrasia educates and trains over 50 university students per year in order to improve Hong Kong's legal support system and encourage future Hong Kong professionals to fully utilize existing laws and regulatory frameworks. Students are trained in investigation, research, victim identification and client services provision.

The Global Migration Legal Clinic

56 GMLC students trained over 3 semesters

GMLC wins the Outstanding Teaching Award 2020

Professional Training

4 training workshop materials produced

4 virtual workshops with partner NGOs

Investigations & Research

6 research reports produced after conducting industry-wide investigations into patterns of wrongdoing by unethical migration intermediaries and actions taken by law enforcement within the migration industry

14 case reports produced

4 suspects arrested as a result of students' case reports

Migrant Worker Law Library Project

Recognising the lack of publicly available collections of legal resources relating to domestic worker issues in Hong Kong, students at the Global Migration Legal Clinic created collections of issue-specific resources including legal summaries, laws, case studies, and additional resources and organised them into shareable Notion pages, divided by legal topic.

After being reviewed by pro-bono stakeholders from law firm partners, the finalised products will serve as comprehensive resources detailing the legal challenges faced by migrant workers in Hong Kong, and will be distributed among civil society, NGO partners, lawyers and among the general public.

Impact Labs

Build a Better Agency Toolkit

Venture Fund for Ethical Employment Agencies

Overseas Legal Research

Employment Agency Investigations

Online Client Support

Social Media Management

THE MEKONG CLUB: CASE STUDIES & TYPOLOGIES

We believe that the private sector has an increasingly important role to play in combating debt bondage and bonded labour. As a result, a key strategy within our Enforcement Program is the reporting of suspected illegal activity to key private sector players. In order to meaningfully supplement and magnify the impact of this strategy, we also aim to equip private sector entities with the knowledge and tools necessary to identify and proactively combat debt bondage and bonded labour.

MEKONG CLUB
FIGHTING THE BUSINESS OF SLAVERY

Through regular sharing of investigative reports and research, Migrasia and the Mekong Club have collaborated to develop typologies and case studies identifying common patterns and indicators of unethical and illegal behaviour within the migration ecosystem. These case studies and typologies, which the Mekong Club has published and distributed to its members, serve as actionable resources for private sector entities to combat and disrupt patterns of debt bondage and bonded labor.

NGO PARTNERSHIPS FOR ENHANCED CLIENT SUPPORT

Migrasia and its partner NGOs regularly engage in information sharing to enhance victim identification, data collection and case management systems. Information sharing has been extremely invaluable for mutually beneficial capacity building. These partnerships have encouraged the exchange of insight, expertise and experience among civil society members in the form of case strategies, technology solutions, case management techniques, victim identification mechanisms and case referrals.

- **HELP for Domestic Workers**
- **HK Dignity Institute and Patricia Ho & Associates**
- **Justice Without Borders**
- **Christian Action**
- **Enrich**
- **Trace Kenya**

II. POLICY ADVISING

HONG KONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REDRESS LETTER

In August 2020, Migrasia in collaboration with the Global Migration Legal Clinic submitted a redress letter to the Hong Kong Legislative Council outlining the ineffective regulation of employment agencies and money lenders in Hong Kong and requesting an inquiry into inadequate action to combat trafficking in persons. The redress letter was a result of a detailed, in-depth investigation conducted by Migrasia and the Global Migration Legal Clinic over a period of two years.

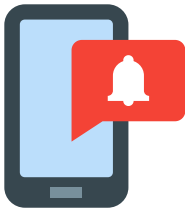
Utilising insights from Migrasia's extensive data collection efforts, comprehensive enforcement program and detailed industry-wide investigations conducted by GMLC students, the redress letter provided a detailed account of the drawbacks in the existing policy landscape. The report outlined the findings of our investigations into common illegal operations, and actions taken by the Employment Agencies Administration, Companies Registry, and Hong Kong Police Force with respect to their regulation of employment agencies and money lenders. The investigation also included the systematic monitoring and assessment of the efforts of various government departments to implement the HKSAR Government's Action Plan to Tackle Trafficking in Persons and to Enhance Protection of Foreign Domestic Workers. Based on our findings, we requested that an inquiry be opened to consider the deficiencies outlined in the report.

Making reference to the findings of our investigations, the redress letter also made several concrete, intelligence-driven recommendations to improve enforcement of the TIP framework in Hong Kong. This included suggestions for strengthening victim identification, investigation, inter-agency coordination, enforcement and prosecution efforts among law enforcement.

The report emphasized the need for the Employment Agencies Administration to play a more proactive role in combating TIP by aggressively and effectively enforcing the laws. Recommendations also called for the Hong Kong Police Force and the Companies Registry to take more aggressive measures in enforcing the Money Lenders Ordinance to combat debt bondage. In addition to the direct enforcement of laws, the redress letter also outlined several recommendations to improve victim protection and support, and partnerships between civil society members and law enforcement.

III. MEDIA & STORYTELLING

Systems change on the scale that Migrasia aims for requires empathy and public engagement, and so Migrasia shares stories to bring the problems faced by migrant workers and their solutions to life. Migrasia works internally as well as closely with journalists and partner NGOs to capture the experiences of our beneficiaries and share their stories, with the goal of educating communities on the lived experience of migrant workers, the exploitation prevalent along the migration journey and the innovative solutions that Migrasia advocates.



Hong Kong / Law and Crime

Filipino domestic helpers duped out of HK$180,000 in Hong Kong jobs scam

- The women were told they could help relatives and friends back home to get work in the city or Macau
- After they paid hefty agency fees, the jobs never materialised

Clifford Lo + FOLLOW
Published: 4:07pm, 17 Mar, 2020
Why you can trust SCMP

HKFP FEATURES

Hungry and indebted: Kenyan domestic worker falls victim to forced labour in Hong Kong

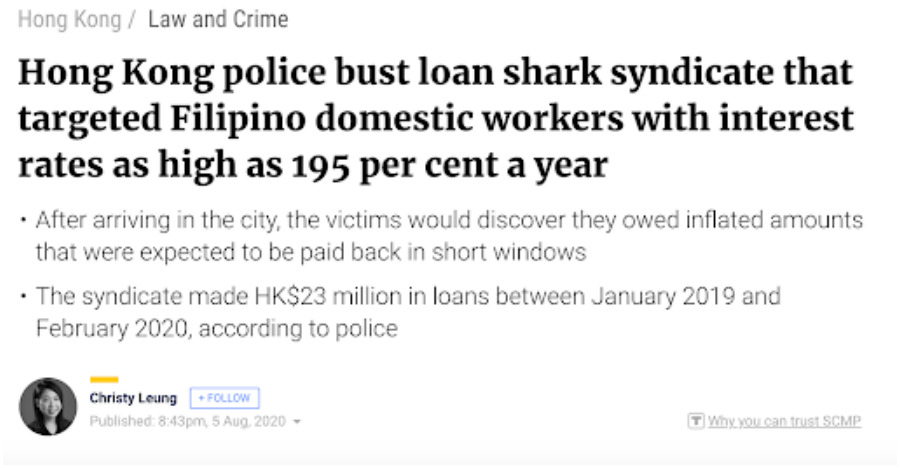
by KELLY HO
17:51, 6 APRIL 2020

Women arrested for bogus agency operations

By Purple Romero
March 18, 2020

Customs authorities. Photos from HK Customs

Migrasia's media engagement has directly contributed to efforts to eliminate unethical migration practices in Hong Kong. One such example involved exposing complex cross border money laundering schemes in popular media outlets. As a result of these strategically crafted exposés Hong Kong and overseas law enforcement authorities approached dormant cases and took prompt action against the perpetrators while simultaneously proactively assisting the victims involved.



Hong Kong / Law and Crime

Hong Kong police bust loan shark syndicate that targeted Filipino domestic workers with interest rates as high as 195 per cent a year

- After arriving in the city, the victims would discover they owed inflated amounts that were expected to be paid back in short windows
- The syndicate made HK$23 million in loans between January 2019 and February 2020, according to police

Christy Leung + FOLLOW
Published: 8:43pm, 5 Aug, 2020

Why you can trust SCMP

How coronavirus pushes Hong Kong domestic workers into debt traps

- Job uncertainties and pressure to support families under lockdowns in their home countries mean many helpers are struggling with debt and threats
- Experts are calling for greater monitoring and regulation of the lending industry amid instances of predatory practices

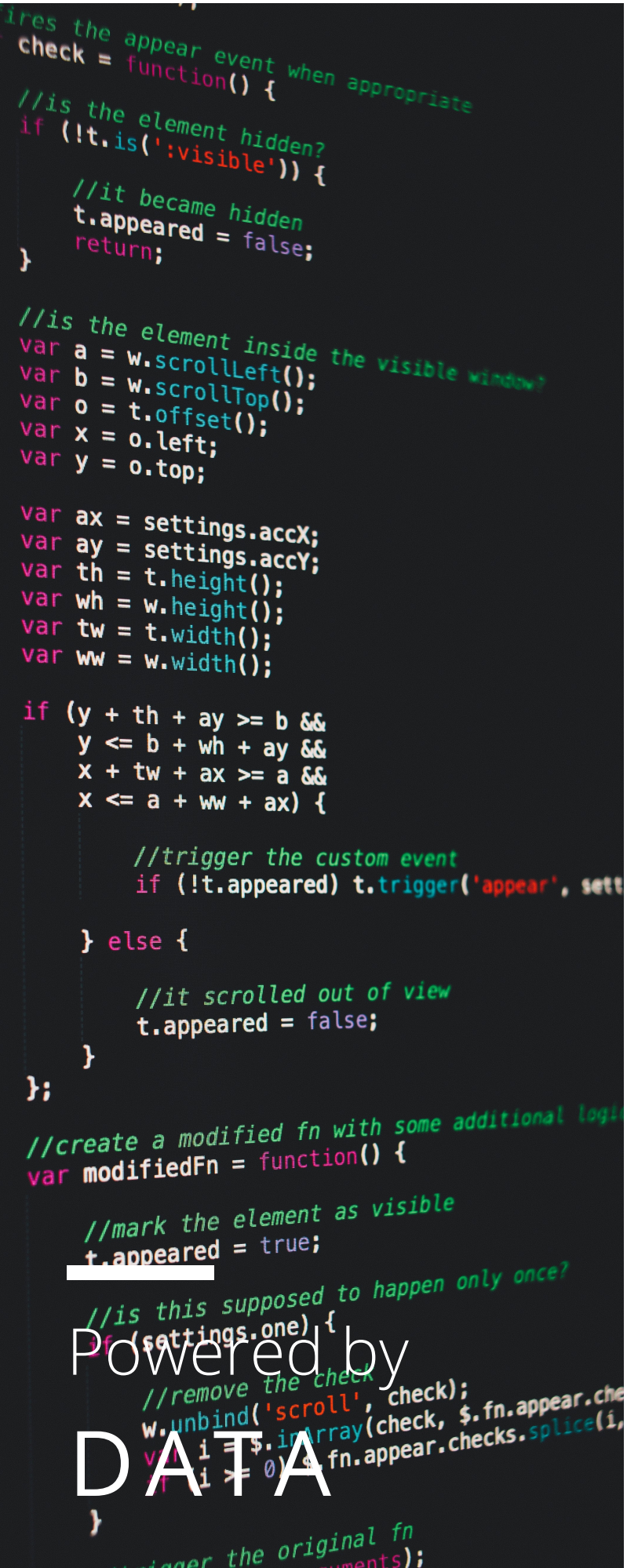
Raquel Carvalho + FOLLOW
Published: 7:45am, 3 May, 2020

Why you can trust SCMP

Modern Slavery: The Kenyan Domestic Workers That Are Trafficked & Forced To Work In Hong Kong

By Sally Ho — Published on Apr 17, 2020 — Last updated Aug 4, 2020

HONG KONG HUMAN RIGHTS



Data is the fundamental building block that informs and drives all our core programs – Client Support, Enforcement, Research and consequently, Thought Leadership and Community Engagement. Our unique data collection strategies allow us to gather information at a large scale from a variety of sources. We then aggregate this data to create meaningful and robust datasets which outline trends of wrongdoing within the migration ecosystem. These datasets inform our core programs by allowing us to identify unethical migration intermediaries, outline new intervention points and conduct in-depth industry analysis.

I. SOCIAL MEDIA

Migrasia utilises social media as the key strategy to **obtain data and intelligence** about illicit activities and **identity victims** of human trafficking and debt bondage. We use a network of Facebook pages, Facebook groups, and individual and group Messenger chats to gather intelligence and evidence related to illicit schemes and syndicates driven by unethical migration intermediaries. Migrasia's current social media outreach includes 210,000 current, former, and prospective migrant domestic workers participating in Migrasia's Facebook groups. In addition to the Facebook groups, Migrasia obtained over 100,000 Facebook page followers and an average of 1,037,000 Facebook page engagements per month. Migrasia expects the number and quality of engagement to grow significantly over the coming months and years.

II. ACCESS TO INFORMATION REQUESTS

Migrasia routinely submits Freedom of Information and Access to Information requests to gather information about previous ongoing government action taken by law enforcement, as well as clarifications on laws and regulations governing the activities of unethical migration intermediaries and corresponding redress mechanisms. Information obtained through these requests has enhanced our understanding of the migration ecosystem and has increased transparency regarding illicit activity and redress mechanisms for victims and potential victims. In 2020, Migrasia submitted 18 requests in Hong Kong and over 60 requests in the Philippines.

III. PUBLIC DATABASES

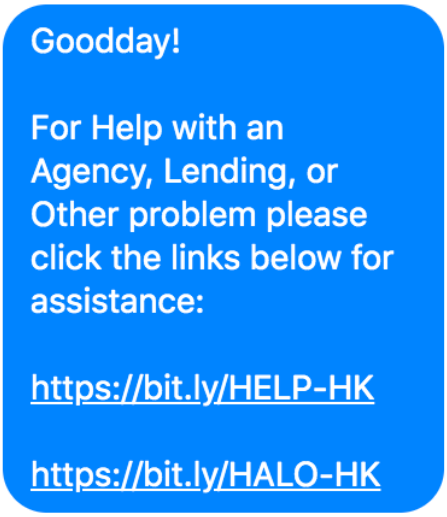
Migrasia also uses publicly accessible sources to collect data that identifies important contextual information such as organisational and operational structures of unethical migration intermediaries, indicators of suspected illicit activity, industry norms, regulations, and ongoing action by government actors. Sources include websites owned by unethical migration intermediaries and other private sector actors, and government databases such as those published by the Companies Registry, Inland Revenue Department, Land Registry, Customs & Excise Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Labour Department, Philippines Overseas Employment Agencies, Philippines Overseas Labour Office, and the Philippines Securities and Exchange Commission.

Driven by TECHNOLOGY

Innovative technology solutions are integrated across Migrasia's programmes and are essential to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and minimal operational costs. Migrasia leverages technology across victim identification, enforcement and research programmes, streamlining client intake and case work and identifying high-impact cases through advanced digital analysis. Migrasia's technological solutions include tablet based case intake systems, optical character recognition (OCR) systems, high speed document scanning, digital signatures, automated workflows, analysis tools and social media based case intake and triage systems.

I. DIGITISED CASE SUPPORT

Unique to Migrasia's approach to client support is our heavy reliance on digitized and cloud-based case support mechanisms. In our online victim identification and triage procedures, Migrasia utilizes automated and streamlined referral mechanisms, making use of chatbots and other digitized cloud based support systems in order to effectively and rapidly provide support to large volumes of clients with minimal overhead costs. Further, Migrasia utilises technology allowing clients to sign documents digitally. Migrasia has achieved significant success using digital signatures in both civil and criminal forums to protect the interests of clients regardless of where they are currently located. Migrasia's streamlined systems allow for fully digitized case management, automated document/complaint generation, autonomous follow-up, and standardized processes for common cases.



II. PYTHON SCRIPTS

Migrasia has developed python scripts for data scraping and analysis. These scripts provide quick and efficient functionality for:

- Obtaining details on licensed employment agencies, money lenders, and training centres in Hong Hong and the Philippines;
- Downloading and tracking case information for all docketed Philippine Overseas Employment Administration cases;
- Acquiring and analysing corporate records to detect suspicious activities;
- Detecting connections between employment agencies, money lenders, training centres, medical clinics, and other migration related institutions and their staff.

III. GOOGLE DATA STUDIO

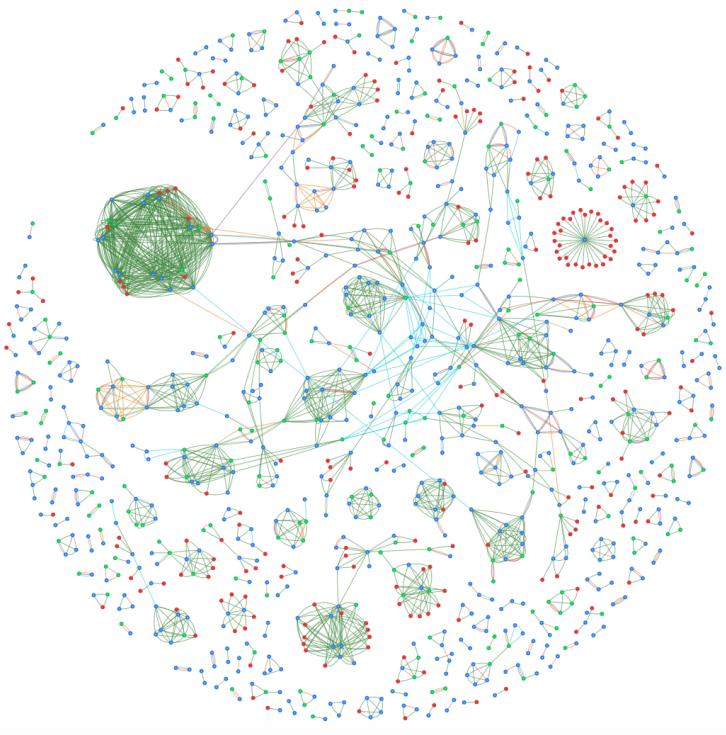
Migrasia has published a number of Google Data Studio Dashboards. These dashboard include:

- Visualisations on Philippine Overseas Employment Administration Cases;
- Visualisations on Job Order Data;
- Interactive databases on companies with the most complaints and reasons for each complaint.

IV. KNOW YOUR AGENCY TOOL

Migrasia has pioneered a searchable database and visualization tool using new and innovative technology to demonstrate and identify the statuses and relationships between employment agencies and money lenders. The tool increases transparency around the migration recruitment ecosystem and allows for easy public monitoring of the relationships between migration intermediaries, ultimately deterring unethical actors from wrongdoing.

Figure 17: Know Your Agency Tool



STRATEGY ROUNDTABLE

Civil society members in the migration sector possess a wide range of expertise, knowledge and experience in handling cases and combating issues faced by migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong. To promote sharing of this expertise and knowledge, Migrasia will be inviting civil society members to participate in a series of "Strategy Roundtable Discussions", with each Discussion led by a different civil society member based on their area of expertise. Strategy Roundtable Events will provide a forum for discussion and information sharing to promote dialogue among civil society members about the use of novel strategies for tackling common cases and issues related to migrant workers.

DIGITAL TRAINING PORTAL

Migrasia will launch a digital training portal for financial institutions and other actors to learn about modern slavery related topics and be equipped to identify, develop and support practices that combat modern slavery.

EXPANSION TO OTHER GEOGRAPHIES

As a result of Migrasia's expanding social media reach, we have come across reports of unethical migration intermediaries operating labour trafficking and debt bondage schemes in Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Myanmar, Kenya, Poland, the Middle East and Romania. In order to create scalable impact, we will expand operations to other geographies by opening our social media channels and online support program to migrant workers from other jurisdictions. This will consequently inform and expand our enforcement and research programs to create global industry-wide impact.

Figure 18: Migrasia's Geographical Expansion

TEAM EXPANSION

As Migrasia's reach increases, we will be hiring additional virtual assistants based in multiple jurisdictions to allow for increased client intake and to add local expertise, knowledge and experience to Migrasia's growing team.

INCREASED COLLABORATION ON POLICY ISSUES

Migrasia's experience with implementing the client support, enforcement and research programs have enabled us to identify several gaps and deficiencies in the existing policy landscape addressing labour trafficking and debt bondage. Migrasia hopes to utilise these insights productively by increasing collaboration with partners on policy related matters, aiding the creation of a more ethical migration ecosystem globally.

NGO PARTNERS

Justice Without Borders JWB

HELP FOR DOMESTIC WORKER 家傭匡扶中心

HONG KONG DIGNITY INSTITUTE 香港守護尊嚴中心

基督教勵行會 Christian Action

enrich – enriching and empowering migrant women

MEKONG CLUB FIGHTING THE BUSINESS OF SLAVERY

TRACE KENYA

LAW FIRM PARTNERS

Davis Polk

Skadden

ALLEN & OVERY

PATRICIA HO & ASSOCIATES 何珮芝律師行

GIBSON DUNN

MAYER | BROWN

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Faculty of Social Sciences The University of Hong Kong 香港大學社會科學學院

Faculty of Law The University of Hong Kong

HKU Business School 港大經管學院

Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine The University of Hong Kong 香港大學李嘉誠醫學院

HKU Journalism

TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

IBM

Google

aws

Traffik Analysis Hub

Migrasia's PARTNERS