

Strengthening Worker Protection Against Recruitment Fraud in International Deployment: A Strategic Policy Framework for Filipino Migrant Workers

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Abstract

International labor migration provided significant economic and employment opportunities for Filipino workers; however, the growing complexity of overseas recruitment also exposed prospective migrant workers to various forms of recruitment fraud. These included fraudulent job offers, unauthorized recruitment, excessive or illegal recruitment fees, contract substitution, misrepresentation of employment conditions, and online recruitment scams. Such practices resulted in financial losses, exploitation, forced labor, and other forms of vulnerability, highlighting the need to strengthen existing mechanisms for worker protection. This qualitative study examined recruitment fraud in the context of international deployment and explored the experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of relevant stakeholders regarding existing protective and regulatory mechanisms. Specifically, the study identified common forms and manifestations of recruitment fraud, examined factors that contributed to workers' vulnerability, assessed existing mechanisms for prevention and protection, identified challenges in recruitment regulation and enforcement, and determined opportunities for strengthening worker protection policies. A qualitative research design was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of recruitment fraud and worker protection within the international deployment process. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with selected stakeholders involved in overseas recruitment and migrant worker protection, including migrant workers, recruitment practitioners, government and regulatory personnel, and other relevant stakeholders. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns, themes, and relationships that emerged from the participants' accounts. The analysis focused on recruitment practices, information and awareness, regulatory mechanisms, monitoring and enforcement, reporting and grievance mechanisms, inter-agency coordination, and access to assistance and remedies. The findings provided a comprehensive understanding of the gaps and challenges in protecting Filipino migrant workers from recruitment fraud. Based on the findings, a Strategic Policy Framework for Worker Protection Against Recruitment Fraud in International Deployment was developed. The framework emphasized preventive measures, strengthened recruitment governance, digital monitoring and verification, worker education and awareness, responsive reporting and redress mechanisms, effective regulatory enforcement, and stronger inter-agency and stakeholder collaboration. The study contributed to the promotion of safer, more transparent, ethical, and accountable international recruitment practices and strengthened institutional mechanisms for protecting Filipino migrant workers throughout the recruitment and deployment process.

Keywords: recruitment fraud, worker protection, international deployment, Filipino migrant workers, overseas recruitment, recruitment governance, migrant worker protection, qualitative research, policy framework

