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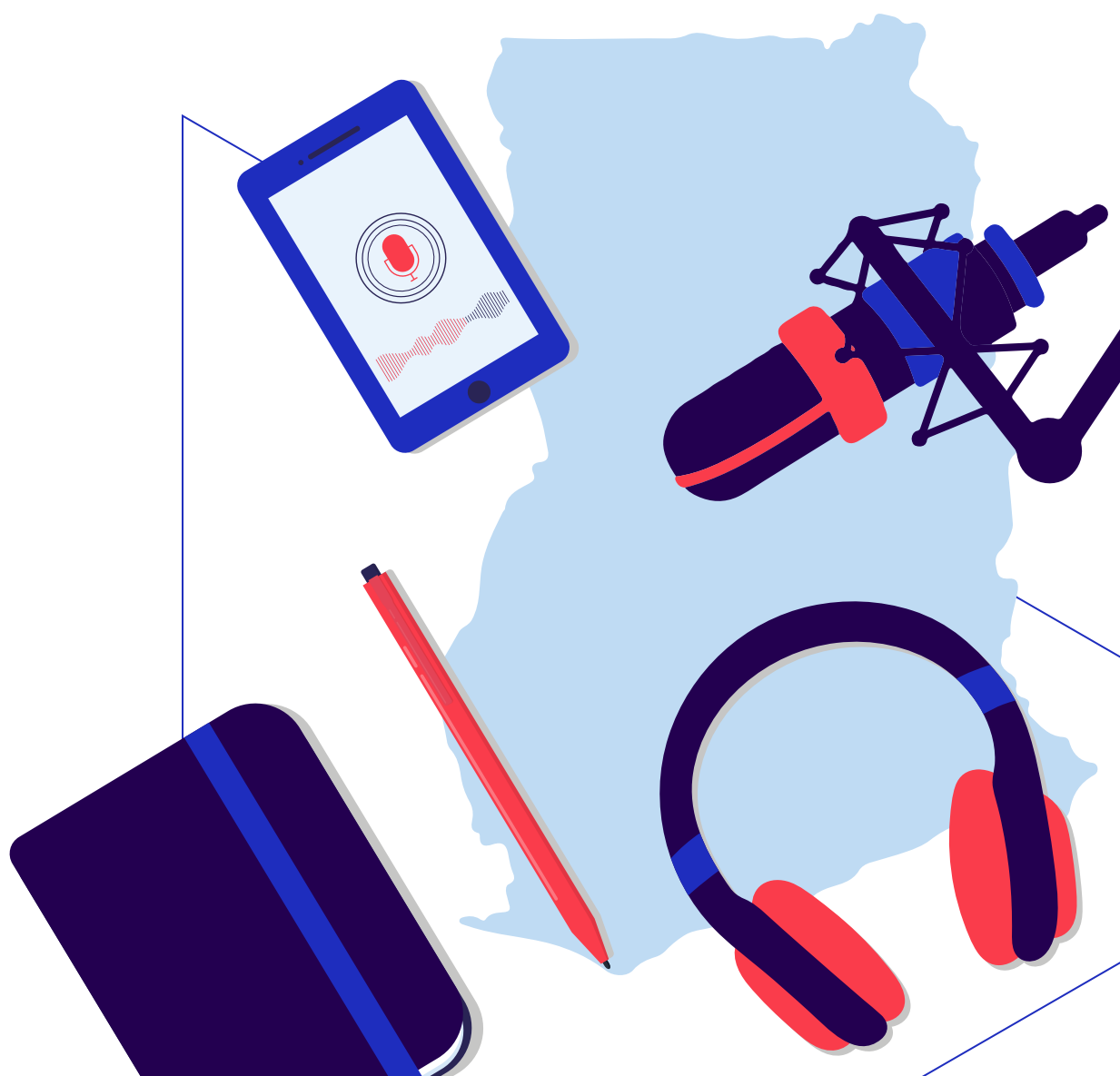


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► Reporting on Forced Labour and Fair Recruitment

An ILO Toolkit for
Journalists in Ghana



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► Acknowledgements

This toolkit was developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The ILO is a specialized agency of the United Nations which, since 1919, has brought together governments, employers and workers of 187 Member States to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men. The ILO's Fair Migration Agenda, which was launched in 2014, emphasizes the significance of labour migration narratives and perceptions in influencing public opinion.

In the framework of the Fair Recruitment Initiative, the toolkit aims to foster contributions to the United Nations TOGETHER campaign, promoting respect, safety and dignity for refugees and migrants. It also aims to further contributions to Alliance 8.7, the global partnership committed to achieving Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals on eradicating forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour around the world. Furthermore, it operates within the framework of the Global Compact on Migration & Development, focusing on objective 16 (Empowering migrants and societies to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion) and objective 17 (Eliminating all forms of discrimination and promoting evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration).

As we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (P029), the toolkit further contributes to informing and educating the public, media, and stakeholders about the ongoing challenges related to forced labour, the progress made, and the continued importance of international cooperation and commitment to eradicate forced labour in all its forms.

Many organizations and actors have contributed to this toolkit, including the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), ILO staff in various country offices and journalists from many countries around the world. The ILO has engaged with journalists in Ghana since 2007 through partnerships with the Ghana Institute of Journalism, civil society organizations, and the General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) of TUC on Social Mobilization Against Child Labour.

The original ILO Media Toolkit was developed by Charles Autheman, Kevin Burden, Cassandre Guibord Cyr, Nicolás Castellano, Lou Tessier, Jane Colombini, Maria Gallotti, Mélanie Belfiore and Clara van Panhuys based on the lessons learned from several media engagement programmes of the ILO and other agencies as well as building on the wealth of experience of the IFJ. The authors express their gratitude to Joanne Land-Kazlauskas who edited the language of the original publication.

The ILO toolkit for Journalists in Ghana was adapted by Charles Autheman, consultant for the ILO and Kamil Abubakari, National Project Coordinator of the Integrated Programme on Fair Recruitment Phase III (FAIR III). The toolkit was presented and amended by professional journalists and stakeholders during a validation workshop held in Accra on 14-15 March 2024.

The authors of the toolkit and the authors of the various examples of reporting provided in this toolkit are respectively and solely responsible for the content and any opinions expressed within this publication, which does not reflect any official position of the ILO.

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► Introduction

Why use this guide?

This toolkit was created to help you report on fair recruitment and forced labour. You don't need any prior knowledge to browse through the content of the guide. You can work your way through the material in your own time and at your own pace.

We recommend that you follow the course in logical order, but it is not strictly necessary. If time is short, you can dip in to find the information you need most at the moment and return later to expand your knowledge.

The role of the media

A 'slave' in Arabia – The story of a Ghanaian returnee

Yaa Mansa (not her real name), a 25-year-old Ghanaian woman, decided to travel to Saudi Arabia in 2015 due to financial difficulties in her catering business. She was lured by promises of well-paid work and a chance to improve her economic situation. The recruitment agency assured her of lucrative opportunities in Saudi Arabia and was expected to receive a monthly salary equivalent to GH¢2,000.

Upon arrival in Saudi Arabia, her passport was confiscated at the airport, and her living conditions quickly became challenging. Yaa soon realized that the promised salary was deceptive, as she was only paid GH¢800 a month for what she described as working as a slave. The remainder of her salary was directed to the Ghanaian agent, whom she couldn't contact while in Saudi Arabia. She was assigned to do the chores of about ten people in a large flat with multiple rooms.

"Communication was a significant challenge for me, as I couldn't speak Arabic. My sponsor's (boss's) wife was very abusive. You are not allowed to eat; it was just work and nothing else. My experience in Saudi Arabia was akin to living in hell. I had wanted to escape due to the kind of treatment I was going through, but the challenge was with my passport, which was not with me. So, I had no option than to endure the hardship," Yaa narrated.

Full story can be accessed here: <https://citifmonline.com/?p=376207>

As a human being, you may be outraged by this story. As a media professional, you may be able to do something about it.

Within the context of labour migration and fair recruitment, journalists play three major roles that are outlined below:

- ▶ Journalists have a voice that many workers do not, they can shine a light on abusive practices and the denial of fundamental human and labour rights. They can play a role in the prevention of deception in the recruitment and labour migration process: reporting on abuses through transparent, documented and ethical journalism, as prospective migrants might take decisions based on a lack of accurate or misleading information.
- ▶ Journalists may help to change public opinion and even policies. They can shape debates around fair migration and decent work and combat the toxicity surrounding these issues in countries of origin and destination.
- ▶ Journalists can confront erroneous perceptions with hard facts. They can share accurate migrant workers' experiences, as inaccurate, biased media reporting can lead to misinformation, and may be an instigator for discrimination, xenophobia and unfair treatment.

People do tend to believe that there is a higher presence of migrants in their

countries than is really the case, and that migrants generally obtain more benefits from social protection systems than they contribute, when the reverse is actually true. In many countries political discourse has tended to reinforce negative attitudes toward migration, and link migrants to the decline of labour market conditions, unemployment rates and decreasing living standards, despite empirical assessments of the real economic benefits of migration.¹

Writing stories on a human rights issue such as forced labour and fair recruitment is not like writing a routine news story. It takes more time because of the effort required to investigate: speak to a variety of sources, weigh the information and verify it carefully in the process.

Many stories of forced labour and fair recruitment are "glocal": they have a local impact and produce repercussions globally. For instance, workers who are trapped in the garment industry may be producing clothing that some of your readers wear. Therefore, understanding contemporary economic interactions and global production mechanisms is also important for reporting.

In the following pages, information and advice is provided to help report more accurately and effectively on forced labour and on fair recruitment. Many examples of good reporting are included as well as tips from journalists experienced in covering these often-challenging subjects.

Notes

¹ ILO, 2014, *Fair Migration: Setting an ILO Agenda*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_242879.pdf

Module 1.

Notes

Understanding the story



► Unit 1.1 – Looking for a common terminology

While telling stories on forced labour and fair recruitment, it is important to know that some words are legally defined while others aren't. Understanding the definitions and interpretations is part of the preparatory work that should be done before any reporting. If you do not have a clear understanding of the meaning(s) of the words you use, your capacity to report accurately and to challenge the discourse of your sources of information is weakened.

Dictionaries, glossaries and media stylebooks are key resources to gain expertise and improve the quality of media productions. The ILO has developed Media-Friendly Glossaries on Migration, Fair Recruitment and Forced Labour adapted to national contexts and in different languages, including the one contextualized for journalists working in Ghana.² This was done during review and validation sessions, involving participants from ILO's traditional constituents, media professionals, representatives from civil society, and other stakeholders.

² ILO, 2025, *Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration: Fair Recruitment and Forced Labour – Ghana Edition*. <https://doi.org/10.54394/GHQL1041>

► Unit 1.2 – Forced labour

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Forced labour can take many different forms. Victims are often tricked into jobs where they are paid little or nothing at all and then cannot leave because they have been manipulated into debt or had their identity documents confiscated. Poverty, illiteracy, discrimination and migration are some of the factors that make workers more vulnerable to forced labour.

A. What is forced labour?

The term forced labour covers a wide variety of coercive labour practices where work³ is compelled from individuals. People who are in forced labour did not give their free and informed consent to start working and/or are not free to leave their work.⁴ Human trafficking, debt bondage, bonded labour, slave labour and modern-day slavery are terms that are used by news and media to describe labour exploitation. There are an estimated 27.6 million victims of forced labour around the world.⁵ Forced labour can be found almost anywhere, whether that is in Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Central Asia, Africa, the Arab States or the Americas.

In 1957 and 1958, Ghana ratified ILO Conventions 29 and 105, respectively. The 1992 constitution, as the paramount law of Ghana, guarantees protection against slavery and forced labour under Chapter 5. This commitment is reaffirmed in the Labour Act of 2003 (Act 651).

B. How do people get trapped?

Some workers are more vulnerable to the risk of forced labour because they face discrimination (for example, minorities) or because they are isolated (for example, migrant workers). The risk of abuse is higher when the work is performed out of sight, behind closed doors, such as the case of domestic workers.

C. What type of work or which sector?

Forced labour can happen in any type of activity inside the labour market, in the formal or informal sector, even though some low-wage jobs are more prone to abusive practices and exploitation.

Article 2 of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) specifies some exceptions:

Forced or compulsory labour shall not include:

- (a) any work or service exacted in virtue of compulsory military service laws for work of a purely military character;
- (b) any work or service which forms part of the normal civic obligations of the citizens of a fully self-governing country;
- (c) any work or service exacted from any person as a consequence of a conviction in a court of law, provided that the said work or service is carried out under the supervision and control of a public authority and that the said person is not hired to or placed at the disposal of private individuals, companies or associations;

³ To understand what constitutes work and how it differs from employment, see *Work and Employment Are Not Synonyms*, ILO, 2019. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/work-and-employment-are-not-synonyms/>

⁴ ILO, 2012, *ILO Indicators of Forced Labour*.

⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, 2022, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*.

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- (d) any work or service exacted in cases of emergency, that is to say, in the event of war or of a calamity or threatened calamity, such as fire, flood, famine, earthquake, violent epidemic or epizootic diseases, invasion by animal, insect or vegetable pests, and in general any circumstance that would endanger the existence or the well-being of the whole or part of the population;
- (e) minor communal services of a kind which, being performed by the members of the community in the direct interest of the said community, can therefore be considered as normal civic obligations incumbent upon the members of the community, provided that the members of the community or their direct representatives shall have the right to be consulted in regard to the need for such services.

D. Recruitment practices

The use of coercion is often very subtle and hard to detect. Recruitment through deception, including making false promises, is very common when it comes to forced labour. Private recruiters and informal intermediaries may be the only source of employment information available to migrants. This makes it easy for them to lie about the nature of jobs and conditions of work.

E. Impunity and profits

Unscrupulous recruiters and employers reap huge illegal profits, facilitated by an environment of impunity where abuses are not always effectively investigated or prosecuted. Victims and their families lose income and as a result cannot escape poverty. It also creates unfair competition for ethical companies and risks tarnishing the reputation of entire industries. Therefore, such environment must be tackled with the contribution of all relevant parties including recruiters, employers, and regulators to

ensure that they take their responsibilities seriously and stick to the law.

F. Labour migration and the risk of forced labour

Migrant workers are one of the groups most vulnerable to forced labour. Nearly 14 out of every thousand adult migrant workers are in forced labour in the private economy, a prevalence rate that is more than three times higher than that of non-migrant workers (4.1 out of every thousand).⁶ Once workers have left their country of origin for a country of destination, they can find themselves more vulnerable to exploitation, especially when they don't speak the language.

- **Debt bondage.** Debt bondage is the most common form of coercion used to entrap workers. It affects 51 per cent of all victims of forced labour in the private sector. In some countries, migrant workers could be charged up to 17 months' wages at destination to cover recruitment fees and related costs. Burdened by heavy debt, migrant workers can find themselves unable to complain about their poor working conditions.
- **Retention of passports.** The retention of passports and other identity documents is one of the most common forms of coercion, restricting a migrant worker's freedom of movement, preventing them from seeking help and trapping them in forced labour. It is one of eleven indicators of forced labour. In many countries, this is even a common practice for certain kinds of workers, for example, for domestic workers who live in the household of their employers.
- **Wage withholding.** Wages may be withheld in order to cover the costs of housing or tools and equipment. This creates a situation where the worker becomes dependent on the employer for food and shelter.

⁶ International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, 2022, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*.

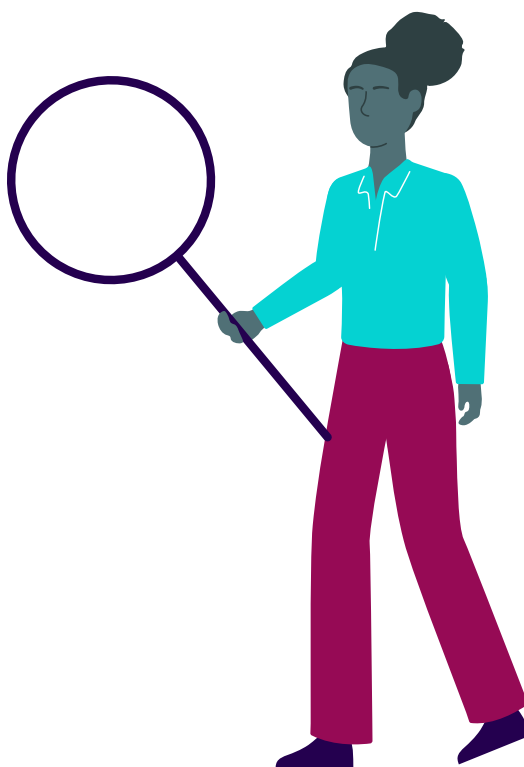
G. Ending forced labour

Forced labour is a severe violation of human rights and is considered a crime under international law. It should be punishable through penalties reflecting the gravity of the offence and which deter perpetrators. Although most countries outlaw forced labour, human trafficking and/or slavery-like practices in their national legislation, successful prosecutions of offenders sadly remain few.

H. The importance of regulation

When labour markets fail and workers are left unprotected, the most vulnerable among them are at risk of exploitation. In its effort to promote decent work, the ILO has developed several international labour standards that tackle forced labour. Some address forced labour in general, while others focus on specific issues such as child labour or domestic work.

Combating forced labour requires the effective regulation of labour markets, at both international and national levels, and proper enforcement of labour laws.



► Unit 1.3 – Decent work opportunities through fair recruitment

In today's globalized economy, millions of people are looking for job opportunities beyond their community or country of origin and the recruitment and employment of workers along global supply chains is ever more common. Migration today is more and more about the world of work. In addition, millions of workers migrate within their own country in search of decent work. Making sure that the recruitment process is fair is a key aspect in securing decent work opportunities for all.

A. What is fair recruitment?

Fair recruitment is a concept that is not defined in international law but that has become central to international debates and ILO work. The Fair Recruitment Initiative is an ILO global initiative looking to improve recruitment practices. It is based on a four-pronged approach: improving global knowledge on national and international recruitment practices (1), improving laws, policies and enforcement (2), promoting fair

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business practices (3), and empowering and protecting workers (4).

The concept of fair recruitment is embedded in the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, which look at various aspects of the recruitment process, and in particular the following:

- **Information on job opportunities.** Fair recruitment starts at the beginning of the recruitment process when information on the existence of a job opportunity is shared. Unfair practices such as deception can happen at that moment, for example through the publication of false promises in the classifieds section of a newspaper. Governments can issue press releases or can publish advertisements to reject such lies.
- **Direct recruitment or agents?** Recruitment processes can be complex and involve different private or public actors. The more intermediaries there are between the employer and the worker, the more risks there are of unethical practices. One of the common problems workers face is the payment, directly or indirectly, of recruitment fees or costs.

The *ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment* state that workers should not pay recruitment fees or related costs, and yet in many countries, recruitment fees are still legally charged to the workers whether in part or whole. In addition, it is important to understand the full range of costs that workers end up paying. These can include “recruitment fees”, usually charged by a recruitment agency for the services of connecting a worker with an employer, but can also include related costs, such as costs for identity documents, travel documents, medical checks and pre-departure training.

- **Appropriate job matching.** The recruitment process should ensure that an efficient job matching is made so that workers are offered a placement with job opportunities that are best suited for their qualifications, abilities and aspirations.

B. Eliminating worker-paid recruitment fees and related costs

The recruitment process often involves third-party intermediaries charging high fees, which frequently burdens migrants in the lowest-paying jobs. ILO-World Bank surveys⁷ show that low-income migrants – disproportionately the least skilled or educated – are paying the highest costs relative to their earnings. This has made migrant workers vulnerable to debt bondage and abuses that amount in different criminal justice frameworks to human trafficking or forced labour. The ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs,⁸ clearly call for recruitment fees and related costs to be borne by employers, not workers.

C. Who else has a role to play in this story?

Many different actors have a role to play in promoting fair recruitment and ensuring its effective implementation. Governments bear the ultimate responsibility for advancing fair recruitment and should adopt and enforce laws and policies meeting international standards.

⁷ World Bank and ILO, 2017, *KNOMAD–ILO Migration Costs Surveys*.

⁸ ILO, 2019, *General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs*.

Enterprises – including labour recruiters, public employment services, private and public employers, as well as trade unions and civil society organizations – are all essential to promote fair recruitment. Finally, the media can also play a role, by making sure that workers are informed and by exposing malpractices publicly.

D. Ethical recruiters

Some private recruitment companies/agencies have made the choice to be “ethical recruiters”. The terms and conditions they offer to employers and workers are transparent and respect fair recruitment guidelines. Their experience is important in demonstrating that compliance with the law and ethical behaviour in recruitment works.

► Unit 1.4 – Legal frameworks

The legal framework addressing forced labour and fair recruitment is both international and national. At the international level, several instruments have been adopted through time.

Some of these instruments are legally-binding for the countries that have ratified them (conventions and protocols) and some such as the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs provide non-binding guidance to strengthen national frameworks (recommendations). In addition, the elimination of all forms of forced labour is one of the ILO’s four

fundamental principles and rights at work. As a consequence, the instruments related to forced labour must be respected, enforced and promoted by all ILO Member States, whether they have ratified it or not.

A. Selected relevant international law

While not an exhaustive list of international legal standards relevant to trafficking, forced labour and related offences, the following timeline presents selected relevant international law instruments:

1930

Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) – Ratified by Ghana on 20 May 1957

Convention No. 29 defines forced labour as: “...all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”. The Convention requires ratifying States to suppress all forms of forced or compulsory labour (Article 1(1)). As the first convention on the subject, it provides the definition of forced or compulsory labour (Article 2(1)) and lists five exceptions. It also requires ratifying States to ensure that the use of forced labour is punishable as a penal offence, and that the penalties are “really adequate and strictly enforced” (Article 25).

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1948	<p>Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88) – Ratified by Ghana on 4 April 1961</p> <p>Convention No. 88 outlines the responsibilities of a public employment service. It requires ratifying States to ensure a free public employment service to workers (Article 1). Ratifying States are also required to form advisory committees including representatives of employers' and workers' organizations to advise on the organization and operation of the public employment service and on the development of employment service policy (Article 4(1)). The public employment service should assess workers' vocational capacity, assist them to obtain training, and match employers' vacancies with workers who have suitable skills (Article 6(a)).</p>
1949	<p>Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) – Not yet ratified by Ghana</p> <p>The Convention requires ratifying States to facilitate international migration for employment by establishing and maintaining a free assistance and information service for migrant workers, and by taking measures against misleading propaganda relating to emigration and immigration. It also includes provisions on appropriate medical services for migrant workers and the transfer of earnings and savings. States must apply treatment no less favourable than that which applies to their own nationals with respect to a number of matters, including conditions of employment, freedom of association and social security.</p>
1957	<p>Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) – Ratified by Ghana on 15 December 1958</p> <p>Convention No. 105 explicitly prohibits five situations in which forced labour is imposed by State authorities, namely: as punishment for the expression of political views; for purposes of economic development; for participation in strikes; as a means of racial or other discrimination; or as labour discipline.</p>
1958	<p>Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) – Ratified by Ghana on 4 April 1961</p> <p>The ILO adopted this Convention concerning discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, which is part of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (Declaration on FPRW, adopted in 1998 and revised in 2010). The Convention requires States to enable legislation that prohibits all discrimination and exclusion on any basis, including race or colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, in employment, and to repeal legislation that is not based on equal opportunities.</p>

1975	<p>Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143) – Not yet ratified by Ghana</p> <p>The Convention provides for measures to combat clandestine and illegal migration⁹ while, at the same time, setting forth the general obligation to respect the basic human rights of all migrant workers. It also extends the scope of equality between legally resident migrant workers and national workers beyond the provisions of the 1949 Convention, to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, social security, trade union and cultural rights, and individual and collective freedoms for persons who, as migrant workers or as members of their families, are lawfully within a ratifying State's territory. The Convention calls upon ratifying States to facilitate the reunification of the families of migrant workers legally residing in their territory.</p>
1990	<p>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990 – Ratified by Ghana on 7 September 2000</p> <p>Entering into force in 2003, this Convention obliges States to protect the human rights of migrant workers and members of their families without distinction of any kind, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion or conviction, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, economic position, property, marital status, birth or other status, and regardless of their stage of migration. Under Article 11, no migrant worker or member of their family shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour, or be held in slavery or servitude.</p>
1997	<p>Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) – Not yet ratified by Ghana</p> <p>Adopted in 1997, this Convention recognises the "role private employment agencies may play in a well-functioning labour market". The purpose of the Convention is to allow the operation of private employment agencies, while protecting the workers using their services. According to Article 7 of the Convention, private employment agencies shall not charge, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or costs to workers.</p>
1998	<p>Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998</p> <p>Adopted by all ILO Member States in 1998, the Declaration defines the four core labour standards that all Member States must "respect, promote and realize", whether or not they have ratified the relevant Conventions. These four principles are: freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, as well as the elimination of forced labour, child labour, and discrimination.</p>

⁹ Term used in the *Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)*.

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1999	<p>Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) – Ratified by Ghana on 13 June 2000</p> <p>Adopted in 1999, this Convention calls for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency. These comprise all types of slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children; forced labour to pay off a debt, and other forms of forced labour — including the use of children in armed conflict. Other worst forms refer to the sexual exploitation of children, their involvement in illicit activities, and work that is likely to harm their health, safety or morals.</p>
2000	<p>Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000 – Ratified by Ghana on 21 August 2012</p> <p>The Palermo Protocol is one of three protocols that were adopted by the United Nations to supplement the 2000 Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Protocol). Article 3 of the Protocol defines trafficking in persons as comprising three components: the act, the means, and the purpose. The Palermo Protocol also establishes children as a special case, for whom only two components are required to constitute trafficking in persons — the act and the purpose.</p>
2008	<p>General Recommendation No. 26 on Women Migrant Workers, 2008</p> <p>This General Recommendation, issued under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, aims to elaborate the circumstances that contribute to the specific vulnerability of many women migrant workers and their experiences of sex- and gender-based discrimination as a cause and consequence of the violations of their human rights.</p>
2011	<p>Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) – Not yet ratified by Ghana</p> <p>Adopted in 2011, this Convention focuses on decent work specifically for domestic workers. Articles 8 and 15 address recruitment-related aspects of domestic work, with notable provisions on the role of private recruitment agencies, on fees and on repatriation. According to Article 9, domestic workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) are free to reach an agreement with their employer or potential employer on whether to reside in the household; (b) who reside in the household are not obliged to remain in the household or with household members during periods of daily and weekly rest or annual leave; and (c) are entitled to keep in their possession their travel and identity documents.

Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (P029) – Not yet ratified by Ghana

The Protocol is a legally binding instrument that requires States to take effective measures to prevent forced labour and to provide victims with protection and access to remedies, including compensation. It supplements Convention No. 29, so ILO Member States must have ratified the Convention first to be able to ratify the Protocol.

Forced Labour (Supplementary Measures) Recommendation, 2014 (No. 203)

Recommendation No. 203, which supplements both the Protocol and Convention No. 29, provides non-binding practical guidance concerning measures to strengthen national law and policy on forced labour in the areas of prevention, protection of victims and ensuring their access to justice and remedies, enforcement, and international cooperation. It builds on the provisions of the Protocol and should be read in conjunction with it.

ILO supervisory system/mechanism*

International labour standards are backed by a supervisory system that is unique at the international level and that helps to ensure that countries implement the conventions they ratify. The ILO regularly examines the application of standards in Member States and points out areas where they could be better applied. If there are any problems in the application of standards, the ILO seeks to assist countries through social dialogue and technical assistance.

The ILO has developed various means of supervising the application of conventions and recommendations in law and in practice, following their adoption by the International Labour Conference and their ratification by States.

There are two kinds of supervisory mechanisms:

Regular system of supervision

Examination by two ILO bodies of reports on the application in law and practice sent by Member States and on observations in this regard sent by workers' organizations and employers' organizations.

1. The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations.
2. The International Labour Conference's Tripartite Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations.

Special procedures

Unlike the regular system of supervision, the three special procedures listed are based on the submission of a representation or a complaint.

1. Procedure for representations on the application of ratified conventions.
2. Procedure for complaints over the application of ratified conventions.
3. Special procedure for complaints regarding freedom of association (Freedom of Association Committee).

Notes

Observations and requests made by the supervisory bodies can be a useful resource for journalists. It can help them identify shortcomings or improvements in the implementation of specific international labour standards. Recent requests from the ILO related to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) can be found on the NORMLEX platform.**

* Detailed information can be found on the ILO official website <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/ilo-supervisory-system-mechanism/lang-en/index.htm>

** https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:4021990

B. Good practices in national legislation

► Armenia

The *Criminal Code (Amendments), 2011*, allows for the confiscation of property from offenders. Victims of trafficking have also been included in the list of vulnerable persons eligible for extra employment assistance by the government.

► Ghana

The *Human Trafficking Act, 2005*, as amended in 2009, criminalizes the activities of recruiters or any other individuals who engage in trafficking persons for exploitation by a third party. The Act also dismisses parental consent as a valid defence in cases related to child trafficking. It incorporates strong prosecution measures, imposing a mandatory minimum prison sentence of five years for convicted traffickers. Additionally, it permits the confiscation of assets acquired by traffickers through their engagement in human trafficking activities.

► Nigeria

Section 62 of Nigeria's *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act*, as amended in 2015, provides that where "the circumstances so justify, trafficked persons shall not be detained or prosecuted for offences related to being a victim of trafficking, including non-possession of valid travel documents or the use of a false travel or other document."

► United Kingdom

The *Modern Slavery Act, 2015*, criminalizes human trafficking, including forced or compulsory labour.

► United States

The United States Government emphasized the importance of due diligence in preventing human trafficking through *Executive Order No. 13627* in 2012, and Title XVII of the *National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2013*. Subsequently, the Government incorporated these policies and mandates into the *Federal Acquisition Regulation on Combating Trafficking in Persons*, setting out strict requirements for contractors and subcontractors receiving federal contracts.

C. National legislation related to forced labour and fair recruitment

The ILO NATLEX platform allows to search for national labour, social security and related human rights legislation. It is possible to browse the platform either:

- By country: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.byCountry?p_lang=en
- By subject: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.bySubject?p_lang=en

► **Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651)**

It is a comprehensive piece of legislation that governs various aspects of labour relations and employment in Ghana except certain categories like the Armed Forces. Key provisions include the importance of written employment contracts; regulation of working hours and overtime; entitlement to various types of leave; procedures for termination of employment; recognition of trade unions and collective bargaining rights; regulation of industrial actions such as strikes and lockouts; and provisions for occupational safety and health. The Act also addresses remuneration, including minimum wage standards, and prohibits unauthorized wage deductions. It aims to establish fair and regulated practices in the employment sector.

► **National Migration Policy, 2016**

It serves as a guiding framework for managing internal, intra-regional, and international migration in Ghana. Its primary objective is to maximize the benefits and minimize the challenges associated with migration by promoting legal pathways while ensuring the rights and security of migrants are safeguarded. By doing so, the policy aims to foster socio-economic development across the country. This policy addresses a wide range of migration-related issues within Ghana, including irregular migration, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, labour migration, brain drain and gain, diaspora engagement, dual citizenship, remittances, return, readmission, and reintegration of Ghanaian migrants. Additionally, it focuses on effective border management and refugee matters.

► **National Labour Migration Policy, 2020–2024**

The policy aims to fortify the governance structure surrounding labour migration. It strives to achieve this by promoting coherence in policies, enhancing the collection and analysis of reliable data, and ensuring the protection of migrants' and their families' rights. Furthermore, the policy endeavours to streamline the management of labour migration within Ghana, with the overarching

objective of optimizing its developmental advantages. Ultimately, it seeks to ensure that labour migration positively impacts migrants, sending and receiving countries, and local communities alike.

► **Immigration Act, 2000 (Act 573)**

It serves as the legal framework governing immigration matters within the country. It outlines regulations related to the entry, residence, and departure of individuals, including the issuance of visas and permits. The Act also addresses issues such as immigration offences, deportation procedures, and the establishment of immigration control posts. Additionally, it provides provisions for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as measures to combat human trafficking and illegal immigration.¹⁰ Overall, the *Immigration Act, 2000 (Act 573)* aims to regulate immigration in Ghana while ensuring national security and safeguarding the rights of migrants.

► **Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843)**

It sets out the regulations and principles governing the collection, use, disclosure and safeguarding of personal data by entities acting as data controllers or data processors. It recognises the rights of individuals (data subjects) to protect their personal information by requiring data controllers or processors to handle such data in accordance with these rights, including its collection, use, disclosure and erasure. The Act also establishes the Data Protection Commission as an independent statutory body responsible for ensuring and enforcing compliance with these regulations.

► **Human Trafficking Act, 2005**

It is aimed at combating and preventing human trafficking within the country. Enacted to address the illicit trade of persons, the Act criminalises various forms of trafficking, including the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons through force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of exploitation.

¹⁰ Term used in the *Immigration Act, 2000 (Act 573)*.

Notes

► **Human Trafficking (Amendment) Act, 2009**

It reinforces Ghana's commitment to combating human trafficking and protecting the rights of victims.

► **National Gender Policy, 2015**

It promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women across various sectors. It emphasizes addressing gender-based discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for men and women in education, employment and political participation.

► **Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989)**

It is aimed at promoting transparency, accountability and good governance by granting citizens the right to access information held by public institutions. The Act sets out procedures and mechanisms for individuals to request and obtain information from government bodies, subject to certain exceptions such as national security or personal privacy concerns. It also establishes an independent oversight body — the Right to Information Commission — responsible for ensuring compliance with the law and adjudicating disputes related to information requests.

► **Domestic Workers Regulations, 2020 (L.I. 2408)**

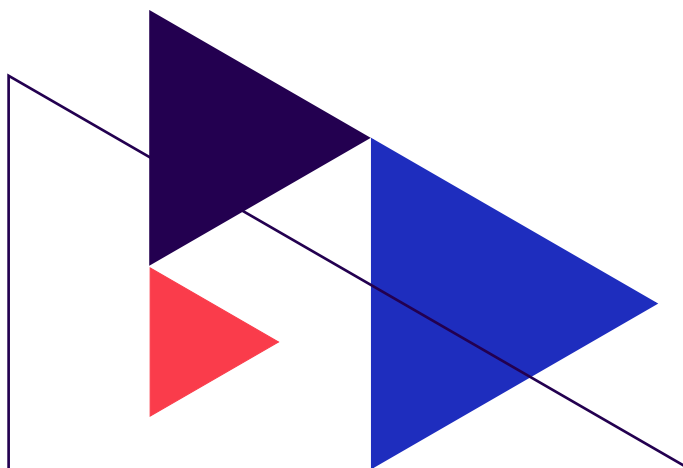
The legislation outlines regulations to protect the rights of domestic workers in Ghana. It mandates written employment contracts between domestic workers and employers, which must be submitted to

District Labour Officers. These contracts specify working conditions, wages (at least the National Daily Minimum Wage), and entitlements such as rest periods and annual leave. The Regulations aim to decrease abuse and improve working conditions for domestic workers.

D. Regional instruments

► **ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, 1979**

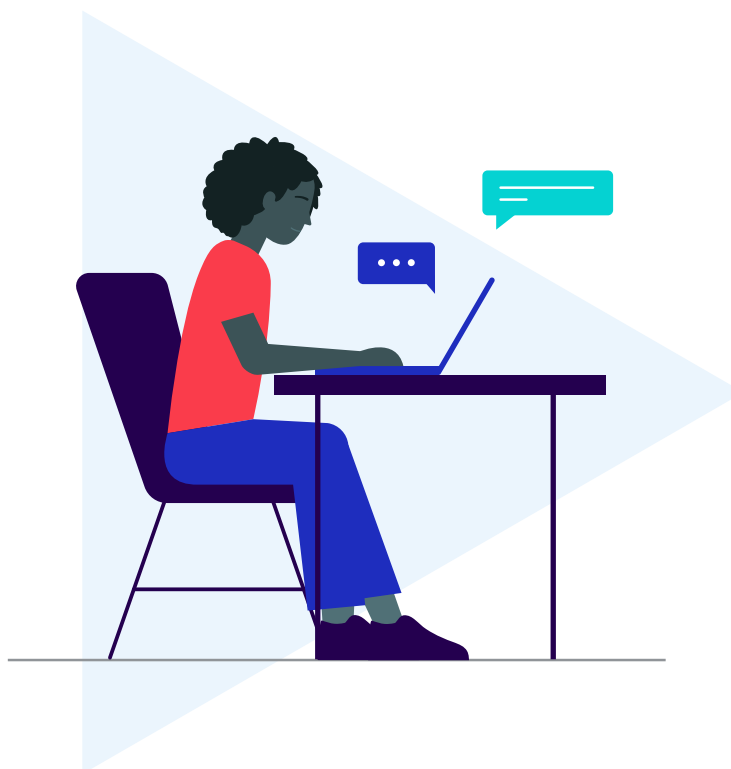
It aims to facilitate the movement of citizens within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. It promotes the right of ECOWAS citizens to enter, reside, and establish economic activities in Member States without discrimination. The Protocol seeks to enhance regional integration, foster economic development and strengthen cultural ties among Member States. It includes provisions for the issuance of ECOWAS biometric identity cards to facilitate border crossings, as well as measures to combat irregular migration, human trafficking and transnational crime. The first phase of the Protocol, which guarantees the free entry of citizens from Member States without a visa for up to ninety days, was ratified by all Member States in 1980. The second phase, concerning the right of residence, became effective in July 1986 and was ratified by all Member States. However, the right of establishment is yet to come into force.



Module 2.

Finding the story

Notes



► Unit 2.1 – Getting prepared

Being fair to the story is a challenging task. It requires good preparation, understanding of the subject matter, hard work and long-term dedication. According to photojournalist and documentary filmmaker Mimi Chakarova, the

biggest preparation is mental. Beyond mental preparation, she also suggests that quality reporting comes from extensive research. In doing so, you should bear in mind the following dos and don'ts:

**Do**

Read what is currently being reported by the media and look for stories that are poorly covered — such as decent work deficits or even abuses in some sectors, gaps in legislation, victim protection, and discrimination in services provided to victims.

**Don't**

Look for stories that are sensational or try to fit into an existing narrative by distorting the reality.

Notes

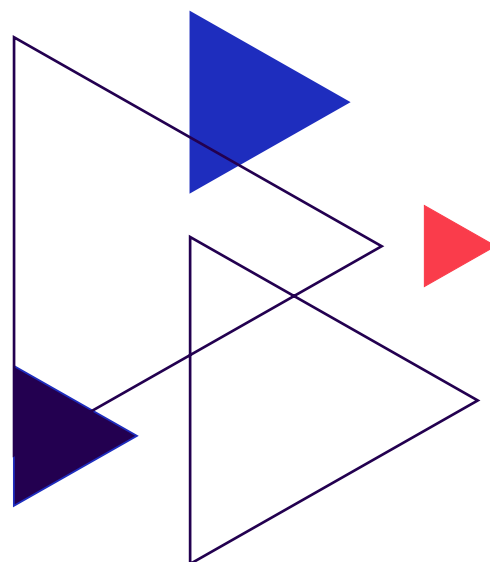
 Do	 Don't
<p>Reach out to relevant expertise: civil society organizations, academia, professionals working on forced labour.</p>	<p>Overlook that you are dealing with vulnerable persons. Rushing, even if you are working on tight deadlines, can have dramatic consequences.</p>
 Do	 Don't
<p>Assess the feasibility of possible stories (time, format, legal and personal risk, resources) and potential consequences for you and your sources of information.</p>	<p>Forget that your responsibility is to inform your audience, providing all sides of a story, and not to advocate by supporting a specific cause or policy.</p>

► Unit 2.2 – Finding a story

There are examples of reporting on situations of forced labour in this section, but the focus of this module is not on revealing a story of abuse. Positive stories can be powerful and provide information that helps prevent situations of abuse and improve public perceptions of the benefits of labour migration, which — when conducted under fair recruitment and decent working conditions — can contribute to development, as well as to the wellbeing of countries of origin and destination, and to migrants themselves.

Journalists can also tell stories of positive changes in policies, laws, business practices, and how these changes might affect the lives of thousands of people.

This section is organized by theme and provides a brief introduction, examples of reporting and, when relevant, a list of questions that can be the starting point of a story.



A. Human stories

The most compelling stories are those where people tell their own stories. There is no need to sensationalize these accounts — let the facts and personal testimonies speak for themselves, adding only the factual information that may be missing. Support groups may be able to connect you with someone who has escaped, for example. You must protect their identity if they request it. Human-interest stories are often widely shared and can help raise awareness of the issues and create social pressure for change.

Key questions you may wish to consider include:

- ▶ How were they recruited?
- ▶ What work are they doing?
- ▶ What journey did they make?
- ▶ What are the living conditions outside work?
- ▶ If they had been trapped into forced labour, how did they get their freedom?
- ▶ What was the reaction of the community around them?

Notes

Example of a human story

Government bans recruitment of workers to Gulf region

The Government has, with immediate effect, placed a ban on all employment agencies in the country from recruiting Ghanaians to work in foreign countries, particularly, in the Gulf region. The Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, Ignatius Baffour Awuah, said the decision was underpinned by incessant reports of inhumane treatment meted out to some Ghanaian domestic workers in the Gulf States by their employers.

“As we respect the ban, let us name and shame the unscrupulous persons who have infiltrated the system and left these girls at the mercy of harsh conditions,” he urged, while advising Ghanaians to always probe into such offers when the opportunity is presented.

“In as much as we need to work, let us carefully scrutinise these offers. Someone is taking you to the Gulf to work and you do not even ask about the terms of the contract. Meanwhile, investigations have shown that people from other countries in the Gulf are paid at least 3,000 dollars a month, while Ghanaians receive as little as 700 dollars for the same job, which is very unfair,” he lamented.

Published on *Peace FM Online*, 1 June 2017.

Notes

B. Labour and the workplace

Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. The four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda are: employment creation, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue. Recruitment conditions can affect the realization of each of these pillars, and fair recruitment principles should apply to all workers. Yet abuses can occur in many industries and may lead to forced labour. Such situations often happen out of sight — for example in domestic work — or in remote areas such as agriculture, mining and fishing, as well as in sectors closer to our everyday lives, such as catering and hospitality.

Key questions you may wish to consider include:

- What are the main sectors of activity and employment in your region?
- What are the steps workers need to take to get a job? Do they have to pay recruitment fees? How can advance payments force workers into debt bondage?
- Do employers and workers know about their rights at work?
- What are the working conditions?
- What information is provided about safety and health on the job?

Example of a story about work

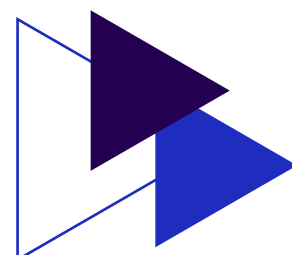
“I left Ghana to farm in Italy. I was exploited in both places”

Kojo Afreh was a farmer and artisanal miner, popularly known as *galamsey* worker, in Ghana before he decided to travel to Italy. He hoped that by finding work abroad, he could support his family and eventually marry the mother of his child. This led him to join others on a perilous journey through Burkina Faso and Niger, crossing the Sahara Desert and Libya before finally reaching the Italian city of Sicily by boat.

Kojo spent two years in Italy working on farms, facing exploitation and harsh conditions. He was eventually deceived by labour inspectors and deported back to Ghana. Despite promises of support, Kojo finds himself back in the dangerous *galamsey* mines, struggling financially.

Published on *openDemocracy*, 27 November 2023.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/i-left-ghana-to-farm-in-italy-i-was-exploited-in-both-places-migration/>



C. Business and economics

Forced labour and unfair recruitment generate huge illegal profits. An ILO study found that modern slavery generates annual profits of over US\$150 billion.¹¹

News reports can unveil the economics behind these issues and encourage employers and businesses to address the risk of forced labour and promote fair recruitment and decent working conditions in their own operations as well as in their supply chains.

Key questions you may wish to consider include:

- ▶ What are the economic incentives behind unfair recruitment practices, exploitative working conditions and forced labour?
- ▶ How can these be reversed or overcome?
- ▶ What are businesses doing to promote decent working conditions in their operations?
- ▶ How do public and private employers ensure due diligence in their supply chains?
- ▶ How are corporate promises integrated into actual business practices?
- ▶ Has consumer pressure resulted in improvements for workers?

Notes

2019 Recruitment Costs Pilot Survey Report – Ghana: Measuring SDG Indicator 10.7.1

In 2019, the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) conducted a pilot survey on the measurement of recruitment costs of migrant workers in line with SDG indicator 10.7.1 on recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of monthly income earned in country of destination. The study was mainly designed to pilot an ILO-recommended survey methodology to collect data on recruitment costs and monthly earnings of migrant workers.

The findings revealed that the average recruitment cost for overseas employment was GH¢7,699 (US\$1,370), with highly skilled migrant workers (GH¢9,413) paying more than their low-skilled counterparts (GH¢7,407). On average, migrant workers earn GH¢3,798 (US\$676) monthly abroad, with male migrant workers (GH¢3,848) earning slightly more than their female counterparts (GH¢3,665). High-skilled migrant workers (GH¢5,643) earn significantly more than low-skilled migrant workers (GH¢3,484).

Published on 15 May 2020.

https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/fair-recruitment/publications/WCMS_869688/lang-en/index.htm

¹¹ ILO, 2014, *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour*.

Notes

D. Migration

The ILO estimates that there are 150 million migrant workers in the world today.¹² Stories about migration can highlight the difficult choices that individuals and their families face when searching for better opportunities. Stories about migration can also help show the positive contribution migrant workers make to countries' economies, helping to overcome common negative stereotypes and xenophobia.

Key questions you may wish to consider include:

- Why do people look for work opportunities away from home?
- What are the legal opportunities to migrate?
- How do people travel?
- Who facilitates migration?
- What happens when legal or established migration routes are suddenly shut?
- How are migrant workers welcomed in countries of destination? Are they treated fairly?

Example of a story about mobility

Nigerians trafficked to Ghana and forced to work as cyber-criminals for ruthless gangs

This article highlights the pervasive issue of modern slavery, with a focus on the efforts of ActionAid's Combatting Modern Slavery project in Ghana. It starts by providing a global context, citing a significant increase in the number of people trapped in modern slavery since 2017, as reported by the International Labour Organization. The narrative then delves into the specific case of Daniel, a young man from Nigeria who fell victim to online traffickers promising lucrative jobs in Ghana. Instead, he found himself forced into cyber-crime activities, enduring harsh conditions and violence.

Published on *ActionAid International*, 27 July 2023.

<https://actionaid.org/stories/2023/nigerians-trafficked-ghana-and-forced-work-cyber-criminals-ruthless-gangs>



¹² ILO, 2018, *ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers – Results and Methodology*.
https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_652001/lang--en/index.htm

E. Discrimination

Discrimination can be based on gender, race, ethnicity, indigenous identity and disability. All these types of discrimination can influence recruitment and working conditions. In some cases, workers can be in forced labour because they belong to a certain ethnic group or caste, or even for holding some form of political opinion. In other cases, women migrant workers can experience discriminatory labour practices at home and abroad. It is important to take discrimination into account when you look at issues of recruitment and forced labour. Stories about overcoming discrimination in the workplace and promoting equality of treatment at work can raise awareness and change mindsets.

Key questions you may wish to consider include:

- ▶ Are some people facing discrimination in terms of job opportunities, recruitment, working conditions? In which sectors?
- ▶ Are efforts being made to ensure equality in the workplace?
- ▶ Does internal and international migration affect some groups of people differently?
- ▶ Are some people more vulnerable to forced labour than others? Children? Women? Men? Indigenous people?
- ▶ Do women and men have equal rights at work? Are they equally aware of their rights?

Notes

Example of a story about differences

Ghanaian female migrants under sexual exploitation in Jordan

Scores of Ghanaian female workers who were allegedly promised “destiny-changing” salaries and better conditions of service are being subjected to sexual abuse and other forms of dehumanising treatment by their employers.

Sharing the experiences, one of them narrated that “I was promised free quarterly medical check-ups, decent accommodation and monthly airtime to call my family members but none of these promises has been fulfilled. My employer pays me only when she feels the need to do so, but I work every day for 10 hours or more, non-stop.” Another migrant shared that “those of us who have decided to abrogate our contracts due to unfair treatment are now being chased by the police like armed robbers. Most of our colleagues have been put behind bars and are suffering inhuman treatment after surrendering to the police. We feel unsafe here, especially with the lack of a Ghanaian embassy here.”

Published on *Modern Ghana*, 4 March 2018.

<https://www.modernghana.com/news/839201/ghanaian-female-migrants-under-sexual-exploitation-in-jordan.html>

Notes

F. Law, enforcement and crimes

The justice system in most countries shines light into some of humanity's most unsavoury practices, such as the violation of labour rights. If your country takes action against labour abuses, make contact with the organizations and people who are responsible for this, whether they are in the mainstream police or a specialist agency. If there are laws but they are not enforced, ask: "Why not?"

Key questions you may wish to consider include:

- What relevant laws are in place in your country?
- Who is in charge of enforcing the laws?
- How do they go about doing it?
- How well are laws enforced?
- What are the consequences for those who abuse workers' rights?

Example of a story about justice

Organisation commends authorities for seeking justice for trafficked victims

The International Justice Mission (IJM) has commended the collaborative efforts of the Police Command, Department of Social Welfare, and State Attorney in Koforidua's Eastern Region for their successful operation in Edrekpota. During the operation, 24 children were rescued from human trafficking, and nine traffickers were arrested. The rescued children, who had been deprived of education and healthcare, were forced into fishing activities on Dedja island in Edrekpota. Most survivors are now in long-term care at shelter homes with support from the Department of Social Welfare.

Three of the arrested traffickers were prosecuted in a Koforidua Circuit Court, receiving an 8-year term for human trafficking and a concurrent 2-year term for exploitative child labour. The court also ordered each convict to pay GH¢6,000 in compensation to the victims, along with a fine of the same amount. Charges against the suspects involved transporting victims from various regions, and some were accused of paying money to the victims. The charges were based on relevant sections of the Human Trafficking Act and the Children's Act. The arrests and legal proceedings were initiated in 2019 following intelligence received by the Eastern Regional Police Command, leading to a successful rescue mission.

Published on *Ghana News Agency*, 12 February 2023.

<https://gna.org.gh/2023/02/organisation-commends-authorities-for-seeking-justice-for-trafficked-victims/>

G. Information, education and advocacy

Stories can be inspired by people who are making a difference to tackle labour abuses and promote decent work for all. Information is centred around providing facts for the audience to make informed decisions; education is centred around equipping readers with tools and guidance on issues they might be unaware of; and advocacy is centred around promoting a specific policy or recommendation. There can be a fine line between these different forms of engagement, and it might be difficult at times for the audience to make a clear-cut distinction between facts and opinion.

Key questions you may wish to consider include:

- ▶ What is being done to inform people about their rights?
- ▶ Who is acting for the abused?
- ▶ What expressions of public support or hostility are there for people in forced labour and for people who migrate?
- ▶ Are there adverse effects to the policies promoted by advocacy groups?
- ▶ What role do celebrities or other figures play in raising awareness?

Notes

Example of a story about awareness

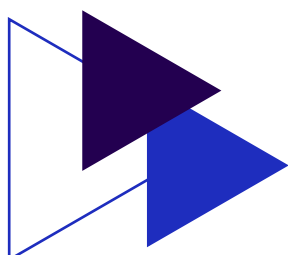
TUC outdoors Migrant Recruitment Platform

The Trades Union Congress, TUC-Ghana, has launched a national Migrant Recruitment Advisor, MRA, an internet hub that seeks to protect migrant workers from abusive employment practices. The platform, which was developed by the International Trade Union Confederation, with TUC Ghana as its affiliate, has support from the International Labour Organization, ILO, and provides a list of licensed agencies across the country.

The Migrant Recruitment Advisor, MRA, is a global recruitment and employment review platform that offers access to information about recruitment agencies and workers' rights for migrants. It seeks to raise awareness of the rights of migrant workers to promote fair recruitment processes and curtail abusive working conditions.

Published on *Ghana Broadcasting Corporation*, 27 April 2022.

<https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/general/tuc-outdoors-migrant-recruitment-platform/2022/>



Notes

► Unit 2.3 – Getting support

A. Gaining support

If you are a reporter aiming to do a story that will take time and resources and may attract hostile attention, you will probably face a tough task convincing your editors to let you do so.

The only option is persuading editors that the work is important and adds value to the news organization. You might remind your superiors that:

- investigations are at the heart of journalism;
- strong investigative reports will raise the profile of the news organization, improve its standing and potentially increase its revenue;
- the report or reports will be of a uniquely high quality and will bring attention and kudos;
- your organization can 'own' the subject — that is to say, become the natural home of coverage of the subject, and other people will come forward with related stories;
- there may be the chance to enter the report(s) for awards.

B. Funding

In investigations, when you are looking for extra time and resources, it helps if you can set out all the likely costs, including staff time, travel and accommodation costs, and other costs. Look for external funding for a story: an international non-governmental organization might agree to pay the costs of a reporter travelling to another country to produce a series of reports on migration.

Sometimes grants are made to the winners of a competition.

Be aware of the risks that the report becomes one-sided and only reports what the funder wants. It is important that the news organization retains its editorial control and remains in charge of what is ultimately published.

C. Collaborating with other media outlets

Collaborating with another news organization can help to reduce costs and increase impact. Even global outlets such as *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* have done so — with great effect. There are also opportunities for smaller news organizations to collaborate across borders.

Collaboration can also take place between journalists, especially when reporting on labour migration. This type of "cross-border" reporting can be very useful, harnessing the expertise of media professionals from different countries — for example, along a migration corridor.¹³

Collaborative efforts are also valuable when it comes to publication. The simultaneous launch of stories across different media outlets — and possibly in different countries — can generate greater impact and reach a wider audience.

The Global Investigative Journalism Network, in its *Human Trafficking Resources*,¹⁴ lists several interesting collaborations.

¹³ https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_903612/lang--en/index.htm

¹⁴ <https://gijn.org/organized-crime-chapter-5-human-trafficking/>

D. External support

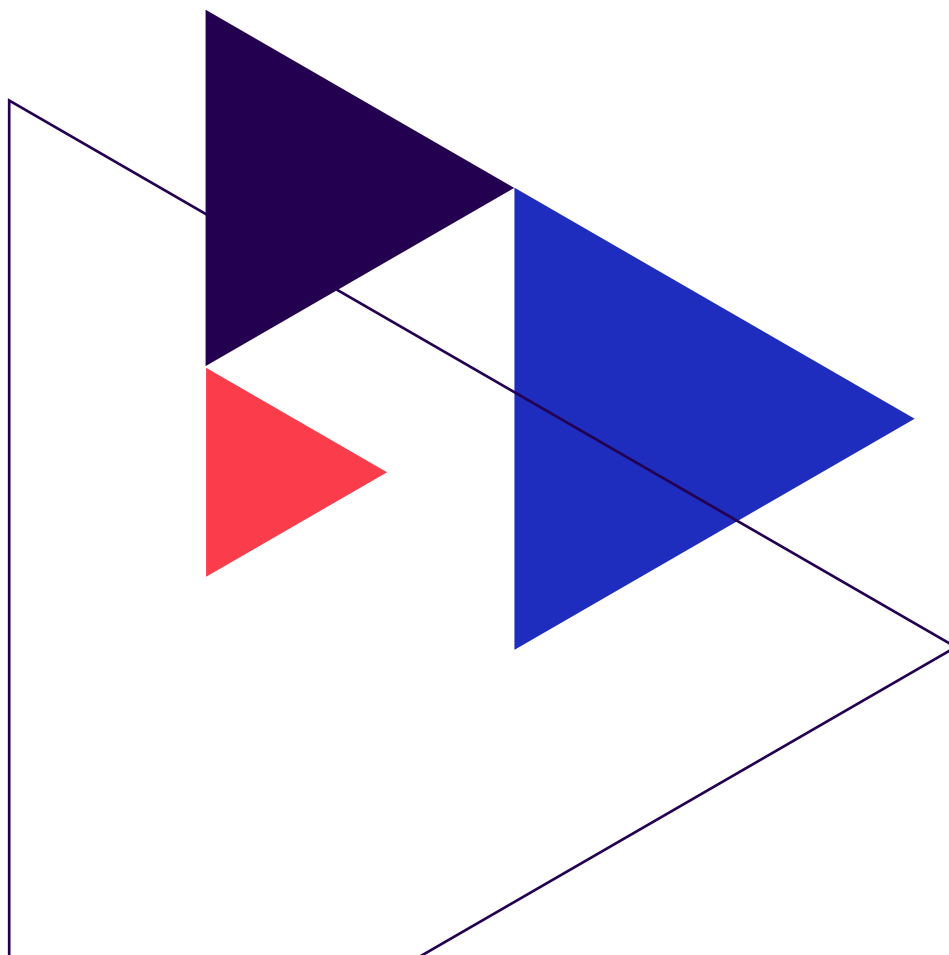
Ensure that your reporting has strong support both outside and inside your media house.

Possible candidates include:

- ▶ Elected politicians
- ▶ Business leaders
- ▶ Law enforcement officials
- ▶ Leaders of NGOs and campaign groups
- ▶ Experts such as academics
- ▶ Celebrities

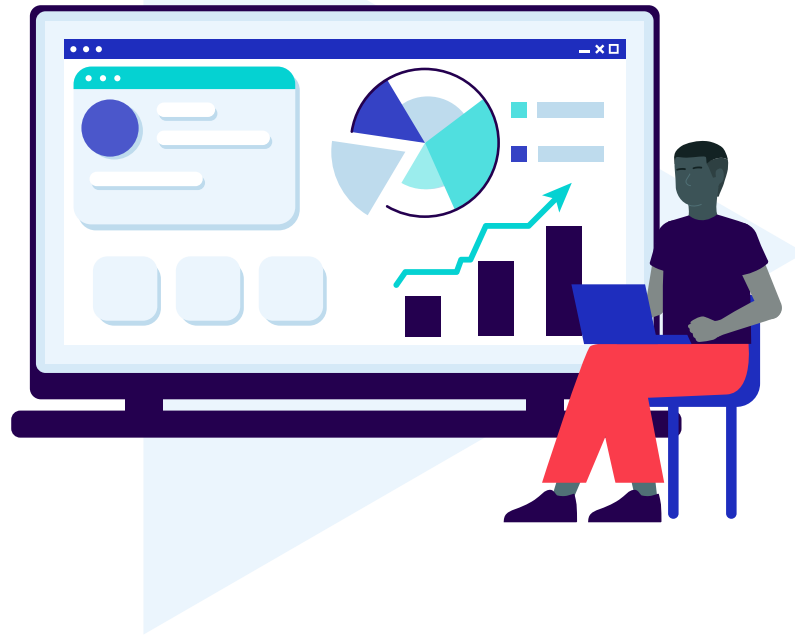
Explain your story and ask for their support. Publish a few words of support alongside their picture. This will demonstrate to those who would wish you ill that you have support in the community.

Notes



Module 3.

Getting the story



► Unit 3.1 – Resources

A. Facts and figures

Facts are the basis of all investigative journalism. Most of the time, facts are nothing more than dry numbers on a page. But with proper understanding and interpretation, they can reveal stories of real interest. Learn to love documents. Look for official or highly respected sources such as official statistics, legal and regulatory frameworks, court documents, company publications and newspapers.

Journalists may face difficulties accessing documents because of unnecessary bureaucracies and the overprotection of official documents. Universal access to information is recognized as a part of the right to freedom of expression, and on this basis, journalists and others have been fighting for this right to be respected.¹⁵ In Ghana, the *Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989)*, was passed by the Parliament of Ghana in 2019, and assented to by the President the same year to give constitutional right to access to information held by public institutions.¹⁶

¹⁵ <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/access-to-information-governments-must-respect-the-right-to-know-says-ifj>

¹⁶ *Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989)*.

B. Photographs and videos

Photographs — and increasingly videos — are a vital part of modern storytelling. But forced labour and unfair recruitment usually take place in the shadows, and both perpetrators and victims may not be willing to be identified.

If someone agrees to be photographed (or filmed) but asks not to be identified, it is far, far better to protect their identity during filming — for example, by only photographing them in silhouette or by filming only the interviewee's hands, rather than relying on post-production techniques such as pixelating or hiding the person's face during the edit or production process.

What can you do if you can't get original images?

- ▶ You could use stock images from a picture library, but the image may not match your story. Do not use sensationalized images, such as people bound in chains.
- ▶ You can illustrate your story with visual arts such as drawings, cartoons and paintings.
- ▶ You might even leave the story without illustration and explain to your reader why that is your choice.

Images play an important role but lack of professionalism or resources often leads to sloppy photo editing and, in the end, to a major disservice to the audience.

▶ Unit 3.2 – Safety

A. The principles of ethical journalism

Here are some top tips for staying safe in your reporting:

▶ Be accurate

Only report those facts which you have checked and double checked and know to be true. Everything else is a claim and should be attributed. Take care to report claims accurately. Do not draw conclusions. Report according to the limits of your ability. If you are covering a sensitive issue, report on what you can see, or at least what you are told by those around you. Leave the analysis, interpretation and speculation to others who have other sources and can see the bigger picture.

▶ Be sceptical

Analyse all information you are given on a situation. Consider recording the conversations you have with anyone involved in a sensitive story you are covering. Later,

they may be pressured to deny your reports, and you may need to present your recordings and transcripts to a court.

▶ Be balanced

Actively seek out the views of all parties. If they won't speak to you, or you can't reach them, look for an authoritative source of their position, such as their official website or news agency. If you fail, explain why: "For such and such reason, it has not been possible to reach the following source of information."

Don't act as a judge, advocate or human rights activist. Leave this to the experts who can brief you and give you analyses.

▶ Be impartial

Don't promote the views of one of the parties to the conflict.

Don't use language (usually adjectives) to describe how good (strong, heroic, determined, rightful) one side is, or how terrible (evil, weak, cowardly) the other side is.

Notes

Recognise that words used widely and without intended prejudice in one community can cause offence among another. Would you like to be described as a 'tribal' or 'aboriginal'? Show respect to other people. Find out how they themselves prefer to be described.

Recognise when your own bias appears in your reporting and remove it.¹⁷

B. Personal safety

Journalists reporting on issues such as unfair recruitment or forced labour are particularly at risk, even when doing so in a balanced and objective manner. You are likely to be

exposing criminal organizations, powerful individuals, or even government abuses. Reprisals may range from intimidation and harassment to actual violence, illegal arrest and arbitrary detention. You need to be aware and take measures such as:

- avoid any routine that would allow easy surveillance;
- avoid unhealthy competition with other journalists;
- be discreet and keep colleagues informed; and
- make sure you know who else is working on your story.

Resources

Committee to Protect Journalists, 2012, *Journalist security guide*.

<https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/guide.pdf>

Council of Europe, n.d., *Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists*.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom>

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), n.d., *IFJ Safety mission*.

<https://www.ifj.org/what/safety.html>

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), n.d., *Gender equality*.

<https://www.ifj.org/what/gender-equality.html>

International News Safety Institute (INSI), n.d., *INSI Safety Code*.

<https://newssafety.org/insi-safety-code/>

UNESCO, n.d., *Basic texts related to the safety of journalists*.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/basic-texts>

UNESCO, 2015, *Safety guide for journalists: A handbook for reporters in high-risk environments*.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000243986>

UNESCO, n.d., *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*.

<https://en.unesco.org/un-plan-action-safety-journalists>

¹⁷ Ethical Journalism Network, 2018, *Five-Point Guide for Migration Reporting*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aongjvQ-QCE>

C. Physical and mental health

- ▶ Be mentally prepared for a traumatic assignment. Share stories and experiences with your fellow journalists. Debrief your bosses and colleagues.
- ▶ Be aware of any potential risks to your physical health.

D. Digital security

- ▶ Don't keep the contact details of sensitive sources in your handwritten notes, notebooks, mobile phone or computer files.
- ▶ Give your sensitive contacts a code name and use this in your notes.
- ▶ Protect your mobile phone with a strong PIN code.
- ▶ Store the contact details of sensitive sources under an assumed name.
- ▶ Delete records of sensitive calls.
- ▶ Delete text messages.
- ▶ Disguise sensitive numbers in another format.
- ▶ Learn how to use enhanced security settings for web browsing.
- ▶ Learn how to send encrypted emails.
- ▶ Take care with what you post on social media.

E. Going undercover

It is a general rule of journalism that reporters should be open and honest about who they are. They should not disguise their identity or activity in order to gain access to information that would not otherwise be shared with a reporter. However, it can be very difficult to gather convincing evidence of crime or anti-social behaviour while being fully transparent.

This is why — when, and only when, there is a genuinely strong public-interest reason to suspect crime or serious anti-social behaviour — some investigative reporters may assume a false identity; for example, by pretending to be an unskilled worker to take a job where workers are abused. This is known as 'going under cover'.

If the reporter makes covert sound or video recordings, a court may decide that they are an invasion of privacy and illegal. Reporters who are uncovered may be subjected to threats and even physical violence.

Consider:

- ▶ How will you join the organization you are about to expose?
- ▶ Will you work alone?
- ▶ How will you make sure that you are safe?
- ▶ What is your undercover identity and story?
- ▶ How will you avoid asking too many questions and arousing suspicion?
- ▶ How will you get the information out?
- ▶ How will you get yourself out if/when things go wrong?

Resources

R.AGE, n.d., *Student/Trafficked*.
<https://www.rage.com.my/trafficked/>

Fruit picking investigation.
<https://www.smh.com.au/interactive/2016/fruit-picking-investigation/>

Notes

► Unit 3.3 – Sources

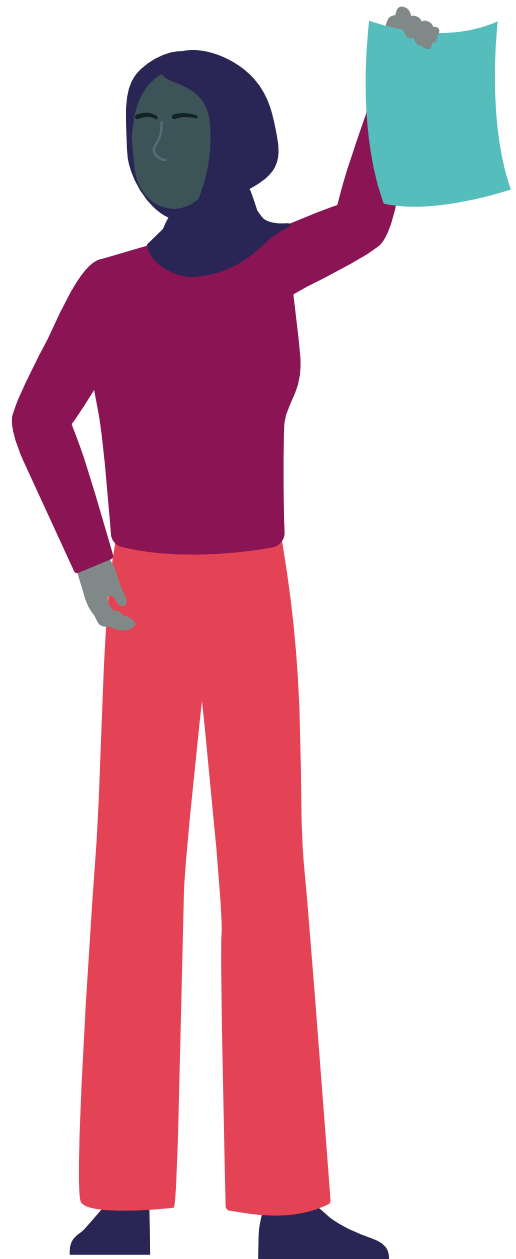
You can obtain information from a wide range of sources, including workers and their families, employers, agents, and intermediaries who facilitate recruitment, as well as academics. You may also gather information from unexpected sources such as security guards at companies, drivers, or janitors.

However unhappy they are about the situation they find themselves in, speaking out may only exacerbate the problem and possibly put them in danger. You will need to be sensitive and respectful, while at the same time encouraging them to provide you with information.

Stories about recruitment may address good or bad practices that lead to very different outcomes for the workers concerned, affecting both their professional and personal lives.

Journalists reporting on these stories need to work carefully and methodically to build up a body of evidence, ensuring accurate, fair and balanced reporting. It is crucial to consistently verify information obtained from your sources before incorporating it into your work. This involves cross-checking details through multiple channels, consulting additional sources, and scrutinizing the credibility of the information provided. This verification process is essential for maintaining journalistic ethics and credibility, ultimately contributing to the quality and trustworthiness of the reporting.

A diversity of sources must be considered. In the following section you will find tips on addressing particular types of sources.



A. Survivors

You must not pressure them, but it is fair to tell victims that speaking out will inform the public about the scale and nature of the problem. It may give others the confidence to speak. And it may warn others of the dangers they may face in travelling across borders.

If you want people to open up to you about traumatic experiences, you need to win their trust. Victims must know that they will not be denigrated or re-victimized by your reporting. The stories that you write about survivors of abuse and atrocities will also determine whether your interviewees will want to talk to you again for follow-up stories.

You should always treat victims/survivors and their families with compassion, care, respect and dignity. This does not mean you should stop being a sceptical journalist working to find the truth.

Depending on the situation, it is advisable to let the interviewee choose the interview venue. You want them to be in a place where they feel comfortable talking.

Victims and survivors may request that you do not publish any information which could lead to them being identified. News organizations are often reluctant to use anonymous sources because it has the effect of weakening the impact of the testimony.

There may also be the danger that those accused attempt to punish those who speak out. It is vital that reporters do not allow this to happen.

If you promise to protect their anonymity, you must ensure that you do so. Take care that their identity is not revealed, even inadvertently by publishing so much information about the person that someone close to them could work out who you are talking about.

In some very sensitive cases, it goes beyond not mentioning their name or identity in pieces that you publish. You must also keep their identity secret in your own notes, in case these fall into hostile hands.

Notes

Tips

- ▶ **Empathy and respect:** Approach the individual with empathy and respect for their experiences and feelings.
- ▶ **Active listening:** Practice active listening by giving the person your full attention, maintaining eye contact, and responding with empathy to their emotions.
- ▶ **Building rapport:** Take the time to build rapport and establish trust with the individual. Share relevant information about yourself or your intentions to create a sense of transparency and connection.
- ▶ **Provide a safe environment:** Ensure the person feels safe and comfortable to share their story. Choose a private and quiet setting where they will not feel exposed or judged.

Notes

B. Support groups, advocacy organizations, academics

Whereas much of the power and emotional impact of a story will come from testimonies of those directly impacted, it will gain strength when bringing a wider perspective, placing the story of one or more individuals into context.

To do this, get information from experts working in the field, such as:

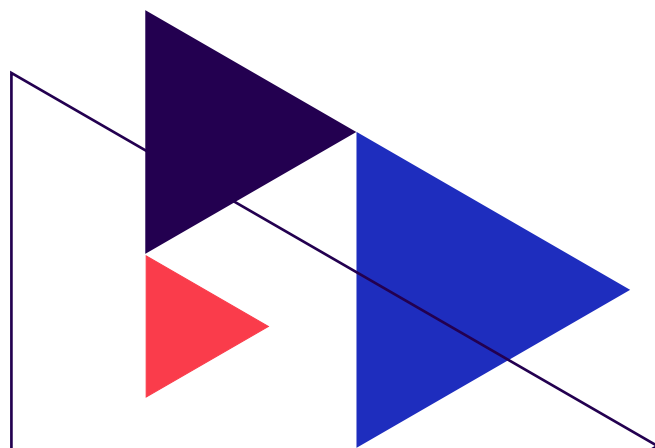
- support groups for victims and survivors;
- associations;
- trade unions;
- law enforcement agencies;
- social services and other public services;

- academics;
- politicians with a specialist interest in the issue;
- lawyers;
- global organizations, such as the ILO.

When you meet them, ask them to suggest someone else you should speak to. Build up your network of contacts. Follow them on social media; read their published articles.

When researching your story, take detailed notes of what each person tells you. If, when writing the story, you are unsure about your understanding, you will be able to go back and check with the right person. This will also allow you to attribute opinions accurately. You will quickly lose the trust of anyone you misquote or attribute the wrong opinion to.

Organizations and experts working on forced labour and fair recruitment can be found on the *Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Expert Directory*: <https://humantraffickingexperts.com/>



C. Actors suspected of abuse

People accused of crimes or anti-social behaviour should be the last people you contact in your investigation, when you have gathered all the evidence and built a strong case against them.

If you contact them too early, they will have the chance to put pressure on witnesses, destroy evidence — and scupper your investigation.

However, in the interest of fairness, you do need to give them a chance to respond properly to any allegations of wrongdoing made against them.

Many news organizations would consider one or two days sufficient time for the accused to give a considered response — but not enough for them to take action — whether legal or illegal, to prevent publication.

If they agree to meet, consider your own safety:

- ▶ Take a colleague along with you.
- ▶ Inform your editor where you are going.

- ▶ Have someone check up on you.
- ▶ Take detailed notes or make a recording.
- ▶ Conduct the discussion professionally and politely.
- ▶ Do not permit yourself to become angry or indignant.

If they refuse to meet, you could ask them to answer your questions by phone or email.

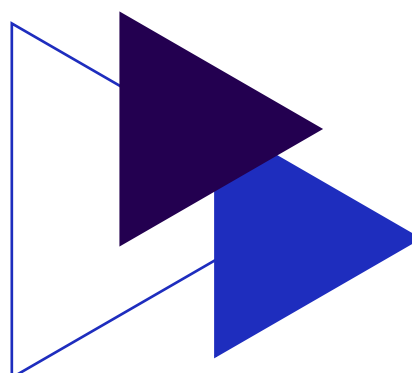
A third option is for them to prepare a written (or recorded) statement for you to use as their response to the allegations against them.

You should be persistent in seeking a response, repeating that you want to hear their view of events in the interests of accuracy and fairness.

If you receive no reply after repeated contact, you should seek to represent their position as best you can, using publicly available sources. You would then write in your report words to the effect of:

Always be polite. As a journalist, your role is not to determine guilt, but to set out the facts as far as they can be established so that the public can reach their own conclusions.

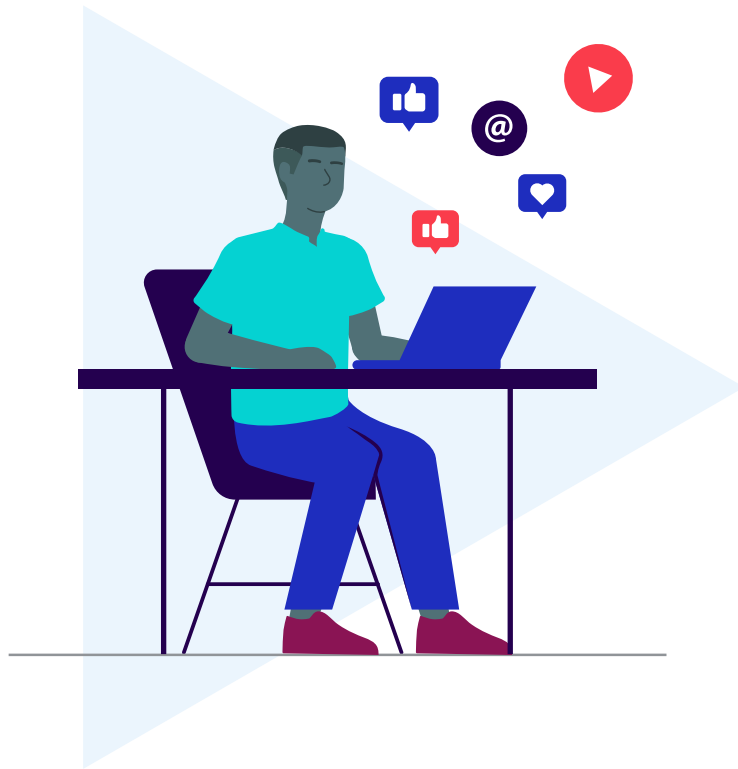
Notes



Module 4.

Notes

Telling the story



► Unit 4.1 – Which medium?

Journalists have a number of platforms on which they might publish their story. It is worth considering at an early stage how you might make best use of the material you have to reach the largest number of people and make the most impact.

You don't have to select just one. You can publish your material in different forms on different platforms such as newspaper, web, television etc.

A. Web

Almost all news outlets have a website and some of them exist only as a website. However, these websites can as easily carry video or audio reports as they can words and pictures. During the process of building a story, consider taking photos, audio or video recordings that can be published in or alongside an article.

A 'long read' is a new type of web article, which incorporates pictorial elements such as pictures, infographics, maps and even audio and video clips into a long text article. The combination makes the format very engaging. It is especially suited to features and investigations.

B. Social media

Many news organizations make extensive use of social media such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. Often, social media are seen as a way of attracting and serving audiences for their mainstream output, but they can equally be used for storytelling in their own right.

Some reporters have become very skilled at telling complex stories on X through sequences of short posts, often two or three sentences long, sometimes accompanied by photos or short video clips.

Instagram is especially good for sharing pictures and short videos. It allows for the publication of a series of images of the people who have provided testimonies — with their permission, of course.

The instantaneity of social media is also quite powerful, notably when seeking to produce a concrete reaction from a person or organization involved in your story. Recent examples have shown how the use of X has helped reports about exploitative conditions of human trafficking shed light on such situations, with authorities reacting quickly.

However social media should also be considered as a medium where ethical and unethical recruiters operate, leading to forced labour or fair recruitment opportunities. The fact that social media is a space where a growing number of people are going to search for jobs reinforces the idea that

quality reporting should also appear on these platforms.

Many initiatives around the world focus on fact-checking, particularly on social media content. In Ghana, organizations such as Fact-Check Ghana are engaged in such efforts.¹⁸

C. Radio programmes

Radio programmes can exist as part of a regular schedule, or exist entirely on their own as a podcast, downloadable and playable at any time. When they are held close to the source of the sound or used with a plug-in microphone, smartphones make good recording devices.

Editing can be performed on a smartphone or a computer. When working with vulnerable sources, radio programmes can more easily provide anonymity and protect survivors from possible retaliation by abusers.

D. Video

Lightweight video production techniques such as filming and even editing on a smartphone make it possible for those with even modest resources to make their own video films, which can be shared online, broadcast on TV, shown in cinema or played to audiences in cinemas and community halls.

Particular care should be given to protecting sources when producing video content, especially for survivors of severe forms of exploitation and abuse.

E. Animation

Animation is a great way to tell a story where there is a need to protect the identity of those involved.

¹⁸ See <https://www.fact-checkghana.com/about/>

At the global level: <https://www.poynter.org/ifcn/>

Notes

F. Apps

Many people are familiar with apps offered by news organizations as a way of accessing their content. There have also been early experiments using apps to tell stories in new ways. The BBC, for instance, created an immersive video to simulate the experience of a migrant risking their life to seek work and a future in another country.

G. Telling the story in pictures

As mentioned in the previous chapter, journalists must carefully consider how they portray their subjects when reporting on labour issues. Particular attention must be paid to preserving the anonymity of sources and protecting victims of labour abuses when required.

► Unit 4.2 – Consider a series

If you have been working hard on a difficult subject such as fair recruitment or forced labour, it is likely that you have more material than you need for a single news report. In this case you could consider a series of reports on the same theme and host it on the web.

You might also consider taking the next step and turning your series into a campaign. This is when a news organization goes beyond its usual role of reporting neutrally on an issue and actually takes sides to support a policy change. News media that aim to be impartial and objective will normally only do this when they are fighting criminal activity and promoting human rights such as liberty, health and free labour.

The stories of the campaign may be focused on a single individual and unfold over time, or they may feature different individuals who face similar problems. Alternatively, a single issue from a number of different angles can be considered — the trafficked or abused worker, the employer, the agent, the law enforcement officer, and so on.

The stories can run over consecutive days or as an occasional series. Signposting

forthcoming stories helps keep viewers or readers engaged:

- “Tomorrow, in our continuing series, we’ll meet the broker who sent Abdul on his perilous journey.”
- “We’ll hear more from Marie and find out how she’s getting on with life as a freewoman.”

Six steps to a successful campaign

Step 1: Set out your goal

Campaigns can start off big or start small and grow. They will always benefit from good advance planning. However, your objective must be clear from the outset. Are you calling for a change in the law, or for another type of action? For example:

- “We will keep campaigning until we see an end to the permit system.”
- “All trafficked women must be freed and taken care of by the state.”

Step 2: Manage your campaign

One person needs to manage the campaign on a daily basis to ensure that it keeps momentum and stays on track. This will usually be the reporter who is writing most of the stories.

The campaign also needs a champion who is senior in the editorial team such as a deputy editor, head of newsgathering, or somebody similar.

The champion will ensure that resources, including time, are allocated. Campaigns need many resources and junior staff may be reluctant to commit them. The champion will also protect the writing team by dealing with any external pressures from parties related to the inquiry.

Step 3: Seek to make a strong initial impact

Try to launch the campaign with impact, choosing a day when it will not be competing with another planned news event.

Make the first campaign story prominent — on the front page of a newspaper, or first in a television or radio news bulletin. Support it with side stories, backgrounders, images, and infographics.

Step 4: Make it easy for readers to join in

People are increasingly used to having their say on controversial issues on social media. Make the most of this and get them involved. Open up comments on your website and publish the most interesting and supportive ones. However, be aware that comments can also be negative, racist, sexist, or otherwise inappropriate. It is important

to set a clear and firm code of conduct for commenting online.

Set up a dedicated email account for members of the public to send you their comments and even stories or story ideas.

There is a platform for e-petitions where citizens can sign up to support demands for a certain action such as a change in the law. If this is the case, set up a petition or ask a sympathetic politician to do it. Then encourage readers to sign the petition. You can publish the number of signatories as it rises, as an indication that the campaign has growing support.

Step 5: Do something readers can't do

Remember the power and the limitations of your news organization. It can amplify the voice of the readers, ask uncomfortable questions and demand answers from those in the highest authority.

Follow up this kind of action with calls to confirm whether the material has been received and read, and to ask if there are any comments on your dossier. Keep that pressure up. If they have nothing to say, try a week later and a week after that. Record your efforts to get an answer and publish it in the paper.

Step 6: Keep at it

There is an old newspaper adage that says that when you are getting tired of a campaign, the readers are only just beginning to notice it. Unless you have opted for a very short, sharp campaign, you are in it for the long run. Keeping campaigns lively, active and interesting is the job of the whole newsroom, not just the handful of people who are directly responsible for it.

Notes

Notes

► Unit 4.3 – Are you ready?

A. The editing process

Like any other type of reporting, covering fair recruitment and forced labour requires the use of good editing guidelines and practices. A wide body of resources on editing is available and largely contextualized, which is why the present toolkit cannot mention them all as good editing practices go far beyond our scope.

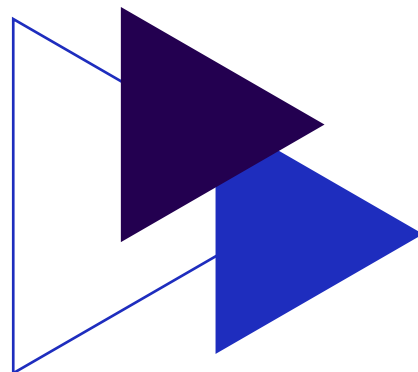
B. Are you ready?

Before you publish your story or series of stories, bring everyone involved in the story together to ensure you have all the information at hand. Make sure that you collaborate with your editors to avoid editorial changes that might alter the spirit of your report.¹⁹ You must have clear answers to the following questions:

- What are you trying to say or allege?
- Do you have enough information and evidence to say it?

- What are the implications of your allegations?
- Do you have full confidence in your sources and in your analysis of documents?
- Have you made an extra effort to verify and check all your information?
- Has everyone under criticism been given the opportunity to respond?
- How is the story structured? Work out the beginning, the middle and the end
- Can you break the story up into manageable parts?
- How will you illustrate the reports? Can you explain the story with pictures, illustrations, tables, or graphics?
- Has a lawyer or experienced editor checked the entire story (including the headlines)?

If you can't answer all these questions fully, you are not ready to publish.



¹⁹ During a conference on reporting forced labour and human trafficking, *The Guardian* editor Annie Kelly shared some tips on pitching a forced labour story to editors: <https://gijn.org/stories/tips-for-reporting-on-human-trafficking-and-forced-labor/>

Module 5.

Following up

Notes



► Unit 5.1 – Impact, awards and specializing

A. Impact

Good journalism makes a difference to people's lives.

The practices you report on might not end, but the reports you publish might:

- lead to one or more individuals being freed from forced labour;
- encourage an employer to modify their practices and/or their business partners to do the same;
- give workers who had their rights infringed the confidence and contacts to set up a support group for others;
- motivate authorities to strengthen and enforce existing laws;
- prompt policymakers to address forced labour and unfair recruitment practices and their root causes;
- raise awareness about specific categories of workers and change possible public misperceptions.

Notes

It is important to think about the desirable outcomes for workers. When reporting on a situation of forced labour, the solution of freeing the workers is a desired outcome. In other instances, when reporting on situations that are not necessarily fair to workers — for example, decent work deficits in terms of working conditions — the desired outcome may be subtler and involve improving working conditions through changes that require the participation of multiple actors, hence more difficult to achieve and monitor.

Several other award schemes also focus on labour and migration issues, including:

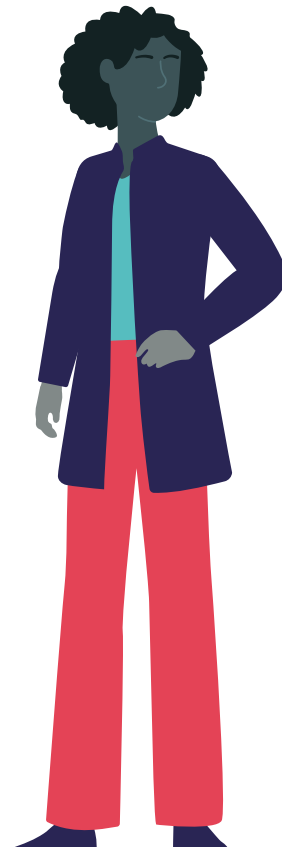
- Global Media Competition on Labour Migration and Fair Recruitment²²
- Migration Media Award²³
- Anti-Slavery Day Awards²⁴
- ILCA Labour Media Awards²⁵
- International Women's Media Foundation Awards²⁶

B. Awards

Awards, prizes, and fellowships exist for almost all types of reporting. Labour migration issues — and notably forced labour — regularly feature in generic media awards, especially when they involve intensive investigation. In recent years, some of the most prestigious prizes in different countries have gone to these types of stories:

- **Pulitzer Prize (USA):** Seafood from Slaves (2016)²⁰
- **National Magazine Awards (Canada):** The Cage (2016)
- **Albert Londres Prize (France):** Voyage en barbarie (2015)²¹

These distinctions help increase the initial impact of a story, as they bring the attention of other media professionals to the issues — and, at times, the attention of the general public as well.



20 Associated Press, 2016, *Seafood from Slaves. An AP Investigation Helps Free Slaves in the 21st Century.* <https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/seafood-from-slaves/>

21 Voyage en Barbarie, 2018. <https://voyageenbarbarie.wordpress.com/>

22 ILO Global Media Competition on Labour Migration. <https://www.ilo.org/topics/labour-migration/events-and-training-labour-migration/global-media-competition-labour-migration>

23 Migration Journalism Award. <https://www.europeanpressprize.com/introducing-the-new-migration-journalism-award/>

24 Human Trafficking Foundation, *Anti-Slavery Day Awards.* <https://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/antislavery-day-awards>

25 International Labour Communications Association. <https://laborcommunicators.org/>

26 International Women's Media Foundation. <https://www.iwmf.org/our-awards/>

► Unit 5.2 – Final tips

Notes

A. Read up

You need to know much more than you will ever regurgitate on the page or on air.

Read all you can about the subject. Read the specialist magazines. Follow the relevant blogs. Government bodies and NGOs often publish newsletters about their activities. You will need to understand how recruitment mechanisms work, what labour migration is about and how national and international legal instruments come into effect.

When an opportunity such as workshops to learn more formally about your adopted subject area presents itself, take it. Every opportunity helps build up knowledge and develop a network.

Resources

ILO topic portal on fair recruitment.
www.ilo.org/fairrecruitment

ILO topic portal on forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons.
www.ilo.org/forcedlabour

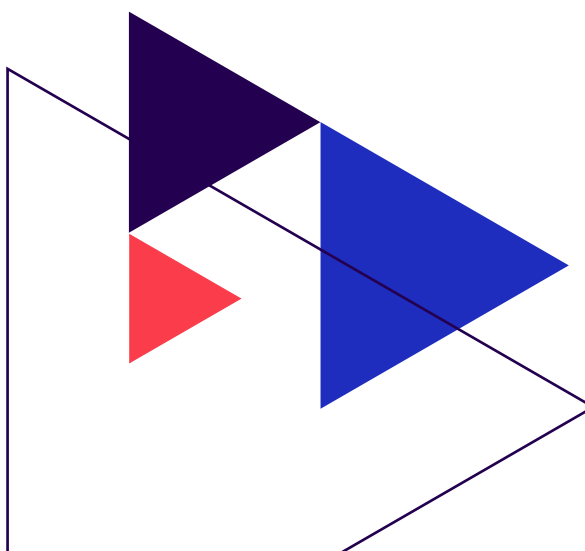
B. Don't get lost in the subject

Your job is to explain specialist issues to an audience of ordinary, non-specialist people. Your job is to explain it clearly. That means:

- translating jargon into everyday language;
- cutting out irrelevant detail;
- explaining things that are not clear; and
- making your stories relevant to readers, listeners or viewers.

C. Don't be alone

Get in touch with others who are covering the same beat. They can provide assistance with information, contacts, story ideas and advice. Consider joining or forming your own local group — or at least having an occasional informal get-together.





International
Labour
Organization



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