

WORKING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND INCLUDING MIGRANT WORKER VOICE



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INTRODUCTION

This guidance note outlines how the hotel industry can work with civil society organizations and incorporate migrant worker voices into its business operations. While it is designed primarily for hotels and corporate offices that employ migrant workers, either directly or indirectly, many of the principles are also relevant for hotel brands. It consists of four sections:

1. Why migrant worker voices and perspectives are important
2. Building trust and engaging migrant workers
3. Establishing partnerships with civil society organizations
4. Engaging in progressive public policy advocacy (This is particularly relevant for hotel brands).

“Migrant voice” is an umbrella term that is used to capture a range of migrant-centred activities. To put it simply, it is about having relationships and systems in place to better understand the unique experiences and perspectives of migrant workers within business operations.

1. WHY MIGRANT WORKER VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES ARE IMPORTANT

Hotels and corporate offices that proactively engage migrant workers about their recruitment and employment experiences can benefit in multiple ways:

- Improved risk management processes: Migrant workers can be a reliable source of information for hotels and corporate offices. By building trust with migrant workers and hearing about their experiences directly, including any issues or concerns, hotels and corporate offices can identify and mitigate risks early and prevent issues from escalating in the future.
- Benefit from new ideas and perspectives: Migrant workers bring different experiences and perspectives to hotels and corporate offices. Their experiences and insights can often prove useful and may lead to improvements in hotel or corporate offices’ policies, procedures and processes.
- Create a loyal workforce: When migrant workers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to feel a sense of loyalty and trust towards their employer. For hotels and corporate offices, this can lead to increased productivity, reduced staff turnover and more migrant workers renewing their employment contracts. It can also prove beneficial when recruiting new migrant workers, as referrals from past and existing migrant workers can help attract new talent.
- Create a safe and respectful working environment: By treating migrant workers well, hotels and corporate offices can create a positive and supportive work environment. This not only benefits (migrant) workers and management, but it can also extend to the hotel’s customers, as high staff morale can often translate into a more positive customer experience.

2. BUILDING TRUST AND ENGAGING MIGRANT WORKERS

There are several actions that hotels and corporate offices can take to build the trust of migrant workers and improve their overall level of engagement:

- Keep migrant workers informed about all internal policies and external developments that may affect them. This includes the hotel or corporate offices’ recruitment and employment policies, changes to applicable laws and regulations and public information announcements during crisis situations.
- Consult migrant workers from diverse backgrounds (nationality, gender, age, ability etc.) and their representatives, about policies, procedures and processes that may impact them. For example, seek migrant worker input on policies relating to recruitment practices, working conditions, accommodation arrangements, due diligence processes for new or existing business partners and the effectiveness of the business grievance mechanism.
- Take steps to better understand the needs and challenges facing migrant workers. This can be done through regular face-to-face interviews, employee satisfaction surveys and by ensuring that migrant workers are represented in worker committees. In doing so, be sensitive to the different experiences and challenges facing migrant workers of differing sexes and gender identities. For example, interviews with women migrant workers should be conducted by female staff members, or representatives from civil society organizations. Refer to Tool 2: Seeking feedback from migrant workers.

- Provide or cooperate in prompt and effective remediation to migrant workers when harm has occurred. While remedies can take many forms, such as apologies, financial compensation, or punitive sanctions, they must be appropriate and proportional to the severity of the violation and adapted to the circumstances of each case. Refer to Tool 4: Access to Remedy and Grievance Mechanisms Checklist.
- Address existing language barriers with migrant workers in a systematic way. For example, ensure that all internal policies, trainings and briefings, information on grievance mechanisms, employment contracts and other relevant documents are presented in a clear and accessible way and in languages that are understood and used by migrant workers. It is recommended that hotels and corporate offices use professional translation service providers and provide free-of-cost language training for migrant workers, to learn the local language.
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive information and orientation system to help migrant workers understand employment terms and conditions, as well as their rights during life and work abroad. This will help to prevent misinformation, especially during recruitment.
- Facilitate access of migrant workers to training courses addressing specific identified needs, such as improving their financial education through management of savings and remittances.
- Provide migrant workers with reasonable access to internet and communication services, including in dormitories, to enable unhindered contact with families and support networks.
- Make use of available communication technologies and social media to enhance communication with migrant workers. This will help solicit worker feedback and improve available grievance mechanisms.
- Support migrant workers' participation in social activities and events that occur in the host community, wherever possible. This helps migrant workers feel included in the community and form social relationships outside of work. This can include connecting migrant workers to diaspora groups within the host community.

3. ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

One of the most effective ways for hotels and corporate offices to build the trust of migrant workers and incorporate migrant voice into business operations, is through establishing relationships with civil society organizations, including trade unions.

- **Why:** Civil society organizations understand the realities facing migrant workers on the ground – both in countries of origin and destination. Their staff are often highly trained and have many years of experience working with vulnerable migrant workers. In addition, civil society organizations often have vast networks and can connect migrant workers to other support services, when required.
- **What:** There is no set way to engage civil society organizations. Any potential partnership will be influenced by the needs of the hotel or corporate office and civil society organization involved. Areas of collaboration can include:
 - Seeking input on the specific risks facing migrant workers during their recruitment from their community in the country of origin, to the hotel or corporate office in the country of destination.
 - Seeking feedback on the hotel or corporate office's policies, procedures and processes that relate to migrant workers. In particular, civil society organizations can provide useful input on the development of due diligence procedures and business grievance mechanisms.
 - Seeking the assistance of civil society organizations to support migrant workers in navigating the remediation process through supporting migrant workers who file grievances through the hotel or corporate offices' grievance mechanism, as well as supporting migrant workers who need to pursue other remediation options outside the business grievance mechanism. This includes the provision of legal advice about the different remediation options and how this may impact a migrant worker's migration status.
 - Seeking the assistance of specialized civil society organizations to act as an independent adjudicator for complex or sensitive grievances. This can help mitigate the power imbalance between the hotel or corporate office and the affected migrant workers.
 - Partnering with a civil society organization to manage the implementation of the hotel or corporate office's grievance mechanism.

- How: Establishing partnerships with civil society organizations can be a daunting task for many hotels and corporate offices. It takes time to connect and establish trust between the two parties. However, once a partner has been found, it is important to develop mutually agreed terms of engagement and cooperation, and where possible, formalize the relationship through a written agreement and as relevant, through financial compensation for services.

Hotels and corporate offices seeking more information about how to connect with civil society organizations are encouraged to contact their local IOM office.

4. ENGAGING IN PROGRESSIVE PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

Hotel brands and/or hotels are encouraged to engage governments and advocate for improved regulation and oversight of international recruitment and protection of migrant workers. While this can be done individually, it is often more effective when done in collaboration with other like-minded business enterprises, employer associations, civil society organizations and international organizations (such as IOM). Key steps include:

- Identifying key issues that require the attention of individual or multiple government actors. Examples include: the regulation of recruitment practices, visa requirements, recruitment-related fees or costs, process issues, or the need for bilateral or multilateral agreements between countries of origin and destination governments.
- Develop a strategy to proactively engage government(s) on key issues, which is supported by key performance indicators. This could involve participating in national, regional, or international workshops/events and/or organizing bilateral meetings or round tables with government stakeholders.
- Document progress made against key performance indicators and adjust the strategy accordingly.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Tool 2: Interviewing Migrant Workers about their Recruitment and Employment Experiences](#)
- [Tool 4: Access to Remedy and Business Grievance Mechanisms](#)
- [IOM Migrant Worker Guidelines](#)
- [IOM Human Resource Guidebook on Employer Obligations and Cultural Sensitivity](#)
- [IOM Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programming Guidance](#)

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