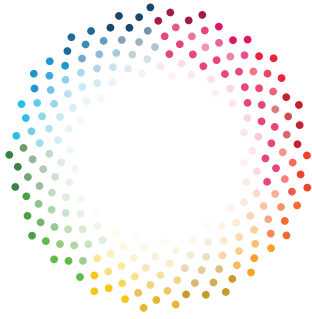**Spotlight Initiative**

To eliminate violence against women and girls

Mobile women and mobile phones

Women migrant workers' use of information and communication technologies in ASEAN

Safe and Fair Programme: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Mobile women and mobile phones

Women migrant workers' use of information and communication technologies in ASEAN

Safe and Fair Programme: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region

Foreword

There are almost 5 million women migrant workers in the ASEAN region, who, like their male counterparts, contribute significantly to the economies of their countries of origin and destination. Like any of us, women migrant workers use their phones to stay connected regardless of the distance. But unlike many of us, mobile phones and online platforms are the only way they can keep in touch with friends and family back home. New technologies and digital platforms present great opportunities to enhance the lives of migrant workers and their families. However, women across the region have lower access to the Internet and mobile phones than men.

Following the 11th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML), on "Digitalization to Promote Decent Work for Migrant Workers", the EU-funded programme "Safe and Fair" conducted this qualitative study focussing on the use of mobile technologies, devices and platforms by women migrant workers in ASEAN countries.

While the study finds that in many instances or sectors, such as domestic work, women are still prevented from using mobile phones or accessing the Internet, it also emphasizes the potential of mobile technologies in promoting safe and fair migration for women. Applications and platforms available on mobile devices can help women migrant workers organize, access information on their rights, and access support services, including in response to violence. Risks to the safety and labour rights of women migrant workers are heightened when information and communication technologies (ICT) are not accessible, particularly when they could be used as a mechanism to seek help in cases of exploitation or violence.

In June this year, the ILO adopted its 190th Convention, which tackles violence and harassment in the world of work. While the Convention's focus on inclusivity is significant, some groups, and workers in certain sectors, occupations and work arrangements are acknowledged to be particularly at risk of violence and harassment; for instance, in services, agriculture or domestic work, many of the sectors which often employ women migrant workers.

Addressing these risks, as well as the gender-specific barriers preventing women migrant workers from accessing digital technologies, is critical to harness women's current use of social networking apps and mobile connectivity. In addition, the study also points to the limits and risks associated with the use of mobile ICT, including data security and privacy protection.

This study provides all stakeholders involved in each stage of the labour migration process (governments, unions, employers, and civil society) with a better knowledge of how women migrant workers use mobile technologies. We hope it will help them develop adequate strategies and tools needed to ensure women's labour migration in ASEAN is safe and fair.

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Terms and acronyms

AFML ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour

App An application that is downloadable on a mobile device only

Application or application programme A software programme that runs on a computer and mobile device. Web browsers, e-mail programmes, word processors, games, and utilities are all applications.

ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CSO civil society organization

Digital literacy The ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate, and create information safely and appropriately through digital devices and networked technologies for participation in economic and social life.[1]

Digital platform A digital platform refers to the software or hardware of a website. For example, Facebook, Quora, and Twitter are digital platforms.

Domestic work Work performed in or for a household or households, within an employment relationship.[2]

EU European Union

Feature phone A mobile phone that incorporates basic functionality such as the Internet and the ability to store and play music, without advanced hardware and capabilities of a smartphone.

FGD focus group discussion

ICT information and communication technologies. This refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications, including mobile phones (feature phones and smartphones), Internet, mass media, and social media.

ICT capacity How a person takes advantage of the features that ICT solutions have to offer, such as downloading apps onto a smartphone, joining an online forum, or contacting a recruitment agent via a website contact page. This can be driven by both ability and desire.

ICT solution Broader ICT concept for a platform that can address the needs of users and be tested at a later stage.

ILO International Labour Organization

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1 UNESCO definition, see M. Antoninis and S. Montoya: "A global framework to measure digital literacy", in *Data for Sustainable Development Blog*, 19 Mar. 2018.
2 ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
Microsites	An auxiliary website with independent links and an address that is accessed mainly from a larger site.
Migrant worker	A person who is engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.[3]
MP3 device	A portable electronic device that can play and record digital audio files.
NGO	non-government organization
Online platform	A platform that is a specially developed using Internet technology, for example, social media platforms or online marketplaces.
Potential migrant worker	Defined for this study as a person who has the intention to migrate to either Malaysia, Singapore, or Thailand in the next 12 months.
Recruitment agency/ recruiter	Employment agencies and all other intermediaries or subagents that offer labour recruitment and placement services. Labour recruiters can take many forms, operating within or outside legal and regulatory frameworks.[4]
Returned migrant worker	Defined for this study as a person who has returned within the past nine months after working in Malaysia, Singapore, or Thailand.
Smartphone	A mobile phone that performs many of the functions of a computer, typically having a touchscreen interface, Internet access, and an operating system capable of running downloaded apps.
UN	United Nations
UN-ACT	United Nations Action for Cooperation Against Trafficking in Persons
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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3   International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990.
4   See ILO: *General principles and guidelines for fair recruitment* (Geneva, 2016).

Acknowledgements

39.7%

of women, and

47.9%

of men in Asia and
the Pacific use the
Internet (ITU, 2017)

Executive summary

As the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) highlighted in 2018, information and communication technologies (ICT) are providing migrant workers across the region with new opportunities related to networking, service provision, and financial inclusion, along with challenges such as unequal access and privacy concerns (ILO, 2018a; 2018b). The region is heavily reliant on mobile technology, with 44 per cent of the population in Asia and the Pacific using the Internet, and 90 per cent of those who use the Internet doing so through smartphones (Google and Temasek, 2017). However, only one third of mobile users access government, non-government organization (NGO), or job services online (Internet Society, 2016). At all stages of migration, obtaining accurate and reliable information is a major challenge. That challenge is even greater for women migrant workers, who tend to have less access to education, to resources, and to information channels such as the Internet. Women's access to the Internet in Asia and the Pacific is lower than men's, with 39.7 per cent of women using the Internet, compared to 47.9 per cent of men (ITU, 2017).

This qualitative study involved potential and returned women migrant workers in four countries of origin in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region – Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines. Women included in the study were intending to migrate to or had just returned from Malaysia, Singapore, or Thailand. Thus, the study covers intra-ASEAN labour migration. Only women who owned or had access to a mobile phone were asked to participate, as this was a minimum requirement in order to have a meaningful discussion around ICT usage.

The study is an exploration of:

- how women migrant workers in ASEAN use information and communication technologies in the migration process;
- what they use it for;
- the challenges they face in accessing and effectively using such technology; and
- the opportunities for harnessing mobile Internet in South-Eastern Asia to reduce risks and to ensure labour migration is safe and fair for women.

Primarily, the study provides insight into women migrant workers' use of mobile phones, and how women migrant workers could access more accurate information throughout the migration process and increase their connections with peers.

Women migrant workers face gendered challenges in accessing the Internet and mobile technology. Barriers to access can be sector-specific. In the women-dominant domestic work sector, migrant workers are likely to either have their phones confiscated or have their access to Wi-Fi restricted (Anderson, 2016). Other barriers are more broadly experienced.

This study finds that prior to migration, women in countries of origin tend to share their phones with the rest of their immediate family.

During migration, some women migrant workers from Cambodia report that their husbands and other men migrant workers had greater online access due to second language skills and "more time to practice on the phone and Internet". This experience aligns with evidence from other International Labour Organization (ILO) research on women's labour migration in South-East Asia, such as a 2016 study wherein women migrant workers in Thailand reported sharing phones with their families, among whom only their husbands and sons know how to use social media applications (apps) (Napier-Moore and Sheill, 2016). In Indonesia, more than in other countries in this study, potential women migrant workers surveyed report that men have access to their phone and social media accounts. Compounding gendered inequalities, women migrant workers from rural areas report being less able to use a smartphone to its full capacity and have limited awareness of the range of apps that are available.

The study finds that the development of apps for smartphone does not represent a panacea to the challenges that women migrant workers face. Not only are there numerous factors that impinge on women migrant workers' access to and current capacity to use mobile technology, but also significant structural barriers exist in terms of governmental and non-governmental capacity and infrastructure to maintain, monitor, and meet women migrant workers' needs, and to ensure safety through the use of any apps they establish. While ICT solutions are increasingly being used to engage and connect more people, traditional outreach is still required; not least to ensure inclusion of those with lower levels of education and income who, as a result, find it challenging to gain access to smart technology or online spaces.

This study echoes that of a national Safe and Fair study conducted concurrently in Indonesia among 40 more women migrant workers, with analysis of 31 primarily Indonesia Bahasa language apps, web-based platforms, and Facebook groups/pages (UN Women, forthcoming).

Key findings

Access, capacity, and usage of ICT: A necessity, not a luxury

Study participants included potential and returned women migrant workers who own a mobile phone. Among those with a mobile phone, 83 per cent own a smartphone with Internet access. This rises to 96 per cent for women migrant workers from the Philippines. Before migrating, women may be restricted in their access to mobile technology due to limited spending power to buy a phone at all, but also due to practices of sharing phones (and phone time) with husbands, children, and other family members. However, virtually all the women interviewed recognized that owning a smartphone has become a necessity in today's society, rather than a luxury. In destination countries, some migrant women, particularly domestic workers, are filing complaints about phone confiscation. People throughout the region (particularly young people) are

increasingly dependent on their phones before migration, viewing confiscation in destination as a hardship and a violation.

Some women migrant workers who could not afford a mobile phone before migrating report being given a phone by relatives or being given an advance payment by their employer to purchase one. The average amount spent on a phone across the four countries in the study was US$141, and the average spending on data and call plans was about US$8 per month. Ownership of a phone did not, however, guarantee that employers in destination countries will allow the use of it. Nor does it guarantee migrant women's ability to effectively, or perhaps fully, use it, in terms of navigating the Internet, or using and downloading apps.

While lack of access to phones while abroad was not reported as a major issue for respondents, domestic workers interviewed were aware that it is common for employers to restrict domestic workers' access either to phones or Wi-Fi. And as above, NGO respondents reported receiving increasing numbers of complaints about ICT restrictions. Risks to workers' safety increase when they are not able to access ICT, particularly when it could be used as a mechanism for seeking help if workers experience violence. If they also lack freedom of movement from their place of employment and accommodation, lack of ICT access results in domestic workers being cut off from the outside world. Therefore, any development of apps aimed at women migrant workers must be in conjunction with strengthened legal frameworks for domestic workers; better regulation of recruitment agencies and employers; as well as the changing of employment norms and standard contracts to include rights to phone access.

With the exception of the Philippines, the vast majority of women migrant workers interviewed used their phones almost exclusively for social connectivity, through either messaging apps or social media. Besides using social media to stay connected, some women migrant workers seek information useful for migrating; though many said they rely primarily on offline and personal sources of labour migration-related information. Women from the Philippines particularly report the use of a variety of apps during the labour migration process, including the downloading of maps and translation apps. Filipina respondents also went to travel websites and searched and joined forums and group chats to prepare for their arrival in the destination country.

Across all four countries of origin in the study, Facebook was overwhelmingly popular. For migrant workers who were less digitally literate, Facebook represented the Internet itself. YouTube and Google were also popular with the majority of research participants. The women interviewed believed that men tend not to use mobile technology for social connectivity, but rather for gaming apps and watching videos. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and Viber were seen as vital apps, as well as cost-effective ways to call and video chat with friends and family, especially once they moved abroad.

Information sought via ICT

The vast majority of women interviewed sought information about migration from their personal networks and returned migrant workers, who would refer them to recruitment agents. If personal contacts were insufficient, ICT allowed women migrant workers to expand their network digitally through Facebook groups where they could ask for recommendations about recruitment agencies. Very few potential migrant women were aware of or even saw a need for non-governmental or civil society support in preparing to migrate for work. The information that they sought from their personal connections and recruitment agents before migration was almost exclusively related to working conditions, salary and time off.

Women migrant workers interviewed in the study did not use the Internet to look up information on migration documentation, visa application processes or work permit processes, as they expected their employer or recruitment agency to handle such matters.

The study found a large reliance on employers and recruitment agencies for information, and also that migrant workers have few avenues for being able to verify information that comes via this channel, much less to verify that the employers and agencies themselves are bona fide, legal, and reliable.

Once abroad, women migrant workers report that they turned primarily to recruitment agencies as their primary – and sometimes only – source of support, due to a lack of awareness of other avenues for support where they exist (including ICT-related support structures).

The majority of potential women migrant worker respondents said that they expected that they would report any problems to their broker or recruitment agency, or employer and if all else failed, they anticipated they would contact their country's embassy. In Myanmar, participants reported knowing the location of embassies in countries of destination, but would not go to them if needed because they did not understand the process for reporting a problem. Few returned women migrant workers said they were aware of existing support services from civil society organizations.

Migrant-supporting stakeholders were also interviewed as part of this study. Trade union, government and non-governmental organization (NGO) respondents talked about various ICT initiatives for migrant workers, some of which they had developed. Among their uses of ICT, stakeholders interviewed primarily rely on social media for outreach to migrant women workers, though women migrant workers themselves stated that they had found out about any support services by word-of-mouth.

The majority of respondents however were unaware of support services for migrant workers. As such, a key finding is that despite stakeholder efforts to date, there appears to be a lack of awareness among migrant workers of services.

Lack of adequate reporting mechanisms

In the face of a perceived lack of adequate reporting mechanisms, many migrant women stated they would use social media apps and messaging apps to report abuse either to family, friends, recruiters, or brokers. Some women said that they had posted about sexual harassment on Facebook.

This demonstrates that, at the very least, some migrant women adapt and use ICT as an avenue for reporting and speaking out, rather than staying silent. Reporting abuses to support services through ICT was viewed as an improvement to phone calls to service providers, or to being required to physically go to an embassy. Women interviewed did recognize, however, that ICT-type reporting mechanisms do not always offer adequate protection or privacy.

There were mixed responses regarding whether social media should be used to share experiences of harassment, exploitation, or abuse. While many women thought social media was useful in raising awareness of risks associated with labour migration, most women in the study said they would not share such details publicly via ICT. Even for those study countries where digital literacy is limited, such as Cambodia and Indonesia, the majority of migrant women interviewed were well aware of the risk of fraud and the lack of privacy on social media.

Conclusions

There are early signs that ICT-based solutions have, at times, contributed to increasing connectivity for migrant workers, including women migrant workers. ICT-based solutions have expanded women migrant workers' personal networks, and have demonstrated some degree of empowerment for women to increase their autonomy and independence through digital spaces. The rapid digitalization of ASEAN societies means that women migrant workers, like others, are increasingly gravitating towards use of online platforms, including in migration. However, this study shows that usage to date is limited to what women migrant workers believe ICT exists for: social connectivity. There is a lack of understanding among many women migrant workers of how ICT can aid in the migration process. For the most part, service providers and stakeholders have fallen short in their digital outreach, failing to harness ICT in a way that can make migration safer and fairer for women. Innovative engagement with the social media networks used by migrant women may be key to effective outreach, since migrant women tend to trust social media.

However, safety, privacy, data protection, and ethics concerns are paramount and must be addressed along with shortfalls in stakeholders' capacity and infrastructure, so as to maintain, monitor, and meet migrant women's needs through ICT-based solutions.

Results from the study suggest that, given current use patterns of women migrant workers and the current capacity of stakeholders, digital outreach may be most effective if it coordinates and streamlines services into digital spaces that are similar to successful platforms such as ride-hailing, room sharing, and e-commerce apps[5] whose popularity rests on the extent of their functionality, user friendliness, and trustworthiness.

Recommendations

1. Use ICT to improve networking and organizing, as well as access to information and services in both countries of origin and destination

    ■ **Harness mobile technology for migrant workers to be able to verify information on labour migration documentation, as well as to find and verify reliable recruitment agents and employers.** This could create healthy competition and more transparency around recruitment costs and services, while at the same time helping women migrants find better employment opportunities. App designs should allow recruitment agencies to promote their services and costs, as well as to receive reviews from migrant workers.

    ■ **Take care not to consider apps and other digital solutions as a panacea to the challenges that women migrant workers face. Traditional outreach is still required**, not least to ensure inclusion of those with lower levels of education and income who, as a result, find it challenging to gain access to smart technology or online spaces.

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5   For examples of these apps, see *The Economist*, 2019a; 2019b; 2019c in the list of references below.

- **Include digital literacy as part of pre-departure training and post-arrival information programmes**, educating women migrant workers on available ICT-based solutions, cyber security, and how to access reliable information. Capacity-building efforts could include cost-effective ways to connect with family and friends; how to set up an email account; how to find information on safe migration; how to verify recruitment agencies and employers; how to contact service providers; and how to report violence and abuse. Any training should also include techniques on how to negotiate mobile phone use in situations where access to phones is restricted by employers or recruiters.

- **Promote the use of mobile technology in networking and organizing of migrant workers, including in women-dominant sectors of work.** Women report primarily using mobile technology for connectivity. This can be harnessed further by trade unions, domestic worker associations, and migrant worker associations.

- **Promote online (and offline) migrant support services and awareness raising through social media.** Given most women migrant workers are using social media, there is potential for high uptake and sharing of migrant-facing apps, platforms, and other information if promoted through social media. Women migrant workers interviewed had little awareness of what services exist or what they need to know to migrate safely. Awareness raising through social media should also target friends and family as key influencers, as well as established peer networks.

2. Ensure that gender-responsive laws and social norms support women migrant workers' use of ICT

   - **Change employment norms, standard contracts, and laws to include rights to mobile phone access.** This is important for all sectors, but particularly for domestic work, where confiscation of phones and restriction of access to Wi-Fi is common. Information campaigns should target employers directly. On 30 October 2018 delegates to the 11th ASEAN Forum on Labour Migration adopted the following related Recommendation: "Ensure that all migrant workers are accorded the right to information and communication, such as ownership; access; and reasonable usage to mobile phones or other ICT gadgets. More attention should be placed on isolated and vulnerable workers, including increasing connectivity in hard-to-reach places."

   - **Where migrant women, particularly domestic workers, face restrictions on using mobile phones, consider self-help programmes that teach how to conduct an informed "mobile phone negotiation"** with an employer through positive win–win arguments, showing how ICT access results in positive outcomes for both the employer and the employee.

   - **Strengthen legal frameworks that protect women migrant workers' rights,** including better regulation of recruitment agencies and employers; full labour law coverage of women-dominant sectors; and robust access to justice and complaints mechanisms throughout the migration process. Without rights being guaranteed in law and in practice, any ICT solution that gives information or tries to facilitate complaint making will fail to make a positive difference to women migrant workers.

3. Promote streamlined, sustainable, one-stop ICT platforms

   - **Create one-stop service platforms, streamlining current offerings from various providers.** This will help to ensure information and services reach migrant workers more efficiently and cost effectively, while fostering collaboration between developers and other stakeholders and avoiding duplication of efforts.

   - If building or enhancing existing apps or one-stop platforms, consider designs with the following characteristics:

     - **Easily accessible and free of charge** for migrant workers. Most women migrant workers spend on average less than US$10 per month on ICT access, and most use pre-paid mobile services and take advantage of free Wi-Fi when using the Internet.

– **Anonymous for all migrant users, with assurance of data privacy.** Confidentiality fosters trust in mechanisms, particularly those for reporting sensitive information such as irregular immigration or work status, violence or abuse. Collection, use, and sharing of data on migrant workers should be regulated and monitored to protect their privacy and online safety, both when such platforms are developed and managed by private companies or by State actors.

– **Able to safely allow users to report violence, abuse, or exploitation.** The information reported should be made private, confidential, and direct to those service providers that can provide immediate help and advice.

– **Based on a "shared economy" approach** that fosters self-regulation through building a community with shared rules and values. This is similar to the approach adopted by Trip Advisor, whose platform fosters a relationship of trust between hosts and guests. Ride-hailing and e-commerce apps in the region are similarly piloting platform designs that prioritize functionality, user friendliness, and trustworthiness.

– **Well-resourced and sustainable** (e.g., through employers' funding or through integration into permanent sites). Apps require ongoing maintenance, updating, and often also dedicated moderators, to be successful and useful to migrant worker users.

– **Accurate, with up-to-date content that is verified and updated regularly by stakeholders.** Content guidelines can be developed to ensure information is consistent, accurate, and verified. There should be reporting and blacklisting of inaccurate information or unscrupulous services.

– **Provided in the majority and minority languages of countries of origin, and keeping in mind that not all migrant workers are literate.** Audio and picture-based information options are being trialed by some app developers.

– **Based on research that indicates what information, assistance, and tools for organizing that migrant workers, and especially women, actually need.**

– **Monitored to regularly assess how and if existing ICT platforms are being used** by migrant workers, with monitoring data disaggregated by gender where possible.

A 2015 Neilsen survey of migrant workers in Malaysia found that
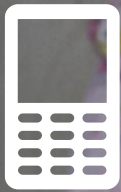
92%

own a mobile phone

↓
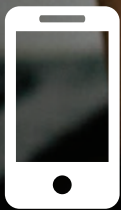
61%

are smartphones

1. Introduction

Across the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), digital technology is increasingly being recognized and used by stakeholders in labour migration, both in terms of migration management and in terms of providing services aimed at migrant workers. The 11th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) explored the theme "Digitalisation to Promote Decent Work for Migrant Workers", with governments, employers, workers, and civil society discussing opportunities and risks that information and communication technologies (ICT) present to migrant workers, and looking at ways for ICT to promote decent work for migrants. The recommendations agreed at the 11th AFML are consistent with the findings of this study (ILO, 2018a).

Asia and the Pacific are heavily reliant on mobile technology, with 90 per cent of Internet users using a smartphone to access the Internet (Hollander, 2017). While there are not comprehensive data on migrant workers' ICT usage, country-specific data from Malaysia, a prominent ASEAN country of destination, exists. In 2015 a Neilsen survey of migrant workers in Malaysia found that 92 per cent of migrants in Malaysia own a mobile phone, 61 per cent of which are smartphones.[6]

Women – among migrant workers and in the ASEAN population in general – are being left behind in terms of both ICT access and skills, with the gendered skills gap surpassing the gap in access (West, Kraut, and Chew, 2019). Today, digital skills are as vital as – and comparable to – basic literacy and numeracy, with digital skills leading to more decent jobs in developed and developing countries (West, Kraut, and Chew, 2019). In terms of access, the proportion of women in Asia and the Pacific using the Internet is significantly lower than that of men, with only 39.7 per cent of women using the Internet, compared to 47.9 per cent of men. In addition, only one third of users access government, NGO, or job services online (ITU, 2017). In a recent study sampling ten low- and middle-income countries, women are 1.6 times more likely than men to report a lack of skills as a barrier to Internet use. They are also more likely to report that they do not see a reason to access or use ICT (World Wide Web Foundation, 2015).

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6   The Nielsen Migrant Syndicated Study surveyed over 1,000 migrant workers from Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Bangladesh and Nepal. See Elahi and Nguyen, 2016.

Given that women make up close to half of all migrant workers in the ASEAN region, women's unequal access to ICT and digital skills represent a challenge, particularly where ICT can aid in making labour migration safer and more fair. There is, therefore, a need to discuss the ways in which stakeholders can effectively modify ICT-based solutions in ways that are accessible, safe, and promote decent work opportunities for women, including migrant women. ICT has the potential to reduce the time and costs of labour migration through faster and more direct connectivity, the fostering of accountability, and increasing transparency in the recruitment process, and to provide tools that allow migrant workers to access relevant information to make informed decisions as they search for work opportunities (ILO, 2018a).

It is important that digital technology is modified or developed with the active participation of potential users to account for their needs and to test ICT-based solutions. The involvement of women migrant workers is therefore needed in the ICT development process to ensure that ICT is reaching women migrants on par with men, and that it is de facto for the benefit of women migrant workers.

1.1 Use of ICT in the labour migration process

Digital technology continues to expand connectivity and integrate the world in new and innovative ways. It can also play a significant role in advancing safe and fair labour migration and the protection of the rights of migrant workers.

Obtaining appropriate and accurate information about labour migration remains a challenge for women and men at all stages of the migration journey. This includes information on credible recruitment agents and practices; expectations on working conditions, wages, and hours in different countries; and how to access services and report a case of abuse or violence to the relevant authorities, among others. The level of information that migrant workers access can depend on the regularity of their migration channel, their country of origin, the sector they migrate into, their country of destination, and their level of literacy, including digital literacy. Regular migrant workers from Myanmar and Viet Nam will, for example, access more information than irregular migrants from the same countries. Similarly, migrant workers heading to Thailand are less likely to access information about labour migration than those heading to Malaysia (Harkins, Lindgren, and Suravoranon, 2017).

While the amount of information about migration and job opportunities abroad is increasing, not all essential information is available online, and the information available might not always be accurate. Commonly, migrant workers rely on friends, family, and brokers for information on migration, rather than information provided online (Harkins, Lindgren, and Suravoranon, 2017). There have been few studies around the extent to which Facebook and other online platforms are used as sources of information, both in the pre-departure stage and during migration.

During migration, access to and use of phones differs depending on the sector. For the domestic work sector, the use of phones can be a divisive issue among employers and workers. Working in an often socially isolated space, domestic workers arguably rely more heavily on phones for information and contact with the outside world than other workers. However, employers may place restrictions on the use of phones during work hours, seeing them as interfering with their work (Anderson, 2016). Some employers of domestic workers take a paternalistic stance and argue that fully restricting access to phones is to keep the worker safe from negative influences online. An ILO study on migrant women working in the Thai construction sector found that some women migrant workers had access to the Internet and to mobile phones, and some shared smartphones (with other family members) that had apps like Viber or Line, allowing them greater connectivity even where their situation restricted their movement outside the workplace or accommodation. A few women mentioned that only their husbands or sons knew how to use the technology. One woman in the study described putting her phone inside her head covering – not visible to the employer – and being able to speak to relatives as she did her work until the battery died (Napier-Moore and Sheill, 2016).

Where women migrant workers in any job sector do have access to phones, there is evidence that they use them mainly to maintain connectivity with family and friends. A case from a recent ILO/UN Women study described a group of Vietnamese domestic workers who met on a bus during a visa run, and subsequently took it in turns to buy a phone package and conference call the group once back at work in the country of destination (Anderson, 2016). Another study found that some 80 per cent of migrant workers, including women, from Bangladesh planned to migrate with their own mobile phone, as it would be used as the main mode of communication to stay connected with family and friends (IOM and Rapid Asia, 2017).

Governments, employers, recruiters, unions, and CSOs are using Facebook as a tool for connecting and giving information to migrant workers. Some Facebook pages develop organically as a space for migrants to connect with other migrants and their home communities during migration. Others are created in order to increase worker safety. Such spaces include those mandated by the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), which works to ensure that private recruitment agencies maintain an active Facebook page for their business, accept friend requests from migrant workers, and act as a platform for sharing information and accepting complaints.

Facebook, among other social media platforms, is also being used to employ migrant workers, in particular domestic workers. Research has shown, for instance, that in Middle Eastern countries where the *kafala*[7] system ties workers with employers, social media is being used by employers looking to find alternative employment for a migrant worker (Bajracharya and Sijapati, 2012).

Given the low levels of migrant workers accessing information about migration and the increased prevalence of smartphones and social media, many stakeholders have turned to ICT-based solutions to strengthen the protection of migrant workers' rights. These ICT-based solutions take varying forms:

- Apps that enable workers to rate and review their recruiters and employers (such as, Recruitment Advisor, see box 1);
- Apps that promote peer-to-peer connection (such as Line, Facebook, and other mainstream social media platforms; OFWWatch, which helps Filipinos connect with other Filipino workers nearby);
- Apps to facilitate mobile payments (such as Saver Asia, which compares online and offline remittance services);
- Apps that facilitate migrant workers' access to various services (such as the OFW e-card in the Philippines);
- Apps for submitting complaints (for example, Philippines recruitment agencies are required by law to maintain a Facebook page through which complaints can be received);
- Apps that provide tailored migration information (for example, Jendela TKI app for Indonesian migrants).
- Apps that train service providers or facilitate their work (such as Hello Volunteer, run out of Thailand).
- Apps that link returnees and employers (public and private) in low- and semi-skilled occupations, thereby supporting reintegration of returnees into countries of origin (for example, SIRA in Ethiopia) (ILO, 2018c).

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7   *Kafala* is a sponsorship system that regulates residency and employment of workers in Gulf Corporation Council countries and includes all domestic workers (drivers, gardeners and maids). The sponsor is responsible for paying any recruitment fees and takes full economic and legal responsibility for their workers. Workers' visa statuses are tied to their sponsors. Through the kafala system, the sponsor has complete control over the mobility of migrant workers. The workers cannot resign or change jobs without consent from their sponsor. Workers are also not able to leave the country without first receiving an "exit visa" from their sponsor. Leaving without an exit visa is considered a crime, even if there is evidence of abuse. Leaving the sponsor renders workers with irregular status. See Bajracharya and Sijapati, 2012.

Box 1. ITUC Recruitment Adviser Platform

Developed by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) with support from the ILO, Recruitment Adviser is a global recruitment and employment review platform, which offers migrant workers easy access to information about recruitment agencies and workers' rights when looking for work aboard (see www.recruitmentadvisor.org). Participating governments provide lists of registered recruitment agencies.

The functions include searching for recruitment agencies and reviewing recruitment agencies. Recruitment Adviser lists thousands of agencies in Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and other countries. The platform has coordination teams in four countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, and the Philippines).The aim is not only to help migrant workers make decisions about recruiters, but also to provide useful feedback to governments regarding the practices of licensed recruitment agencies, which could be used to complement more traditional monitoring systems.

Source: ILO, 2018d; ITUC, 2018.

The challenge, however, is that while the idea behind the different digital platforms and apps have good intentions, the fragmentation of too many different systems can lead to confusion and shows there is a greater need for collaboration and coordination among agencies working towards common goals (ILO, 2018a).

While the use of ICT in some cases has led to results that strengthen workers' voices and improve employment conditions and access to services, various challenges exist – including issues of cost, sustainability, and data security – that need to be considered before the full potential of such initiatives can be realized. It is particularly imperative to ensure that any ICT solution meets the needs of the people it is seeking to serve and has the ability to work across borders. With these concerns in mind, in South-East Asia several United Nations (UN) and civil society organization (CSO) partners developed guidance and cautions for donors and others involved in ICT-based solutions for migrants and trafficked persons (see box 2). Where technology is built without the beneficiary in mind, it can be at best a waste of resources, and at worst, can expose people to insecurity around their personal data. As such, it is critical to take a beneficiary-led and co-creation approach to ICT-based solutions targeted at women migrant workers.

Box 2. Regional Network Meeting guidance on funding and developing tech-based solutions 2018

On 27th November 2018, UN-ACT and ILO co-hosted a Regional Network Meeting to discuss the challenges and opportunities digitalisation of migration management and migrant service delivery bring for the prevention of human trafficking and exploitation, and the promotion of the rights of migrant workers. All parties recognized that technological developments – online messaging and social media platforms, in particular – are dramatically affecting migration and exploitative labour practices, as well as responses to these issues by governments agencies, IOs and NGOs. This reality is reflected in a growing appetite from project donors for 'innovative tech-based solutions'.

While all participants recognise that harnessing technologies can offer new tools in migration governance and serving migrants and victims of trafficking, many cautioned against a notion that technological development will provide 'quick-fix' solutions to longstanding problems of trafficking and labour exploitation. In light of this, the network discussed experiences working with new technologies in order to provide some guidance to stakeholders looking to support and develop innovative, tech-based projects.

Box 2 (cont.)

- There should be clear and common understanding about what can be achieved with a particular tech-based solution. Projects with a clear purpose, function, and target set of users, are likely to be more successful than those that try to cater to all actors involved in a certain sector. Significant consultation and participation of the intended target user base throughout development will also increase the utility of new platforms.

- Investment in technology requires commensurate investment in projects/programmes and partners to enhance abilities to use the technology, especially amongst under-privileged and vulnerable populations, and investment in the organisations that may see an increase in the numbers of clients accessing their services as a result of the tech investment. For instance, many platforms are conceived as providing referrals, however investment is not also made in those partners who ultimately are expected to provide the services.

- In developing any new tech solution that will generate data, data-protection and data-use conditions should be built into funding requirements to ensure any data generated – including meta-data – is not used in ways that jeopardise rights of trafficked persons or exploited/vulnerable migrants. Even where truly informed consent is difficult or impossible to obtain, steps should be taken to ensure all data is used responsibly.

- When a new tech solution has been proposed to address a problem, the first question that should always be asked is 'is a new platform necessary?' Answering this question should involve mapping of existing solutions to understand whether an entirely new platform is really needed, or if an existing or already utilised platform can achieve the same goals. This should also address whether the solution truly addresses the problem,

    – Many truly innovative tech-based solutions that have emerged organically on existing platforms are often not recognised as such – in part, because of a preference for bespoke platforms that may ultimately prove less user-friendly or accessible to the target populations.

- The needs of migrant workers and trafficked persons/survivors must be considered in the development of new technologies targeted at migrant workers or trafficked persons. 'Is this something that trafficked persons or vulnerable migrants want and need?' should be a paramount consideration in project conception. To best address this question, intended beneficiaries should be engaged from the start in the development of tech-based projects, and the costs for this consultation and pilot testing built into the investments.

- If projects are focused on app-development, capacity needs for app management, promotion, and maintenance beyond the app-development stage must be considered. Planning should be in place to ensure sustainability as is relevant to the intended intervention.

- Tech-based solutions should be accompanied by advocacy for robust legal and regulatory frameworks. This includes advocacy and engagement in questions around data management, the use and abuse of computer crimes acts when online space is a substitute for civil society dialogue, and the risks of third parties 'owning' data related to migration management and individual migrants.

- Innovative M&E frameworks – especially those that go beyond conventional metrics for gauging the 'reach' of digital messaging or numbers of subscribers – are required to measure the "real-world" impact of tech-based projects.

- A 'development mediator' may be useful to avoid misalignment in expertise and objectives. As 'tech actors don't speak development and development actors don't speak tech', it is important to allow time and resources for such mediation, and select appropriate partners accordingly.

Source: UN-ACT, 2018.

1.2 ICT access and capacity

The gender gap related to Internet access varies across countries in the region, with for instance, only 31 per cent of women being users in Jakarta, Indonesia, compared to 50 per cent of men. In Manila, the Philippines, this flips with 46 per cent of women being users, compared to 42 per cent of men – an exception across the region, in which women access the Internet at a rate of 39.7 per cent, compared to 47.9 per cent of men (World Wide Web Foundation, 2015).

Gendered gaps also exist with and are tied to mobile phone ownership. A study conducted in Myanmar found men are 28 per cent more likely to own their own phone than women (Scott, Balasubramanian, and Ehrke, 2017). Women's unequal control over ICT devices and unequal skills acquisition contribute to gender-based digital divides both at home and when women migrate for work.

Most ICT-based solutions require possession of a hardware device and Internet access. The latter is proven to be more challenging for women than men. Further, having access to ICT does not mean a person is able or wants to use all the features the technology has to offer. For example, according to a 2015 GSMA survey of 12,000 respondents in Myanmar, some 33 per cent of women had a working smartphone, but fewer than 33 per cent of them used app-based features. In most cases, the phone was only used for SMS, listening to music, and making or receiving calls.

As shown in figure 1 below, in order to assess the extent to which ICT-based solutions are appropriately designed for women migrant workers to use, both access to ICT and capacity to use ICT need to be considered. These considerations should guide development actors in terms of what application platform to use (i.e., mass media, social media, mobile, etc.) as well as the application design (e.g., video content, ability to register as a user, reporting mechanism, etc.). Further, it is also important to consider how various stakeholders currently use ICT to interact with migrant workers and the experiences and interest that this has generated. This study looks at these above elements, holistically examining what is needed for successful use of ICT by both migrant workers and stakeholders in the migration cycle.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework
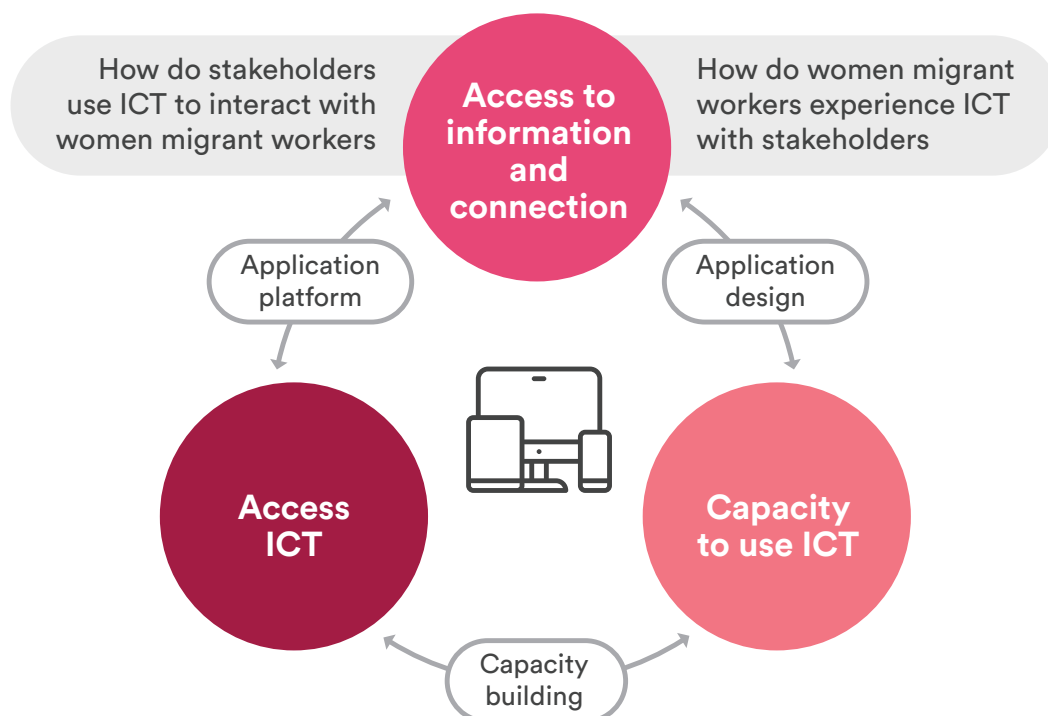
Capacity in this context refers to how migrant women take advantage of the features that ICT-based solutions have to offer, such as downloading apps onto a smartphone, joining an online forum, or contacting a recruitment agent via a website contact page. This can be driven by both ability and desire.

Most modern ICT-based solutions currently rely on "self-learning", and designs that are intuitive and user-friendly. Facebook, for instance, is a good example of this, where people sign up and then learn as they interact with the features. The advantage of ICT, if designed appropriately, is that users do not need to be trained to use it but can learn as they go and gain proficiency with the parts of the app that are most useful to them. Women migrant workers, like all of us, use technologies because they have something to gain. This conceptual understanding of how modern digital platforms work is an important underlying framework for interpretation and analysis of data collected in this study. Notwithstanding, however, that a "self-learning" design is key to any digital solution, the teaching of digital literacy for migrant workers in the region is also important, as technologies and their emergent risks are new to many users.

Many of the findings of this report echo those of a provincial level Safe and Fair study on ICT in Indonesia conducted concurrently (see box 3, UN Women, forthcoming).

Box 3. Safe and Fair Indonesia study on women migrant workers' ICT use and available platforms

Safe and Fair in Indonesia conducted a study on women migrant workers' ICT use, with a focus on analysis of platforms available for phone use. In total 40 returnee women migrant workers were interviewed in Lampung Timur, Cirebon, and Blitar,[8] with a further 35 stakeholders from government, workers' organizations and CSOs interviewed. Women interviewed had returned from working in Hong Kong (China), Malaysia, Singapore, or Taiwan. Of over 300 mobile apps, web-based platforms, and Facebook groups and pages found related to Indonesian migrants, the study analysed the accessibility, service provision, and utility of 31 platforms in depth.

Findings from the study include that Facebook and You Tube are the most accessed sites by women migrant workers. Facebook is used for social networking primarily, and for information access second. Women turn to Facebook group postings when they need to report life-threatening cases, when they need advice, or for instance when they needed help with translation to local languages. One respondent who had been in Singapore used Facebook to search for a new recruitment agent. She found the addresses of several agencies and went to all of their offices before deciding which one to register with for her next placement. The research also found for instance that in one Indonesia district the Head of the district is very active on social media, resulting in migrant workers' families feeling confident to report cases to his personal social media account directly. Women migrant workers face challenges with Facebook however in that their comments (even urgent ones) sometimes go unresponded. Some women reported recruitment scams on Facebook where providers stole workers' money via the platform, or provided an irregular recruitment service. Respondents also reported recruiters confiscating their phones, noting that after the 6-9 month period in which they were paying off their debt, they did not have a means of communication. After the debt was paid off, the women migrant workers had enough money to buy another phone.

Government agencies or CSOs that provide information or services via Facebook pages find they often have to repeat answers to frequently asked questions, and have trouble updating pages with frequency. The majority of platform providers in the study do not have systematic promotion strategies, though those that engage in the most promotion used Facebook advertising, or sometimes videos or offline promotion. NGOs noted that Facebook ads increase visitors to their information sharing websites.

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8   Complimenting the current study in terms of geographical locations for interviews in Indonesia.

Box 3 (cont.)

The study also finds a lack of synergy among and between government institutions in terms of promotion of platforms, where local government bodies are not promoting central government platforms, and vice versa.

Good practice examples of platform development include:

- Pantau PJTKI is a recruitment agency rating platform with information on agencies' practices vis a vis the law. This was updated from the years 2014-2017, and the platform owner is waiting on law reform (Law 18/2017) to fully take effect before updating further. Nonetheless, the site has accumulated over 1000 reviews on upward of 400 agencies. It receives 400-500 unique visitors per day.
- Rumah Pengaduan is a case reporting and management platform maintained by three CSOs and worker associations that collaboratively manage case after reporting by migrant workers.

Practical recommendations from the report include that migrant workers want direct, one-click platforms. Fast app loading time was significant for respondents, and, more importantly, fast response to reported cases was also significant, with the report noting: "One of the key success factors in increasing people's trust in government assistance to remedies is quick responses."

Source: UN Women, forthcoming.

2. Research approach

This is a qualitative scoping-type study, with data collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) with potential and returned migrant women, and in-depth interviews with other key stakeholders. By including both potential and returned migrant women, it was possible to explore differences in people's ICT use and access before and after labour migration. As a qualitative study, results necessarily provide direction, but it is not possible to generalize findings. While the design does not provide for representative data, this was seen to be less important than qualitatively and more deeply exploring ICT usage and uncovering ideas related to ICT current and future solutions. Data collection took place between November and December 2018.

2.1 Research objectives

The primary objective of the research was to gain an insight into how women migrant workers can potentially access more accurate information and have the ability to connect with peers through ICT in the labour migration process. In order to achieve this, the study looks at the following two areas of inquiry:

1. The extent to which women migrant workers have access to ICT, including types of device they own or have access to and when (in what situations) they use them.

2. The capacity[9] of women migrant workers to use ICT, including an assessment of what different ICT features they actually use and how often they use them.

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9   "Capacity" in this context refers to how migrant women take advantage of the features that ICT-based solutions have to offer, such as downloading apps onto a smartphone, joining an online forum, or contacting a recruitment agent via a website contact page. This can be driven by both ability and desire.

The following are more specific questions around which the questionnaires in Appendices I–IV were designed:

1. To what extent are women migrant workers using phones that have Internet access; and to what extent are they purchasing data that provides access to the Internet?

2. To what extent are women migrant workers using their phones for: voice calling; text-based messaging; or for access to online/social media-based communication?

3. Which platforms do women migrant workers use?

4. To what extent do women migrant workers use their phones to: communicate with people within the country that they are in; to communicate with people outside the country there are in; people they know; people they have never met?

5. What information do women migrant workers communicate, seek, and share through text-based apps and/or online social media platforms?

6. To what extent do women migrant workers having experienced violence use their phone and/or online social media platform for: seeking support from their peers, networks, and families; seeking information about existing coordinated responsive services; reporting a case of violence?

7. How much money do women spend on technology (hardware, software, and data)?

8. What language/s do women migrant workers use when communicating and/or seeking/sharing information on text-based apps and/or online social media platforms?

9. What are women looking for when using ICT, and are they finding it?

2.2 Research scope

To capture information about ICT usage across the labour migration cycle, data was collected from potential and returned women migrant workers in selected ASEAN countries of origin: Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines. The advantage of conducting data collection with women migrant workers in countries of origin is that it is relatively easier to find returned migrant workers from a variety of sectors and working conditions, some of which are harder to reach for interview in countries of destination. Another advantage is that all data collection can be carried out in local languages using local interview moderators.

In Myanmar and the Philippines, participants were recruited around Yangon and Manila (figure 2). In Cambodia, they were recruited in Prey Veng (which is not far from Phnom Penh), and in Indonesia they were recruited in and around four cities in Java including Klaten, Kartasura, Indramayu, and Kecamatan Ledokombo (figure 2). The locations were selected taking into account a balance of migrant workers' locations before and after labour migration and the feasibility of recruiting respondents within the set timeline.

Additionally, in-depth interviews with various other stakeholders were carried out in the four countries of origin as above, as well as in major destination countries –Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. Stakeholders interviewed included government authorities, employers, workers' unions, civil society organizations, and recruitment agencies.

Figure 2. Research areas in each country of origin

Focus groups with women migrant workers examined ICT usage among migrant women, and looked at ICT ownership, media usage and consumption, subscription to different social media sites, activities undertaken in social media, money spent on mobile and Internet access, and the extent to which ICT is used to find information about migration and connecting with recruiters and employers.

Interviews with other stakeholders (government, trade unions, employers, and civil society organizations) inquired about the extent to which ICT is used to provide support services to migrant workers and the potential of ICT to allow ASEAN migrant workers – particularly women migrants – better access to information and connectivity (see Appendices I–IV for questionnaires and moderator guides).

2.3 Data collection methods

2.3.1 Document review

The research team conducted a document review to better understand ICT usage trends among women migrant workers and the typical barriers faced when accessing information about how to migrate regularly and when connecting with recruitment agents and employers. The initial document review was conducted in October 2018, followed by additional reviews to explore specific issues. These document reviews helped the research team develop the data collection tools and to corroborate some of the key findings.

2.3.2 Stakeholder interviews

Stakeholders were interviewed in each of the four countries of origin, and in addition, employers were interviewed in key countries of destination including Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. Most interviews with stakeholders were conducted face-to-face, and some via phone. A total of n=25 interviews were conducted in local languages or English by trained moderators (table 1). Stakeholders' agencies or organizations' names are anonymized in this report. The moderator guide developed for the interviews with stakeholders has been included as Appendix IV.

Table 1. Number of informants interviewed, by country

Target group	Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines	Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore	Total
Recruitment agencies	n=1 in each country	–	4
Trade unions	n=1 in each country	–	4
Civil society	n=1 in each country	–	4
Government officials	n=1 in each country	–	4
Employers	–	n=3 in each country	9
Total	16	9	25

– = nil

2.3.3 Focus group discussions with women migrant workers

The survey target was potential and returned women migrant workers who owned a mobile phone[10] and who had engaged in simple and routine physical or manual work[11] in any sector. The latter requirement was included to ensure so-called low-skilled women migrant workers were included and to ensure groups were homogeneous, allowing for comparability between countries. For returned women migrant workers, only those who had returned in the past nine months were recruited, to ensure participants could share recent experiences with ICT. Participants were screened using a separate screening questionnaire based on criteria shown in table 2 below (included as Appendix I). Recruitment of potential and returned migrant women was done via intercept in locations where migrants are known to gather, such as markets, coffee shops, places of worship, etc. Some level of snowballing was also used to obtain referrals.

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10 While not all migrants have a mobile phone, it was important for the purpose of the scoping study to target migrant women who had some level of experience using ICT in order to obtain useful information.
11 Occupations that typically require the use of hand-held tools, such as shovels, or of simple electrical equipment, such as vacuum cleaners. These occupations involve tasks such as cleaning; digging; lifting and carrying materials by hand; sorting, storing, or assembling goods by hand, sometimes in the context of mechanized operations; operating non-motorized vehicles; and picking fruit or vegetables.

Table 2. Screening criteria

Target	Screening criteria
Potential migrant workers	■ In Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines ■ Women aged 18–40 years[12] ■ Intend to migrate to Malaysia, Singapore, or Thailand[13] ■ Plan to migrate in the next 12 months ■ Own a mobile phone
Returned migrant workers	■ In Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines ■ Women aged 18–40 years ■ Migrated for low-skilled work in Malaysia, Singapore, or Thailand ■ Returnees with regular or irregular status during migration ■ Returned in the past nine months ■ Own a mobile phone

As shown in table 3 below, potential and returned migrant women participated in separate FGDs with n=6-8 participants in each group. Two FGDs in each country were with potential women migrant workers, and two were with returned women migrant workers. Where possible, the groups were divided based on age to ensure more homogeneity within the groups. In Indonesia, the FGDs were also split by women's country of destination (Malaysia and Singapore). The moderator guide developed for the FGDs has been included as Annex 3.

Table 3. Number of focus group participants interviewed, by country

FGDs by country	Total participants	Potential women migrant workers	Returned women migrant workers	Country of destination
Philippines, 4 FGDs	26	14	12	Singapore
Myanmar, 4 FGDs	24	13	11	Thailand
Cambodia, 4 FGDs	28	15	13	Thailand
Indonesia, 4FGDs	27	14	13	Malaysia, Singapore
Total	105	56	49	

Before commencing each FGD, participants were asked to fill out a mini questionnaire (Appendix II) regarding their ICT usage. This helped to give the moderator an overview of the types of phones women used, usage of different media, and extent of engagement in social media. Some of the results from this exercise are presented in this report for more context, but should only be regarded as relevant for those women who participated in the FGDs and not women migrant workers generally.

12　The 18–40 age band was applied to ensure more homogeneous groups. Groups were split based on limited age bands (18–29 years and 30–40 years), which encourages more participation without influence of seniority.

13　The intention to migrate was determined by whether the person has taken certain steps to migrate, for example, visiting Migrant Worker Resource Centres, starting documentation processes, making an agreement with a recruitment agency, etc.

2.4 Data analysis

Relevant documents were first reviewed and analysed against the research objectives for the scoping study and along with findings from the primary data collection itself. For each FGD and stakeholder interview conducted, responses were summarized into an analysis template and categorized against the research questions. For quality control purposes, all FGDs and interviews were recorded, allowing the research team to refer back to the recordings to clarify any important points captured in the interview summaries. Key findings were determined by examining the most frequent responses, together with suitable case studies and quotes. The key findings were then linked back to each research question in preparation for triangulation.

The multilevel combination approach was used to ensure proper triangulation of the data.[14] First, data from the desk review, FGDs, and the stakeholder interviews were analysed separately, and key findings were agreed within the research team. Second, all key findings were linked to the research questions. Finally, the team triangulated the data, examining the key findings across the different information sources (figure 3).

Figure 3. Data triangulation process

Data Sources	Detailed data analysis	Identification of key findings	Triangulation
Focus group discussions / **In-depth interviews** / **Desk review**	All data are analyzed in detail. Survey data is analysed using SPSS. Qualitative data are recorded on MP3 device and findings extracted on summary sheets, along with findings from the desk review.	Based on the data analysis, key findings are formulated for each source of data. The findings are summarised in a separate spreadsheet and sorted according each study question.	A multilevel combinations method is used. Key findings found to be supported by more than one source are included. Findings not supported but not contradicted are included if the source is deemed to be reliable.

2.5 Quality assurance

The following quality-control requirements were enforced with the survey team. Moderator guides were peer reviewed, followed by localization and translation in each country. Localization involved adjusting the language (including technical terms) to ensure wording was in line with the country context as well as appropriate from a cultural perspective. Prior to data collection, a detailed briefing session was arranged with moderators in each country. All FGDs and stakeholder interviews were recorded, with stakeholders' consent, on an MP3 device.[15]

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14 Per USAID, 2013.

15 This was to enable call-backs to participants to clarify answers if needed. The recording only started after consent was made, and personal details were not recorded. Recordings were not available to any third party and were deleted after six months for confidentiality purposes.

That the study overall has reasonable face validity could be established by comparing results with that of other recent studies on migration and ICT, as well as with studies on women and ICT. Although the nature of the study is qualitative and should not be regarded as representative of all migrant women, nothing was found to suggest the results are biased or overly skewed.

2.5.1 Ethical considerations

Rapid Asia is a member of ESOMAR[16] and as such is obliged to follow well established, international best practice for professional conduct with regard to data collection and data management. The guidelines, norms, standards, and code of conduct under ESOMAR are similar those set out by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) and include that researchers are to:

1. Ensure that those involved with collecting data are independent and act with integrity and honesty when interacting with all beneficiaries and stakeholders.
2. Ensure that all participants in the survey understand the purpose, objectives, and the intended use of survey findings.
3. Be sensitive to social and cultural norms and gender roles during interactions with participants and their families.
4. Respect the rights and welfare of participants by ensuring informed consent and rights to anonymity and confidentiality before the interview, that consent is freely volunteered, and they can withdraw at any time without any negative consequence.

2.6 Limitations and risks

As the study was conducted interviewing women migrant workers in countries of origin, a major limitation is that women migrant workers who are presently migrating and in destination sites were not included. Further, men migrant workers were not part of the study's scope. Without interviewing migrant men, it is difficult to fully assess the degrees to which accessibility, usage, and proficiency differ between men and women. Instead interviewees were asked if they believe there to be differences along these lines between themselves and men.

Since the FGDs with potential and returned migrant women were conducted in or near major capital cities, penetration and usage of ICT and media consumption in general is expected to be higher compared to migrant workers in other locations, including rural communities. This was not, however, seen as a major disadvantage, as the focus of the study was on ICT usage and part of the recruitment criteria was to include those who already had at least a mobile phone.

This study is not a prevalence-type wide-scale survey of ICT usage among migrant women, as only migrant women who already own a phone were interviewed. However, not all migrant workers have access to or own a mobile phone, smartphone, or similar device. Hence, while ICT developments have the potential to increase access to information and the ability for migrants to connect with their peers, there will still be segments of migrant women who will remain unaffected. But since penetration of smartphones and other devices are growing rapidly, especially among younger people in the region, access is expected to increase over time.

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16 ESOMAR is a not-for-profit organization that promotes the value of market, opinion and social research and data analytics. It provides ethical and professional guidance and advocating on behalf of its global membership community, ESOMAR website can be accessed via this link: https://www.esomar.org/my-esomar?request_url=%2Fmy-esomar%2Fmy-network%2Fsearch-contact.php

> "
>
> [When people share experiences of violence on social media], I read the comments so I can get ideas of how problems can be solved.
>
> — Potential woman migrant worker from the Philippines

3. Findings

3.1 Technologies that ASEAN women migrant workers access

As noted in the Introduction, there is not comprehensive survey data on women migrant workers' ICT usage, and this current study was qualitative and small scale in nature. Country-specific migrant worker ICT-use data is available in Malaysia, an important country of destination in ASEAN. In 2015 a Neilsen survey of migrant workers in Malaysia found that 92 per cent of migrants in Malaysia own a mobile phone, 61 per cent of which are smartphones.[17] This is not, however, disaggregated for women migrant workers' use. Potential and returned women migrant workers in this study all had mobile phones (as a requirement for study participation), with high Internet connection rates: Cambodia 46 per cent, Indonesia 52 per cent, Myanmar 88 per cent, and Philippines 92 per cent. See table 6 and sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 for further information on mobile phone ownership and Internet usage among respondents.

While this report focuses on usage of mobile phones and usage of the Internet via mobile phones, women migrant workers have access to a range of technologies and media. Television ownership rates were high among study respondents – above 85 per cent in all countries (see figure 4), and many also listen to radio. Among respondents in this small sample, radio ownership was at 29 per cent in Cambodia, 33 per cent in Indonesia, 17 per cent in Myanmar, and 62 per cent in the Philippines.

Larger sample sizes are needed for more accurate quantitative representation of media ownership among women migrant workers. However, the use of television and radio should not be discounted when considering women migrant workers' ICT use, or when considering stakeholders' options for reaching women migrant workers with accurate safe migration information. See box 4 on successful radio programme broadcasts in 2017 and 2018 in Myanmar covering safe migration and financial literacy information through entertainment.

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17   The Nielsen Migrant Syndicated Study surveyed over 1,000 migrant workers from Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Bangladesh and Nepal. See Monjur and Nguyen, 2016.

Figure 4. Ownership of media types (%) among study respondents

Ownership of Media

Legend: ■ Philippines ■ Myanmar ■ Cambodia ■ Indonesia
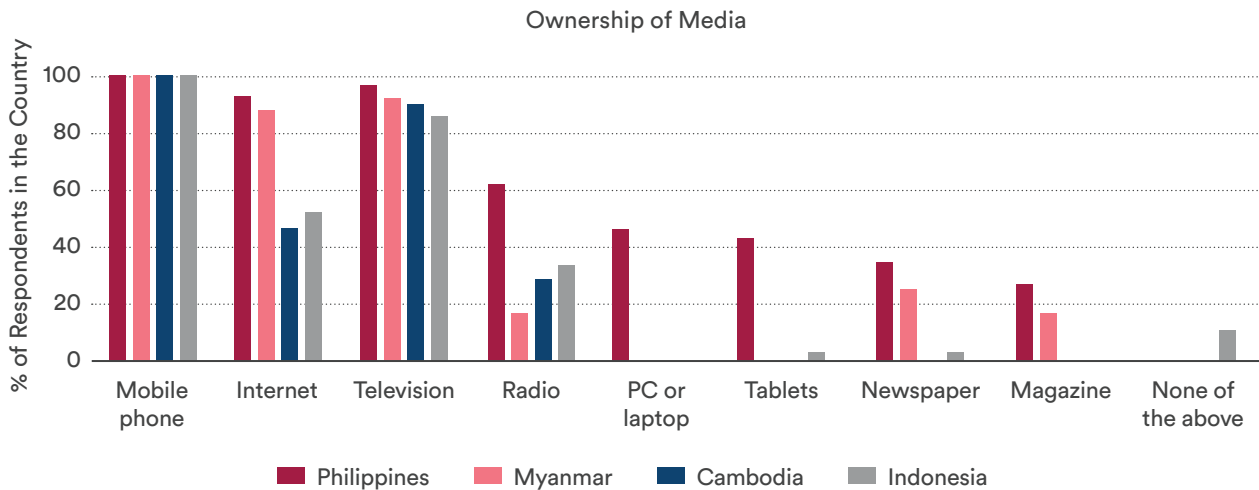
Box 4. Yay Kyi Yar: Radio programme on migration in Myanmar by BBC Media Action

BBC Media Action surveyed 3,000 persons (not limited to potential/returnee migrant workers) in Myanmar on their media use in 2018, and 37 per cent listen to radio.

Yay Kyi Yar (Towards Clearer Waters) is a radio show that aired weekly in Myanmar in 2017 and 2018, providing information on the risks and opportunities of migrating for work within Myanmar and internationally. BBC Media Action broadcast the show on national Myanmar radio, as well as MAP radio, a community radio station in Thailand reaching Myanmar migrants. Findings from monitoring research reveal that Yay Kyi Yar reached an estimated 3.2 million listeners in Myanmar, with 1.8 million regular listeners tuning in to at least every other episode. One in ten households with migrants (current, potential, or returned) have listened to Yay Kyi Yar, and 38 per cent of regular listeners report that listening to the programme has improved their knowledge "a lot" about what to consider before moving elsewhere. Regular listeners are more likely to have discussed migration in the past 12 months, compared with non-listeners (26 per cent of regular listeners vs 18 per cent of non-listeners). Finally, monitoring research showed that listeners had improved confidence to make decisions about migration: 44 per cent of regular listeners state that they feel "a lot" more confident to make decisions about migration. The show featured a strong financial literacy component, with a main character, Mr Money, giving guidance for informed financial decisions.

Sources: BBC Media Action, 2019a; 2019b.

3.2 Phones for social connections: "The Internet is Facebook"

3.2.1 Current usage of phone and Internet

Connectivity through either social media apps or calling and texting was by far the most popular form of phone usage[18] by women migrant worker respondents in this study, followed by general Internet browsing. As can be seen in tables 4 and 5 below, Facebook was by far the most popular app, not only for social networking but also messaging (i.e., via Facebook Messenger). Usage differed according to digital literacy,[19]

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18 The most popular phone brands used in order of popularity, were Samsung, Huawei, Apple, Nokia, and Oppo.
19 See definition in Terms and Acronyms section.

which in turn differed according to nationality. Filipinas used the greatest diversity of mobile applications, referencing Twitter, Instagram, and Netflix; while other nationalities mainly used Facebook and YouTube. Myanmar and Cambodian women were largely unaware of or did not know how to access other websites besides Facebook. It was also noted among a focus group of potential migrants in Myanmar that "The Internet is Facebook." The percentages in the tables below, as well as subsequent tables, highlight results based on FGD participants and are not representative of the respective populations.

Table 4. Social media subscription by FGD participants (%)

Social media subscription	Overall n=105	Philippines n=26	Myanmar n=24	Cambodia n=28	Indonesia n=27
Facebook	90	96	100	82	85
YouTube	63	89	25	57	78
Google+	21	46	–	4	33
Instagram	17	46	–	–	22
Twitter	4	15	–	–	–
Other	2	8	–	–	–
None	11	–	17	14	15

– = nil

Table 5. Activities undertaken by FGD participants on social media (%)

Activity	Overall n=105	Philippines n=26	Myanmar n=24	Cambodia n=28	Indonesia n=27
Chatting	73	92	63	64	74
Searching	57	89	58	14	70
Sharing	57	73	63	54	41
Connecting with others	53	42	63	61	44
Downloading	31	65	–	14	41
Reading material	26	54	42	4	7
Competitions and games	16	35	8	4	19
None	11	–	17	14	15

– = nil

Besides using social media for staying connected, some returned women migrant workers had made the effort to seek information useful for migrating; though many said they rely more on offline, personal sources. When using the Internet to seek out information, it was mainly to gain access to chat groups, Facebook groups, or forums for migrant workers. Some also mentioned they has searched for information about recruitment agencies. The Filipina participants, having greater digital literacy, made greater use of online sources that appear to have helped smoothen migration process. This includes using a variety of apps (e.g., for translation, maps to find their workplace) and searching for information online (e.g., reading blogs to find out about living in the destination country and to locate local Filipino communities). Other nationalities did not use Internet sources to their fullest extent, mainly due to believing that information from personally sought sources, including recruiters, is sufficient and more trustworthy than information found online.

> ## "
> **[We] contact agencies, and they provide everything we need.
> [We] follow any instructions or advice the agencies provide.**
>
> – Potential Myanmar woman migrant worker

Indonesian participants sought information about working conditions and salary mostly through recruitment agencies online and through friends and relatives who have migrated. The Indonesian Government has an online portal that migrant workers can use to access information on recruitment agencies, though officials did not give an indication on how widely it is used. A trade union in Indonesia highlighted the app may not be used outside of Jakarta, as potential migrant workers from rural areas tend to seek information from brokers who are less reliable, indicating the gap in information access due to limited familiarity of available sites and lower levels of digital literacy.

Returnee participants in Cambodia tended to be relatively more reliant on their husbands or other migrant workers for ICT use, commenting that their husbands and other men migrants had greater online access due to second language skills and more time to use and familiarize themselves with phones and the Internet.

> ## "
> **Men are better than women [in accessing information],
> as they have the time to practice [on the phone].**
>
> – Returned Cambodian woman migrant worker

However, participants in three out of four focus groups of Filipina migrant workers noted that not only did they seek information on labour migration, but that they thought migrant men use the Internet less than women to look for information.

> ## "
> **Men generally don't use the Internet, especially if looking for work. They will
> just go directly to an agency or employer. Women do the researching for men.**
>
> – Potential Filipina migrant worker

> ## "
> **Women search for more information than men because it is more dangerous
> for women to leave their home country. They have to take extra care in ensuring
> that they are armed with proper information. Women use online [platforms]
> to process papers so they can save time and money.**
>
> – Potential Filipina migrant worker

Further in several focus groups women migrant workers themselves said they did not know where to look for such information. Civil society organizations in Cambodia similarly pointed out that migrants often do not know where to look and only seek out information in the event of a problem. The Cambodian Government noted that information is easy to find for those migrating legally, as they are trained by the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training before departing. This, however, does not take into consideration that those migrating irregularly are perhaps doing so because of a lack of information. Participation rates in pre-departure training have also been found to be generally low in many countries in the region, including Cambodia (Harkins, Lindgren, and Suravoranon, 2017).

Notably, the information that all FGD participants said they sought or would seek before migration is almost exclusively related to job sector, working conditions, salary, and time off. Employers in destination countries confirmed this, saying they are asked mostly for information about wages and working conditions rather than rights, duties of the employer, or documentation.

Only one participant group mentioned looking up information online about the necessary documentation, visa application process, or work permit process. Others expect their employer or recruitment agency to handle such matters. A Filipino civil society organization felt that women migrant workers do not know what information they need to know to ensure safe migration and are usually more concerned with how to send remittances.

3.2.2 Phone and Internet usage in different migration stages

Based on the study participant criteria, all the women migrant worker participants at least had access to a feature phone, with most owning a smartphone. While not all migrant workers have mobile phones, mobile penetration across the region has increased significantly in recent years. In Myanmar, for instance, in 2016, 83 per cent of households reported owning mobile phones – an increase of 46 per cent from 2015. When disaggregated for women's ownership alone, in 2015, 33 per cent of women in Myanmar owned a mobile phone, which increased to 52 per cent by 2016 (Galpaya et al., 2017).

Myanmar

Households owning mobile phones

46% 2015
83% 2016

Women's sole ownership of a phone (not shared)

33% 2015
52% 2016
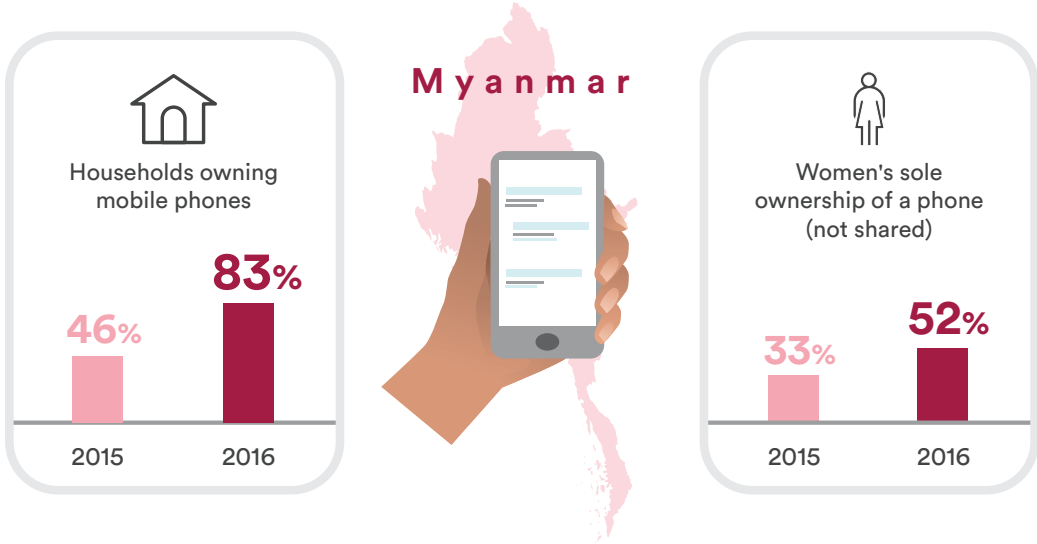
Smartphones have the benefit of cost-effectiveness when connecting with family members and connecting to the Internet. Access to free Wi-Fi, either through an employer or publicly accessed, means women migrant workers can do many tech-based activities free of charge, or using a pre-paid account that can be topped up with small amounts of money.

Women migrant workers in the study originating from rural areas were less likely be able to afford a smartphone in the pre-migration stage, and as such were more likely to share phones with other family members, buy second hand, or receive their phone as gift from their husbands or other family members. In many rural areas, access to the Internet is naturally more limited than for those in urban centres, but access is rapidly increasing with the expansion of mobile coverage throughout South-East Asia (Kemp, 2019). Stakeholders from Indonesia noted their ongoing efforts to improve rural mobile and Internet connections, with an eye both to rural development more generally, but also to help migrants be able to connect to family members when abroad.

Table 6 below shows the relatively high level of ownership of smartphones across participants. When looking at how much they paid for a smartphone, it was found that the investment on average was an average of US$141, reflecting the purchases of second-hand rather than new phones.

Table 6. Mobile phone ownership by FGD participants (%)

Type of mobile phone	All n= 105	Philippines n=26	Myanmar n=24	Cambodia n=28	Indonesia n=27
Smartphone	83	96	75	82	78
Basic mobile phone/ feature phone	13	4	25	14	11

While the table does not differentiate ownership according to the stage of migration, more women were able to afford a smartphone after having worked abroad. A few Indonesian women also reported that in Malaysia and Singapore, employers had offered them an advance and bought mobile phones for them, deducting the amount from their salary over time. This difference in practice between employers who assist in purchasing a phone and those who confiscate them demonstrates that while some recognize the utility of phones for connectivity, many restrict them due to a lack of trust. Past research shows that accessibility of phones for migrant domestic workers is complicated by the already complex relationship between employee and employer in the domestic environment, especially for live-in domestic workers. In such cases, the employers may be the sole decider in whether the employee can contact her family, thereby creating a significant power imbalance (Platt et al., 2014). Indeed, several of the interviews with employers confirmed that domestic migrant workers are subject to various restrictions.

One employer from Malaysia pointed out she would buy phone credits rather than letting the domestic worker access her local Wi-Fi connection, in order to restrict usage to certain days.

People throughout the region are increasingly dependent on their phones before and during migration, and see restriction of access to their phones as a reportable problem. A recent ILO and UN Women study surveyed employers of migrant domestic workers in destination countries for ASEAN migrants: Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. It asked employers if they let domestic workers have access to their mobile phones out of work hours, and in all countries less than 50 per cent of employers say they did let domestic workers use their phones (ILO and UN Women, forthcoming). See figure below.

Figure 5. Percentage of employers who let domestic workers access their mobile phone out of work hours

Japan

6%
out of 233 employers surveyed

Singapore

47%
out of 297 employers surveyed

31%
out of 190 employers surveyed

Malaysia

37%
out of 166 employers surveyed

Thailand

Source: ILO and UN Women, forthcoming.

One NGO in Singapore that receives complaint cases from migrant workers reports that in 2018 they received 273 complaints from migrant domestic workers of phone restrictions[20] by employers, and a further 106 complaints of phone restrictions by recruitment/employment agents.[21] Through the whole year, the NGO took cases from a total 800 complainants. Complainants are not mutually exclusive, ie. the same worker can file two complaints – one about phone restriction by her employer, and another about phone restriction by her agent. These figures are higher than in 2017. The NGO reports that restrictions are more common during periods where workers are paying off their recruitment fees, as well as more common for Myanmar and Indian domestic workers, for those newer to Singapore, and for younger workers.[22]

3.2.3 Gendered impacts on women's use of phones and Internet

Confiscation of migrant workers' mobile phones or restricting usage is a tactic in which employers exert power and control over the workers. Both FGD participants and stakeholders from Indonesia and the Philippines reported that many domestic workers have their access to phones restricted by their employers, a problem which has also been reported in recent studies (Anderson, 2016; Platt et al., 2014). One study of Indonesians in Singapore reports that respondents commonly were granted phone access only after one or two years of service, as a privilege and a sign of trust. Beyond that, women also had to negotiate access to their employers' Wi-Fi networks (Platt et al., 2014). A Malaysian employer respondent in a 2016 ILO/UN Women study said: "A maid should not have a phone. That's all… It looks cruel, but it is to keep them safe. We allow them to call their homes from our fixed lines" (Anderson, 2016, p. 66).

Employer respondents to this current study in Singapore were aware of cases where migrant domestic workers were not allowed to use their phone in the house. While in Thailand, one employer attributed poor quality phones as a main limitation for migrant workers usage of phones.

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20 Phone restriction was defined as when a workers' phone had been taken away from her or when she felt her means of communication through phone usage had been unreasonably restricted.

21 Correspondence, NGO, Singapore, 22, 23, 27 July 2019.

22 Correspondence, NGO, Singapore, 22, 23, 27 July 2019.

> **"**
>
> ## I am in many forums with employers only. I heard a lot of stories where employers actually restrict phone use. They are not allowed to use a phone inside the house, or only use it after work.
>
> – Singaporean employer of a migrant domestic worker.

Both government and recruitment agency stakeholders in Indonesia mentioned on-going work to stipulate that migrant workers should have access to phone and Internet.

> **"**
>
> ## We are in the process of discussing the possibility to include a clause [in contracts] that migrant workers have the right to use and access the Internet in their working places, and the employer would have to sign.
>
> – Indonesian recruitment agency.

The same recruitment agency respondent in Indonesia put forth plans to put apps on mobile phones of women migrant workers, perhaps in cooperation with a mobile phone provider. The agency envisions requiring that the migrant domestic worker would have to upload an update once a month, so at least there would be access to a mobile phone once a month.

The ways in which migrants use their phones, in terms of activity, differed between potential and returned migrant women. A number of migrant workers downloaded dictionaries and translation apps to aid in the migration process. Some saved phone numbers of embassies and recruitment agencies before leaving. However, there was a noticeable knowledge gap in terms of women migrant workers knowing about toll free numbers or hotlines to access services in case of abuse or violence. Some potential migrant women in Cambodia, who owned basic phones, said they would purchase smartphones after migrating, though they also talked about their limited capacity to use a smartphone effectively. On the other hand, returned migrant women reported that they:

- use the Internet more extensively;
- are more likely to have a smartphone;
- spend more money when buying their current phone;
- use more phone features; and
- spend on average more on phone credits.

When asked about differences in usage between men and women, there was a perception in the Philippines that men tend to use their phones for playing games or watching videos, whereas women use them for keeping contact with friends and family.

Some Indonesian women reported that men in their families blocked their Facebook accounts or regularly checked on their social networking activity.

Relatedly, some women in FGDs raised an issue about online safety that women faced and men did not, and that subsequently sometimes led to their spouses limiting or monitoring their social networking. Online harassment is more likely to happen to women, particularly on Facebook.

The Broadband Commission estimates that around 73 per cent of women globally have experienced or been exposed to some form of cyber violence (EQUALS Research Group, 2018). Some Indonesian women migrant worker respondents commented that men had harassed them by sending sexually explicit material. In response, the women or their husband would block the sender.

No women in any of the FGDs reported having their phone usage entirely restricted by their partners.

Employers were generally unaware of differences in usage between men and women, due to a number of interviewed employers only employing domestic workers and not encountering men migrant workers. For employers of persons of both genders, there were mixed opinions on who uses the Internet more and who uses more phone features. A Thai employer of construction workers noted that women were more sophisticated users than men, while a Singaporean employer of a domestic worker commented that her domestic worker was able to multitask with her phone. Some employers commented that domestic workers only used their phones for basic connectivity. One employer noted that restrictions on women migrant workers' use of phones and the Internet is dependent on the goodwill of the employer (see quote below).[23] Employers may have a limited understanding of women migrant workers' needs, and place restrictions on usage rather than seeing ICT as a platform for increased connectivity to increase job satisfaction.

"

Some employers give them access [to the Internet], and some don't. It depends on the decency of the employers. Some think they should give Internet access so [women migrant workers] can keep in touch with family. Some think that if they get access to the Internet, they will not be focusing on work.

– Singaporean employer of a woman migrant worker

3.2.4 People with whom women migrant workers connect and communicate

Staying in contact with family and friends is by far the strongest consideration for having a mobile phone among respondents in this study, explaining why ICT usage tends to increase in connection with migration.

All participants said that they use their phones to keep in contact mainly with family and friends, both when they are in and out of their country of origin. They generally reported not trusting strangers who attempt to communicate with them via social media, as many are aware of the risks of being scammed or harassed. However, that is not to say they are immune to risks; only being cautious when the risk is obvious. Respondents were likely to trust certain sources, such as recruitment agencies, past migrant workers with experience in companies they want to work in, as well as migrant communities from their home country – family and friends in particular.

Past research notes the utility of ICT in creating "connected" and "cosmopolitan" migrants who not only remain closely connected with family and friends in their home country but are able gain more accurate ideas about migrating from those who are abroad. It is due to these trusted and personal networks that migrants tend to seek information from each other rather than official sources (Anderson, 2016).

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23 For more information on restrictions of phone usage, see Anderson, 2016.

In terms of staying connected with family members back home, most participants said that Facebook Messenger, as well as Viber, were their apps of choice, as they allow for free texting, calling, and video chatting. Such cheap and convenient methods mean that many women migrant workers are able keep in daily contact with family members. Women migrant workers often reported that they had greater connectivity abroad than at home, especially in countries of destination where there was good Wi-Fi coverage. However, some Indonesian participants did not own phones while abroad (and only had them on return). In the destination country they had to either borrow their employer's phone or use public telephones, therefore not only driving up the cost of individual calls but also restricting their freedom to communicate autonomously.

When asked what needs to be improved in terms of connectivity when abroad, most Filipina women were satisfied with using Facebook Messenger and the Internet access they had to keep in touch with family and friends.

However, Cambodian and Myanmar participants expressed concern about Internet connectivity, namely the lack of quality broadband in rural areas of their home country, which would impede efforts to stay connected to their family once abroad.

Even if they had good connectivity abroad, their families at home would not be able to receive their messages or calls easily. Indonesian women focused discussion on the freedom to possess and use their phones at work to stay connected with family members; suggesting that for Indonesian women workers, confiscation of phones is a common issue. This may not be surprising given that many Indonesian women migrate for domestic work.

Stakeholders generally appreciated the importance of social media in terms of connectivity with their organizations. For example, trade unions and civil society organizations in the Philippines reported that through WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, all migrants' requests and inquiries are responded to. Similarly, in Indonesia, stakeholders say they are active on migrant-facing social media.

An Indonesian trade union reported that they receive most cases between 1 and 2 am. when migrant workers are able to access their phones.

This is consistent with reports from NGOs in countries of destination, who note that some women domestic workers are only allowed by employers to access their phones after their work ends, i.e., after midnight (HOME and Liberty Shared, 2019). Recruitment agencies in Myanmar say migrants contact them through Viber when they encounter problems with salary payments. In Cambodia, the use of social media by civil society organizations remains at a nascent stage.

However, a larger issue perhaps is that some women migrant worker participants did not know what service providers they should contact nor how to contact them. The knowledge gap is an issue that needs to be assessed and explored further by stakeholders to ensure migrant women are informed of the existing services as well as how to contact them, both before and during migration.

Good practices in the Philippines point toward positive trends in terms of greater harnessing of ICT in connecting service providers to women migrant workers. A representative from a trade union explained how they use Facebook for outreach and Signal for connecting directly to workers when privacy and confidentiality are needed. The union representative also commented that they use ICT, namely Facebook, for initial engagement and to collaborate with other groups for in-person meetings with potential women migrant workers. A representative from a women's NGO in the Philippines noted that it is a lack of capacity and funding that inhibits them using more ICT in preventative approaches targeting violence against women. The same representative also believes that ICT has great potential in raising awareness of abuse and risks of migration for women, particularly through harnessing the connectivity of Facebook. The NGO representative stated that migrants prefer having information all in one place and being able to share experiences with each other, but more securely than Facebook currently allows.

"

Security is still a big question. There is still a sense of fear to share immediately via online. Migrant workers also want to just see information in one go, less clicks on several links before getting the answers they want. So, most workers prefer to engage on Facebook groups and ask those who have similar experiences.

– NGO representative in the Philippines.

Across the four nationalities there are differences regarding whom women would contact first if problems such as exploitation or violence arose. Filipina participants said they would keep regular contact with recruitment agencies via phone calls and would mostly inquire about their rights as workers. Besides recruiters, they would contact their embassy or would rely on friends' recommendations for which agencies to contact. Myanmar participants followed a similar pattern, though they expressed a preference for using Facebook Messenger, relying on friends' advice in the pre-migration stage, and contacting various agencies such as embassies and religious leaders who could also provide a layer of support if problems arose during migration.

3.3 Access to migration information, services, and support

3.3.1 Trust placed in different information sources

In terms of perceived reliability and trustworthiness of information found online, most of the participants expressed scepticism towards information circulated on social media, especially Facebook. Both potential and returned Filipina migrant workers spoke about making an effort to verify information they find via social media by checking the websites of service providers, or only using websites referred to them by friends and family. Women migrant workers from Myanmar displayed more trust in recruitment agencies than the other groups, and when using social media they were less trusting and would check the post dates and accounts of those who post information. Among nationalities of participants, Cambodian women migrant workers particularly mentioned being unsure of how to verify information. Some said they would use offline means to verify, such as checking with friends or family who have migrated before. Indonesian women migrant workers tended to get their information in person from those who had previously migrated, though some would rely on information posted on Facebook. One Indonesian woman migrant worker commented that she believes some recruitment agencies purposefully withhold information about the conditions abroad, do not respond to inquiries, and levy fines upon migrants if they cancel the process or quit their job.

The inherent trust women migrant workers place in friends and family is easy to understand, but also highlights a potential challenge in how to actually reach the same women with up-to-date and reliable information. Investment in awareness-raising activities seems crucial, especially during the pre-departure

stage. Such activities by policy-makers must be applied on a community level, involve local leaders and families, and use the full range of media, including digital, TV, and radio channels.

Employers were unsure of migrants' digital literacy, particularly migrants' abilities to differentiate between trustworthy and untrustworthy sources. Stakeholders agreed that fake news is a widespread problem, particularly when it is circulated on social media. An NGO in Indonesia pointed to a widespread problem of fake insurance and investment companies attempting to attract migrant workers to pay for their services. Trade unions, civil society organizations, and government departments from all of the countries in the study expressed the need for migrant workers lacking education to increase their skills to discern fake news from real news through training and awareness building on how to navigate social media and verify information.

The potential challenge here seems to be that while most women do seek information, the majority primarily seek that information from recruitment agencies, believing that recruitment agencies fill their needs in the pre-departure stage. Respondents were largely unaware of migrant support groups, NGOs, or trade unions that can provide them with information, beyond working conditions in a particular sector or with a particular employer. It is not possible for women migrant workers to know what they do not know; meaning they may not be aware of the precautions to take, their legal rights, or the help services available. Information that is not shared by recruitment agencies or families may be information that women migrant workers are not unaware of.

Previous research corroborates the fact that potential migrant workers rely on personal contacts, word of mouth, and brokers (Harkins, Lindgren, and Suravoranon, 2017), which then creates a crucial barrier to future efforts to promote ICT-based solutions (ILO, 2018a).

3.3.2 Sources of information on migration and awareness of available services

There was a significant lack of awareness of existing service providers, such as NGOs, unions, and government support services, among women migrant workers.

In seeking information in preparation for migration, women migrant workers would rarely go beyond family, friends, local trusted contacts, or recruitment agencies in their communities, and these were mostly offline, face-to-face interactions (see table 7).

While Filipina respondents use the Internet comparatively more than others in seeking information, they too were often unaware of NGOs and support services for women, as they did not see a need to seek out information beyond their personal contacts.

Potential Myanmar women migrant workers said that they tend to rely on returned migrants as their first point of reference in seeking information, as they believed returnees could point them in the direction of trusted recruitment agencies. Similarly, Cambodian and Indonesian participants said they would primarily trust their husbands, village heads, previous migrants, and brokers, and for some Cambodian women, their husbands were their only source of information.

When going beyond personal contacts, many women migrant workers use Google to browse recruitment agency options and then contact them directly through Facebook or WhatsApp. Employers in Thailand and Singapore also agreed that personal contacts and word of mouth were reliable sources of information, while an employer in Malaysia noted that the information circulated through migrant communities can be inaccurate.

Table 7. Sources of information on migration by FGD participants[1] (%)

Information sources on migration	All n=105	Philippines n=26	Myanmar n=24	Cambodia n=28	Indonesia n=27
Through friends	71	69	92	75	52
Internet	37	69	25	18	37
Job agency or broker	33	35	50	11	41
TV documentary / programmes	26	42	13	25	22
News and media reports (including through TV, radio)	18	35	4	21	11
Local government authorities	15	8	8	29	15
None	12	–	4	25	19
Public service announcements	11	12	17	7	7
NGO	10	–	–	29	7
Posters, leaflets or brochures	5	7	–	7	4
Police	4	–	13	4	–
Community event, festival, etc.	3	–	8	–	4

– = nil

1 More than one response possible.

3.3.3 Women migrant workers' needs for information and services vis-a-vis ICT

In terms of how service providers can better address the needs of women migrant workers, many participants said that websites need to be kept up to date; information should be found in one place; and greater Internet connectivity is needed. Women also called for capacity building from governments, NGOs, and other service providers for more effective use of ICT.

Participants saw Facebook and forums, where migrants can share information, as vital to safe migration; though reliability of information remains an issue. The notion that social media probably represents a natural entry point for migrant service and information providers came across very clearly.

When asked about what can be improved in terms of better access to information, the Philippines' stakeholder participants reported that they are satisfied with the current availability of information that migrants access, and do not see room for improvement. Cambodian, Indonesian, and Myanmar stakeholders, however, all recognized the need for capacity building for potential migrants, not only to increase their digital literacy to maximize the usage of smartphones, but also to discern trustworthy sources from less reliable ones. A Cambodian women migrant worker focus group suggested greater involvement of NGOs in raising awareness of safe and regular migration as well how to search for accurate and reliable information. An Indonesian group expressed a desire for social forums where the information they need is gathered onto one digital platform that is consistent and reliable. Myanmar women migrant workers suggested the Government share reliable information through Facebook.

The combination of a lack of information, too much unverified information, and lack of knowledge about what to look for in the pre-migration stage demonstrates the necessity of re-evaluating how to best reach women migrant workers.

Development of an ICT solution (or enhancement of existing ones) aimed at decreasing risks through awareness raising may be seriously hindered in its objectives should women migrant workers lack the knowledge of where and how to seek out such information. It would therefore be essential to factor in the trustworthiness of friends and family in any ICT concept development effort. In achieving this, any ICT solution would need to take advantage of the strength of existing platforms, particularly Facebook. Not only does Facebook have the greatest outreach, but it also harnesses the connectivity and trust of existing communal and familiar networks. Recruitment agencies, migrant support centres, and NGOs would need to integrate themselves into these digital networks.

3.3.4 Awareness raising about violence and exploitation

When asked if they had heard stories of other women facing violence abuse or exploitative working conditions, there were diverse responses across the nationalities. Some Filipina migrant workers had read about domestic workers who faced exploitative conditions on social media. They felt it was positive that social media was at least raising awareness that such exploitation exists and in some cases providing helpful information.

Myanmar women respondents had come across similar stories on social media. Some expressed concern about whether they were true or not, and others used the stories and the comments related to them to get information on how to navigate exploitative or violent situations.

“

People [migrants] never share their problems on social media, but they do share if they found something about how to be safe when you have migrated.

– Returned woman migrant worker from Myanmar

While Cambodian respondents reported not having seen any such instances of abuse or violence on social media, Indonesian women, on the other hand, discussed in detail about cases of sexual harassment, violence, and exploitation they had read about, mostly on social media. One woman talked about a particular case of a domestic worker subjected to sexual violence and how the story influenced other women migrant workers who chose to seek work in manufacturing instead of domestic work.

This decision-making behaviour reveals the limits of social media, such as Facebook, in the context of migration. While it does raise awareness of potential risks and can sometimes offer or point to informal advice on what steps to take in such situations, most migrant women are unsure of what to do with this information; are unsure of its credibility; have little or no trust in the information; and often lack reliable mechanisms to report incidences of violence themselves. (See the next section for further and specific information on reporting cases of violence and exploitation via ICT.)

3.3.5 Reporting violence and exploitation with the help of ICT

In a few countries outside the ASEAN region, ICT is being used by the general public for women to report and geotag instances of harassment. The app HarassMap is being used in Cairo and Mumbai in this way, giving other women a visual guide of what areas of the cities to avoid.

However, for most women migrant workers in ASEAN, both potential and returned, their recruitment

agency is the first point of contact in the event of a problems, including labour exploitation, violence, or abuse. In this study, recruitment agencies had usually initially been referred to them by friends, and as such, they placed a certain level of trust in agencies to resolve any issues faced. Embassies were commonly seen as a second point of contact; although they were commonly viewed as inaccessible to the women migrant workers (see section 3.2.6 on limitations of digital connectivity).

As above, the FGDs revealed there was a significant lack of either awareness or use of migrant-focused service providers by women migrant workers while abroad. Potential migrants from the Philippines said they would rely on the local Filipino community for support. They would also search for worker's groups but were unsure of how to locate or contact them. Some Filipina women did not see any benefit in contacting a service provider. Some Myanmar respondents did say they received some training at a migration skill centre and knew they could receive support for documentation from their embassy. Cambodian women were unaware of support services available to them because their information was limited to what they could learn from family and friends. There was no mention of contacting their embassy; though potential migrants believed they could report to the embassy or an NGO if they had a problem. Indonesian women said that while they were aware of embassies and UN agencies, they have never contacted them, but some had their numbers and addresses on hand just in case.

A number of potential women migrant workers in the FGDs stated that, in addition to their recruitment agency or family back home, they would contact their supervisor in the event of a problem. Despite the assumption that employers can be trusted to resolve work-related issues or abuse, very few of the employers interviewed had been contacted by their workers for reporting a problem, and they also did not know of any support services for migrant workers. Employers, like the workers interviewed, put more trust in embassies and did not see social media as an effective reporting avenue. However, this was also due to a lack of trust among employers in worker's abilities to safely use social media.

> **"**
>
> **[Domestic workers'] level of knowledge is not the same with us. Even if they can upload something on Facebook, if they upload silly things, they can get arrested. So, it is better for them to go to the embassy or police for proper support.**
>
> – Singaporean employer of a domestic worker

A Thai employer in the construction industry did not see what role ICT had to play in the safety of women migrant workers, but stated the husbands of women migrant workers provided enough security.

Consistent with this, a 2016 ILO study found that women migrant workers in the construction industry in Thailand are often de facto required by employers to be accompanied by a husband to be hired. The inadequate safety in employer-provided housing for construction workers was justified because husbands are to provide safety and security (Napier-Moore and Sheill, 2016).

Some employers in Thailand also recognized that language is a barrier for migrants wishing to report abuse. However, if reporting were done using mobile technology, many apps today, such as Line and Facebook, have translation functions installed that make communication across linguistic barriers easier.

From the stakeholders' perspective, social media is indeed a common way for women migrant workers to contact them; though frequency with which this happens does not tend to be adequately monitored. It was recognized, however, that there is much that needs to be done in engaging with women migrant workers, making information accessible, and increasing women's capacity to migrate safely. Stakeholders

in the Philippines and Indonesia confirmed that they receive most communication through social media and messaging, but also admitted their own limited capacity in this regard, unable to regularly updating Facebook groups, for example. They recognized the potential of social media to better connect with workers, but emphasized the need to improving digital literacy of migrant workers in order to make effective use of digital channels.

"

People access our website, but we don't have data on how many and who they are. But our Facebook group, many migrant workers use it to find information, share their problems or connect with friends.

– Government representative from Indonesia.

When the FGD participants were asked how they would respond to instances of abusive or violent behaviour, there were mixed responses, including contacting the embassy, recruitment agencies, NGOs, INGOs, or the police. Interestingly, Cambodian potential migrants felt they simply did not have equal rights while abroad, thus creating a significant barrier to reporting. Returned Cambodian migrants were also not aware of how to respond to situations of violence or abuse. Myanmar women were unsure of how to report and would tend to seek advice from the recruitment agency. Indonesian and Filipina women would reach out to embassies first and then recruitment agencies in the event of no response from the embassy. Stakeholders said they would rely on a combination of phone calls, group chats, and social media for receiving reports of abuse or inquiries; however there was no indication of any dedicated mechanisms for reporting abuse. One NGO in Indonesia had a platform on social media for reporting as well as running group chats where potential and returning migrants can share advice.

An ILO report on access to justice for migrant workers showed that there are numerous major barriers that severely undermine migrant workers' ability to seek remedies, these barriers are then compounded by gender and status (Harkins and Åhlberg, 2017). This study shows that for migrant women with legal status, lack of information and lack of awareness are the most significant barriers, along with ineffective reporting mechanisms through embassies, recruitment agencies, and employers. While some unions and NGOs intend to fill this gap in government services, the study found some fall short in this purpose due to lack of outreach with migrant workers. The issue lies in the fact that in most cases, women migrant workers who need help do not know the existing reporting mechanisms or how to contact service providers. Services that do exist, while well-intended, usually take a passive approach, leaving it up to the migrants to contact them.

3.3.6 Limitations of digital connectivity: When no one answers

The limitations of non-digital connectivity were evident as respondents shared their practical experience in reaching out for help. Women migrant workers in Indonesia highlighted problems with connecting to recruitment agencies or embassies when the only channel for communication was via traditional phone calls. Phone numbers are often difficult to locate, or no one has answered when they call.

Some Indonesians reported labour abuses that were compounded by an inability to seek help or by weaknesses with helpline protocols. An Indonesian woman worker reported being locked up with no phone. Another did not have their recruitment agency's phone number, while others complained that their agencies never checked working conditions.

> **"**
>
> **Most of the time I was not allowed to go out or meet with people, so when I put out the bin or picked the kids up from the building lobby, secretly I talked to other domestic workers. When I did have the chance to make a call and I called the embassy and local agency, either no one picked up the phone, or, if they answered, they put the blame on me.**
>
> – Returned woman migrant worker from Indonesia

Women highlighted issues related to labour conditions, making clear that solving them requires more than just better connectivity.

For example, Cambodian participants who experienced labour abuses such as withheld salary payments, no break time, and verbal abuse did not reach out for support. Again, this demonstrates the gap between prevention and response. Many of the women interviewed believed that ICT and social media could help by informing them of the risks and therefore aid their decision-making. However, when asked, many were not aware of these risks, nor had they pre-emptively looked for information on where to seek help.

While reporting is an important element and an option for some migrant workers, preventing problems from happening in the first place through well thought-through, safe migration strategies appears to be an area where new ICT-based solutions can contribute the most. However, knowledge and understanding of reporting mechanisms may not always convince women migrant workers to take action, as maintaining employment can be of a higher priority than accessing remedies.

3.3.7 Using social media to report or post experiences of violence or exploitation

Many study participants felt sceptical and hesitant to use social media to report issues, such as poor working conditions, violence, or harassment. The reason cited was the possibility of negative backlash through comments and online harassment. Some Myanmar participants, however, said that they would post a negative experience online to help others avoid similar situations. Some Cambodian women workers had shared information online concerning violence during migration and had indeed received mixed comments.

> **"**
>
> **Yes, I may post information about my problem if I couldn't sort it out alone – just for reminding other people how to avoid similar situations.**
>
> – Potential woman migrant worker from Myanmar

Returned Indonesian women migrant workers expressed more hesitation to share sensitive matters, including abuse or harassment, online and were more likely to instead tell friends or family directly, believing that it is not appropriate to share such personal or serious affairs publicly.

> ## "
> ## I never share sensitive problems on social media. Sometimes, I shared about feeling tired or stressed after work. The reaction was not serious, just fun.
> – Returned woman migrant worker from Indonesia

Among Filipina focus groups, there was an attitudinal difference between the younger and older workers, with younger women less hesitant to share information on violence or abuse on social media, while older women were more concerned with doing so for fear of being judged. Older women workers said they would treat social media as a last resort and would first seek out assistance from the recruitment agency. Myanmar women workers said they would similarly first contact agencies and then post on social media or in group chats if necessary. They expressed an awareness that they would need to provide evidence in such an instance. Both Cambodian and Indonesian potential migrant workers thought it is acceptable to share problems of abuse or violence experienced abroad, but also expressed the importance of avoiding personal details that could create shame or embarrassment for themselves or others. The offline factors that discourage women from reporting abuse, such as victim blaming, negative backlash and other repercussions (Caritas, 2012), are therefore echoed in the digital space, perhaps even more so due to the widespread accessibility and "viral" nature of social networks.

When asked if social media could be an effective avenue for women migrant workers to share problems experienced while abroad, many of the focus groups recognized potential benefits such as raising awareness and creating a forum where migrant workers can help each other to be aware of the risks and provide advice or help each other.

> ## "
> ## It doesn't matter if I share problems on social media because the idea is to prevent, warn others to be careful, report, and find solutions.
> – Potential women migrant worker from Indonesia

However, as above, they also recognized the risk of victim blaming, retaliation from employers, and humiliation. When seeing other women share experiences of abuse or violence online, there was a feeling of sympathy and pity. Some recognized that such stories are hard to verify, and others would see them as warnings to be careful when migrating.

The mixed responses from the study participants indicate that reporting mechanisms directed toward women migrant workers would need to ensure confidentiality and safety as a priority in order to genuinely protect the interests of women migrant workers and to create a safe space where they feel confident to share negative experiences.

Stakeholders shared these concerns with respect to using social media channels to report abuse and share information concerning risks. Some felt that women migrant workers lacked appreciation for security and safety online. However, there was also recognition from some stakeholders that those who were aware of the risks of sharing information online may be unaware of other options to report abuse.

A Filipino trade union representative discussed their efforts in creating a safe space for reporting online through secure channels and the use of moderators to protect migrants' identities. The representative also noted how the union uses social media for initial contact with migrants but also follows up with offline meetings to ensure effective engagement and information sharing. Besides security concerns, stakeholders also see the need for greater collaboration between different actors and support services in streamlining efforts to make access to information and reporting mechanisms accessible and user-friendly.

Service providers interviewed reported heavily relying on Facebook and chat groups for women migrant workers to reach out to them; while acknowledging that fear of retaliation and shame, as well as lack of awareness of those groups, are the biggest barriers to accessing their services.

While Facebook does indeed provide a rich and significant digital platform in terms of popularity and connectivity, it is not a platform designed to deal with reporting of sensitive matters.

A trade union representative from the Philippines provided an example of a good practice where Facebook is used for initial engagement, but actual reporting or seeking advice is carried out by more secure digital means, such as Signal or WhatsApp.

"

Facebook is our initial engagement. Then migrant workers are referred to specific groups or a person that can help address their concerns more easily and one closest to their area. Priority is to help members of the union, but most of those to whom we reach out are not members. Nonetheless, no one is turned away. We will assist in referring them instead.

– Trade union representative in the Philippines.

The FGDs with women migrant workers also provided recommendations for how social media could be effectively used to curb violence and abuse against women migrant workers. All the groups suggested greater involvement of government agencies so as to provide an effective channel for communication between migrant communities and governments. Such integration of government services and social media would create greater accessibility for migrants, as they are mostly unaware of where to turn to for help. They also suggested that in using social media, government authorities could share information on labour rights; labour laws in destination countries; support services for reporting abuse; and basic advice such as Wi-Fi access, travelling from the airport, and trustworthy recruitment agents.

Very few of the women interviewed stated they had experienced violence or abuse – online or offline – and those who did said they had not reported the incident to any authority or organization. Some had seen posts of others who had faced abuse, and while they did not know how to respond, they reflected that they at least had better awareness of such risks. As such, the general opinion of the focus groups towards social media and avoiding violence and abuse was that it can serve mainly to raise awareness, and noted that current channels of awareness raising are too obscure and have very little reach. The focus groups also stated that social media has the potential to provide reporting mechanisms and channels for effective communication with governments and service providers.

3.4 Access to mobile phones and the Internet

3.4.1 Possession and usage of phones with Internet access

As noted earlier, phone usage can be curtailed by employers, especially in domestic work, but also impacted by circumstances where women migrant workers share their phone with others, primarily spouses, but also children, for both entertainment and schoolwork.

There were no significant issues reported in accessing the Internet once abroad. Many returned migrant women had prepared for travelling abroad and for periods of being offline by downloading useful apps beforehand. Some returned migrant women from Myanmar were well prepared by downloading dictionaries and translation apps, as well as joining chat groups of local agencies. Those from the Philippines had

downloaded Grab, Google translate, and among those headed to Singapore, the Singaporean Ministry of Manpower App to check their work permit status. Participants from Cambodia had less capacity for effective usage, as they tend to only upgrade to a smartphone once abroad thanks to higher wages, but many lacked the digital literacy to use all the functions. While only one stakeholder raised the issue of Internet connectivity in rural areas, this was identified as a problem by most of the women migrant workers, particularly from Indonesia and Cambodia.

Stakeholders offered different advice in terms of ensuring effective access and usage of phones. Recruitment agencies in Cambodia suggested there is a need for pre-departure digital literacy training to maximize the benefit of ICT, and this was echoed by the Indonesian Government, who had similar advice. However, this suggests a reliance on traditional training approaches in the region that so far have failed to build on the strengths of most ICT-based solutions – that is, the ability to discover opportunities and advice through networks and self-learning.

"

We should have one platform to connect all stakeholders [relevant ministries and CSOs], however, there is no budget support, and this should be led by [the] Ministry of Interior.

– NGO representative in Cambodia.

A major barrier to effective use of ICT was identified as the lack of streamlining and coordination by the different agencies and support services, as well as a lack of transnational cooperation to increase the accessibility of regular migration channels. It appears this is an area where an ICT solution should have a lot of potential, provided it is developed as a platform where users can contribute and share information.

Stakeholders – and migrant workers – recognized that information should ideally be in one place and that this platform should allow for user-driven feedback, utilizing the informal knowledge networks of migrant workers. For example, a centralized database of recruitment agencies would allow for an "all-in-one" access point and could be self-regulated through a user-generated feedback function, helping to build on existing networks of advice and knowledge in migrant communities.

"

Migrant workers' connecting with stakeholders using social media is limited, especially with government.

– NGO representative in Indonesia

3.4.2 Expenses on phones and Internet access

Women migrant workers from the Philippines and Indonesia noted that they had free Internet access most of the time while working abroad, in public places with free Wi-Fi or, for domestic workers, at their employer's home via private Wi-Fi. Most of the participants (returned and potential migrant workers) would on average spend less than US$10 on phone credit and Internet a month in their own country. Filipina women spend double the average amount, due to the amount of time they spend on their phones, while Cambodian and Indonesian respondents spend less than US$5 on phone credit and data each month (see table 8).

This study was only able to accurately capture what women migrant workers are spending in home countries before and after they migrate, not what they spent while abroad. However, women migrant workers reported that due to the greater accessibility of Wi-Fi abroad, the cost of data could be lower in the destination country.

As previously mentioned, the majority of women had smartphones (as opposed to feature phones). Participants in Myanmar emphasized the necessity of owning a smartphone and the cost effectiveness of using the Internet for calls rather than using prepaid phone credits. One Indonesian woman reported that while her employer in Malaysia did purchase her a smartphone and make deductions from her salary, she was not instructed on how to use it and consequently did not use it while abroad.

Table 8. Investment on ICT by potential and returnee women migrant workers (US$)

ICT investment item	All	Philippines	Myanmar	Cambodia	Indonesia
Average money spent to buy a mobile phone	141	205	116	128	108
Average monthly spending on phone and data, currently in country of origin	8	16	8	3	4

3.4.3 Time spent on phones and Internet

Migration may provide opportunities for better ICT literacy. Returned women migrant workers tended to spend more time on their phones than potential migrants. Stakeholders interviewed reflected that this was often because it was only after having migrated that women workers would either be able to afford a phone or would have gained greater digital literacy. Trade union representatives commented that Filipina women migrant workers have high usage at all stages of the migration process. This was corroborated by the women themselves, who reported that in the pre-migration stage typically one to eight – but up to 16 – hours a day could be spent online; while abroad this time would be between two and eight hours a day. This amount of time is not unusual, as the Philippines tops the world's Internet usage index (Lamb, 2019).

Myanmar women migrant workers also reported spending more time online once they had returned home. Recruitment agencies confirmed that migrant workers tend not to be able to afford phones in the pre-migration stage, but will invest in a phone as they migrate in order to keep in touch with their families. The same applied for Indonesian participants: once they had returned, many could afford a new phone and would actively use it to keep in touch with other workers and look for jobs. Multiple stakeholders in Cambodia commented on how potential migrants would only have basic phones due to the high cost of smartphones, however those migrating to developed countries like Japan would be more likely to own a smartphone as well as a greater ability to navigate the Internet.

Not surprisingly, digital literacy can impact on how much time women migrant workers spend on their phone. Since Filipinas are generally more digitally literate, Filipina respondents use a wider range of smartphone functions. Women migrant workers from Myanmar and Indonesia would spend between one and eight hours a day; while the Cambodian participants would spend between 15 minutes and three hours a day on mobile devices.

3.4.4 Platforms usage and sustainability

Given phone usage in all stages of migration is primarily centred around social connectivity, correspondingly the main platforms used are messaging apps such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and Viber. As shown in table 9 below, besides messaging apps, Facebook itself is heavily used, though Cambodian respondents spend more time on entertainment. Both Filipina and Myanmar women use educational apps. Only the Filipina women actively use apps relating to migration, such as banking and remittance apps. See for instance box 4 about the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) app Peso Sense.

Messaging apps were seen as important for maintaining contact with recruitment agencies, since phone calls were less reliable due to either the phone number not being easy to find or staff being unresponsive. Myanmar migrant workers commented that the better-known recruitment agencies have better communication with employers and are therefore more likely to monitor or negotiate for better working conditions. The importance of frequent contact with employers and recruitment agencies was also mentioned by the Cambodian and Indonesian migrant workers, particularly in terms of monitoring working conditions. With more reliable channels of communication creating greater accessibility, recruitment agencies could have more accountability and responsibility for workers' conditions. However, the Philippines demonstrates that with greater digital literacy, varied and more effective usage of ICT has a tendency to increase.

Table 9. Types of apps downloaded by FGD participants[1] (%)

Types of Apps	All	Philippines	Myanmar	Cambodia	Indonesia
Messaging apps (e.g., Line)	57	69	50	29	82
Social networks (Facebook)	75	92	63	50	82
News	11	15	–	21	7
Games/entertainment	52	81	–	68	56
Lifestyle (travel, health, etc.)	9	19	–	7	7
Business, banking, etc.	11	35	4	–	7
Education and e-learning	18	35	25	4	11
Migration Apps, such as, recruitment, complaints, etc.	8	27	–	–	4
None	11	–	25	11	7

– = nil
1 More than one response possible

In addition to presence on social media platforms, websites and microsites, as well as messaging apps, hotline channels, and normal phone calls, there are ICT initiatives specifically set up to support women migrant workers. Stakeholders in Indonesia, as one example, referred to an app in development by a recruitment agency that would provide general information such as the cost of migrating and how to get a bank account and work permits. Some examples mentioned by government, union, and CSO stakeholders were an MRC hotline, SaverAsia, Peso Sense (see box 5), SIGNAL, SOS, Indonesian migrant workers' window, recruiter watchdog websites, ASPATAKI app, LSCW collaboration with GPC and Media to support safe migration, etc. (see table 10).

However, when asked about what ICT-based solutions they were using or aware of, none of the women migrant workers in the study recalled any of the ICT-based solutions mentioned and built by stakeholders.

in table 10. This again confirms the apparent gap between what stakeholders provide and the information sources and services actually used by women migrant workers. In addition to this gap, another challenge faced by app producers is that each app needs to be adapted to different phone operating systems.

Table 10. ICT-based solutions mentioned by stakeholders

ICT-based solutions mentioned	Purpose of the ICT-based solutions	Country
Aspataki app	An app providing general information regarding work	Indonesia
"Go ICN" app	An app for sharing information about recruitment agencies	Indonesia
Jendela TKI (Indonesian migrant workers window)	An online information with important contact numbers	Indonesia
Mal Shwet Pyaung (Miss Migration)	IOM Myanmar's Facebook Chat Bot that helps process information queries	Myanmar
One door service by Ministry of Manpower	A digital platform coordinating all complaints and information regarding migrant workers' protection	Indonesia
Pantau PJTKI (Recruiter agency watchdog)	A website providing database of all recruitment agencies in Indonesia	Indonesia
Peso Sense	A website promoting financial literacy (see box 4)	Philippines
Safe Travel	Indonesia Ministry of Foreign Affairs app with an emergency push button directly from migrant workers' phones	Indonesia
Saver Asia	A web-based remittances cost comparison platform, supported by ILO/TRIANGLE in ASEAN	Cambodia, Indonesia
Shwe Ain Mat (Golden dreams) app	A Yelp-like app, by Issara Institute, for learning and exchanging information, reviews, ratings, comments, and advice about employers, recruiters, and service providers, in both home and destination countries	Myanmar
Signal app	An app ensuring confidentiality for sensitive issues	Philippines
SOS app	A paid app that allows migrant workers to get immediately connected to someone for help	Philippines
Yay Kyi Yar ("Towards Clearer Waters")	A radio project providing information on the risks and opportunities of migrating for work within Myanmar and internationally (see box 3)	Myanmar
Zaw Gyi app	An app by the Migrant Worker Rights Network for migrant workers migrating to Thailand, providing information on labour laws and benefits, information on school for migrant children, etc.	Myanmar

Box 5. Peso Sense: A financial literacy platform reaches a majority of women

In 2013 the Commission of Filipinos Overseas (CFO) established a financial literacy campaign, training modules, and practical tools for overseas Filipino workers, called Peso Sense: the Philippine Financial Freedom Campaign. Peso Sense has a mission to "improve financial literacy by promoting productive expenditure, greater savings, and entrepreneurship among overseas Filipinos and their beneficiaries". It began in response to 2012 World Bank research suggesting financial literacy related to remittances was successful if the remittance beneficiaries and spenders were engaged in the country of origin. Peso Sense has made use of online platforms through a website (www.pesosense.com) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/pesosenseph), aiming at both migrant workers abroad as well as members of their families back home. Its online training modules are tailored for different groups: retirees and seniors, students, professionals, homemakers, and young adults. Peso Sense has been funded by the Western Union Foundation and the United Nations Development Programme.

The Facebook page shares information on wise spending, financial tips, inspirational stories and quotes, and attention-grabbing memes on financial literacy. As of end 2018, the Peso Sense Facebook platform has over 3.2 million people who have subscribed through Facebook "like" functionality, 69 per cent of whom are women. Within ASEAN, "likers" of Peso Sense include the following numbers of people per country location:

- Philippines – 2,708,638
- Singapore – 25,103
- Malaysia – 10,970
- Thailand – 3,511
- Brunei Darussalam – 2, 186
- Viet Nam – 2,004
- Indonesia – 1,544
- Cambodia – 1,098

Source: Correspondence, Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 15 Apr. 2019.

3.4.5 Language used on phones and social media

For the Philippines, a large majority of respondents would use both their native language and English online, while very few exclusively used their native language. This is not surprising since English is an official language in the Philippines and the switching between Tagalog and English is very common in informal discourse (Bautista, 2004). However, when asked, respondents in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar said they most commonly used their native language when online. Greater fluency in English naturally aids in acquiring greater digital literacy, as 54 per cent of all global web-content is in English (W3techs, n.d.). Though it does not necessarily prove a causal relationship in this case, greater English skills are likely to act as an advantage when it comes to navigating digital spaces. As shown in table 11 below, none of the women from Myanmar or Indonesia used English exclusively, and those who used both their native language and English online were very few in Cambodia and Indonesia. Further, this is consistent with their activity online being mainly to connect with friends and family.

Some people who migrate are not literate, however, and it is important to include visual material and videos in any migrant-facing platforms (See table 12).

Table 11. Digital literacy levels and languages used on phones and social media by FGD participants (%)

Language used	All n=105	Cambodia n=28	Indonesia n=27	Myanmar n=24	Philippines n=26
Native language	60	82	85	67	8
English	7	7	–	–	19
Both	32	11	15	33	73
Digital literacy	Moderate	Low	Low	Moderate	High

– = nil

Table 12. Literacy levels in South-eastern Asia, 2017 (%)

	South-east Asia Region	Cambodia	Indonesia	Myanmar	Philippines
Youth literacy	97	92	100	85	98
Adult literacy	93	81	95	76	96
Of illiterate youth, % women	49	47	51	51	31
Of illiterate adults, % women	63	67	69	60	45

Source: UNESCO, 2018.

In Myanmar, men are 28% more likely to own their own phone than women

Scott, Balasubramanian, and Ehrke, 2017

4. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to scope the extent and ways in which women migrant workers in South-east Asia use ICT platforms and apps in the migration process. The study revealed that usage of smartphones is generally high in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines, and those who had migrated more than once used wages earned abroad to purchase a smartphone, as they recognize their utility in migration and upon return. However, there exist large inequalities, both economic and gendered, in terms of digital literacy and effective use of smartphones. Women migrant workers tend to use their phones for connectivity with friends and family more than any other purpose, especially those women migrants who lack the capacity to make full use of the features that smartphones possess. Digital literacy is a crucial factor, as the study revealed that Filipina women migrant workers were particularly adept at using several different functions and apps; whereas Cambodian and Indonesian women found themselves limited to messaging and Facebook. Women migrant workers have also identified advantages that men have in becoming digitally literate, both in terms of second language ability and more free time to learn how to use mobile technology. Women workers are also disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of access. Domestic workers may not be allowed to access their phone or Wi-Fi during work or even rest hours, and women in the construction industry accompanying their husbands may be reliant on their husbands for access to a shared phone.

In the migration process, family, friends, and migrant communities play a crucial role in the circulation of information. Potential migrants rarely reach beyond these personal or communal contacts in seeking information about migrating or about trustworthy recruitment agencies. While digital technology can provide a technical avenue for effective dissemination of information and advice, as well as strategic outreach and cooperation between recruitment agencies, a major challenge is ensuring the reliability of the information and services provided online. Government and civil society organizations are required to ensure women migrant workers are fully informed of reporting mechanisms and their legal rights in the pre-departure stage. Moreover, digital literacy sessions should be required to build women migrant workers' capacity to use digital tools in a meaningful way and to protect themselves. Digital technology can also help women migrant workers overcome language barriers with their employers through the use of translation apps and language learning apps. However, for many of Asian languages, the quality of translation is not ideal. Since

effective use of mobile technology can depend on the users' level of English and/or language in country of destination, pre-departure digital orientation would have to ensure at least a basic level of English for online use.

Making information accessible to potential women migrant workers must go beyond a top–down approach, it is crucial to utilize the existing networks of trust in migrant's home communities in disseminating information about safe migration. Interviews with stakeholders revealed a lack of awareness on the part of civil society and trade unions that migrants do not see a need to contact them unless there is an emergency. There was, however, some recognition that migrant workers need capacity building on effective ICT usage; as even where migrants would use the Internet to search for information, they were unable to do so effectively, largely because they often did not know what to search for.

The study revealed that the process of migration itself can and does improve digital literacy, especially for women from Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar. This is often due to better Internet access abroad in countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, but also the increased reliance on social networks to stay connected to friends and family in their home country. For women, ICT usage can be empowering when coupled with migration, as they are more likely to be able to purchase their own phone and manage their own data plans when abroad. However, restrictions on usage still exist for domestic workers by employers, as well as for women who accompany or are accompanied by their husbands.

The study also revealed the extent to which Facebook's influence is central to online activity, as the social network provides a one stop shop for migrant groups, family, friends, photos, videos, and news. Facebook messenger also proved to be the most popular chat service. Since most migrants had access to free Wi-Fi once abroad, Messenger provides a free service for sending messages, calling, and video chatting. Accessibility was rarely an issue based on financial ability. More often, migrants were concerned about the availability of broadband and Wi-Fi in their home country than the cost of the phones or data plans.

Safe and effective reporting mechanisms, including for violence and abuse, were lacking a coherent digital presence. Most migrant women noted difficulty in contacting embassies due to their lack of online presence. As such, the recruitment agencies would be the first point of contact. Online chat services appeared to be the main channel through which migrants would report issues or problems. While migrant women saw value in social networks in raising awareness of the risks and potential abuses that women migrant workers face, they believed that social media would only increase the risk to those who shared instances of violence or abuse.

An overall conclusion to be drawn from this study is that ICT has already become a major platform for connectivity for migrant workers, and in some cases has helped to empower women, as ICT can increase their autonomy and independence so long as restrictions are not imposed. The rapid digitalization of society means that migrant workers have naturally gravitated towards using online platforms as they move abroad. However, their usage is limited to what they believe ICT exists for: mainly social connectivity. There is a lack of understanding among migrant women of how ICT can aid in the migration process, and this lack of understanding also exists for stakeholders in terms of how ICT can work to making migration safer and fairer. Ultimately the networks that migrants use should continue to be utilized, as they are trusted by migrant workers. What should be focused on is facilitating greater connectivity between actors in order to effectively coordinate and streamline services into a digital space similar to successful platforms such as Facebook, Trip Advisor, and Grab whose popularity rests on the extent of their functionality, user-friendliness, and trustworthiness.

"

What needs to be improved? "I need to be allowed to carry and use my own mobile phone and contact my family at any time."

— Indonesian returned women migrant worker

5. Recommendations

1. Use ICT to improve networking and organizing, as well as access to information and services in both countries of origin and destination

   ■ **Harness mobile technology for migrant workers to be able to verify information on labour migration documentation, as well as to find and verify reliable recruitment agents and employers.** This could create healthy competition and more transparency around recruitment costs and services, while at the same time helping women migrants find better employment opportunities. App designs should allow recruitment agencies to promote their services and costs, as well as to receive reviews from migrant workers.

   ■ **Take care not to consider apps and other digital solutions as a panacea to the challenges that women migrant workers face. Traditional outreach is still required,** not least to ensure inclusion of those with lower levels of education and income who, as a result, find it challenging to gain access to smart technology or online spaces.

   ■ **Include digital literacy as part of pre-departure training and post-arrival information programmes,** educating women migrant workers on available ICT-based solutions, cyber security, and how to access reliable information. Capacity-building efforts could include cost-effective ways to connect with family and friends; how to set up an email account; how to find information on safe migration; how to verify recruitment agencies and employers; how to contact service providers; and how to report violence and abuse. Any training should also include techniques on how to negotiate mobile phone use in situations where access to phones is restricted by employers or recruiters.

   ■ **Promote the use of mobile technology in networking and organizing of migrant workers, including in women-dominant sectors of work.** Women report primarily using mobile technology for connectivity. This can be harnessed further by trade unions, domestic worker associations, and migrant worker associations.

   ■ **Promote online (and offline) migrant support services and awareness raising through social media.** Given most women migrant workers are using social media, there is potential for high uptake and sharing of migrant-facing apps, platforms, and other information if promoted through social media. Women migrant workers interviewed had little awareness of what services exist or what

they need to know to migrate safely. Awareness raising through social media should also target friends and family as key influencers, as well as established peer networks.

2. Ensure that gender-responsive laws and social norms support women migrant workers' use of ICT

- **Change employment norms, standard contracts, and laws to include rights to mobile phone access.** This is important for all sectors, but particularly for domestic work, where confiscation of phones and restriction of access to Wi-Fi is common. Information campaigns should target employers directly. On 30 October 2018 delegates to the 11th ASEAN Forum on Labour Migration adopted the following related Recommendation: "Ensure that all migrant workers are accorded the right to information and communication, such as ownership; access; and reasonable usage to mobile phones or other ICT gadgets. More attention should be placed on isolated and vulnerable workers, including increasing connectivity in hard-to-reach places."

- **Where migrant women, particularly domestic workers, face restrictions on using mobile phones, consider self-help programmes that teach how to conduct an informed "mobile phone negotiation"** with an employer through positive win–win arguments, showing how ICT access results in positive outcomes for both the employer and the employee.

- **Strengthen legal frameworks that protect women migrant workers' rights,** including better regulation of recruitment agencies and employers; full labour law coverage of women-dominant sectors; and robust access to justice and complaints mechanisms throughout the migration process. Without rights being guaranteed in law and in practice, any ICT solution that gives information or tries to facilitate complaint making will fail to make a positive difference to women migrant workers.

3. Promote streamlined, sustainable, one-stop ICT platforms

- **Create one-stop service platforms, streamlining current offerings from various providers.** This will help to ensure information and services reach migrant workers more efficiently and cost effectively, while fostering collaboration between developers and other stakeholders and avoiding duplication of efforts.

- If building or enhancing existing apps or one-stop platforms, consider designs with the following characteristics:

  – **Easily accessible and free of charge** for migrant workers. Most women migrant workers spend on average less than US$10 per month on ICT access, and most use pre-paid mobile services and take advantage of free Wi-Fi when using the Internet.

  – **Anonymous for all migrant users, with assurance of data privacy.** Confidentiality fosters trust in mechanisms, particularly those for reporting sensitive information such as irregular immigration or work status, violence or abuse. Collection, use, and sharing of data on migrant workers should be regulated and monitored to protect their privacy and online safety, both when such platforms are developed and managed by private companies or by State actors.

  – **Able to safely allow users to report violence, abuse, or exploitation.** The information reported should be made private, confidential, and direct to those service providers that can provide immediate help and advice.

  – **Based on a "shared economy" approach** that fosters self-regulation through building a community with shared rules and values. This is similar to the approach adopted by Trip Advisor, whose platform fosters a relationship of trust between hosts and guests. Ride-hailing and e-commerce apps in the region are similarly piloting platform designs that prioritize functionality, user friendliness, and trustworthiness.

  – **Well-resourced and sustainable** (e.g., through employers' funding or through integration into permanent sites). Apps require ongoing maintenance, updating, and often also dedicated moderators, to be successful and useful to migrant worker users.

- **Accurate, with up-to-date content that is verified and updated regularly by stakeholders.** Content guidelines can be developed to ensure information is consistent, accurate, and verified. There should be reporting and blacklisting of inaccurate information or unscrupulous services.

- **Provided in the majority and minority languages of countries of origin, and keeping in mind that not all migrant workers are literate.** Audio and picture-based information options are being trialed by some app developers.

- **Based on research that indicates what information, assistance, and tools for organizing that migrant workers, and especially women, actually need.**

- **Monitored to regularly assess how and if existing ICT platforms are being used** by migrant workers, with monitoring data disaggregated by gender where possible.

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Appendix I. Screening questionnaire

_____

Respondent full name: **Location:**

_____

Date: **Mobile phone number:**

    /   / 2018

For Potential Migrants	

1 How old are you?

○ 18-29 years old	FGD 1
○ 30-40 years old	FGD 2
○ Other	STOP

2 Do you intend to migrate to Malaysia, Singapore or Thailand?

○ Malaysia	CONTINUE
○ Singapore	CONTINUE
○ Thailand	CONTINUE
○ No	STOP

3 Do you plan to migrate within the next 12 months?

○ Yes, in contact with a recruiter	CONTINUE
○ Yes, in contact with employer	CONTINUE
○ Have plan but no concrete action yet	STOP
○ No	STOP

For Returned Migrants	

1 Did you migrate to Malaysia, Singapore or Thailand?

○ Malaysia	CONTINUE
○ Singapore	CONTINUE
○ Thailand	CONTINUE
○ No	STOP

2 How old are you?

○ 18-29 years old	FGD 1
○ 30-40 years old	FGD 2
○ Other	STOP

3 Did you return from overseas since March of this year, 2018?

○ Yes	CONTINUE
○ No	STOP

Appendix II. Mini questionnaire

Mini questionnaire

B1   Which of the following ICT / media do you own? (Select all that apply)

- ○ Television
- ○ Radio
- ○ Newspaper
- ○ Magazine
- ○ Internet
- ○ PC or laptop
- ○ Tablets
- ○ Mobile phone
- ○ None of the above

B2   Which of the following media do you regularly watch, listen to or read? (Select all that apply)

- ○ Television
- ○ Radio
- ○ Newspaper
- ○ Magazine
- ○ Internet
- ○ None of the above

B3   How many hours per day do you spend using each media?

- ○ Television
- ○ Radio
- ○ Newspaper
- ○ Magazine
- ○ Internet
- ○ None of the above

B4   Which ICT/media do you use to access news and information? (Select all that apply)

- ○ Television
- ○ Radio
- ○ Newspaper
- ○ Magazine
- ○ Internet
- ○ None of the above

B5   How much did you spend buying your current mobile phone?

B6   How much do you spend per month on phone and internet?

B7   What type of phone do you have? (Select one)

- ○ Smartphone
- ○ Basic mobile phone/ feature phone
- ○ Camera phone
- ○ Music phone
- ○ Other (SPECIFY)

B8   What is the brand of the mobile phone you are using? (Select all that apply)

- ○ Apple
- ○ Samsung
- ○ Sony
- ○ Nokia
- ○ HTC
- ○ Huawei
- ○ Motorola
- ○ LG
- ○ Blackberry
- ○ Google
- ○ Other (SPECIFY):

B9 **What are the phone features you normally use? (Select all that apply)**

- ◯ Making voice calls
- ◯ Receiving voice calls
- ◯ SMS
- ◯ MMS
- ◯ Taking photos/videos
- ◯ Internet browsing
- ◯ Communicating on social networks
- ◯ Playing games/entertainment
- ◯ Mobile banking/e-payment
- ◯ Minor functions i.e. timer, calculator, weather, maps
- ◯ Apps
- ◯ Other (SPECIFY):

B10 **What types of Apps have you downloaded on your phone? (Select all that apply)**

- ◯ None
- ◯ Messaging apps (Line, Viber, WhatsApp)
- ◯ Social networks like Facebook
- ◯ News
- ◯ Games/Entertainment
- ◯ Lifestyle (travel, health, food and drinks etc.)
- ◯ Business, banking, remittances, and e-payment
- ◯ Education and e-learning platforms
- ◯ Any apps relating to migration, such as, recruitment, complaint mechanism
- ◯ Other (SPECIFY):

B11 **Do you use any paid Apps?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

B12 **Which of the following social media sites do you use, if any? (Select all that apply)**

- ◯ Facebook
- ◯ Twitter
- ◯ Instagram
- ◯ YouTube
- ◯ Google Plus
- ◯ Other
- ◯ None

B13 **Which activities do you do regularly on your social media site? (Select all that apply)**

- ◯ Searching
- ◯ Reading material
- ◯ Chatting
- ◯ Connecting and networking
- ◯ Downloading
- ◯ Sharing
- ◯ Competitions and games
- ◯ None

B14 **What language do you use on phones and on social media? (Select one)**

- ◯ My native language
- ◯ English
- ◯ Both

B15 **Which of the following chat services do you use, if any? (Select all that apply)**

- ○ Google chat
- ○ Facebook
- ○ What's App
- ○ Line
- ○ Skype

- ○ Yahoo
- ○ Viber
- ○ WeChat
- ○ Other (SPECIFY):
- ○ None

B16 **Which sources have you used to obtain information about migration? (Select all that apply)**

- ○ News and media reports
- ○ TV documentary or other programmes
- ○ Through friends
- ○ Through local government authorities
- ○ Internet
- ○ Police

- ○ NGO
- ○ Public service announcements
- ○ Community event, festival, street show etc.
- ○ Posters, leaflets or brochures
- ○ Job agency or broker
- ○ None

Appendix III. FGD moderator guide

Respondent full name: **Location:**

Date: **Time begin:**   **Time ended:**

/   / 2018

Warn-up questions

- Some of you have smartphones, feature phones (phone that has access to certain internet use/social media platforms, but does not have equipped functions like smartphones), basic phones (for calling and texting only) or no phones. If you have a phone, tell me how you got the phone and why you selected it.
- How often do you use your phone to access the internet? How long each time?
- How much do you spend each month on phone and internet usage?
- What are the websites or social media sites you go to regularly?
- What are the activities you normally do on those sites?
- How does/did your phone and internet usage differ from that of men you know?
- Do you share your phone with anyone? If so, is it a man or a woman? What relationship is that person to you? Who keeps the phone with them? Who pays for the top ups
- **(ASK POTENTIAL MIGRANTS)** Are you planning to do something differently when you migrate? Do you plan to buy, download, or subscribe to any ICT or media services?
- **(ASK RETURNED MIGRANTS)** Did you do something differently when you migrated or while overseas? Did you buy, download, or subscribe to any ICT or media services that you did not have at home?

Social connectivity

- How will/did you stay connected with family and friends when overseas? How often will/did you do so?
- What platform will/did you use to connect with family and friends, and how well do you think it will work/worked?
- What needs to be improved in order for you to have better connectivity with family and friends in the future?
- Have you ever seen anything on social media that you found out later was not true?
- Have you ever had people contact you that you did not know – which online platforms did that encounter take place (ie. online forums, Facebook pages)? were these experiences positive or negative?

MINI WORKSHOP: CONNECTIVITY MAP (1): To what extent do migrants communicate with people they know and do not know, both overseas and at home.

Information access

- When migrating overseas, where do you go to seek information? How do/did you find and access information you are looking for? What information are you looking for?
- What types of information do/did you look for?
- To what extent is information in the media and social media reliable and trustworthy? How do you know? Do/did you try to verify the information you found?
- What platform will/did you use to seek information and how easy or difficult is/was it to use or navigate?

- Do men you know have more or less access to information? What is different from your experience as a woman?
- To what extent do/did you seek information through websites, Facebook sites, hotlines, messaging or calling recruitment agencies, the government, trade unions or NGOs?
- What needs to be improved in order for you to have better access to information in the future?

Employers and support networks

- Who helps/was helping you in your home country? How did you contact them?
- Who helps you when you have a problem overseas? How do you contact them? How often do you contact? If you are overseas and didn't contact, what would they do? Who would they contact?
- How did you connect with your recruiter and with your overseas employer?
- How can communication with recruiters and overseas employers be improved?
- What migrant support services will/did you connect with such as a migrant worker resource center, NGO, trade union, government offices (Office of Councilor/Embassy/Labour attaché for assistance, dispute settlement, etc.)? Which ones?
- How will/did you connect with them?
- Do men you know make more or less connections with support services? How is this different from your experience as a woman?
- If you experienced or heard of abusive behavior while migrating and wanted to report it, how would you report it?

MINI WORKSHOP: IDEATION (2): How can ICT be used to help migrants with social connectivity, information access and support networks?

Problems experienced

- Have you ever used social media to share a problem? What sort of problem? Did you share publicly or just with your friends? What reactions did you get? Were they useful? How did you feel afterwards?
- Have you seen other women share experiences of violence on social media? Have you responded to them?
- What are the advantages of using social media to share a problem? What the risks or problems?
- Can you think of any circumstances when women are experiencing problems that social media could help respond to those problems? Or help them to find ways to solve the problems?
- Can you think of any ways that social media can contribute to reducing the frequency of the problems? (social media for employers? For men? For women)
- Have you ever heard of anyone experience abuse through social media? What type of abuse? What can they do about it?
- In the media you watch and read, how are women portrayed? How are migrant women portrayed? What is the impact on women's lives of these portrayals?
- Were you able to keep and use your mobile phone when you were at work abroad?
- What can you do / did you do to prevent such risks to yourself or others? What did you do to respond to such problems?
- In your opinion, how can ICT and media help to avoid such problem? And respond to such problem?
- Do you think it is ok to share or describe problems on social media or through messaging? Are there any problems with sharing, or are you ever scared of sharing?

Appendix IV. Stakeholder moderator guide

Respondent full name: **Location:**

Date: **Time begin:**   **Time ended:**

/   / 2018

Warm-up questions

- To what extent are women migrant workers using phones that have internet access? How is this different pre-migration, during migration, and post-migration? Is this different for men migrant workers?
- What limitations do women migrant workers face in terms of access to phones or the internet? Is this different for men migrant workers?
- How is social media influencing women migrant workers? Why? Is this different for men migrant workers?
- What strategies do women migrant workers employ in order to become connected – pre-migration, during migration, and post migration? Are these different from strategies men migrant workers use?

Social connectivity

- How do women migrant workers stay connected with family and friends?
- What are the platforms they use to connect with others? Do you think it is an effective method for them?
- What could to be improved for migrant women to have better connectivity? Is better connectivity a good aim for migration stakeholders to be working towards?
- What is your organization doing to help in this process?

Information access

- When migrating overseas, where do/did women migrant workers normally go to seek information? What are their reliable sources? Are any of these phone-based, media-based, or internet-based? Do/did they come to you?
- What are the types of information they normally look for?
- Does your organization operate on social media? Have you ever been contacted by migrants on those platforms? What do they contact you for? If they come to your platforms, are you able to give them answers?
- To what extent can migrant women find reliable information on the internet?
- What about fake news? How big of a problem is that?
- What needs to be improved in order for migrants to have better access to information in the future?

Employers and support networks

- How do women migrant workers normally get in touch with your organization?
- To what extent is ICT a strategy for your organization to provide better services/information to migrant workers?
- Have you or your organization reached out to women migrant workers to provide support? Please tell us about it.
- Have you or your organization gotten any reports via ICT from women migrant workers, their families or other advocates about problems? Were you able to resolve their problems? If not, what did you do? How did you use ICT in this?

- Do you know of other actors providing information or support to women migrant workers through ICT? What are some best practices? What needs to be improved?
- Do information or support services use any different strategies in reaching out to women and men migrant workers? Why?

Women, migration and ICT

- In your opinion, how can ICT and media help women migrant workers avoid violence or abuse? Or respond to violence or abuse?
- Are the ICT avenues that are open for women migrant workers to use prioritizing security? If women share online, what are the risks for them? Are some women scared to share because they cannot trust confidentiality or anonymity of their information?
- Does your organization connect with women migrant workers through any ICT platforms? Which ones? How often? What are the benefits and limitations of these platforms for your organization?

The joint ILO-UN Women Safe and Fair Programme: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (part of the multi-year EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls) undertook a qualitative study involving potential and returned women migrant workers in four countries of origin in the ASEAN region – Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines. The study covers intra-ASEAN labour migration, including women who intended to migrate to, or had just returned from, Malaysia, Singapore, or Thailand. The study provides insight into women migrant workers' use of mobile phones, and how women migrant workers could access more accurate information throughout the migration process and increase their connections with peers.

The study finds that most women migrant workers use their phone for social networking, and it highlights opportunities for governments, unions, employers, and civil society to harness women's current use of social networking apps and mobile connectivity. Women migrant workers' use of mobile phones can enhance migrant organizing, access to information on safe migration, and access to services, including in response to violence. The study finds however that the development of apps for smartphone use does not represent a panacea to the challenges that women migrant workers face. Not only are there numerous factors that impinge on women migrant workers' access to and current capacity to use mobile technology, but also significant structural barriers exist in terms of governmental and non-governmental capacity and infrastructure to maintain, monitor, and meet women migrant workers' needs, and to ensure safety through the use of any apps they establish.