



GOLDEN DREAMS



Tech & innovation to empower workers and transform exploitative labour recruitment corridors

RECRUITMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS INTO FACTORIES, FARMS, AND FISHING VESSELS IN ASIA CAN BE HIGHLY EXPLOITATIVE, PUTTING WORKERS AT RISK OF DEBT BONDAGE AND FORCED LABOUR—AND PUTTING GLOBAL BRANDS, RETAILERS, AND IMPORTERS AT RISK OF HAVING UNDETECTED MODERN DAY SLAVERY IN THEIR SUPPLY CHAINS. GOLDEN DREAMS AIMS TO REDUCE EXPLOITATIVE RECRUITMENT, FORCED LABOUR, AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSFORM RECRUITMENT CHANNELS AND THE POWER AND INFORMATION ASYMMETRIES THAT PUT JOB SEEKERS AND WORKERS AT RISK. SCALABLE, WORKER VOICE-DRIVEN TECH THAT DRIVES TRANSPARENCY, CUTS OUT INFORMAL MIDDLEMEN, AND MATCHES QUALIFIED WORKERS TO DECENT JOBS IS REVOLUTIONIZING RESPONSIBLE RECRUITMENT DOWN TO THE FIRST MILE.

WHAT IS GOLDEN DREAMS?

Golden Dreams is a smartphone app, originally launched in 2017, aiming to empower Burmese, Cambodian, and Nepalese jobseekers and workers—with more languages and country information being added every year. It is a platform in workers' languages to access and exchange information about recruitment, jobs, work, and life abroad in different destination countries, including thousands of workers' and jobseekers' reviews of employers, recruiters, and service providers—in a way similar to Yelp.

In 2021, Issara launched Golden Dreams 2.0, with updated features such as peer discussion forums and a job recruitment marketplace to connect job seekers with actual open jobs advertised by registered recruiters and employers. For recruiters and employers, a desktop-based interface allows businesses to post comprehensive job advertisements in their language, which appears on the smartphone interfaces of jobseekers and workers in their own native languages.

KEY FEATURES OF GOLDEN DREAMS

- ✓ THE LATEST UPDATES ON RIGHTS, POLICIES, AND LAWS RELATED TO MIGRANT WORKERS IN ORIGIN & DESTINATION COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS OTHER NEWS
- ✓ UPDATED INFORMATION ON EMPLOYERS, RECRUITMENT AGENCIES, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS SUCH AS HOSPITALS AND NGOS
- ✓ RATING AND REVIEW FUNCTIONS TO ALLOW USERS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND OPINIONS ABOUT EMPLOYERS, RECRUITERS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS
- ✓ DISCUSSION GROUPS AND COMMUNITY POLLING TO ENCOURAGE COLLECTIVE EXPRESSION OF VIEWS AND PROBLEM SOLVING, AND LEARN THE OPINIONS OF OTHER WORKERS ON COMMON ISSUES THEY FACE
- ✓ EASY AND SECURE REGISTRATION THROUGH FACEBOOK OR GMAIL
- ✓ ABILITY TO SHARE A PROBLEM OR SEEK IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE FROM THE ISSARA TEAM, 24 HOURS A DAY, THROUGH A FREE PHONE HELPLINE OR PRIVATE MESSAGING
- ✓ A SECURE PLATFORM FOR THE JOBSEEKERS TO DIRECTLY APPLY FOR THE JOBS ADVERTISED BY REGISTERED RECRUITERS AND EMPLOYERS.

WHAT IS INNOVATIVE ABOUT GOLDEN DREAMS?

GENUINE LOCAL OWNERSHIP. The app has deep buy-in and ownership by job seekers and workers, trade unions, NGOs, government, and leading recruitment agencies, all who contributed to the app's design.

AMPLIFYING WORKER VOICE. Features allow for peer-to-peer sharing through ratings of employers and recruiters, polls, and discussion forums—all amplifying the voices, knowledge, and power of workers.

DYNAMIC & RELIABLE. The app is dynamic. It is not a static information-access-only platform, but is interactive and updated on a daily basis by a multi-lingual team tapped into the latest labour migration policies and processes.

ACCESSIBLE ANYWHERE. The app engages job seekers and workers across the full migration journey. It provides safeguarded access to the most updated information, and an anonymized user experience wherever workers are; there is no need to travel to a physical office or interact with unknown authorities to get information.

VALUABLE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE. The app was designed for workers and the promotion of safer migration, but provides companies with a critical view of conditions in their supply chains that is vastly more credible than information gained from an audit.

SCALABLE. We are changing and strengthening the recruitment systems of Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, and Malaysia. The system is poised for growth through the rest of Asia to include more worker nationalities, and origin and destination countries, since the infrastructure and best practices for stakeholder engagement are in place.

“IN GOLDEN DREAMS, IT IS VERY EASY TO INQUIRE ABOUT THE INFORMATION WE WANT, AND WE CAN FIND THE DATA VERY EASILY. I SHARED MY KNOWLEDGE TO CHOOSE OFFICIAL RECRUITMENT AGENCIES TO PREVENT CHEATING BY ILLEGAL BROKERS, AND DO'S AND DON'TS INFORMATION FOR SAFE MIGRATION.

I HOPE THAT GOLDEN DREAMS CREATES BETTER MIGRATION FOR COMMON PEOPLE IN LEGAL WAYS.”

– Overseas migrant worker

TRANSFORMING RECRUITMENT CORRIDORS: THE JOB MARKETPLACE

In-depth consultation with workers, trafficking survivors, NGOs, and trade unions highlighted that if there is not a platform for finding and matching job seekers with *actual* jobs, there will still be a space for informal and exploitative brokers to thrive. Therefore, Issara developed the recruitment marketplace feature for Golden Dreams in 2021, following additional in-depth consultation with leading progressive suppliers and labour recruiters.

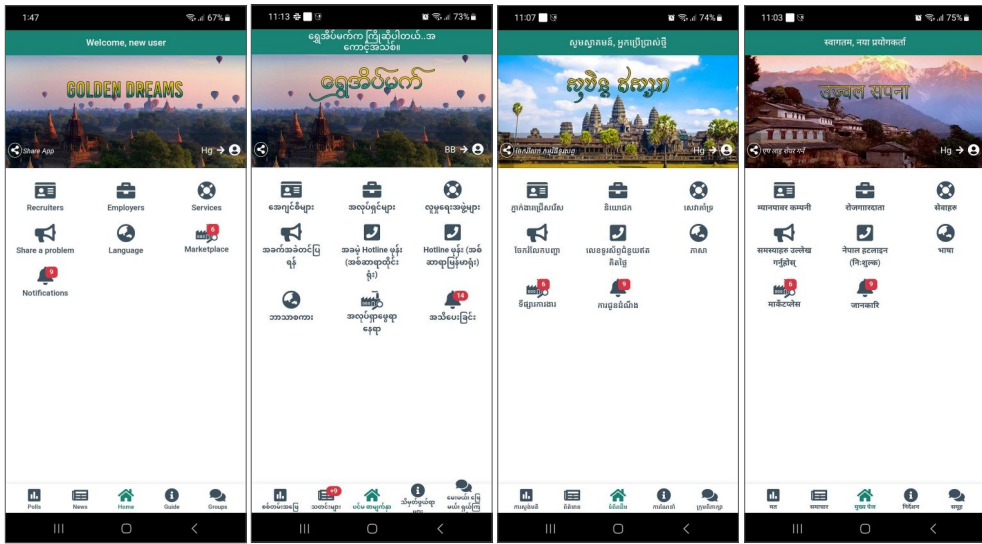
On the platform, jobseekers can apply for jobs posted by vetted, legally registered recruiters or employers. Job advertisements, in order to be posted, must provide detailed information on the responsible recruitment policies of the supplier company, as well as the terms and conditions of employment as provided by the employer—meaning greater transparency and accountability about what recruitment-related fees should be paid by the employer vs. the worker, and about promised working conditions.

With a few clicks, jobseekers can create their own CV and file job applications. Jobseekers can also submit their CVs to the rosters of responsible recruitment agencies of interest, to be first in the queue for consideration for upcoming jobs. Recruitment agencies and employers can thus professionally manage thousands of applications and their related documents in a fair, secure, and digitized way. Huge stacks of paper files, including the personally identifiable information (PII) of job seekers, are becoming a thing of the past!

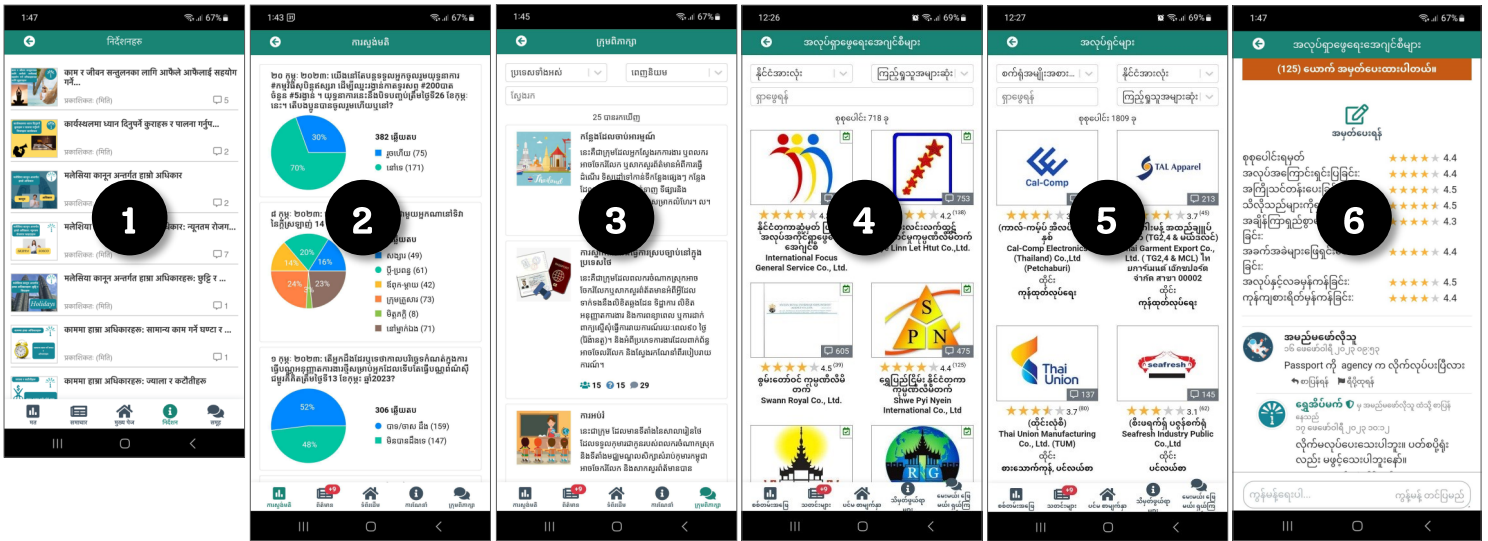
“GOLDEN DREAMS IS A SAFE PLATFORM FOR JOB SEEKERS TO FIND THEIR FAVORITE JOBS IN A SAFE WAY. AS THERE IS DETAILED INFO ABOUT THE RECRUITMENT AGENCIES, IT IS SAFE TO CONNECT BETWEEN JOB SEEKERS AND AGENCIES DIRECTLY. I ALWAYS READ THE COMMENTS UNDER MY AGENCY IN THE GOLDEN DREAMS APP.

IT WOULD BE SO GOOD IF ISSARA COULD CONNECT WITH MORE FACTORIES THAT WILL PROVIDE ZERO COST SYSTEMS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS.”

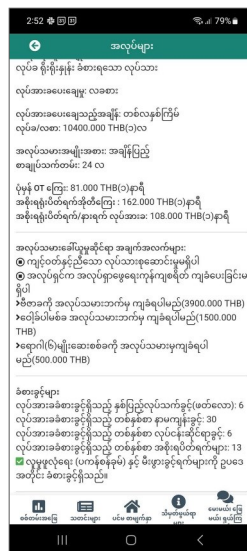
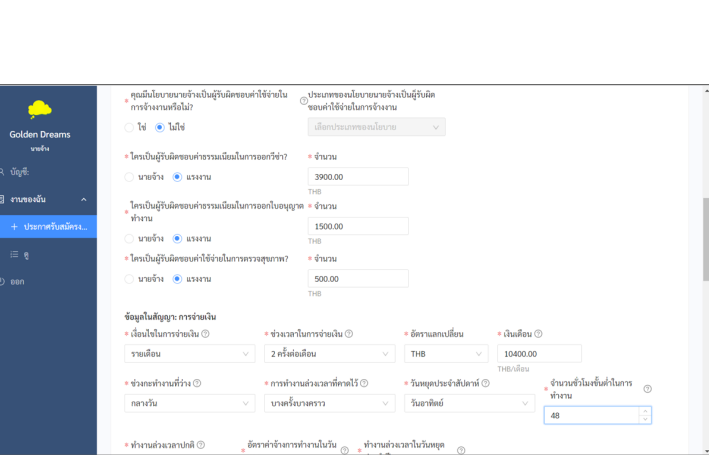
– Recruitment agency



TOP ROW. Screenshots of Golden Dreams landing screen for jobseeker/worker mobile UI, in English, Burmese, Khmer, and Nepali.



MIDDLE ROW. 6 screens from jobseeker/worker mobile UI: (1) informational guides, (2) polls, (3) group discussion forum, (4) recruitment agency profiles and worker ratings, (5) employer/supplier profiles and worker ratings, and (6) detailed worker ratings and anonymous reviews.



BOTTOM ROW. Golden Dreams Marketplace features. The recruiter/employer desktop UI allows businesses to post jobs using an interface in their language (left, in Thai), while the job posting appears on worker mobile UIs with all information in the language of the worker (right, in Burmese). Note the red asterisks, which indicate mandatory fields: to drive transparency and accountability, comprehensive information about the terms, conditions, and costs of recruitment are required to be publicly disclosed in order to be posted on the Job Marketplace.

“OVER THE PAST 8 YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

I WOULD NOT HAVE COME ACROSS THE HARDSHIPS I DID IF THERE HAD BEEN AN APP LIKE GOLDEN DREAMS.”

- Human trafficking survivor

“I USED GOLDEN DREAMS SINCE I WAS WORKING IN THAILAND, AND I HAD PARTICIPATED IN ISSARA’S EMPOWERMENT TRAININGS TOO.

THE REASON WHY I USED GOLDEN DREAMS WAS TO KNOW MY RIGHTS AND TO CREATE A BETTER WORKING ENVIRONMENT. SO, I USE THE GOLDEN DREAMS APP AND I SHARE ABOUT GOLDEN DREAMS WITH MY FRIENDS TOO.”

- Migrant worker returnee and community mobilizer

HOW IS GOLDEN DREAMS HELPING TO END FORCED LABOUR AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Information is power, and Golden Dreams has the power to drive **real behaviour and systems change** at a scale required to make a measurable reduction in labour exploitation and human trafficking.

We are tracking our impact in terms of these behaviour and systems changes (and more):

- **JOBSEEKERS AND MIGRANT WORKERS** are educating themselves about their work options and rights in destination countries, avoiding illegal brokers and unallowed recruitment fees, and successfully finding decent jobs through legal channels.
- **EXPLOITED WORKERS, INCLUDING VICTIMS OF FORCED LABOUR**, have a safe, private way to seek assistance and intervention. They are equipping themselves with knowledge about their rights and options, and exchanging and organizing with other workers to report abuses more powerfully and effectively.
- **SUPPLIERS/EMPLOYERS** are becoming more accurate and transparent in the terms and conditions of employment they disclose to recruiters for public posting, and more accountable for delivering jobs to workers exactly as advertised. The exploitative practice of workers being promised one set of working conditions by recruiters/brokers but then being offered something different upon arrival to the workplace is declining with Golden Dreams users.
- **RECRUITMENT AGENCIES AND RECRUITMENT AGENCY FEDERATIONS** are better identifying and addressing exploitative elements within their business and industry, and more generally are modernizing and professionalizing their sector's systems.
- **GLOBAL BRANDS AND RETAILERS, AS WELL AS SUPPLIERS/EMPLOYERS**, have an unprecedented new option for incentivizing more responsible recruitment in their supply chains. Leading progressive businesses have begun requiring suppliers to recruit their foreign workers through Golden Dreams.
- **GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES OF BOTH ORIGIN AND DESTINATION COUNTRIES** can strengthen their official bilateral recruitment channels based on real data regarding the structural weaknesses and failures of current systems.



"I got a job through Issara's Golden Dreams Marketplace, in a garment factory in Thailand."

"I didn't need to pay any cost to get hired. So, if you want to access a reliable job, I would like to suggest you to apply for jobs through Golden Dreams. Thank you Golden Dreams smartphone app, which connected me to my employer."



Burmese jobseeker who got hired through GD Marketplace

