

GENEVA CHALLENGE 2023

Breaking Loneliness and
Isolation among Southeast Asia
Migrant Domestic Workers

nyaya.



Harvard Kennedy School
of Government



Abstract

This proposal aims to address the issue of loneliness among migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong. Current solutions primarily focus on peripheral issues like healthcare and housing, overlooking the crucial aspect of economic empowerment. Existing efforts to empower MDWs often fail to provide credible employment information and bargaining power, resulting in the replacement of one exploitative sourcing method with another. To harness the collective power of the MDW community, we propose the development of an app platform called **Nyaya**, derived from the Sanskrit word for justice. Nyaya will leverage community-based networks to empower MDWs, providing credible employment information and fostering informed decision-making. By facilitating social interaction and engagement, the platform aims to reduce social isolation, loneliness, and promote a sense of belonging. Additionally, Nyaya will serve as a resource center, offering legal information, educational materials, and practical advice. Through the integration of these features, the platform seeks to improve the overall well-being and integration of MDWs within their host communities.

Keywords

Community-based networks, economic empowerment, Hong Kong, isolation, loneliness, migrant domestic workers, Nyaya app platform, sense of belonging, Southeast Asia

The Team

Bella Zhou | China



Bella Zhou is currently studying public policy (MPP) with focus on digital service and technology at Harvard Kennedy School. With a background in quantitative economics and East Asian Studies from Smith College, her goal is to analyze the interaction between private and public problems on macro and micro levels to develop impactful policy solutions.

Chaitanya Gupta | India



Chaitanya Gupta is currently studying public policy (MPP) with a focus on the intersection between climate and innovative finance at Harvard Kennedy School. Prior to HKS, he worked with Dalberg Advisors, an international impact-focused management consulting firm, on projects related to urbanization, skill development, climate, and healthcare, across South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Neta Anggina | Indonesia



Neta is currently studying public policy (MPP) with focus on Political and Economic Development at Harvard Kennedy School. Prior to HKS, she studied International Relations and continued with three years work experience at Indonesia's foreign service. She is exploring her interests in structural transformation and employment policies at the World Bank.

Table of Contents

- 1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT.....4**
- 1.1. THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF LONELINESS.....5
- 1.2. AN OVERVIEW OF MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS (MDWs)6
- 1.3. WHY MDWs AND THEIR LONELINESS MATTER?6
- 1.4. GEOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW: SE ASIA’S MDWs CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE7
- 1.5. WHY HONG KONG?8
- 1.6. PROBLEM STATEMENT9

- 2. PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND BUILDING SOLUTIONS..... 11**
- 2.1. UNDERSTANDING THE MULTIPLE LAYERS OF ISOLATION AMONG MWDS 11
- 2.2. ROOT CAUSES ANALYSIS 12
- 2.3. SYSTEMS ANALYSIS..... 12
- 2.4. LOOKING BACK: WHAT HAS BEEN DONE..... 14
- 2.5. LOOKING FORWARD: WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE..... 16

- 3. NYAYA: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION 19**
- 3.1. OPPORTUNITY..... 19
- 3.2. ABOUT NYAYA 19
- 3.3. GOALS, OUTCOMES, AND THEORY OF CHANGE 20
- 3.4. NYAYA’S DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS 20
- 3.5. NYAYA’S COMPONENTS AND FEATURES 21
- 3.6. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN..... 25
- 3.7. RISK ASSESSMENT..... 31

- 4. FUTURE VISION AND CONCLUSION..... 33**

Global challenge of loneliness | epidemic to the healthcare systems
| the loneliness loop | diminishing overall quality of life | absence of
social contact and connection | migrant domestic workers and the
unique challenges & vulnerabilities | exploitative practice in Hong
Kong | "two weeks" and "live in" regulation | depression and isolation

introduction & problem statement.



1. Introduction and Problem Statement

1.1. The Global Challenge of Loneliness

1.1.1 Loneliness Around the Globe

Loneliness is a subjective experience characterized by feelings of social isolation and a perceived lack of meaningful connections with others and has emerged as a significant public health issue. According to a study published by The BMJ (Surkalim et al., 2022), researchers from the University of Sydney aimed to examine the global extent of loneliness to help inform policymakers about the scope and severity of this issue. Drawing data from 57 observational studies covering 113 countries or territories between 2000 – 2019, they concluded that **problematic levels of loneliness** are experienced by a **substantial proportion of the population in many countries**.

According to a study published by The BMJ (Surkalim et al., 2022), researchers from the University of Sydney analyzed data from 57 observational studies covering 113 countries or territories between 2000 and 2019, to conclude that problematic levels of loneliness are experienced by a substantial proportion of the population in many countries. The result revealed that high-income countries, particularly in Europe, had higher rates of loneliness compared to low- and middle-income countries. For example, the data showed that in the Southeast Asia region, the prevalence of loneliness among adolescents was around 9.2%, while in the Eastern Mediterranean region, it was approximately 14.4%.

Despite the limitation of studies due to its data scarcity and methodological heterogeneity, research and findings have raised undeniable attention on the need to incorporate loneliness into general health surveillance with broader geographical and age coverage.

1.1.2 Impacts of Loneliness

Loneliness can have significant implications for individuals, affecting both their mental and physical health (Alexis Blue, 2019). Experts suggest that loneliness can be as detrimental to health as obesity or smoking fifteen cigarettes a day. Moreover, it has been associated with heart disease, diabetes, substance abuse, and even premature death. Regardless of gender, age, race, or social skills, prolonged loneliness is linked to a heightened risk of developing mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

Additionally, loneliness can perpetuate itself through a phenomenon referred to as "the loneliness loop" (Zaria Gorvett, 2020). This cycle can adversely affect social skills and create a toxic combination of low self-esteem, hostility, stress, and social anxiety, making it challenging to establish and sustain meaningful relationships. Those experiencing loneliness often report diminished life satisfaction, a sense of emptiness, and a lack of purpose.

The issue of loneliness has gained attention worldwide, with many countries recognizing it as an **epidemic that burdens healthcare systems, hampers productivity, and diminishes overall quality of life**. United Kingdom, for instance, has acknowledged its widespread loneliness problem, leading to the establishment of the Ministry of Loneliness to address the issue (GOV.UK, 2018). Similarly, countries such as China and Japan are grappling with prevalent social isolation and its consequences.

1.1.2 Causes of Loneliness

While different types of loneliness exist, triggered by various factors such as emotional, social, and existential aspects (Mansfield et al., 2019, p. 2), the primary cause across these types is social isolation, which refers to a deficiency in both the *quantity* and *quality* of social connections (Tomaka, Thompson, & Palacios, 2006). Research conducted by Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) revealed that physical isolation, such

as living alone or lacking social ties, was associated with heightened levels of perceived loneliness. They concluded that the **absence of social contact and connection resulting from physical isolation contributed to feelings of loneliness.**

It is important to recognize that both physical health and psychological factors play a bidirectional role in the experience of loneliness and social isolation (National Academies Press, 2020). For instance, social isolation or loneliness may increase the likelihood of developing chronic health conditions, while chronic health conditions may, in turn, contribute to social isolation or loneliness by disrupting relationships or exacerbating physiological processes.

Moreover, economic, societal and cultural factors can influence individuals' interactions with their environment and their likelihood of experiencing social isolation or loneliness. These factors encompass characteristics of economic empowerment, such as stable earning and financial freedom, or social support, such as marital status and the quality of relationships with family, friends, or pets.

When **designing technologies to address loneliness**, it is crucial to consider **(a) whose loneliness matters** and **(b) how to effectively reach those individuals.** Understanding the specific needs and circumstances of different population groups is key to developing technology-driven solutions that effectively combat loneliness.

1.2. An Overview of Migrant Domestic Workers (MDWs)

According to ILO (2017), a migrant domestic worker refers to an individual who migrates from their home country to another country to perform domestic work in a private household. The scope of domestic work includes cleaning, cooking, childcare, elderly care, and other household chores. Migrant domestic workers (MDWs) typically reside with their employers and their responsibilities include maintaining the household and providing support to family members. These workers often leave their home countries in search of better economic opportunities and employment prospects. The demand for domestic labor in destination countries, influenced by factors such as changing demographic patterns, has contributed to the emergence of **migrant domestic work as a significant and enduring aspect of international migration.**

The phenomenon of "**feminization**" is particularly noticeable in migration, with a prominent presence of women (particularly *young women*) in the migrant workforce, especially in Asia. Women constitute over half of all migrant workers in the region, with a significant majority engaging in domestic work. Globally, domestic work represents the predominant occupation for women migrants, accounting for 83% of all domestic workers.

1.3. Why MDWs and Their Loneliness Matter?

MDWs face a range of distinct challenges and vulnerabilities, including harsh working conditions, low wages, and limited legal protection. These circumstances restrict their physical and social activities, resulting in a lack of interaction with the wider community. Furthermore, most existing projects for migrant domestic workers focus on skills and foreign language development, with little attention given to addressing issues of loneliness, depression, and isolation in the workplace.

The nature of private relationships in domestic works significantly impacts their working conditions, particularly mental and psychological well-being. These private relationships can be managed through work contracts, but they tend to establish unequal and hierarchical relationships which are prone to abuse. In the workplace, MDWs commonly experience anxiety, depression, and difficulties stemming from unfavorable material conditions, high levels of mental pressure, and exploitative agencies/employers. This has adverse effects on the workers' self-esteem, physical health, and mental well-being – leading to

inability to perform and criminal conducts to run away from the employers. In many cases of middle eastern countries, MDWs are prosecuted and sentenced to death for their defensive acts towards abuse. This is a case in point how MDWs' loneliness and isolation issue may develop into high-level policy issues but has been lacking the attention and solution.

1.4. Geographic Overview: SE Asia's MDWs Contribution to the Economy and Workforce

MDWs play a crucial role in the economies of many Southeast Asian countries. According to ILO (2017), approximately 2.2 million MDWs can be found in 10 ASEAN countries, representing nearly one-fifth of the total migrant workforce in the region (~83% are women). Several factors contribute to the significant presence of specialized migrant workers in the domestic service industry in Southeast Asia, particularly among women.

Firstly, economic reasons drive the influx of migrant domestic workers to Southeast Asia. The region, consisting mainly of developing countries, faces a considerable economic disparity compared to developed nations, with a substantial population belonging to low-income groups. Conversely, engaging in the domestic service industry as maids or nannies can triple their income. Therefore, many highly educated individuals, especially women, choose to work as domestic workers.

Additionally, cultural factors also contribute to the willingness of women to engage in the domestic service industry. In Southeast Asia, the perception of female roles has undergone significant changes since the 11th century when such roles were initially limited. With societal progress, women have become more open-minded, recognizing the importance of cultural integration, including ideology, customs, and traditions. Consequently, a large number of Southeast Asian women have started working overseas, leaving their footprints across the globe and becoming influential figures. In Southeast Asia, many young women engage in common domestic labor from an early age. They possess a forward-thinking mentality, believing in the pursuit of a beautiful and fulfilling life through favorable economic and labor returns.

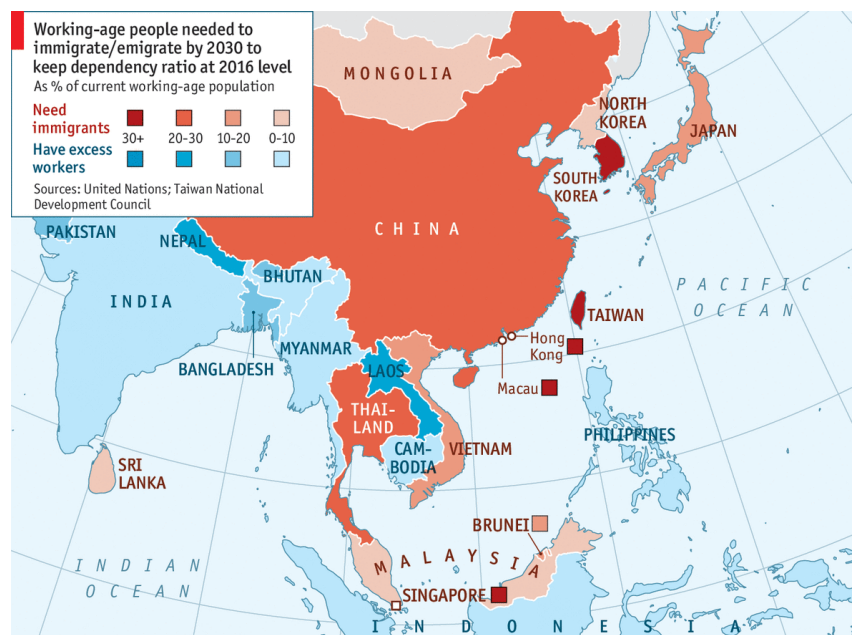


Figure 1.1. Mapping of Asian Countries that Need Migrant Workers and Have Excess Migrant Workers (Source: UN, Taiwan National Development Council)

For the above reasons, we believe our intervention is well suited to Southeast Asia. We plan to conduct our pilot intervention in Hong Kong, review results, and make improvements, before scaling up to other geographies in Southeast Asia.

1.5. Pilot for Intervention: Why Hong Kong?

In terms of domestic worker density, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) stands out as one of the highest in the world. The functioning of Hong Kong's economy heavily relies on the availability of affordable domestic work, especially in the care sector, where government-provided services for children and the elderly are insufficient. There were over 336,600 domestic workers in Hong Kong (2015), with the vast majority being women. While initial domestic workers in Hong Kong were primarily of Chinese origin, a program implemented in 1970s to open up Hong Kong to migration led to the arrival of domestic workers from the Philippines first, followed by Indonesia and Thailand.

Table below shows the rising trend of registered MDWs in Hong Kong in span of 22 years, mainly from Indonesia and the Philippines.

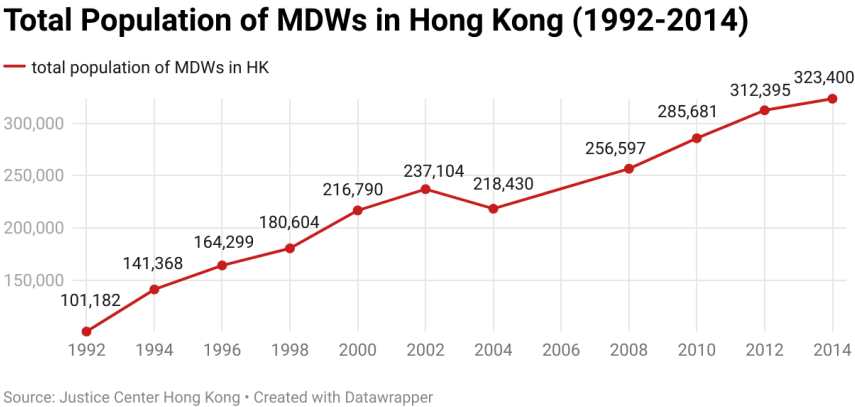


Figure 1.2. Total Population of MDWs in Hong Kong, from 1992 to 2014 (Source: Justice Center Hong Kong)

On paper, Hong Kong is regarded as one of the best places in the region to work as MDWs. Hong Kong has a formal temporary labor migration scheme for domestic workers, as well as one of the most liberal visa regimes in the world (Cheung, 2015), and there is no set limit for the number of visas issued to MDWs. However, in reality, there still found to be certain exploitative practices across the general MDW population residing in Hong Kong. For example, MDWs, on average, report working 11.9 hours a day, six days a week, which is equivalent to 71.4 hours per week. While the majority are awarded one day off per week as a rest day, 36.7% have to work before they leave and after they return on their rest day, not getting the full 24 hours-rest as mandated by Hong Kong employment law (Justice Centre, 2016).

The requirements imposed by the Hong Kong Government for MDWs to live with their employers, commonly known as the **"live-in" requirement**, has considerable adverse effects on various aspects of their working condition, including working hours, rest time, accommodation arrangements, and privacy. About 39.3% of the MDWs surveyed do not have their own room to sleep in, 35.2% share a room with a child or the elderly and 2% sleep in a kitchen or communal living space.

The **"two-weeks" rule** also restricts the freedom and job flexibility of domestic workers. This policy requires them to leave Hong Kong within 14 days after their contract ends or is terminated. While the government claims it to prevent job-hopping and illegal work, critics argue it leaves workers vulnerable to

exploitation and discourages reporting of abusive situations. Concerns about negative perceptions (37.5%) and a lack of job options (55%) deter workers from quitting (Tsang, 2014).

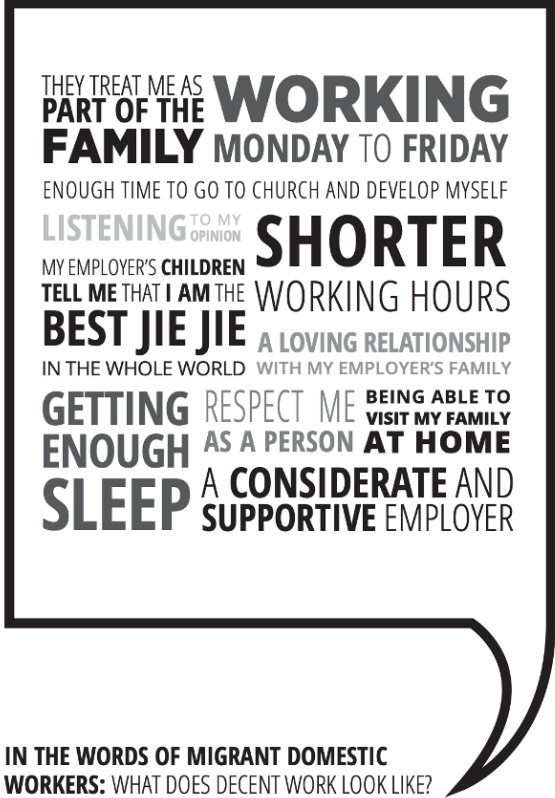


Figure 1.2. Responses from MDWs participants in qualitative FGD (source: Justice Centre Hong Kong, 2016)

1.6. Problem Statement

As MDWs working in Hong Kong, and SE Asia more broadly, face numerous social and emotional barriers that contribute to their isolation and restricted social interactions, their issue of loneliness presents a significant policy challenge. Harsh working conditions, low wages, and the lack of legal protection exacerbate their vulnerabilities, preventing them from actively engaging with the local community. While existing programs focus primarily on skills development and language training, there is a dearth of international projects addressing the specific challenges of loneliness, depression, and isolation faced by these workers within their workplace. Moreover, the personal relationships between employers and migrant domestic workers often exhibit hierarchical dynamics, leading to psychological exploitation and further impacting their mental well-being. Therefore, **it is imperative to develop targeted intervention strategies that address the loneliness issue among MDWs**, providing them with the necessary support, social connections, and a conducive work environment to enhance their overall well-being and integration within Hong Kong society.

Multiple layers of isolation among MDWs | three branches of root causes from government, society, and workers | lack of legal protection | disempowering migrant image to Hong Kong society | lack of information | system analysis | previous effort to empower MDWs | the gaps need to be filled in | rating & review as incentives

problem analysis & building solutions.



2. Problem Analysis and Building Solutions

2.1. Understanding the Multiple Layers of Isolation among MDWs

Migrant domestic workers make interesting case for loneliness due to the multiple layers of isolation they experience as a result of the nature of their work and its challenges entailed.

Physical Isolation

MDWs mostly work alone in private households, which can lead to physical isolation and limited opportunities for social interaction outside of their workplace. The nature of work and the arbitrary working hours may restrict their ability to leave the premises or engage in social activities, resulting in a feeling of loneliness.

Social/Emotional Isolation

MDWs experience social isolation due to separation from family, limited social integration, language and cultural barriers, lack of access to leisure activities, as well as stigmatization in the broader society. Workers travel miles away but only have limited opportunity to reconnect with home. They are also disconnected from these new places because of its unfamiliarity, use of foreign language daily, and further marginalization due to their exclusion from countries' political processes and social protection system (Migrant Forum in Asia, 2013).

Economic Isolation

Due to the limited control over wages and working hours, MDWs also experience economic isolation. Exploitative practices, such as low salaries, withheld payments, and abused working hours often 24/7 leave them financially vulnerable. Majority are the families' backbone, with current trend showing that migrants' total remittance flows exceed FDI and development aid by three times in developing countries (World Bank, 2022). Therefore, MDWs income becomes a vital lifeline; and unless there are better economic opportunities at home or upskilling gains; they remain with no other choices despite the exploitative practices (KNOMAD, 2021). Additionally, the power dynamics inherent in (a) employer-employee relationship in a foreign country (b) indebted status toward their employment agencyⁱ can prevent them from negotiating abused rights. This lack of control and agency exacerbates their economic isolation, making it difficult for them to make choices that are not hurting financially.

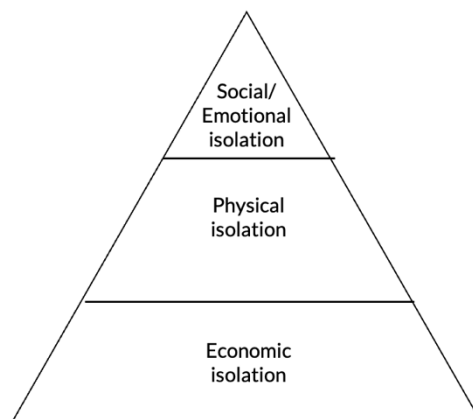


Figure 2.1. Three types of MDWs isolation (composed by authors)

Figure 2.1. above portrays our conclusion that economic isolation contributes the biggest portion and becomes the underlying driver of larger MDWs' issue of loneliness and isolation. The limited control and agency over their exploitative work, and the inability to choose other economic options – either to *leave*

ⁱ According to Hong Kong regulation, placement fee for agencies is capped at 10% of MDWs' first month wage

or look for another type of occupation – force domestic workers to stay in the isolated work both from the families back home and the communities in the foreign place.

2.2. Root Causes Analysis

Using literature review on Hong Kong’s migrant employment practices toward MDWs, we identified several themes which are frequently mentioned in the reports, studies, and news. These themes are placed into mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive buckets on our problem tree (figure 2.2.), including (i) **government side**: lack of legal protection toward MDWs, (ii) **society side**: disempowering ‘migrant’ image to the society, and (iii) **workers side**: lack of information and self-organizing capacities among workers.

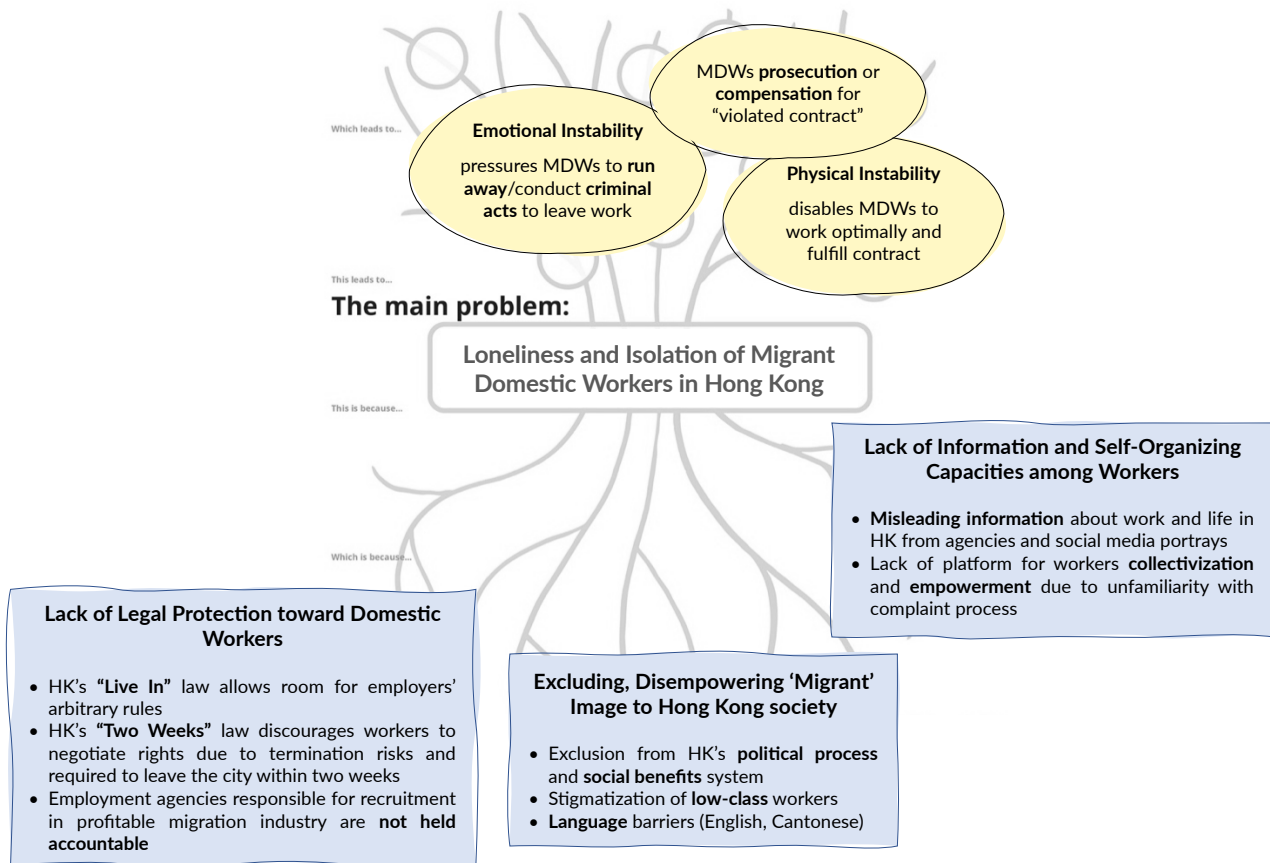


Figure 2.2. Problem Tree – Root Causes Analysis of MDWs Loneliness & Isolation (composed by authors)

2.3. Systems Analysis

Drawing from several root causes above, we analyzed (i) the area of change where interventions are feasible within the scope of grassroots initiatives, and (ii) the other area that requires stakeholders’ intervention in order for change to be systemic and effective. The mapping (figure 2.3.) utilized Six Conditions of Systems Change framework (John Kania et al., 2018) under three levels of change, namely **structural change** (policies, practices, resource flows), **relational change** (relationship & connections, power dynamics), and **transformative change** (beliefs).

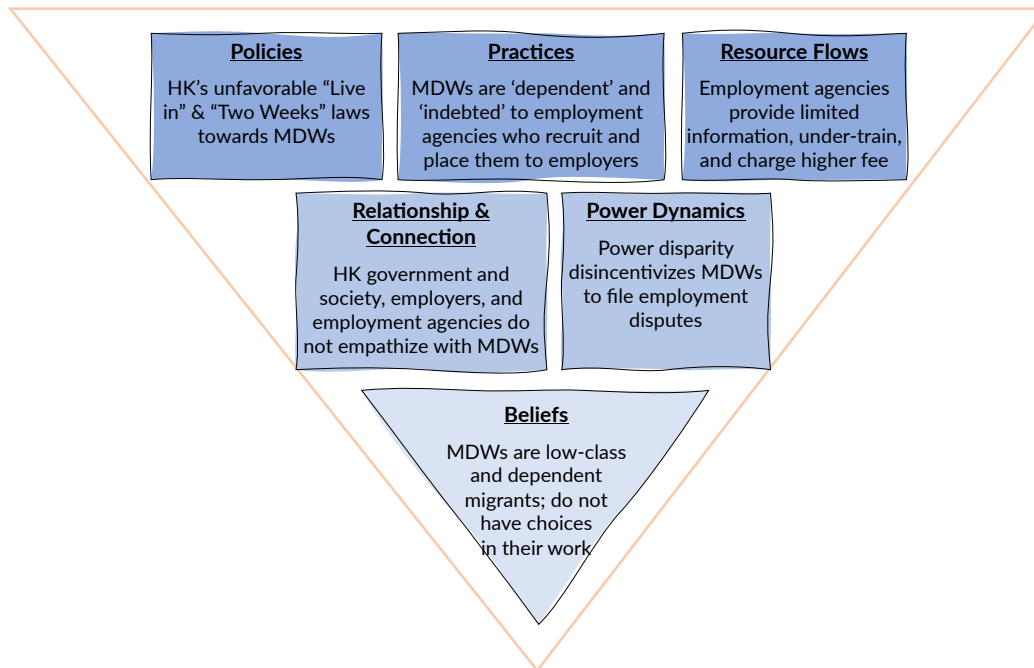


Figure 2.3. Six Conditions of System Change on MDW's Loneliness and Isolation
(composed by authors)

Structural Change (Explicit)

- **Policies:** Controversial "live in" and "two weeks" laws require MDWs to live together with employers and leave territory within fourteen days when the contract terminates (Justice Center HK, 2016). There is no inspection by Immigration/Labour Department to check accommodation's properness, while shared place muddles the work and rest time; leading to 44% higher average working hours (CSIS, 2017)
- **Practices:** Employment agencies as the capital holder provide and take care of the whole recruitment/placement process for brokerage, but rarely care about well-being of MDWs.
- **Resource Flows:** MDWs are barely equipped with proper information on Hong Kong's labour laws, employer-employee's rights and responsibilities, and ways to seek authorities' assistance during disputes. Employment agencies from SEA country origins control the flow of information with loosely enforced training standard, under business-to-business (B2B) scheme with Hong Kong.

Relational Change (Semi-explicit)

- **Relationship & Connections:** MDWs lack constructive relations with all stakeholders that commodifies and puts them in isolated places. This includes financial exploitation by employment agencies, arbitrary practices by employers, restrictive Hong Kong government's labour policies, challenge for social integration, and unprotective home government that seems to delegate duties to private agencies – despite MDWs' significant contribution to remittance and foreign exchange.
- **Power Dynamics:** MDWs are disincentivized to negotiate, reclaim their space, and leave the work when abuse happens, as they cannot afford work termination and unfavorable legal system that might not guarantee justice.

Transformative Change (Implicit)

- **Beliefs:** As low-class society who depend their life abroad on agencies and employers, MDWs believe that they do not have power and control over their work. Drawing from survey to 320 workers by Justice Centre Hong Kong (figure 2.4.), almost all show a resigned outlook on their work.

We concluded that from the many levels of change above, it is more feasible to address the area of **information flows** and **low-class & dependent beliefs** that calls for MDWs empowerment from the grassroots level. On another hand, policies-related issue requires Hong Kong government to reform their restrictive labour regulation. The exploitative and unaccountable migrant brokerage industry calls for SEA government's effort to better regulate agencies operating in MDWs' hometown and control their power to ensure that B2B practices hold certain standard. Our team fills the gap of **beliefs reform** that has not been widely addressed in current effort of MDWs empowerment, compared to information sharing, re-training, and peer-to-peer networking – to be discussed below.

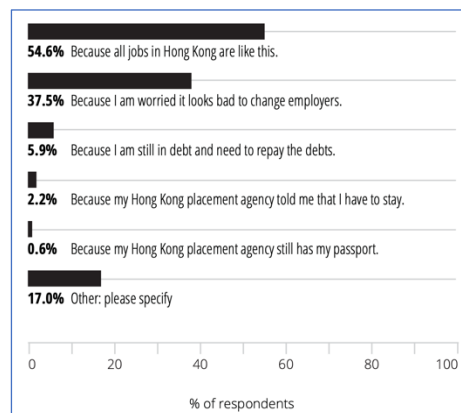





Figure 2.4. Reasons why MDWs do not feel free to quit their job (source: Justice Centre Hong Kong, 2016)

2.4. Looking Back: What Has Been Done

The governance of labour migration is highly fragmented in various levels – there is no single institution that oversees all aspects to empower migrant workers, and to promote and protect migrant worker rights. The table below (figure 2.5.) maps some of the most established **empowerment efforts** for MDWs in Hong Kong to understand where we can add value to fill the gap.

Intervention	Description	SWOT Analysis
Mission for Migrant Workers (MFMW) 	Charitable organization providing information and re-training, case support, shelter provision and other rescue and emergency assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Est. 1981 (early start – a decade after the start of MDWs flow to Hong Kong) • Reached 34,000 beneficiaries (on avg. 5,000/year) • Partnership with over 100 migrant org., active outreach to migrant places in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and New Territories. • Church-affiliate (St. John Cathedral) org. => might not be able to reach non-Christian MDWs who are the majority of Indonesian workers (only 2% of total beneficiaries)
HELP (for Domestic Workers) 	MDWs' empowerment through provision of legal advice & assistance, awareness & education on rights and responsibilities, and empowerment & peer support. Builds employers' awareness for a mutually beneficial relationship with their workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Est. 1989 (quite early start) • Engages with MDWs, employers, and HK community • Reached 20,000 beneficiaries (2022)
Enrich HK 	MDWs' economic empowerment through (1) financial literacy workshops to manage their financial challenges, incl. paying off recruitment debts, sending large amounts home, or lending to friends (2) information guidance on financial rights, and (3) negotiation workshop to support financial deal with employment agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Est. 2007 • Reached 30,000 beneficiaries




<p>HelperPlace</p> 	<p>Online marketplace that connects employers directly to MDWs and enabling both parties to make informed decisions on transparent employment contract. Empowers workers through direct information of their future employers and removes dependency on agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Est. 2016 • Reached 260,000 users (of MDWs and employers) • Engages with both MDWs and employers • Do not have rating/review feature after service for future reference • Only feasible for MDWs who are already in Hong Kong and ready to work full time
<p>EmpowerU</p> 	<p>Connects migrant workers with opportunities to learn from education partners (NGOs, companies, and Hong Kong University professors) through online/offline courses on health, legal, financial, career and other matters related to their rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Est. 2018 • Reached 1,000 beneficiaries • Engages with MDWs and academic communities (professor, student interns) • Requires a small fee to cover administrative expenses for a one-year certificate programme
<p>Social Justice for Migrant Workers</p> 	<p>Facebook platform for MDWs seeking social rights, justice and opportunities to help each members while working abroad.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Est. 2019 by ex-MDW through fellowship • Reached 42,600 community members • Limited features and resources

Figure 2.5. Comparison of existing empowerment programs for MDWs in Hong Kong (composed by authors)

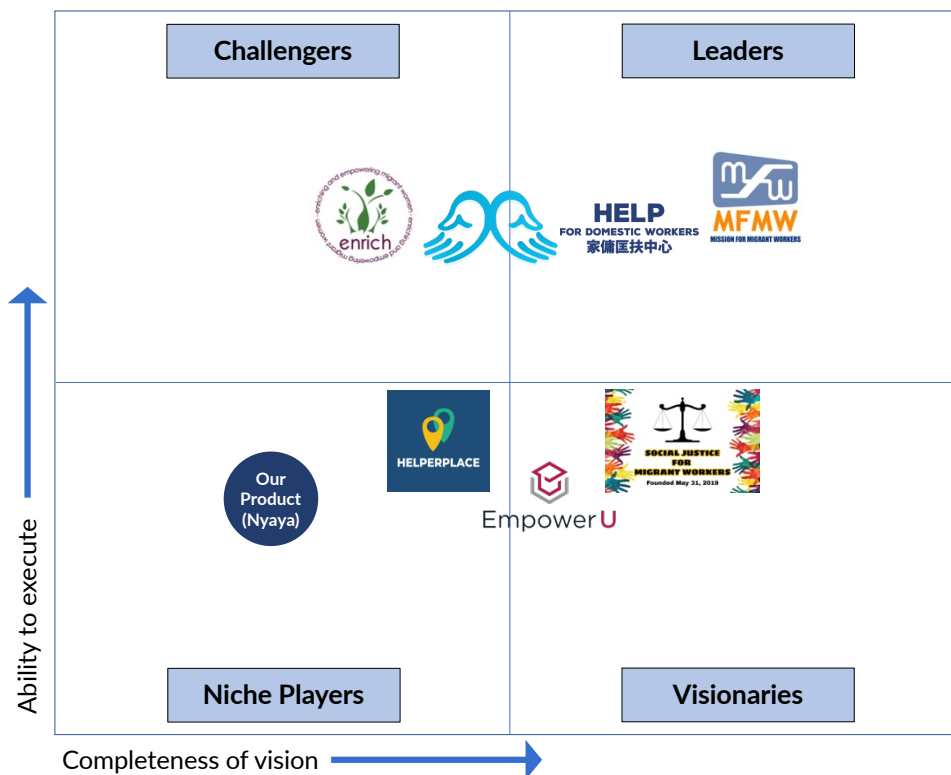


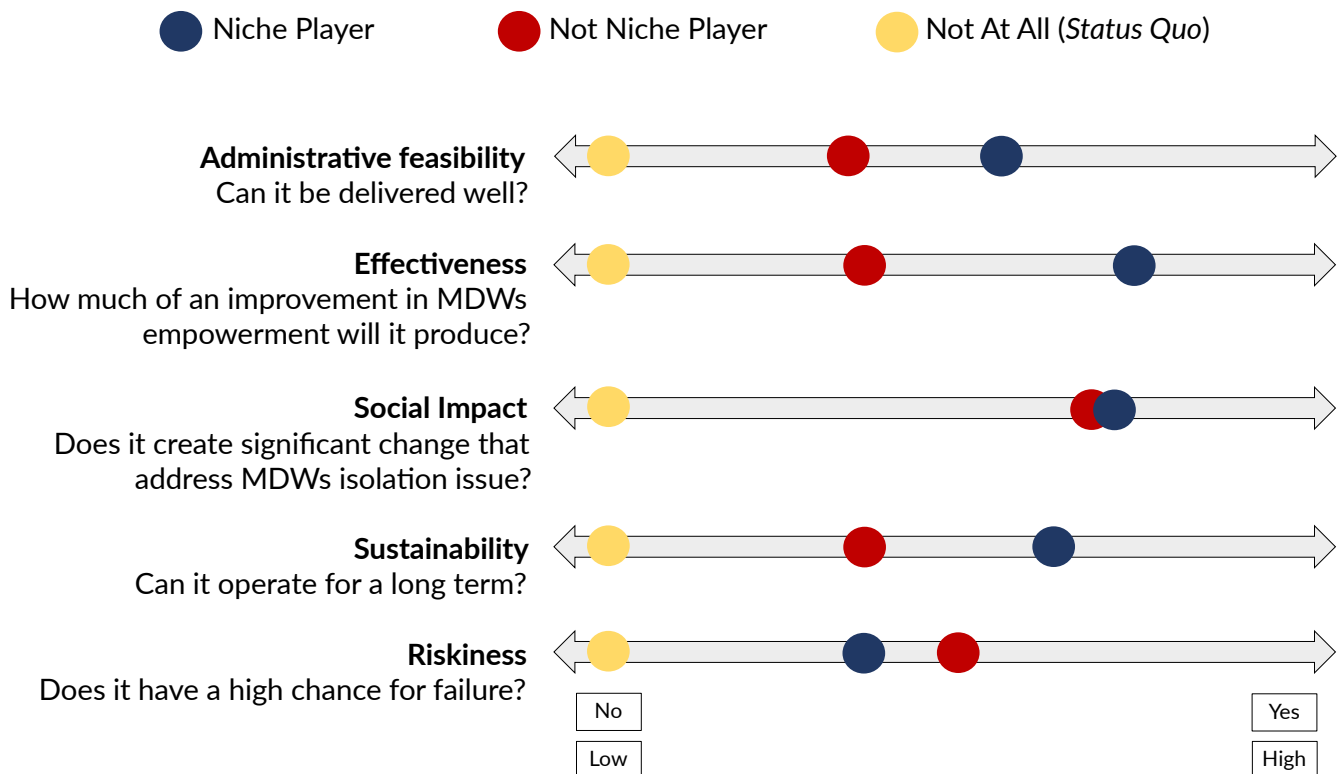
Figure 2.6. Competitive Matrix of MDWs Empowerment Programs in Hong Kong (composed by authors)

We concluded that some programs have similar segment (empowerment through legal counseling, awareness of rights and responsibilities, and peer support) with MFMW leading the market as longest-serving organization with largest beneficiaries and active outreach, followed by HELP for Domestic Workers. Meanwhile, Social Justice for Migrant Workers operates as peer-to-peer support through facebook group – a newly established community empowerment with limited feature compared to others who own professional/third party resources for assistance. Enrich HK and EmpowerU each focus differently on financial literacy and access to non-formal education, with the latter requiring costs that might disincentivize MDWs to participate to a certain degree.

Our intervention aims to be the **niche player**, which will focus on smaller segments and does not *out-innovate* or *out-perform* the established empowerment programs. Currently, HelperPlace operates in niche as the only marketplace for MDWs to pick and choose their employers directly – based on their needs and capacity. However, we identified that there is **no feature to rate / review** to each other as future reference. This might eventually lead to old issue of exploitation, as such gig work has no access to labour protection (The East African, 2023). The app also does not work for future MDWs who are looking for jobs and still based outside Hong Kong.

2.5. Looking Forward: What Needs to be Done

After understanding the state of play in MDWs empowerment, we considered **several criterias** to **assess our option as the niche player** (empowering workers to rate their employers and vice versa). This is critical to weigh if our intervention is the best option, rather than *not going as niche player* (challengers/visionaries) or even *not going at all* (status quo). We referred to Patton et al. (2021) for some widely-used criterias below:



Therefore, **intervention in niche** that focuses on **enabling MDWs to rate/review their employers or employment agencies** will deliver added value by giving workers control over their employers and agencies. This intervention aims to strengthen the existing innovation by building more credibility and protection for MDWs.

- ⇒ Referring to market mechanism, parties with bad ratings will be driven out of business. This can serve as **'reputational incentive'** and pressure employers or agencies to have more accountability to the public (Fernando, 2023).
- ⇒ The **specific segment** for ratings is **easier** rather than going with multiple assistances for training, legal counseling, and information that have higher chance to fail. This also explains why it is better to operate as *niche player*, rather than *challenger* (dominates larger segment, but no understanding of issue direction) or *visionaries* (has understanding of issue direction, but does not execute well).
- ⇒ Ratings can also serve as reference for future MDWs back home who are looking for jobs – allowing it to be **sustainable** with every new flow of workers who just finish their contracts and those who just begin.

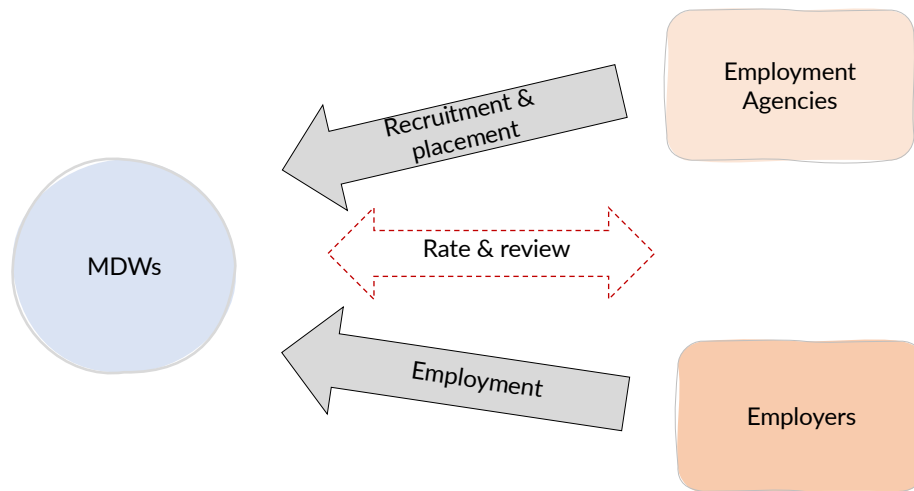


Figure 2.7. Illustration of intervention plan to empower MDWs
(composed by authors)

Revolutionary platform to leverage community-based network and experiences | rate & review employers and agencies | outcome & theory of change | design principles for success | components and features | pilot project & scaling up | stakeholder engagement plan | resources & financial | monitoring & evaluation | future vision

Nyaya design & implementation



3. Nyaya: Design and Implementation

3.1. Opportunity

Loneliness experienced by MDWs is rooted in their unique struggles with discrimination and abuse, primarily stemming from limited access to fair economic opportunities. Many existing solutions for MDWs focus on peripheral issues like healthcare and housing, neglecting economic empowerment. Efforts focused on economic empowerment (e.g HelperPlace) aim to eliminate exploitative intermediaries for transparency, but they often fall short of providing MDWs with alternative structures to enable credible employment information and bargaining power. Thus, *HelperPlace* and similar solutions replace one exploitative sourcing method with another, **failing to harness the collective power of the MDW community.**

Conversely, job-reviews platforms like *Indeed* and *Glassdoor* are introducing greater transparency in employment engagements by involving the job-seeking community. However, they **lack the cultural, social, and contextual understanding** required to effectively address the specific challenges faced by MDWs.

Therefore, there exists a significant opportunity to leverage MDWs community networks, experiences and information to bring more credibility to information on employment opportunities. This approach can empower MDWs to make informed decisions, and collectively challenge exploitative practices within the domestic work industry. In addition to providing credible employment information, such platforms can also serve as hubs for community support and solidarity. Over time, this can allow MDWs to feel more integrated into their host communities, directly mitigating problems of isolation, loneliness and depression among them.

3.2. About Nyaya

Nyaya, derived from the Sanskrit word for justice (**न्याय**) is a **revolutionary platform** that our team propose to **leverage community-based networks to empower migrant domestic workers (MDWs)**. Nyaya connects MDWs with a wide range of job opportunities, while ensuring credibility through peer-reviewed information. By tapping into the power of a supportive community, MDWs can access reliable job information, fostering trust and informed decision-making, as well as channeling their voices if injustice happens. Through interactive features and engagement tools, we create a sense of belonging, reduce social isolation, and encourage social interaction. Nyaya also provides a resource center for legal information, educational materials, and practical advice.

3.3. Goals, Outcomes, and Theory of Change

Impact	Reduced loneliness and enhanced social connectedness among migrant domestic workers through reduced economic isolation.				
Long term outcome	Increased job satisfaction, improved working conditions, and enhanced job opportunities for migrant domestic workers, to feel more integrated into their host communities, reducing feelings of loneliness.				
Intermediate outcomes	<p>Improved access: MDWs gain access to a wide range of job opportunities through the job search portal, leading to increased economic participation.</p>	<p>Empowered & informed decision-making: MDWs benefit from peer reviewed information on employers, making informed decisions for better employment outcomes, increased freedom, and enhanced social interaction</p>	<p>Enhanced social support networks: MDWs can connect with each other and the wider community through the platform, fostering a sense of community, support, and reducing social isolation.</p>		
Outputs	User-friendly job search and application portal with a diverse range of job opportunities, providing accurate and up-to-date employment information	Robust feedback system allowing MDWs to provide peer reviews and ratings about employers, and vice versa	Resource center providing legal information, educational materials, and practical advice	Interactive features for facilitation of peer-to-peer communication	Collaboration with stakeholders, to promote the platform and encourage fair employment practices.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage UI/UX designers and developers for an intuitive and accessible platform. Establish partnerships with employers and organizations for diverse job opportunities. Implement a filtering and matching system for relevant job listings Create mechanism for MDWs to contact employers and apply for opportunities through platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandate MDWs' registration of employment activities on platform Verify employer-listed employment conditions Create feedback mechanism for MDWs to review employers and vice versa for credibility Establish mechanisms to verify feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile and organize legal information, educational materials, and practical advice for MDWs. Regularly update and expand the resource center to address the evolving needs of MDWs. Ensure the resource center is easily accessible and user-friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop forums, chat rooms, and interest groups to facilitate social interaction among MDWs. Provide multilingual support to accommodate diverse linguistic backgrounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with government agencies, labour organizations, NGOs, and advocacy groups. Conduct meetings and consultations to understand their objectives and priorities. Collaborate on joint initiatives and projects that align with the platform's mission.
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilled development team including UI/UX designers and developers. Partnerships with employers, recruitment agencies, and job placement organizations. Resources for platform development, maintenance, and updating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback system development and integration. Staff for screening employers, and content moderation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal experts and subject matter specialists. Resources for content development and curation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platform features development Event organization resources Community management resources and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder engagement strategies Meeting and consultation resources Outreach campaign resources.

3.4. Nyaya's Design Principles for Success

1. Creating Trust

- **Transparency:** Provide clear information about platform operations, objectives, privacy policies, and mechanisms for ensuring information reliability
- **User Verification:** Implement a robust process to verify users' legitimacy and build trust among MDWs and employers.

2. Engaging the Ecosystem

- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Collaborate with government agencies, labor organizations, NGOs, and advocacy groups to gain their active involvement and support
- **Feedback and Iteration:** Continuously gather user and stakeholder feedback for platform improvement and meeting evolving needs

3. Making it Accessible and Usable

- **User-Centric Design:** Prioritize user experience by considering the needs and preferences of MDWs with varying digital literacy levels.
- **Multilingual Support:** Provide language options and accurate translations to accommodate MDWs' linguistic diversity.

3.5. Nyaya's Components and Features

I. Nyaya's Interface for MDWs

Set-up

- **Feature 1: Easy registration.** Registration can be completed in 2-mins after uploading a picture and photo ID, and confirming a verification code through SMS
- **Feature 2: User profile for MDWs.** The feature will capture a picture of the MDW, their basic details (gender, age, residence, country of origin etc.), employment preferences (working hours, wages, nature of work) and social connections

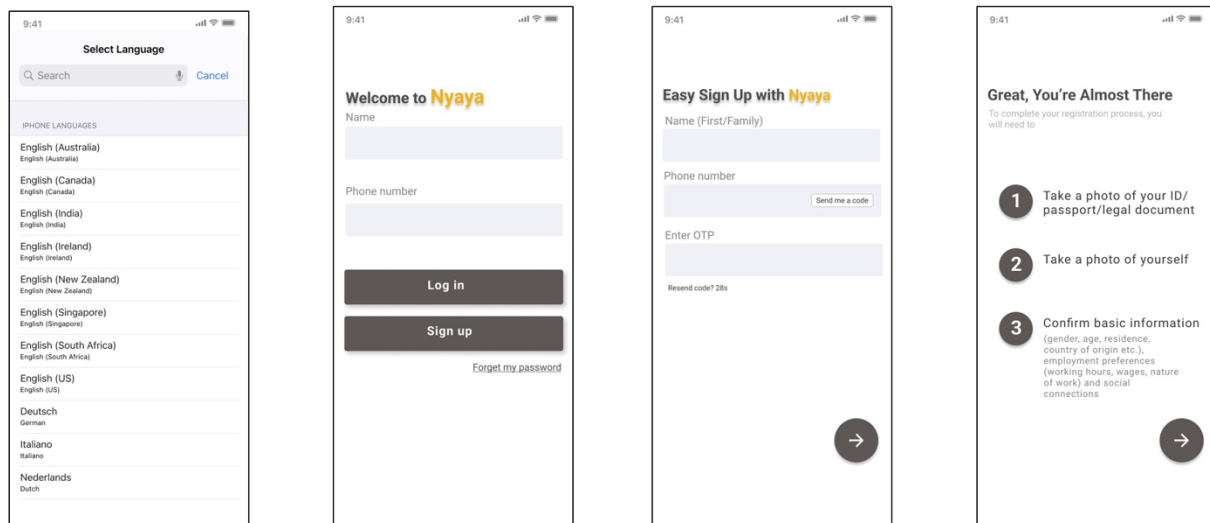


Figure 3.1. Nyaya's Set-up User Interface
Designed on Figma

Job search

- **Feature 3: Job recommendations.** AI powered tool to recommend jobs to MDWs based on basic details and employment preferences. The recommendations will be further searchable/filterable by geography, wage rate, employer rating etc.
- **Feature 4: Job details.** Comprehensive information about each job listing, including job description, required qualifications, employer details, wage rate, working hours, and location.

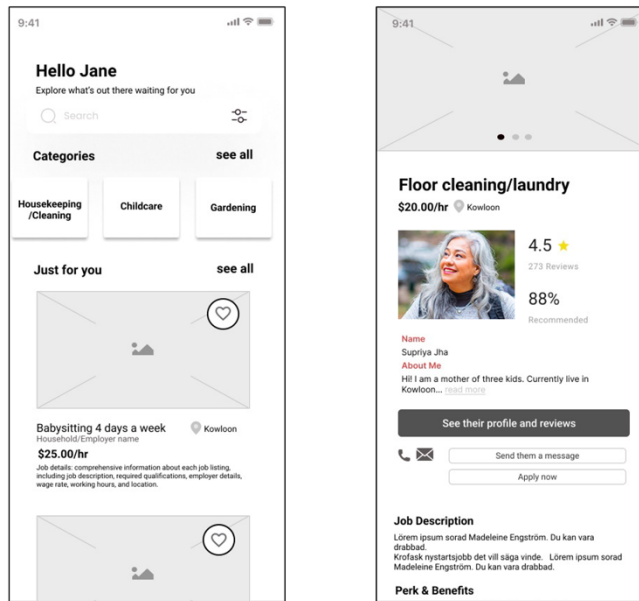


Figure 3.2. Nyaya's Job Search User Interface
Designed on Figma

Ratings and review

- **Feature 5: Peer reviews.** MDWs can read peer reviews and ratings about employers, based on their work experience, work environment, and treatment received, and also chat with peers to follow up on their reviews
- **Feature 6: Chat with employer.** MDWs can communicate directly with employers through the platform to discuss job details, clarify expectations, and negotiate employment terms.
- **Feature 7: Apply for job.** MDWs can apply for jobs directly through the platform, submitting their application and relevant documents to employers for consideration.

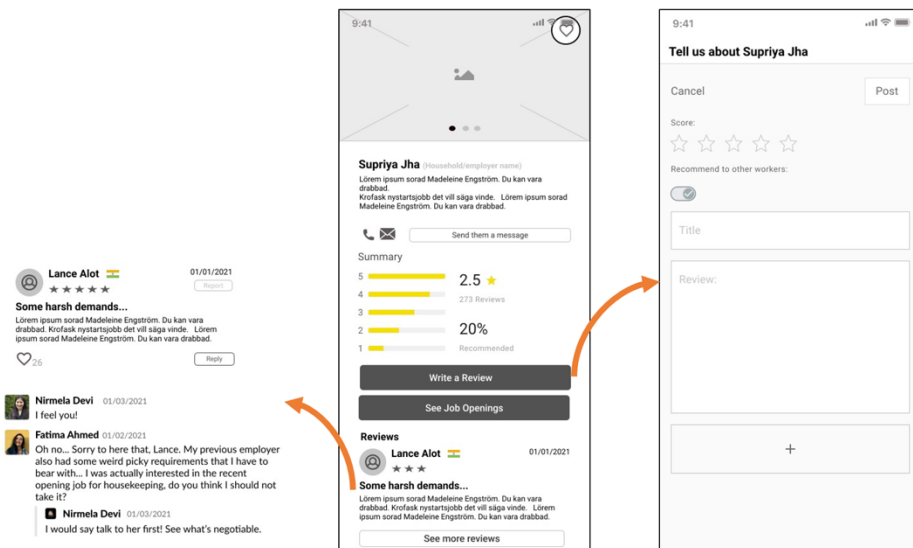


Figure 3.3.1 MDWs can write reviews on employers and respond to comments
Designed on Figma

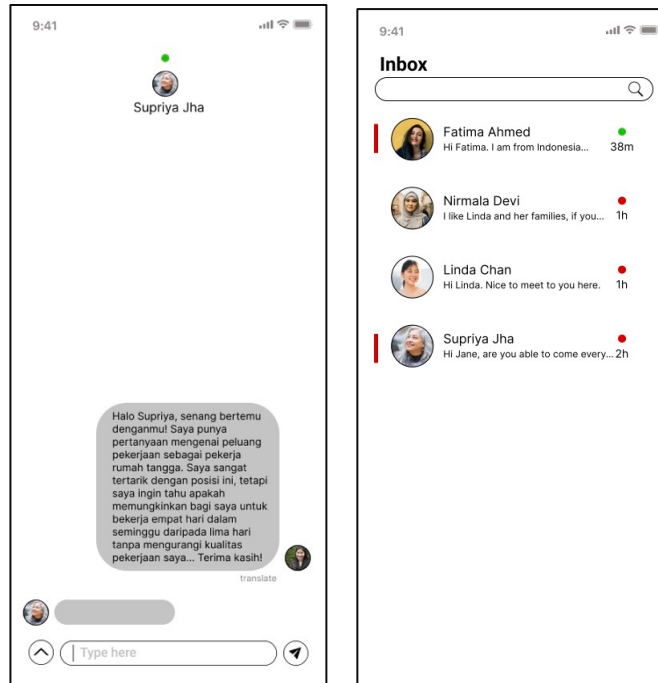


Figure 3.3.2 MDWs can chat with employer and their peers with language translate function
Designed on Figma

Community connect and support

- **Feature 8: Chat with peers.** MDWs can engage in real-time chats with their peers to seek advice, share experiences, and provide support to each other
- **Feature 9: Community connect.** MDWs can join interest groups, participate in forums, and plan meet-ups, and receive support from a wider community
- **Feature 10: External resources.** Curated collection of external resources, including legal information, educational materials, practical advice and list of NGOs and government resources for help

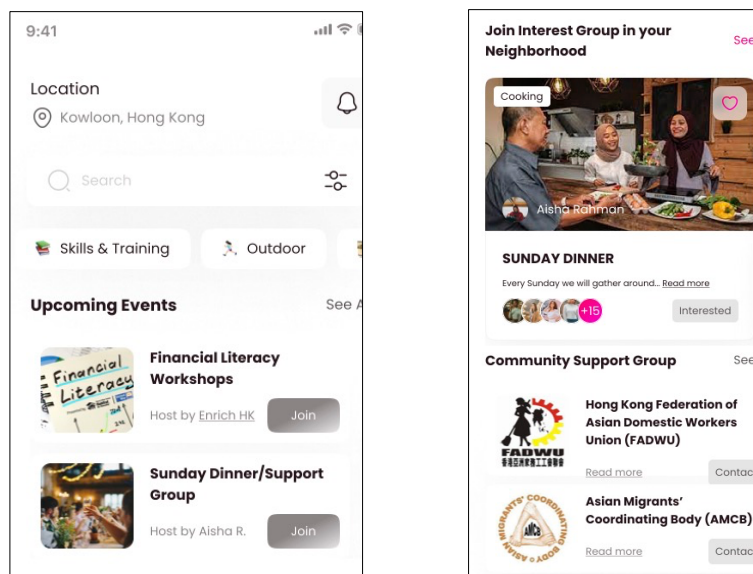


Figure 3.4. MDWs can join interest groups, attend social events, and seek professional support from external resources
Designed on Figma

II. [Nyaya's Interface for Employers & Agencies](#)

Set up

- **Feature 1: Easy Registration and user profile.** Employers can complete a simple registration process by providing necessary information about their organization, including company details, contact information, and relevant documentation

Job posting

- **Feature 2: Job Posting.** Employers can create job listings with detailed descriptions, requirements, and specifications, including work hours, job duties, desired qualifications, and wage rates.
- **Feature 3: Review applications.** Employers can search and filter candidates that have applied based on criteria such as skills, experience, availability, and location to find the most suitable candidates for their job openings.
- **Feature 4: Candidate Profiles.** Employers can view comprehensive profiles of MDWs, including their pictures, basic details, and employment preferences, enabling them to make informed decisions during the hiring process.
- **Feature 5: Hiring Decisions.** Employers can make informed hiring decisions based on the information provided by MDWs, including their profiles, qualifications, and interview performance.

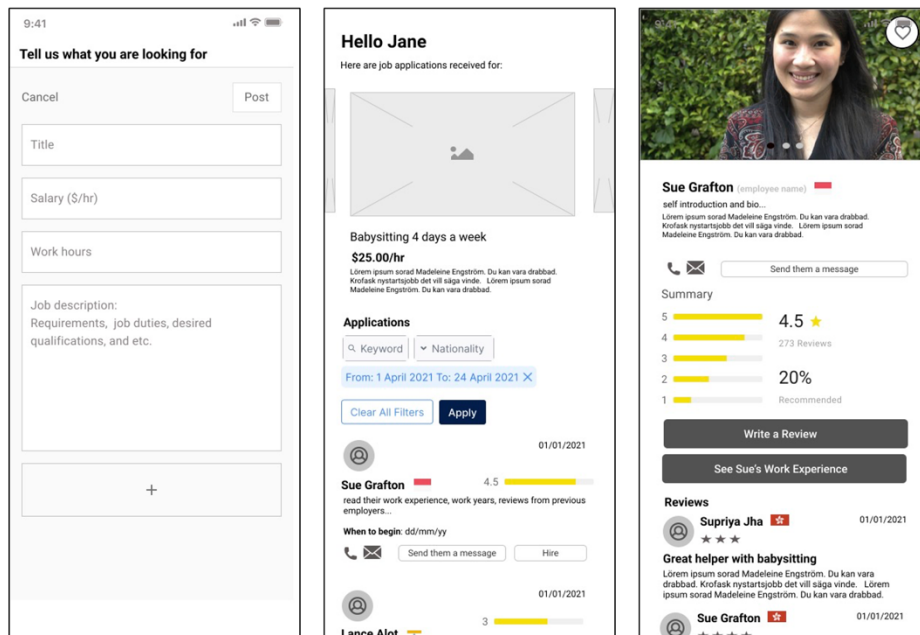


Figure 3.5. Employers can post jobs, view applications, filter candidates, and view comprehensive profiles of MDWs to make informed decisions
Designed on Figma

Ratings and review

- **Feature 6: Compliance and Documentation.** The platform can provide resources and reminders for employers to ensure compliance with labor laws and documentation requirements, such as work contracts and legal obligations. The platform can also use audio-visual proof to ensure employer is meeting legal obligations. *[This will be supported by random spot-checks and in-person audits by the screening team to ensure compliance]*

- **Feature 7: Reviews and Ratings.** Employers can view and respond to reviews and ratings provided by MDWs, gaining insights into their reputation as an employer and addressing any concerns or issues raised by workers. They can also provide reviews for MDWs.

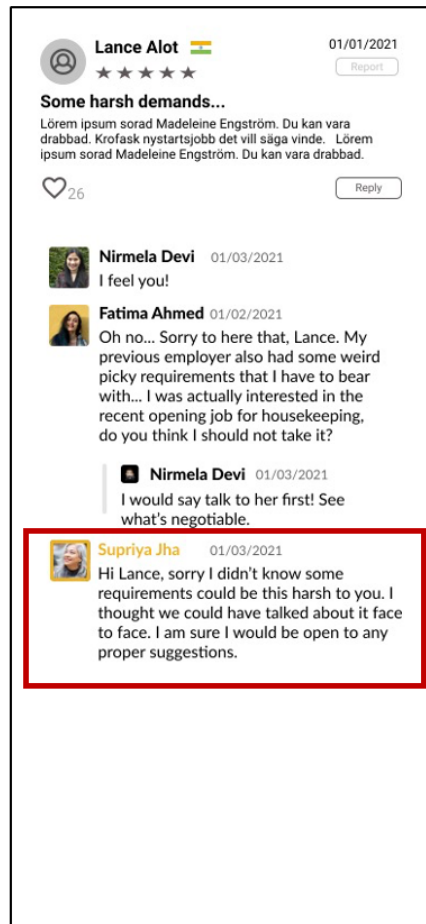


Figure 3.5. Employers respond to reviews and ratings from employees/MDWs
Designed on Figma

3.6. Implementation plan

1. Timeline

Nyaya will begin with a **Pilot Phase** (month 0-18), during which we will launch the program among 5,000 beneficiaries in Hong Kong. We will first start in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and New Territories, which are the current MDW hotspots. Further, since organizations such as MFMW already have active presence in these areas, it would be easier to build partnerships and mobilize MDWs on the app. After this, we would test the program in the rest of Hong Kong, gather learnings from results and improve the initial model. This will lay the foundation for a scalable and impactful solution that can be expanded to other SE Asia MDWs hotspots in the region.

Post this, we will launch **Phase II** (month 19-36) to scale it across select geographies which are also MDW hotspots, such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

Details on each phase are given below.

PHASE I / PILOT (month 0 – 18)

Sub-phase	Activities	2024				2025	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Project Set Up	Develop a detailed project plan	■					
	Initiate discussions with potential partner organizations (public and civil society)	■					
	Form internal project team	■					
Project design	Design and development of job search portal, ratings and review system and community engagement platform		■				
	Secure commitment with employers/agencies (private sector)		■				
	Establish partnerships with legal and educational organizations for resources		■				
	Conduct user testing and FGDs to gather feedback on usability and functionality			■			
	Incorporate feedback and make necessary improvements to the job search portal.			■			
	Begin designing the robust resource center			■			
Controlled Pilot	Pilot-test the job search, rating and review system and resource center with 5000 MDWs in target sub-geographies in HK			■	■		
	Refine and finalize the platform based on feedback			■	■		
	Develop user guidelines and manuals for MDWs, as well as internal SOPs			■	■		
HK-wide pilot	Launch the pilot program across Hong Kong, including the job search portal, rating system, community platform and resource center				■		
	Conduct marketing and awareness campaign to promote the platform			■	■	■	■
Monitoring & Evaluation	Monitor and analyze the data collected to assess the program's effectiveness and make data-driven improvements.			■	■	■	■
	Engage in regular communication and feedback sessions with stakeholders to address concerns and gather feedback				■	■	■
Learning from pilot	Produce a comprehensive report and marketing collateral on the program's outcomes, challenges, and lessons learned.					■	■
	Collaborate with stakeholders to assess the pilot program's impact and explore opportunities for scaling up.						■
	Develop a roadmap for scaling up the program, considering feedback, insights, and stakeholder inputs.						■
Scale Up Planning	Develop a detailed plan for scaling up the program, including resource requirements, timelines, and partnerships.						■
	Begin preparations for the next phase, which may involve securing additional funding, expanding the team, and implementing the scaled-up program.						■

PHASE II / SCALE UP (month 19 – 36)

Sub-phase	Activities	2025		2026			
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Scale Up Planning	Identify MDW hotspots in SE Asia for scale up based on the potential for impact and feasibility of success						
Localization and Customization	Adapt the platform to cater to regulatory environment, cultural nuances, and specific challenges in each country. Translate into local languages, customize job search filters, and incorporate region-specific resources.						
Partnership Development	Establish partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, NGOs, and recruitment agencies in the target countries.						
Regional Launch	Expand the platform to the targeted countries in SE Asia, leveraging the partnerships and local networks established. Conduct targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness and attract MDWs and employers to join the platform.						
User Acquisition & Engagement	Implement strategies to drive user acquisition and engagement in each country, tailored to the local context.						
Monitoring and Iteration	Continuously monitor platform performance as per MEL plan. Iterate and refine the platform based on user needs, cultural considerations, and market dynamics.						

2. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Stakeholder	Role / Interest	Engagement Plan
Public		
Hong Kong Labor Department	Overseeing and enforcing labor laws in Hong Kong; Regulate and supervise employment agencies, handle labor disputes, and ensure compliance with employment standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek guidance on compliance with labor laws and regulations specific to MDWs; Discuss the possibility of forming a partnership or obtaining official recognition to gain credibility and trust from workers and employers. Offer to collaborate on raising awareness about the app platform through joint workshops, seminars, or outreach programs through their connections
Hong Kong Immigration Department	In charge of visas and work permits, and all immigration policies and requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the current visa and work permit regime for MDWs and seek advice on incorporating necessary features within the app platform to ensure compliance with immigration policies; Discuss the potential for collaboration to enhance the monitoring and reporting mechanisms for workers' welfare and disputes
SEA Consulates and Embassies	Protect the rights and welfare of MDWs from source countries when they are working abroad in Hongkong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote app to help protect and support their citizens working as MDWs, and discuss potential collaboration opportunities (i.e. co-hosting information sessions, providing embassy-specific resources or updates within the app)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek endorsement to build trust and encourage workers to use the app
Legislative Council (LegCo)	Responsible for enacting laws, debating policies, and scrutinizing the government's work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the platform's potential benefits for MDWs to members who focus on labor and employment issues and discuss how it aligns with existing labor policies; • Explore the possibility of participating in relevant committee hearings or providing expert opinions to influence legislation and policies that support domestic workers' rights.
Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)	Responsible for promoting equality and combating discrimination in Hong Kong by providing advice, handle complaints, and conduct public education on equal opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek guidance on ensuring the platform's design and functionalities adhere to principles of non-discrimination and fairness to show our commitment to promoting equal opportunities for all domestic workers; • Offer to collaborate on educational campaigns or initiatives that raise awareness about equal treatment and rights for migrant domestic workers; • Request their endorsement or support to demonstrate the platform's commitment to equality and inclusivity.
Private		
HelperPlace and other for-profit employment aggregators/ platforms/ agencies	Earn revenues from MDWs' recruitment and placement process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct meetings and workshops with for-profit employment platforms/agencies • Design a mutually beneficial arrangement to source job opportunities from such platforms for Nyaya
Employers	Job providers for MDWs responsible overall care and upkeep of MDWs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with employers through workshops and seminars to introduce the platform's features and encourage their participation in providing fair employment opportunities. • Establish partnerships with employers' associations or industry groups to promote the platform as a tool for fair recruitment
Civil Society		
Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions (FADWU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represented for all the domestic workers in Hong Kong; • Advocate for workers' rights, provide support and services, and promote fair employment practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the review rating app platform to domestic workers through workshops, and offer to conduct training sessions or workshops on usage • Seek their inputs for iterative testing on the app platform • Explore the possibility of collaborating on awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts
Hong Kong MDWs	Seeking fair, equitable employment opportunities in Hong Kong using their collective power and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify organizations/influencers with existing ties to the community • Registration drives in MDW hotspots • Workshops/seminars/programs to educate the community about the platfor

3. Monitoring and evaluation

Component	Indicator	Means of data collection	Periodicity	Assumption
Outcome: Improved access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of MDWs hired through portal • Time taken from registration of MDW to job start date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform database 	Monthly	There is no shadow/black market for recruitment of MDWs
Outcome: Empowered and informed decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of negative reviews by MDWs • User reported accuracy of peer-reported employment conditions • Average salary of MDWs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform database • User surveys • Focus group discussions • Field visits 	Monthly	Empowered decision-making actually leads to more economic and personal freedom
Outcome: Enhanced social support networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of active monthly users on social connect feature • User satisfaction, net promoter score and sense of belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform database • User surveys • Focus group discussions 	Monthly	Enhanced social connections result in happiness, and not further anxiety or fear of missing out
Output: User-friendly job search and application portal with a diverse range of job opportunities, providing accurate and up-to-date employment information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of unique job listings available on the platform • Number of applications submitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform database • User surveys • Field visits 	Fortnightly	Employers intend to use the app to hire and do not sidestep the system after contact employers from the system
Output: Robust feedback system allowing MDWs to provide peer reviews and ratings about employers, and vice versa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of ratings/reviews submitted by MDWs • Number of ratings/reviews submitted by employers • User satisfaction and response on reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform database • User surveys • Field visits 	Fortnightly	MDWs continue to have access to digital platform through mobile/tablet/laptop after being hired, and are not trapped in forced labor situations
Output: Resource center providing legal information, educational materials, and practical advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of visits and click-through rate for resources • User satisfaction with relevance, accuracy and depth of content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform database • User surveys 	Fortnightly	Availability of information and resources is currently a challenge contributing to exploitation of MDWs
Output: Interactive features for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of active users in peer-to-peer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform database 	Fortnightly	Higher engagement signifies enhanced social

Component	Indicator	Means of data collection	Periodicity	Assumption
facilitation of peer-to-peer communication	<p>communication features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly number of peer conversations per user 			support and reduced isolation
<p>Output: Collaboration with stakeholders, to promote the platform and encourage fair employment practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of MoUs/agreements signed with public, private and civil society partners Number of jobs sourced through external parties Number of MDWs mobilized through external parties Stakeholder satisfaction with partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platform database Stakeholder interviews 	Fortnightly	Support from at least a few public, private and civil society players is available
<p>Activities: Online platform creation, call center set-up, ground mobilization, surveys, information collection, advocacy campaigns, training, partnerships etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time for platform design Progress on completion of intended platform features Number of meetings held with external stakeholders Number of MDWs and employers registered Number of employer sites screened Number of resources uploaded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project report Platform database 	Weekly	
<p>Inputs: Financial resources, staff, software, training toolkits, advocacy materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of units procured for each item Cost of each item Benefits per unit HKD spent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receipt of rented services/purchased products Project audit data 	Monthly	Resources (financial, human, logistical etc.) are available

4. Resources and financials

For Phase I, we expect an outlay of HKD 3.2 mn (~USD 410,000) over 18 months. A large part of these costs is attributable to the initial set-up of the technology for the platform, as well as costs related to Monitoring and Evaluation.

Category	Description	Unit Cost (HKD)	Units	Total (HKD)
Personnel	Project Manager	HKD 100,000	1	HKD 100,000
	Software Developers (2)	HKD 80,000	2	HKD 160,000
	User Support and Community Manager	HKD 60,000	1	HKD 60,000
	Screening Employers (3)	HKD 40,000	3	HKD 120,000
	Telephonic Support (3)	HKD 40,000	3	HKD 120,000
	Community Moderation (3)	HKD 45,000	3	HKD 135,000
	Partnerships Head (2)	HKD 80,000	2	HKD 160,000
	Policy Expert	HKD 120,000	1	HKD 120,000
	Sub-Total			HKD 975,000
Technology	Platform Development and Maintenance	HKD 500,000	1	HKD 500,000
	Cloud Hosting and Server Infrastructure	HKD 200,000	1	HKD 200,000
	Sub-Total			HKD 700,000
Marketing and Promotion	Digital Marketing Campaigns	HKD 200,000	1	HKD 200,000
	Outreach Events and Collateral	HKD 150,000	1	HKD 150,000
	Sub-Total			HKD 350,000
Stakeholder Engagement	Meetings and Workshops with Stakeholders	HKD 50,000	5	HKD 250,000
	Collaboration and Partnership Activities	HKD 100,000	3	HKD 300,000
	Sub-Total			HKD 550,000
Research and Evaluation	Surveys and Data Collection	HKD 100,000	5	HKD 500,000
	Evaluation and Impact Assessment	HKD 200,000	1	HKD 200,000
	Sub-Total			HKD 700,000
Total Budget				HKD 3,275,000

As we incorporate more learnings into the program, we expect unit scale up costs to reduce, particularly for technology and MEL.

3.7. Risk Assessment

Administrative Risk	Probability	Impact	Consequences	Mitigation
Failure to comply with relevant regulations and legal requirements regarding data privacy, labor laws, and employment practices	Medium	High	Legal penalties, reputational damage, loss of trust from users and stakeholders.	Conduct regular audits to ensure compliance, stay updated on changing regulations, employ legal experts for guidance, and implement robust data protection measures.
Demand Risk	Probability	Impact	Consequences	Mitigation
Lack of user adoption and engagement with the platform, resulting in limited job listings and	Low	High	Limited job opportunities for MDWs, decreased platform value,	Conduct user research to understand user needs, invest in user experience design, develop effective marketing and outreach strategies, collaborate with

reduced community interaction			decreased community support	stakeholders to promote platform awareness, and provide incentives for user engagement
Increased competition from other platforms or services offering similar job search and community engagement features	Medium	Medium to High	Decreased user base, reduced job listings, diminished user engagement, loss of market share	Continuously monitor and analyze the competitive landscape, differentiate the platform through unique features and user experience, maintain strong relationships with employers and stakeholders
Technical Risk	Probability	Impact	Consequences	Mitigation
Unplanned system outages, technical failures, or cybersecurity incidents leading to platform unavailability	Low	Low	User frustration, loss of job opportunities, reputational damage, financial losses.	Regularly perform system maintenance and establish disaster recovery plans.
Unauthorized access, theft, or leakage of user data, compromising privacy and confidentiality.	Medium	Medium	Legal and regulatory penalties, loss of user trust, reputational damage, potential lawsuits.	Implement robust data security measures, encryption protocols, access controls, regular security audits, and employee training on data protection best practices.
External Risk	Probability	Impact	Consequences	Mitigation
Political instability, changes in government regulations, or social factors affecting the operations and acceptance of the platform	Low to medium	Medium	Disruptions to platform operations, legal and regulatory challenges, decreased user trust.	Maintain open communication with relevant stakeholders, adapt platform operations to align with changing regulations, and diversify partnerships to mitigate reliance on specific entities or regions.
Economic downturns, financial instability, or other external factors impacting the availability of job opportunities or funding for the platform	Low to medium	High	Reduced job opportunities for MDWs, decreased financial resources, operational constraints, potential platform shutdown	Diversify revenue streams (incl. open to ads placement), maintain financial reserves, establish partnerships with organizations committed to supporting MDWs, and actively monitor economic trends

4. Future Vision and Conclusion

Migrant domestic workers has long been experiencing unique struggles with abuse and isolation, leaving them disempowered despite being one of the most significant agent of development in the country. Our vision is to create a powerful network of empowered MDWs, where their collective knowledge, experiences, and networks serve as the driving force behind improved job opportunities and fair working conditions. **Nyaya** is a platform that we envision could **harness the strength and resilience of migrant workers communities**, enabling them to be the architects of their own success.

Nyaya is also a story of **collaborations to empower**. Through ongoing engagement with stakeholders, we aim to expand our platform's reach to more regions in Southeast Asia, unlocking a wealth of untapped potential for migrant workers. By fostering strong community connections and pushing for greater accountability in a loosely regulated migrant industry, we envision a future where migrant workers not only find better job opportunities but also have the tools and support to negotiate for fair wages, improved working conditions, and greater respect and recognition.

In conclusion, Nyaya is built on the belief **that MDWs possess the knowledge, skills, and power to create change within their own lives**. The challenges and disadvantages that come from unavailability of jobs at home, governments' loose protection, exploitative brokerage business, and intimidating employers have hampered them from achieving their goals. It is our task as society to ensure that they have the space to negotiate those challenges – where their voices are heard, their experiences valued, and their aspirations realized.

We invite you to join us on this journey towards a future where migrant domestic workers are agents of their own empowerment and where fairness and justice prevail in the labor market.

References

- Alibhai, K. (2017). Social Isolation and Technology: How Technology Can Be Used to Reduce Social Isolation Among Older Adults in British Columbia. Social Connectedness Fellowship Program.
- Blue, Alexis. (2019, September 30). Which Comes First: Smartphone Dependency or Depression? | University of Arizona News. <https://news.arizona.edu/story/which-comes-first-smartphone-dependency-or-depression>
- Cacioppo, J. T., & Patrick, W. (2008). Loneliness: Human nature and the need for social connection. WW Norton & Company.
- Cheung, Ian. (2017, October 6). "Who Is Responsible for Hong Kong's Invisible Migrant Workers?" CSIS. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/171004_hong_kong_migrant_cheung.pdf?DRVgdYZ_9HXazaTCAGSKSXZY77kHGlc
- Cheung, M. (2015, March 6). Hong Kong provides level playing field for migrant workers. South China Morning Post. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/comment/letters/article/1730138/hong-kong-provides-level-playing-field-migrant-workers>
- Faraday, Fay. (2021, December). The Empowerment of Migrant Workers in a Precarious Situation: an Overview." KNOMAD <https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/KNOMAD%20Working%20Paper%2039-Empowerment%20of%20Worker-Dec%202021.pdf>
- HKSAR Government. (2015, June 16). Enhanced Protection for Domestic Helpers (LC Paper No.: CB(2)1683/14-15(06)). LegCo Panel on Manpower Enhanced Protection for Foreign Domestic Helpers. Retrieved from <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/mp/papers/mp20150616cb2-1683-5-e.pdf>
- Immigration Department Annual Report 2011. (n.d.). Immigration Department Annual Report 2011. http://www.immd.gov.hk/publications/a_report_2011/en/ch1/index.html
- Justice Centre Hong Kong. (2016, March). Coming Clean: The prevalence of forced labour and human trafficking for the purpose of forced labour amongst migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong. Retrieved July 12, 2023, from <https://www.justicecentre.org.hk/framework/uploads/2016/03/Coming-Clean-The-prevalence-of-forced-labour-and-human-trafficking-for-the-purpose-of-forced-labour-amongst-migrant-domestic-workers-in-Hong-Kong.pdf>
- Malpass, David. (2022, December 6). "Remittances are a Critical Economic Stabilizer." World Bank Blogs. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/remittances-are-critical-economic-stabilizer#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20remittance%20flows%20to,development%20aid%20by%20three%20times.>
- Mansfield, L., et al. (2019). A conceptual review of loneliness across the adult life course (16+ years): Synthesis of qualitative studies. What Works Wellbeing, (p. 2; 18; 36)
- Migrant Forum for Asia. (2013, September 26). Policy Brief No. 7, "Social Protection for Low-skilled Migrant Workers and Their Families." <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/docs/137/PB7.pdf>

- Migration Data in South-eastern Asia. (2023, May 31). Migration Data Portal. <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/regional-data-overview/south-eastern-asia>
- National Academies Press (US). (2020). Risk and Protective Factors for Social Isolation and Loneliness. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK557971/>
- Patton, Sawicki, Clark (2021). Basic Methods of Policy Planning and Analysis.
- PM launches Government's first Loneliness strategy—GOV.UK. (2018, October 15). [Gov.uk]. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-launches-governments-first-loneliness-strategy>
- The East African. (2023, February 28). "Gig Jobs Apps on the spot over Failure to Protect Domestic Workers." <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/science-health/gg-work-apps-not-protecting-workers-4139232>
- Tomaka J, Thompson S, Palacios R. The relation of social isolation, loneliness, and social support to disease outcomes among the elderly. *J Aging Health*. 2006 Jun;18(3):359-84. doi: 10.1177/0898264305280993. PMID: 16648391.
- Tsang, E. (2014, February 20). 'Job-hopping' migrant domestic workers suspected of exploiting rules. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1431281/job-hopping-foreign-domestic-workers-exploit-rules-cash> Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1431281/job-hopping-foreign-domestic-workers-exploit-rules-cash>
- Surkalim D L, Luo M, Eres R, Gebel K, van Buskirk J, Bauman A et al. (2022, February 9). "The Prevalence of Loneliness Across 113 Countries: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis" *BMJ* 2022, vol. 376. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8826180/>
- Villaseca, E. (2017). Addressing governance challenges in a changing labour migration landscape. International Labour Organization (ILO).
- Zaria Gorvett. (2020, October 23). How solitude and isolation can affect your social skills—BBC Future. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201022-how-solitude-and-isolation-can-change-how-you-think>