



New tech guidelines to boost worker engagement in supply chains

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A set of guidelines has been published in the US designed to maximise the impact of technology-driven efforts to engage workers in global supply chains with the aim of helping identify and address worker abuse and exploitation.

The Worker Engagement Supported by Technology (WEST) Principles were officially announced by mobile survey platform Laborlink and the Humanity United foundation this week at the Innovation Forum in Washington DC.

Good World Solutions, a US-based non-profit, operates Laborlink with a number of apparel brands and retailers including Primark, C&A, Marks & Spencer, Levi Strauss Foundation, American Eagle Outfitters, and a partnership with the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety.

Unlike a typical audit where around 5% of the workforce are interviewed, and workers may be coached on what to say, Laborlink uses mobile technologies to survey factory workers, giving brands and retailers a real-time insight into safety, factory conditions, working hours and wages across their supply chains.



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The end result is much more reliable data sourced from a larger number of workers.

In December, it reached its 1m worker surveys milestone more than a year early, of which 60-70% are based in apparel or footwear factories.

Now, LaborLink has helped to develop eight Principles to provide guidance on how to design and implement technological solutions that identify and address worker abuse and exploitation.

Implemented in four phases - design, engage, analyse, and utilise data - the Principles include:

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- Start with integrity and purpose;
- Use worker-centric and inclusive design;
- Build trust with workers;
- Facilitate uptake and ownership;
- Manage security and risk;
- Evaluate outcomes and processes;
- Inform decisions and system changes; and
- Collaborate and share learnings

"Technology-driven approaches can enable stakeholders at all levels of global supply chains to take action against human rights abuses and improve worker well-being — the opportunity lies in how these solutions are designed and implemented," Laborlink says.

Convened by Humanity United and Laborlink by Good World Solutions, the authors of the WEST Principles also include GeoPoll, MicroBenefits, Ulula, and Workplace Options.

The Principles were collaboratively developed in consultation with stakeholders across supply chains including brands, employers, NGOs, industry leaders, and issue experts. The authors commit to uphold the WEST Principles and welcome stakeholder groups across supply chains to endorse them to signal their commitment.

[Click here](#) to view the WEST Principles online.

Earlier this year, just-style spoke with Heather Franzese, executive director and co-founder of Good World Solutions, who explained how Laborlink is being used to help bring about change, drive sourcing decisions and give deeper visibility into the supply chain.

[Using worker surveys to drive change in supply chains](#)

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