

Using Agents

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So, an agent charges the school to find them a teacher. This means that the agent, essentially, works for the school. And this means that if there is some kind of contractual dispute between the teacher and the school, the agent is likely to take the side of the party which pays them - the school.

On the other hand, an agent wants to keep both parties happy because if the teacher leaves the school, they won't get paid. In this respect they will try to resolve issues, but if it comes to deciding between you or the school, the agent will most likely choose the school.

Remember also that as agents make their money from schools, they are sometimes ready to deal with schools which may not be the best. Some agents are very scrupulous here and will only deal with high quality schools which offer good conditions and a reasonable salary to their teachers; other agents will supply teachers to any school which asks.

If you do have a problem with the school, it's obviously first best to approach the school. If there's still an issue, without an agent you are left with few alternatives. If you do have an agent, however, you can ask them to try and sort out the problem. Most agents are at least willing to smooth things over and try to find a compromise.

Conclusion

There are good agents and bad agents. If you are an experienced teacher who knows the ropes of a country then you are probably able to do without the services of an agent.

However, for new teachers in a new country, an agent can provide a backup if things go wrong. The other thing to consider is that you will have less control over where you are sent and may well end up teaching in a small town when you asked to work in a big city (which may not be a bad thing in itself, but that's for you to decide).

Before selecting an agent, do a search online for them and see what others say, but do bear in mind that people who have used an agent and found them good tend not to post, whilst those who have a gripe do.