

Institution: University of the West of Scotland		
Unit of Assessment: 17: Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Fair and Decent Work in Scotland: what matters most and who can make a difference?		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2016 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s)	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Stephen Gibb	Reader	2014 - 2020
Dr Mohammed Ishaq	Reader	2014 - 2020
Dr Christine Reilly	Senior Lecturer	2016 - 2020
Dr Abeer Hassan	Reader	2004 - 2020
Prof Heather Tarbert	Professor	2010 - 2020
Dr Hartwig Pautz	Lecturer	2014 - 2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Fair and decent work (FDW) is the major global challenge of progressing job quality, wages and wellbeing. The exemplary Oxfam-UWS partnership within the context of Oxfam's '<i>Sustainable Livelihoods approach</i>' in its analysis of poverty around the world has been influential, contributing to social policy developments in Scotland. Our research, which started in 2016, has directly informed social policy developments in Scotland, as corroborated by Oxfam and others. Beyond this, we have worked with some of the biggest employers in Scotland to implement change, and ensure fair and decent work is being delivered – such as local authorities, the hard-to-reach small and medium enterprise (SME) sector (including engineering firms, construction firms and retail/hospitality), and most recently adult care homes. We have helped kick-start a culture shift through our research on inequalities.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>While many advocate 'voice' – essentially trade union presence – as the key to fair and decent work progression, our ground-breaking approach is to work with organisations in order to instigate change. We have taken an innovative approach, including employer voice in the initial study, up-taking a review of challenges facing local authorities, working with the small and medium enterprise champion of FDW role modelling, and most recently, by inputting to the review of social care in Scotland as a result of the pandemic crisis in care homes for the elderly.</p>		
<p>The underpinning research, from 2016, has created and applied a pioneering intermediate model of FDW, and the identification of priority areas, through initial collaborative research between University of the West of Scotland researchers and Oxfam partners. The project as a whole was presented at the Scottish Parliament in September 2016, chaired by Keith Brown, who, at the time, was Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work. This was influential in the consolidation and extension of fair work as a central policy goal for the Scottish Government.</p>		
<p>The underlying and cumulative purpose of our research has been to reach a range of stakeholders, within and beyond government, especially employers through civil society. If fair and decent work is to be advanced, it is vital that they are aware of and engaged in supporting organization culture and development (OC&D). We engage with employers lacking basic FDW – low paid sectors and small and medium enterprises, for example. Our research also seeks to influence employers with more sophisticated management systems, but narrow views of fair and decent work. This category would include large employers such as local authorities. Our approach is essentially qualitative, through interviews and case study research, to advance, in a combined way, a set of factors (including low pay) which organizations should be able to self-evaluate on and contextualise and prioritise. Research can be an inspiring and accessible way of reviewing their own status as fair and decent work employers, to help identify and pull together practical and relevant strands of manager, staff and organization development.</p>		

Our contribution to the initial research was to identify the employers' perspective on FDW using the pioneering Oxfam-UWS partnership model. We achieved this through literature review, interviews and case study analysis with a range of employers. These included NHS Scotland, local authorities, energy companies, hospitality, tourism, and the manufacturing sector. The main findings [3.2, 3.3] were that employers shared an interest in progressing FDW, but did not see that as being led by legislation. Employers and human resources managers believe that the creation of a clear and widely agreed definition of 'decent work' would be helpful, and they would welcome a simple way to measure it. Employers view responsibility for creating 'decent work' as shared with government and other key stakeholders. There are both overlaps and differences between employers' perceptions of key features of 'decent work', and the perceptions of wider society and lower-paid workers as indicated in related research.

Subsequently, since 2016, there has been further research adopting the UWS-Oxfam model of FDW with Local Authorities, SMEs and the social care workforce [3.1, 3.4, 3.5]. We interviewed HR managers in 18 local authorities, about their perceptions, policies and practices of fair and decent work. We found a perception among interviewees that local authorities are still 'bastions of decent work', but that there were significant pressures on this in the current and anticipated climate and resourcing regime, which could threaten that. Ways to protect and sustain FDW in the sector were needed.

Subsequently, a sample of owner/directors in potential 'role model' SME cases (7) and surveys of employees in those was completed. We had knowledge of these SMEs' reputation from our own systemic interactions and local authority business development networks. Cross-case content analysis of these identifies common aspects of culture associated with these fair and decent work SME role models and "Business Champions". Awareness of these who may influence other small and medium enterprise employers to improve their FDW practices, which was being facilitated by delivery of workshops on the research to employers through the Centre for Engineering Education Development (CEED) network.

Most recently, in 2020 and as a result of the ground-breaking partnership, we received a British Academy special Covid-19 grant to conduct decent work in social care research. This research involved in depth interviews with front line social care workers (20) and stakeholders in the review of social care in Scotland (9) producing a report that has been circulated within the Feeley Review and the FWC, as well as employer associations. Aside from the unprecedented media coverage we obtained - on TV news as well as national press front page covers - we had feedback in webinars with stakeholders that our contribution was triangulating and validating the emerging direction of travel of change. Care workers' experience during the first wave of the Covid-19 outbreak in Scotland evidence that pre-existing issues and deficits in the care sector, in the context of decent work, were amplified during this time of crisis, some with greater significance than others. Decent work improvements in older people's care require a dedicated approach and specified institutionalised 'regime' for job quality improvement. Overall, Scotland lacks a 'culture of care', which values older people specifically, but also other people needing social care, beyond economic views around productivity.

The initial research was funded by partnership resources and other resources from Oxfam, at an early stage in the development. More recent work on decent work in social care, specifically front line care worker experience in care homes for the elderly, has been pursued by Pautz & Gibb with British Academy funding.

3. References to the research

3.1 Gibb, S., Ishaq, M., Elliott, I., Hussain, A. (2020) Fair and Decent Work in Scotland's Local Authorities: Evidence and Challenges. Public Money & Management.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2020.1723262>

3.2 Gibb, S., Ishaq, M (2020) Decent Work; What Matters Most and Who Can Make A Difference?, *Employee Relations*. 42 (4) pp. 845-861. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-04-2018-0099>

3.3 Gibb, S. Ishaq, M (2016) *Decent Work Thematic Report 2; The Employers View*. <http://uwsoxfampartnership.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Decent-Work-Thematic-Report-2-Employers-View-Web.pdf>

3.4 Gibb, S. (2020) *Cultures of Fair and Decent Work; Lessons from SME Business Champions*. Output available on request.

3.5 Pautz, H., Gibb, S., Riddell, J. (2020) *Decent Work in Scotland's Care Homes – the impact of Covid-19 on front line workers*. UWS report to British Academy. November. <https://dwsc-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Decent-Work-in-Scottish-Care-Homes-Report-Final.pdf>

3.6 Gibb, S. (2020) *To fix social care, first we must listen to frontline workers*. The Times. Thought leadership piece print and on line on Friday 21 August. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/to-fix-social-care-first-we-must-listen-to-frontline-workers-k0d723cnx>.

Grants

3.A Hartwig, P., *Social Care in Times of Crisis*, Special Research Grants: COVID-19, British Academy, 2020, GBP9,375

4. Details of the impact

Our Route from Research to Impact

From 2016, employees and employers have benefitted from the use of the Oxfam-UWS developed FDW model and contributions to policy associated with our research. We have influenced social policy and civil society, through social innovation, and by informing bodies including the Fair Work Commission. We have also contributed to wider awareness of fair and decent work factors, influencing employers, employees and advocates. The Scottish Government/Fair Work Convention has shaped its own activity on the basis of the work of the Partnership. Our pioneering research partnership with Oxfam has influenced policy makers to address FDW in various policy improvements. More distinctively we have developed a flagship training programme for employers and stakeholders on advancing decent work through Organization Culture & Development (OC&D). This has local and international significance, as we promote engagement with FDW worldwide. Especially to influence those lacking awareness of the FDW agenda, as many SMEs are, or those with a narrow- base pay level- FDW agenda, as for example many local authorities.

Socio-economic impact

Impact from the projects concerned with local government would be on the awareness of fair and decent work, and perceptions and concerns of HR and managers in local authorities. Impacts on small and medium enterprise employers are likewise about awareness raising and creating an environment of progressive change locally in Scotland, UK and internationally. **Reilly, Hassan and Tarbert** in the 'Routes To Work' KTP work focus upon third sector entrepreneurship and employability. They are helping to advance fair and decent work through companies developing more effective services which means more people back in work. They are doing this by supporting the social enterprise 'Routes to Work' to improve their services, including creating a virtual reality product as a '3rd Safe Space' to allow vulnerable groups to access workplace environments via VR simulations

We share a common research and impact space with many agents in civil society and government. Many agents are involved in raising political and cultural awareness of fair and decent work,

including but going beyond the Living Wage. Impact has been through influencing policy makers to address these in various policy forums.

We can differentiate ourselves from those more concerned with advocating 'voice', essentially trade union presence, as the key to fair and decent work progress. We have rather sought to work with organization culture and development Impact; first by including the employer voice in the initial study; then by an uptake of review of challenges based on the report in local authorities (presentation to Glasgow City Council HR managers Dec 2018); then with small and medium enterprise champion of fair and decent work role modelling (report to companies, web page presentation to Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM); most recently by inputting to the review of adult social care in Scotland.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 Testimonial from Oxfam Scotland

5.2 Testimonial from Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)

5.3 Testimonial from Fair Work Commission

5.4 Testimonial from the Feeley Review of Adult Social Care ,Scottish Government

5.5 Testimonial from Routes To Work

5.6 Social Care Sector: participant testimonials; manager testimonials, stakeholder testimonials to come after dissemination of report in November/December.

5.7 Social Care sector reports and blogs: <https://dwsc-research.org/>

5.8 Social Innovation Academy blog 15/03/2020 8 tips <http://www.socialinnovationacademy.eu/8-fair-and-decent-work-tips-for-small-and-medium-enterprises/>

5.9 Scottish Business Pledge: <https://oxfamapps.org/scotland/2018/08/24/2018-08-everyones-business-the-role-of-the-scottish-business-pledge-in-delivering-the-global-goals/>

5.10 Scottish Parliament's Economy Committee's report on Work, Wages and Wellbeing published (<http://www.parliament.scot/gettinginvolved/90669.aspx>) in January 2016 the DW project – then in the making and pre-publication – is referenced Scottish Parliament. (2016) 1st Report, 2016 (Session 4): Taking the High Road - Work, Wages and Wellbeing in the Scottish Labour Market. *Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, The Scottish Parliament*, SP Paper 874 1st Report, 14th January, online from <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/95420.aspx>. [accessed 23/03/2021]