

<p><b>Institution:</b> Queen Mary University of London (QMUL)</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> C17 (Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology)</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Making a case for the living wage</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Since 2001, research by Jane Wills has exposed the problem of low pay and in-work poverty in London, explored the potential solution offered by a living wage, and underpinned a successful campaign by London Citizens – an alliance of community organisations – for a living wage in the capital. As a result of the campaign, there are now 400 accredited employers who pay a living wage and up to 45,000 workers across the UK who have benefitted. In 2008, persuaded by Wills’ research, Queen Mary became the first university in the UK to adopt the living wage. Now, almost all HEIs in London do the same. Wills has presented her research at the House of Commons (2009, 2012), the Marmot Enquiry (2009), and has spoken alongside Ed Miliband to support the living wage during his leadership election campaign (2010). The Labour Party supports the living wage as its policy response to in-work poverty and it will feature in the Party Manifesto ahead of the next general election. The research has focused mainly on London, yet the findings have relevance nationally and internationally, informing campaigns in Birmingham, Brighton, Glasgow, Nottingham, Wales, Canada and New Zealand.</p> <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Over more than a decade, Wills has led seven research projects, funded by a range of organisations including the ESRC, Trust for London and UNISON, examining the problem of low pay and in-work poverty, and the potential solution of the living wage. Her research findings have been published in five reports (see below), five papers in international peer-reviewed journals and a co-authored book (see section 3). The quality of her research has also been recognised by the Back Award from the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) in 2013 for ‘research contributing to public employment policy.’ The projects are:</p> <p><b>2001: <i>Mapping low pay.</i></b> Funded by UNISON (£5,000) and led by Wills this project identified those workers who fell into the gap between the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and the newly calculated London Living Wage (LLW). The research highlighted the prevalence of low wages and poor benefit structures on offer to workers, the impact of the two-tier workforce and the role of foreign-born workers doing these jobs. The research provided an initial map of the extent of low pay in east London and provided the intelligence needed to launch the living wage campaign as well as identifying potential targets for the first phase of action. See Wills (2001) <i>Mapping low pay in East London</i> (<a href="http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/pdf/mappinglowpay.pdf">www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/pdf/mappinglowpay.pdf</a>).</p> <p><b>2005-06: <i>The impact of improved pay and conditions on low-paid urban workers: the case of The Royal London Hospital.</i></b> This research project was led by Wills and Martin Sokol and analysed the impact of increased income on household expenditure, well-being and career planning. It identified benefits in relation to increased income and reduced rates of labour turnover, and made the case for the living wage in east London. See Sokol, Wills et al (2006) <i>The impact of improved pay and conditions on low paid urban workers: the case of the Royal London Hospital</i> (<a href="http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/docs/staff/58801.pdf">www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/docs/staff/58801.pdf</a>).</p> <p><b>2005-07: <i>Global Cities at Work.</i></b> Funded by the ESRC, OXFAM, the GLA, UNISON and QMUL (£340,000) and led by Wills with colleagues Kavita Datta, Jon May and Cathy McIlwaine, this major project researched the causes and consequences of low pay in London (Wills et al. 2009; 2010). The project involved analysis of large data sets and interviews with employers, workers and policy-makers, and provided the data to analyse London’s Migrant Division of Labour. The research highlighted the twin processes of subcontracting and international immigration in generating working poverty in London, and it elucidated the impact of low pay on workers, their families, the local community and patterns of remittance sending. This project reinforced the case for the living wage and generated the data that prompted QMUL to address in-work poverty on campus.</p>

**2005: Work, identity and new forms of political mobilisation.** Funded by the ESRC (£85,000) this project documented the growing impact of the campaign in relation to the employers adopting the measure, the numbers of workers covered and the estimated redistribution of income. The research also explicated the model of politics behind the living wage, highlighting the extent to which the alliance of different groups involved in London Citizens allowed a demand for increased wages and improved conditions to spread successfully across the city, reaching policy-makers, politicians and the media (see Wills, 2009a, 2009b).

**2009: The business case for the living wage.** Funded by UNISON (£2,000) and led by Wills, this research documented the impact of the living wage on costs, cleaning standards and the cleaners at QMUL. This research provided evidence that the living wage reduced staff turnover, improved productivity and service standards, eroding the anticipated increase in costs. The project generated the first evidence to support the business case for the living wage, providing the foundation for the larger project funded by Trust for London (2010-12). The project led to the report by Wills, with Kakpo and Begum (2009) *The business case for the living wage: the story of the cleaning service at Queen Mary* ([www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/pdf/livingwagereportQM.pdf](http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/pdf/livingwagereportQM.pdf)).

**2010-12: The costs and benefits of the living wage.** Funded by Trust for London (£70,000) this project explored the costs and benefits of the London living wage through 17 case studies comprising modelled and statistical data, interviews and a large workplace survey. This research highlighted the benefits of the living wage for employers, employees, the Treasury and the tax-paying public. This is shaping wider public debate about the problem of in-work poverty and the campaign for the living wage. The report by Wills and Linneker (2012) *The costs and benefits of the London living wage: a research report* ([www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage](http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage)) directly informed papers by Wills and Linneker (2013) and Flint, Cummins and Wills (2013).

**2013: Living wage week.** Funded by the Centre for Public Engagement at QMUL (£7,793) this project has funded new research into the impact of the living wage in organizations across the UK accredited by the Living Wage Foundation ([www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/](http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/)) and has commissioned a short film on the living wage as publicity for living wage week (2013).

### 3. References to the research

#### Book

Wills, J., Datta, K., Evans, Y., Herbert, J., May, J. and McIlwaine, C. (2010) *Global cities at work: new migrant divisions of labour*. London: Pluto Press.

#### Journal articles (all published in international peer-reviewed journals)

Flint, E., Cummins, S. and Wills, J. (2013) Investigating the effect of the London Living Wage on the psychological wellbeing of low-wage service sector employees: feasibility study. *Journal of Public Health*. Published online 5 Sept 2013, doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdt093.

Wills, J. and Linneker, B. (2013) In-work poverty and the living wage in the UK: A geographical perspective. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* Article first published online: 11 SEP 2013 DOI: 10.1111/tran.12020.

Wills, J. (2009a) Subcontracted employment and its challenge to labour. *Labor Studies Journal*, special issue on community unionism, 34, 4, 441-460.

Wills, J. (2009b) The living wage, *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture*, 42, 33-46.

Wills, J., Datta, K. Evans, Y. Herbert, J. May, J. and McIlwaine, C. (2009) Religion at work: The role of faith-based organisations in living wage campaigns for immigrant workers in London. Special issue entitled Transforming Work, *The Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 2, 3, 443-62.

### 4. Details of the impact

Wills' research has played a crucial role in persuading 400 accredited employers to support the living wage campaign and ensuring that up to 45,000 workers across the UK are paid a living wage. Her research has provided intelligence highlighting the growth, extent and impact of low-paying employment in London; evidence outlining the business case for the living wage in London, which has played a key role in persuading employers to support the campaign; support for the new *Living Wage Foundation*; calculations of the impact of the living wage campaign across the UK; and arguments to support the promotion of the living wage as a public policy response to the growing problem of in-work poverty in the UK and beyond.

### **i. Intelligence underpinning the campaign for the living wage**

The first wave of London Citizens' living wage campaign was underpinned by *Mapping Low Pay* (2001). The research provided London Citizens with evidence about the dynamics of low pay and the potential impact of the living wage on office cleaners at Canary Wharf and hospital workers in east London. The subsequent campaign secured increased wages for an estimated 4,000 cleaning and catering workers by 2005. A more in-depth account of the London labour market was provided by *Global Cities at Work* (2005-07), and the data collected extended the focus of the campaign towards higher education, local authorities and the hospitality sector.

### **ii. Establishing the business case for the living wage**

The data collected for *Global Cities at Work* was used by Wills and London Citizens to make the case for the living wage at QMUL. Since 2008, more than 200 cleaners have moved back in-house, gaining increased wages, holiday entitlement, access to sick pay and a pension. This case was documented in *The Business Case for the Living Wage: the story of the cleaning service at Queen Mary* and London Citizens used this report to campaign for other HEIs to become living wage employers. As a result, almost all HEIs in London now pay the living wage, benefiting more than 1,000 workers. The research has been cited by the Greater London Authority in its efforts to promote the living wage to the sector, and led to QMUL winning a Green Gown award (2009) for sustainable employment practices. As an example of the impact of Wills' research on other HEIs, Dr Tim Hall (University of East London) writes: "[this work] was vital to the campaign team because it enabled us to present a rigorous business case to university managers and convince them of the benefits of paying a living wage. Recent research by Prof. Wills on the impact of the living wage has enabled us to share best practice on its implementation. The work of Prof. Wills has therefore led directly to better jobs for approximately 250 externally contracted staff at UEL."

This research laid the foundations for the larger project, *The costs and benefits of the London living wage (2010-2)*, which further explored the business case for the living wage. The results have been used to make the case to potential living wage adopters, as the Managing Director of Enhance Office Cleaning, explains: "[We] use the abbreviated version of QMUL's research report to send to our clients in support of our costs, which include the Living Wage. The university's findings give considerable added weight to our own argument for paying the Living Wage and this has worked well for us in achieving the Living Wage for our staff." Likewise, the Head of Facilities at KPMG, says: "The Living Wage research by the School of Geography at Queen Mary has been extremely important in persuading key business and political stakeholders on the merits and affordability of the Living Wage. Businesses appreciate the fact that the research quantifies both the direct and indirect benefits of going Living Wage. Arguably the Living Wage Foundation which now accredits decent organisations would not have existed without the research."

Wills actively promotes her research findings to industry (eg to the annual conference of the British Association of Cleaning in HE, 2011; as an invited speaker at a FairPensions event for living wage week held at Aviva in the City of London, 2012; and to the British Institute of Facilities Management, 2013). The CEO at ShareAction (formerly FairPensions), says: "Prof. Jane Wills' well-received presentation of her research on Living Wages to a group of institutional investors and major listed companies in the FTSE 100 in late 2012 demonstrated the relevance of her work to major actors in our economy. It is a credit to her work that it should influence these types of corporate and financial sector decision makers."

### **iii. Support for the new Living Wage Foundation**

In 2010 the research and related experience of supporting the living wage prompted QMUL to become a founding partner in the new Living Wage Foundation (along with Save the Children, the Resolution Foundation, Trust for London, Linklaters and KPMG), which supports, recognizes and celebrates the leadership shown by living wage employers in the UK. The Foundation uses the research to encourage greater adoption of the living wage. The Director of the Living Wage Foundation says: "Queen Mary has made – and continues to make – a profound and unique contribution to the growth and development of the Living Wage in the UK. As the first HEI to adopt the Living Wage; as the leading source of original and impactful research into the benefits of the

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Living Wage; as a champion for the Living Wage within the HE sector; and more recently as one of the founding Partners of the Living Wage Foundation.”

#### iv. Calculating the impact of the campaign on employers, jobs and redistribution of money

The research projects *Work, identity and new forms of political mobilisation* (2005-8), *The costs and benefits of the London living wage* (2010-12) and *Living wage week 2013* have provided the resources to update records of the number of employers and workers covered by the living wage, and to create a bespoke living wage research website ([www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage](http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage); 38,162 hits and 16,212 pdf report hits, 2006-13). The website is widely used by organisations like the GLA, IPPR, Resolution Foundation, New Economy (Manchester), the Scottish Assembly, the Welsh Assembly, The Fair Pay Network, Save the Children and the Centre for Social Inclusion.

#### v. Influencing public policy in relation to working poverty in the UK and beyond

Wills' research has been pivotal in promoting the living wage as a solution to in-work poverty in the UK and further afield. The research has been presented at meetings in the House of Commons (2009, 2012) and the Marmot Enquiry (2009). Wills has spoken alongside Ed Miliband to support the living wage during his leadership election campaign (2010) and to a meeting of Labour Council leaders, chaired by Rachel Reeves MP (2012). The Labour Party supports the living wage as its policy response to in-work poverty and it will feature in the Party Manifesto before the general election in 2015. Wills also gave evidence to the Economy Committee of the London Assembly when it considered low pay and the living wage in London (2013).

Wills' research has had a significant impact on policy debate on working poverty, and has been covered in the media on Press TV (2010), BBC London (various radio and TV), in a *Guardian* podcast (2010), *The Observer* (2012) and by Reuters (2013). Wills is regularly contacted by campaigners outside the UK and has featured in media outlets in Canada, Switzerland, New Zealand (2012), Sweden (2013), and was a guest of the Irish Trades Union Congress (2013). The research outputs from *Work, identity and new forms of political mobilisation* (2005-8) also included a photography exhibition in Brick Lane and a leaflet prepared by the ESRC ([www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/pdf/Wills.pdf](http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/pdf/Wills.pdf)). The Chief Executive of Trust for London said in a press release to publicise *Costs and Benefits*: “This piece of research conclusively shows that paying the Living Wage benefits employers, workers and government. Government can save nearly £1 billion a year in London if companies in the capital pay the Living Wage; workers receive thousands more in wages and employers can reap HR, reputational and efficiency benefits. This means there is no reason for large numbers of companies to pay poverty wages in the capital. Paying the Living Wage gives people fair reward for the work they do and helps to tackle poverty and inequality in one of the most unequal cities in the developed world.”

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- i. Wills' website: [www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage](http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage) provides evidence of the impact of the living wage on employers and workers in London (38,162 hits; 16,212 report pdf hits 2006-13).
- ii. The Living Wage Foundation website includes references to Wills' work and founding partner, QMUL: [www.livingwage.org.uk/home](http://www.livingwage.org.uk/home). Wills' research is also featured in the Foundation's new policy document (2013): [www.livingwage.org.uk/blog/living-wage-week-continues-citizens-uk-launch-recommendations-government](http://www.livingwage.org.uk/blog/living-wage-week-continues-citizens-uk-launch-recommendations-government)
- iii. Coverage of the costs and benefits report can be found on a number of news outlets including the BBC: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-19948654](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-19948654)
- iv. The talk with Ed Miliband, Leader of the Labour Party, was covered by a blog based at the London School of Economics: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39511>
- v. The connections being made beyond the UK are clear in this interview with New Zealand media outlets: <http://home.nzcity.co.nz/news/article.aspx?id=146420>

#### End-users to corroborate impact:

- i. Executive Director, Citizens UK (impacts i – v)
- ii. Director, Living Wage Foundation (impacts i – v)
- iii. Managing Director, Enhance Office Cleaning Services (impact ii)
- iv. Lead Organizer at Metro Vancouver Alliance, Canada (impacts i – v)
- v. Director of Policy and Grants, Trust for London (impacts i – v)