

ESRC IMPACTS

Fairly paid aid

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Unfair pay practices for aid workers are challenged by ESRC/DFID research, leading to a new global task force promoting equity in organisations

ON AVERAGE, EXPATRIATE AID workers get four times more money than local employees for doing the same work. And that is not because of different levels of experience or skills, but rather because expatriates simply come from higher income economies. This is revealed by the research project ADD-UP (Are Development Discrepancies Undermining Performance?), funded through the joint ESRC/Department for International Development (DFID) Scheme for Research on International Poverty Reduction. The research has been instrumental in setting up a Global Task Force for Humanitarian Work Psychology to combat these inequalities.

According to the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, local and expatriate workers should be on similar pay scales. Project ADD-UP tested the impact of pay discrepancy on local workers' motivation in the health, education and business sectors of six countries: Malawi, Uganda, India, China, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. The project, which is led by Professor Stuart Carr at Massey University and Professor Mac MacLachlan at Trinity College Dublin, found that dual salaries create resentment, perpetuate

dominance and injustice, and undermine pride in low-income countries.

By bringing together the first global task force to tackle the issue, ADD-UP has made a convincing case for the need for change. The task force is an international network of researchers and practitioners from ten low- and high-income countries who have talked to professional workers and representatives from aid, government, educational and business organisations.

The research team argues that the role and impact of organisations and organisational cultures should be given much more attention. Data from ADD-UP shows that organisations play a central role in enabling fair pay and promoting the perception of greater work justice and equity. While poverty reduction policies commonly focus on economic development to overcome material deprivation, ADD-UP shows that organisational and industrial psychologists have an important role to play in working with aid organisations.

The task force promotes the use of organisational psychology and raises awareness of humanitarian work psychology among international aid and development organisations. It aims to achieve this by applying humanitarian principles to work settings of international organisations, such as the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation and the OECD.

The research team has just made its first full submission to the United Nations through the UN's call for fresh perspectives – *Keeping the Promise* (UN, 2010). This UN publication reflects the Task Force's mission by calling for greater attention to organisations and the human factors in organisational work. ■

Local workers in a European Union aid compound in Zwedru, Liberia



Aid Salary Discrepancies and Development Workers' Performance

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Web poverty.massey.ac.nz/#addup

Project ADD-UP brings together an international team of psychologists, sociologists, management experts, educationalists, and economists from ten different countries. It is co-ordinated by Professor Stuart C. Carr (Poverty Research Group, Massey University, New Zealand) and Professor Mac MacLachlan (Centre for Global Health, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland).

For further information on the Global Task Force for Humanitarian Work Psychology, see www.humworkpsy.org