Nantes Université

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Unités d'enseignement et de recherche de l'UFR de Sociologie

Diplôme : Licence Section : Sociologie Année 3ème Cycle : 1er

Unité SLGSON5U04 : Compétences Transversales 5

Enseignement SLGSON5E09 : Anglais

Nom du Professeur responsable : **Mme Sylvie KERVISION**

Observations des Professeurs : L'utilisation du dictionnaire est interdite. Documents non autorisés

Date : mardi 8 janvier 2025
Heure : 13h30
Lieu : IAE Bâtiment ERDRE / Amphi Savary
Durée : 2 heures

Sujet pour D.A.

Low pay and poor conditions: London's undervalued essential workers

https://trustforlondon.org.uk/; 30 April 2024

Klara Skrivankova, director of grants

For International Workers Day 2024, our director of grants Klara discusses London's issues with low pay, insecure work and labour exploitation.

I recently attended a meeting on London Living Wage along with about twenty other people. At some point we were asked to raise our hands if we knew the name of the person who cleans our offices. Most of us kept our hands down.

That moment was a reminder that we live alongside a large community of invisible workers. We rarely meet these fellow Londoners. Not because they are hiding, but because they work behind closed doors of private homes, in the underbellies of buildings and out of hours.

They are cleaners, domestic workers, carers and nannies. We may not always see them, but we would notice if they suddenly stopped working.

And just as we are often oblivious to their valuable contribution, we also don't know about their struggles. Low pay means that many of these essential workers can't make ends meet. 16% of Londoners are low-paid, and in some industries this is significantly higher. Nearly half of all jobs in the hospitality sector (accommodation and food services) in the capital are low pay.

No guaranteed hours also means that many workers don't know how much money they will have at the end of the month. New research found that almost one in three workers are guaranteed fewer than 16 hours a week. On top of this, many Londoners are exploited at work, or in unsafe conditions, such as with inadequate PPE (*personal protection equipment* ndlr). Some – such as many domestic workers – are on call 24/7, working without any rest and facing abusive employers who are also their landlords – meaning if they leave, they will be homeless.

So, this International Workers Day, we celebrate all these workers, what they do for us and stand alongside them in their collective fight for decent work.

We also celebrate some of our funded partners, organisations that bring together workers and their allies to demand better pay and conditions for those who work away from the public eye and provide essential services.

They include:

The Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS) that was set up by and for migrant women and fights for their rights. LAWRS recently exposed routine abuses experienced by domestic workers in London: most never receive written contracts of employment or payslips. The organisation supports domestic workers to enforce their rights and to make their voices heard in campaigns on law and policy.

The Centre for Progressive Change runs a campaign to fight for better working conditions of cleaners. Cleaners were the very workers on the front line at the high of the pandemic keeping us safe. But their pay and conditions do not reflect the importance of their work.

The Nanny Solidarity Network was set up by migrant nannies and au-pairs as a mutual aid group during the pandemic. Today the network supports, connects and represents isolated childcare workers making them visible in the fight for better pay, against abusive employment.

The work and achievements of these brilliant organisations remind us that change is possible. But it does not come easy, quick or by actions of a single individual or group. It happens through collective actions of organisations working in different ways towards a common goal.

We can all be agents of change in our workplaces and communities, not just on International Workers Day, but all year round. We can be allies to workers in their fight for better pay and conditions and demand that everyone is paid at least the London Living Wage and guaranteed Living Hours.

Trust for London is an independent charitable foundation which aims to tackle poverty and inequality in London and its root causes. It was established in 1891 as the City Parochial Foundation and changed its name to Trust for London in 2010.

It achieves its aims by funding charitable work through its Central Fund, making substantial grants every year for the relief of poverty and inequality. As an independent funder it is particularly interested in work which is viewed as challenging. One of its long-standing principles is to support activities which government will not or is unlikely to fund.

International Workers' Day, also known as Labour Day in some countries and often referred to as May Day, is a celebration of labourers and the working classes that is promoted by the international labour movement and occurs every year on 1 May, or the first Monday in May.

(from Wikipedia.org)

I. Raising awareness of invisible workers (approx. 100 words) 4 points

Explain what the author recalls as a "moment (that) was a reminder that we live alongside a large community of invisible workers". Have you ever had a similar experience? How do you react to her point?

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II. Who are invisible workers? (approx. 100 words) 4 points

Which professions are we talking about when discussing invisible workers? What, or who, makes them invisible?

III. Precariousness (approx. 100 words) 4 points

Explain what the author describes as the pitfalls (disadvantages) of being an invisible worker: how is that in many ways a double penalty?

IV. Collective fight (approx. 100 words) 4 points

Based on what you understand about Trust For London, the context in which the article was published, and the partners the author chooses to mention, explain the case made in favor of collective action. What is your personal opinion about this?

V. Fighting invisibility? (approx. 100 words) 4 points

Study the proposed campaign ad: describe analyse and comment, putting the ad in perspective with the text.

