

SESSION 1: WOMEN AND DECENT WORK: WHAT IS DECENT WORK?

Age range: 14–19

<p>Outline Learners will discuss what makes work decent and will come to understand that women face barriers when trying to access decent work, which leads to gender inequalities.</p>	
<p>Learning objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reflect on the concept of decent work. To understand that gender affects women’s ability to access decent work. To think critically about why men and women do not have equal access to decent work. 	<p>Learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will be introduced to the concept of decent work and given the opportunity to reflect on it, in the context both of their own lives and globally. Learners will understand that gender affects women’s ability to access decent work. Learners will use critical thinking skills to understand how gender affects women’s access to decent work.
<p>Key questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is decent work? How does gender affect access to decent work? 	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decent Work for Women slideshow (slides 2–6) Resource sheets: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Decent work game role-play cards The factors of decent work Factors of decent work, by gender
<p>Curriculum links</p>	
<p>Wales</p> <p>Welsh Baccalaureate Foundation / National Key Stage 4 Global Citizenship Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and apply decision-making and problem-solving approaches and techniques Identify and analyse problems or issues Identify potential solutions or responses and reasons for different views Be able to justify decisions Identify and develop arguments 	

Activity 1.1 (10 mins)

Imagining decent work

- Ask learners to think about their own work, now or in the future. Some may already have part-time jobs.
- Ask them to share the range of jobs that they are familiar with in their everyday lives. What jobs do the people they live with or know do? Write a selection of these on the whiteboard or flipchart. Ask the questions: Are these good jobs? If so, why? What makes these jobs worth doing?
- Tell the learners that the idea of decent work was thought up by the International Labour Organization, a specialist agency of the United Nations, to help countries make better laws about employment.¹ Write 'Decent Work' on a flipchart or whiteboard and ask learners to work in groups to identify what it would look like. Record their ideas.
- Show learners slides 3–6 of the slide show and ask them what is happening in each slide.
- Read the information accompanying each slide to the learners. Does any of the information surprise them or change their view of what makes work decent?

Differentiation

- Make it easier: give learners a range of jobs and aspects of decent work prior to the group work.
- Make it harder: give the learners the information from the notes accompanying the slides and ask them to work on it in groups. They should feed back what they've learnt about these women to the class.

Activity 1.2 (15 mins)

What makes work decent for women and men?

Below are some of the factors that have been suggested as making work good or decent:

- Fair pay
- The right terms of employment (sick pay, holidays)
- Health and safety
- Career progression
- Work–life balance
- Regular, predictable hours
- Flexibility
- Friendship
- Respect from colleagues

Write these factors on a flipchart or whiteboard, and go through them to make sure that learners understand what is implied by each one. Give each learner five sticky dots and explain that they

¹ See this web page for further information: www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm

each have five votes. Ask learners to place their dots next to the factors that they think are most important. Learners can place as many dots as they wish next to each factor, depending on how important it is to them.

- Discuss the way in which learners have voted. Which factors did they think were most important for decent work?
- Ask these questions:
 - Which factors do you think are most important for men and which are most important for women?
 - Why do you think this?
- Now ask learners to think about their hopes for their future working life and their fears about it: What do you hope for in your future job? What are your fears about your working life? Learners could share their ideas with a partner before you open this up to a whole-class discussion.
- In pairs, learners should write lists of their main hopes and fears regarding work. Then ask them to repeat the activity, imagining they are the opposite gender.
- Allow time at the end for learners to reflect on this last activity:
 - Were there any differences between the hopes and fears of girls and boys?
 - Did you have different hopes and fears when you imagined yourself as being the opposite gender?
 - Did everyone identify similar differences? What do you think might be the reason for these differences? Do you think it is fair that males and females should need to think in these different ways?

You may wish to explore Activity 1.2 and the following Activity 1.3 from a LGBT+ perspective or consider different frames of reference. You may wish to include additional questions or characters to represent other diversities and experiences, or perhaps encourage contributions from students whose experience may be different to that of the characters represented in Activity 1.3.

Activity 1.3 (20 mins)

Decent work role-play game

- Learners will now consider how people in different countries find decent work. Ask learners to stand in a row at one end of the room or space, facing you. Give each learner one of the Decent work game role-play cards (Resource sheet 1) and explain that they need to try to imagine what it would be like to be that person. For larger classes, you will need to photocopy this resource more than once and give some learners the same cards.
- Explain that you are going to read out some statements. If learners think that their character could agree with the statement, they should take a step forward. If they think their character would not agree, they should stay where they are. Encourage those learners who are unsure how their character would answer to ask you or others in the group for advice.



- Read out the list of statements below. You may wish to adapt some of these, depending on the group, context and time available. Eventually the learners will be spaced out across the room according to how many steps they have taken forward.
 - I have training opportunities at my workplace.
 - I have the power to influence people in my community.
 - I can rely on my manager to support me and treat me fairly.
 - I have savings.
 - I have a pension and the right to sick leave and holiday pay.
 - I don't have to worry about health and safety at work.
 - I have enough spare time and money to enjoy leisure activities with my family and friends.
 - I am satisfied with my life.
 - I can afford to go on a foreign holiday at least once a year.
 - I will be consulted on issues that affect my life.
 - I have work colleagues I can rely on.
 - I have the chance to progress in my career.
 - I have a good work–life balance.
- Once you have read out all the statements, ask learners to stay where they are and introduce their character to the others in the group. Encourage the learners to give reasons for their decisions about how many steps they took.
- Explain that the purpose of this game was to give learners an idea of some of the inequalities in work and influence that exist in our societies and between countries. Some of these inequalities are extreme, and some are based on gender.
- Allow time for the group to reflect on the game. Possible discussion questions include:
 - Who were the people left behind in this activity (those who took fewest steps across the room)?
 - What do you think might be the reasons for the inequalities (gaps) that appeared between the different countries, people or groups? Were there any differences based on gender or age?
 - Are there any connected inequalities that could affect women's ability to access decent work?
 - Do you think these inequalities are fair?
 - Did these inequalities affect anyone's ability to earn the money they needed and have a fulfilling life?
 - Who do you think is responsible for making our society more equal?

Activity 1.4 (20 mins)

What does decent work look like for different people?

- Divide learners into groups of three or four. Give each group a set of the Decent work game role-play cards (Resource sheet 1) and a copy of Resource sheet 2. If you prefer, instead of giving them



Resource sheet 2, you could display the list of the factors of decent work that the class identified in Activity 1.1. Ask learners to work together to decide on the three most relevant factors of decent work for each character, or a selection of the characters, featuring in the role-play cards.

- Ask learners to discuss their findings as a class. Were there any similarities or differences between the lists chosen for the characters on the role-play cards? Do all people have the same requirements when it comes to a job? Are the characteristics of decent work different for men and women?
- Ask learners to go back into their groups, and give each group a copy of Resource sheet 3. This sheet contains the findings from the report 'Decent Work for Scotland's Low-Paid Workers'.² Explain that women and men were asked what factors made work decent for them.
- Ask learners to compare their answers from the group activity with these findings. They could consider the following questions: What similarities and differences are there? What might be the root causes of these similarities and differences? What does this mean for women trying to access decent work, for men trying to access decent work, for employers or for the government?
- Ask the groups to feed their findings back to the whole class.

Welsh Baccalaureate skills development

- Design an infographic by creating a questionnaire or survey for people in your local area, school or family. What are the experiences of people living in your area who try to find decent work? Learners could create an exhibition of jobs in their local area. Learners could also think about other differences that affect people's access to decent work, such as age, culture, disability, etc.
- Learners could produce their own gender infographic using information from their survey.
- Please ensure that all data is kept anonymous to conform to GDPR regulations.

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² F. Stuart, P. Hartwig and S. Wright (2016) Decent Work for Scotland's Low-Paid Workers: A Job to Be Done, A UWS-Oxfam Partnership report with the support of Warwick Institute for Employment Research, Oxford: Oxfam GB, policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/decent-work-for-scotlands-low-paid-workers-a-job-to-be-done-619740



Decent work game role-play cards

Resource sheet 1

<p>You are a single man and after a successful career in business you have become a Member of Parliament in the UK. You have everything that you need.</p>	<p>You are a married woman in the UK. You have four children. It is difficult for you to find a job with hours that allow you to pick up and collect the children. You currently do administrative work for an agency when the hours fit in with your needs.</p>
<p>After a successful career in business, you are now an Assembly Member in the National Assembly for Wales. You are the mother of two children. You have influence and can afford everything that you need.</p>	<p>You are a female architect in Palestine. You run your own carpentry business using recycled wooden pallets. It is difficult to find work in Palestine, so this gives you the chance to be creative. You don't always get the same monthly income, but you get by.</p>
<p>You are a female care worker, caring for elderly people in a residential home in the UK. You were employed through an agency which arranged the position for you. Your pay works out at below the minimum wage because of unpaid overtime; you often work from 50 to 60 hours a week. You have two small children. You do not have access to childcare vouchers that could help you pay for childcare.</p>	<p>You are a male care worker, caring for elderly people in a residential home in the UK. You were employed through an agency which arranged the position for you. Your pay works out at below the minimum wage because of unpaid overtime; you often work from 50 to 60 hours a week. You have two small children. You do not have access to childcare vouchers that could help you pay for childcare.</p>
<p>You are a hedge fund manager for an energy company in the USA, managing £3 billion worth of assets. You are one of the 25 richest hedge fund managers in the world, which makes you very rich indeed. You have two small daughters.</p>	<p>You are a female journalist in the UK. You have worked hard for your position. You have a small daughter who you hope will have similar opportunities. You have joined your school Parent-Teacher Association to petition for better access to STEM subjects for girls.</p>



<p>You are a female plumber in Jordan. You used to be a housewife but after training as a plumber you now run a business and set up training opportunities for other women. You enjoy your work and your business is doing well.</p>	<p>You are a male plumber in Jordan. You run a well-established business and are doing well.</p>
<p>You are a male marketing manager in the UK. You and your partner have just had a baby. You are only entitled to two weeks paternity leave. You would like to share your partner's maternity leave but your company will not allow it.</p>	<p>You are a female marketing manager in the UK. You are on maternity leave and have not had access to training while you were away. You have asked for part-time hours on your return but this has been refused.</p>
<p>You are a male supervisor in a clothing factory in Vietnam. Your work is stable but you work very long hours for your salary which is enough to support your family.</p>	<p>You are a female worker in a clothing factory in Vietnam that supplies a major supermarket chain in the UK. You sometimes work 10 to 12 hours a day for six days in a row. Work is not stable and some months your salary is too low. You support an ageing family and give some of your salary to them.</p>
<p>You are a female accountant working for an international travel company in the city of Mumbai in India. You have a nice apartment and live quite well on your salary. You are thinking of starting a family.</p>	<p>You are a female hedge fund manager for an energy company in the USA, managing £3 billion worth of assets. You are one of the 25 richest hedge fund managers in the world but it is difficult to make friends where you work. You have two small daughters who you don't see every day.</p>



<p>You are a single mother of three young children, living in the UK. You would like to work but can't afford childcare. You receive financial support from the government but these benefits have been cut recently and you worry about how you will pay the bills. Sometimes you go without food so that your children have enough to eat.</p>	<p>You are a male accountant working for an international travel company in the city of Mumbai in India. You have a nice apartment and live quite well on your salary. You are thinking of starting a family.</p>
<p>You are a female teacher in Wales. You have always wanted to be a teacher but you have found it difficult to get by recently as the cost of living is rising faster than your income.</p>	<p>You work in catering in the UK. You have two small children whom you and your partner both care for. You have a zero-hours contract and have recently been asked to buy your own uniform. Your employer does not pay the Living Wage.</p>
<p>You are a cashier in Cardiff. You have taken maternity leave twice. You have seen your male co-workers promoted to supervisor level while you were on maternity leave. You are now on a part-time contract and have little access to training.</p>	<p>You are a male cashier in Cardiff. You have been promoted twice but are still aware that the gap between your salary and that of your manager is very wide. You have just joined your union.</p>
<p>You are a domestic worker in Kenya. You travel an hour a day to work in wealthier people's homes. You have no right to sick pay or pay for travel time. You are setting up a workers' group to try to influence the government to support decent work.</p>	<p>You are a male farmer in Uganda. You have just taken equal responsibility for looking after your children and you share the farm work with your wife. You make enough money to meet your basic needs. You take part in community meetings.</p>



The factors of decent work

Resource sheet 2

Help with childcare	Flexible hours
Career progression	A contract for a minimum number of hours per week
Holiday pay	A job that doesn't involve unpaid overtime
A job without discrimination	A supportive manager
A safe working environment	Fair pay compared with similar jobs
The real Living Wage	Education and qualifications
Regular and predictable hours	A job that is easy to get to
Able to express your views to management	The chance to learn new skills
Time for hobbies	A friendly workplace
Pension	Sick leave



Factors of decent work, by gender

Resource sheet 3

Factors women value more	Factors men value more
A supportive line manager	Being paid fairly compared to similar jobs
Support to return to work after absence	Regular and predictable hours
Additional benefits beyond pay	Work that does not involve excessive hours
Flexibility in choosing working hours	Being paid fairly compared to senior staff
A job which is easy to get to	

'Factors of decent work' and 'Factors of decent work, by gender' are from: F. Stuart, P. Hartwig and S. Wright (2016) Decent Work for Scotland's Low-Paid Workers: A Job to Be Done, A UWS-Oxfam Partnership report with the support of Warwick Institute for Employment Research, Oxford: Oxfam GB, policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/decent-work-for-scotlands-low-paid-workers-a-job-to-be-done-619740

