Lingnan University 2025/2026 SDG Report
SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



27th in the world (THE Sustainability Impact Ratings 2026)

1,046
Research Outputs

No. 1 in Hong Kong (THE Sustainability Impact Ratings 2026)

1% salary gap between female and male employees

Lingnan University advances **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** through interdisciplinary research and initiatives that promote productive employment, fair working conditions and inclusive economic development. By examining contemporary workplace challenges, Lingnan scholars generate evidence to inform employment practices and policy discussions. These efforts support better work quality, equitable opportunities and sustainable livelihoods, contributing to an economy in which more people can participate and prosper.

Multinationality and Strategic Dynamic Capabilities During Sustainable Development Goals Adoption: Evidence From a Natural Experiment

Led by Professor Liane W.Y. Lee, Associate Professor of Teaching in the Department of Management, this research examines how multinational enterprises (MNEs) implement initiatives to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study is relevant to SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, with additional connections to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, through its focus on innovation, strategic adaptability and sustainable corporate practices.

The research investigates how two types of multinationality—degree of internationalisation and international diversification—affect MNEs' application of strategic dynamic capabilities. It enhances dynamic capabilities theory by incorporating institutional change, and examining the contextual impact of the global SDG initiative on corporate strategies.

Using a difference-in-differences approach, the study compares two groups across the three years before and after the launch of the SDGs in 2015. This natural experiment provides a basis for analysing institutional changes associated with SDG implementation.

The findings reveal that MNEs' degree of internationalisation is positively associated with three key strategic capabilities: ambidexterity, innovation and reconfiguration. However, international diversification has the opposite effect, highlighting the distinct implications of these two dimensions of multinationality.

The study suggests that adopting the SDGs can benefit MNEs by enabling them to leverage non-location-bound firm-specific advantages across geographies. However, diverse local challenges in emerging markets may increase transaction costs and impede the internal integration of dynamic capabilities.

These findings contribute to SDG 9 by deepening understanding of organisational innovation and adaptability. They also offer insights relevant to SDG 8, particularly the strategic capabilities that may support innovation-driven productivity and sustainable business development. The connection to SDG 12 lies in examining how multinational enterprises respond to the SDGs and integrate sustainability priorities into corporate initiatives. Together, these perspectives strengthen understanding of how enterprises navigate institutional change while aligning business strategies with sustainable development.

Raising concerns about platform-mediated care and domestic care workers: Advancing decent work under SDG 8

Echoing the International Labour Organization's global agenda of formalisation of paid domestic work, Professor AU YEUNG Tat Chor, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, has conducted a research project exploring the job quality and employment relations of care workers involved in platform-mediated temporary employment agencies. The research relates to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, particularly the protection of labour rights and the promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers.

The data revealed that care platforms, as digitised intermediaries, deprived care workers of labour rights by framing them as independent contractors while exercising employers' power over workers. The issues of informalisation, false self-employment and labour protection coverage appeared in the long-term care sector and were embedded in the marketised care model in Hong Kong. The research findings suggested that the logic of the platform economy, based on a fast and on-demand workforce, may undermine the quality-of-care work, including labour insurance coverage and protection against uncompensated risks.

Policy suggestions have been made to promote stronger regulation of care platforms, reclassification of workers' employment status, and better human resource planning

in the care sector, supporting decent work, formalisation of employment and stronger labour protections in line with SDG 8.

Understanding low-paid older workers and extended working lives: Promoting decent work and inclusive employment

-mid workforce ageing and pension reforms, the Hong Kong government has introduced policies to support mature-age employment. Professor AU YEUNG Tat Chor, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, has launched a study exploring older workers' lived experiences of extended working lives. The research aligns with SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, focusing on productive employment, decent work for all and the protection of labour rights.

The research examined low-paid workers aged over 65 and their work and welfare experiences, including their reasons for continued employment, perceptions of pension incomes, and expectations of future retirement. The findings suggest that some low-paid older workers accepted their weaker bargaining power due to their declining bodily functions and productivity, placing them at a disadvantage in the labour market. Many interviewees experienced multi-dimensional precarity, including income, job, health and cost-of-living precarity, leading to an uncertain future. These findings highlight challenges to decent work, income security and inclusive employment for older workers.

Older workers' policy preferences could inform better government policymaking. First, they expected more flexible working-time arrangements to support their later career development. Second, interviewees raised concerns about means-testing and eligibility issues concerning old-age welfare benefits. Without an insurance-based public pension, older workers may lose income protection because the welfare system excludes claimants with regular full-time incomes.

To achieve more and better mature-age employment, this research project argues that the government needs to review the current pension system and minimum wage arrangements that contribute to income inadequacy and precarity for older workers. This research also emphasises age-inclusive workplace diversity by encouraging more firms to adopt flexible retirement practices and improve work design, supporting decent working conditions and sustainable employment opportunities for older workers in line with SDG 8.

Let's Talk: Co-Designing Empathic Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) Chatbots for the Media Arts Classroom

Let's Talk integrates generative AI into design-thinking teaching to accelerate empathy training and AI literacy, supporting SDG 4: Quality Education through interdisciplinary learning and innovative, human-centred pedagogy. This media arts strand sits within the wider Let's Talk Teaching Development Grant, which also includes empathy training in

design thinking for global sustainable development across the Global Development and Sustainability Programme's teaching.

Across six interdisciplinary courses, students co-design chatbots that simulate conversational partners, practise perspective-taking and active listening, and learn to verify outputs through citations and "NOT IN CORPUS" rules in safe, repeatable scenarios. The sequence moves from zero-shot roleplay and "sticky questions" to attachment-only, self-check, and two-bot relay workflows, culminating in a student-built RAG chatbot with controllable sources and parameters. Baseline and follow-up surveys, artefacts and reflections capture changes in communication skills and critical, responsible use of AI, producing widely transferable resources for other disciplines and educators.

The project develops empathy, digital literacy, curatorial skills and prompt-engineering proficiency while fostering equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), cultural sensitivity and inclusive learning environments. These dimensions are relevant to SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. Its interdisciplinary approach connects technology and design thinking with social and sustainability challenges, while adaptable chatbots and shared teaching resources support knowledge exchange and capacity building among educators. These resource-sharing activities can also support SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals through future educational collaboration.

Organising Units:

- Global Development and Sustainability Programme, Wu Jieh Yee School of Interdisciplinary Studies - Professor Grace Chou, Programme Director and Professor of Teaching
- Wong Bing Lai Music and Performing Arts Unit, Wu Jieh Yee School of Interdisciplinary Studies - Dr Enrico Bertelli, Associate Professor of Practice