

BARGAINING

FOR A LIVING WAGE

a trade union guide



Bargaining for a Living Wage

International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation

The ITGLWF is a Global Union Federation representing 220 affiliated unions in 110 countries with a combined membership of ten million workers



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Preface

Colleagues,

One of the key issues of concern to workers in our sector in all parts of the world is the level of wages they need to subsist and the hours they need to work in order to earn that wage.

Many countries have a legal minimum wage but in almost every case this does not meet the needs of workers and their families. In some cases, wages in the textile, clothing and footwear industries for a standard working week amount to an income of less than 1\$ a day – which is below the UN threshold for absolute poverty.

While many retailers and merchandisers have included provisions for the payment of a living wage in their codes of conduct, very few have even attempted to put this principle into practice

The time-honoured manner of improving pay and working conditions is through collective bargaining between unions and employers. But collective bargaining cannot take place in a void. The right to organise and to bargain collectively must be respected, but almost nowhere is that happening.

That's why the ITGLWF has chosen as its theme for the World Day for Decent Work the issue of the living wage, with the goal of ensuring that unions worldwide have the right to bargain collectively in order to secure a living wage and that the prices paid by brands and retailers are sufficient to enable manufacturers to pay a living wage.

Of course this goal will not be achieved without sustained and coordinated trade union effort. This Guide is intended to assist unions in those efforts.

I wish you every success in your campaign.

NEIL KEARNEY
General Secretary

World Day for Decent Work
October 7 2008

Case studies

Juana Suarez Mendez, Honduras

Juana Suarez Mendez has been working for 9 years as an operator at a Taiwanese-owned company near San Pedro Sula which produces jeans for major brands.

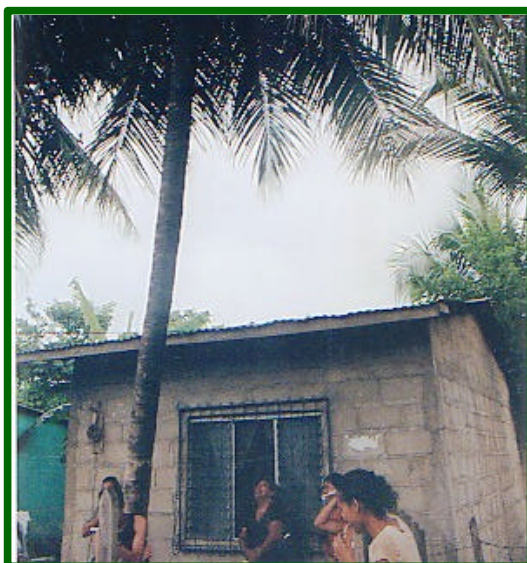
Juana is a single mother with three children aged three, six and eight. She came to the town from her village 250 kms away, leaving her twelve-year old son in the care of her mother.

For a 44-hour week, Juana earns a basic wage of 830 L (44\$). If she meets all her targets, she will earn up to 350 L a week (18\$). But the targets are very high and she mostly has to cut short her lunch break, stay late and sometime come in on Saturday morning without overtime in order to meet those targets. With her attendance bonus she earns on average about 1200 L (63\$) a week.

That's if she stays healthy and can keep up the pace. Getting sick is a real problem, because the company refuses to pay sick leave, and if she's away for a single day she loses her attendance bonus for the whole week. With no money set aside, falling ill or - worse still - losing her job, would be a disaster.

Juana works overtime when she can in order to bring in extra money. Sometimes, when there are urgent orders she has to work till 10 pm or later. Her biggest worry are the children; she can't afford a telephone at home so she has to try to leave a message with a neighbour to let them know she'll be late. On those nights her eight year old has to look after the younger children on his own, and it's not a safe neighbourhood

Shopping for food is become more and more difficult as prices keep going up. A kg of chicken costs 7.10 L, up from 6.80 L just two months ago. Rice, tortillas, beans and cooking oil have also increased drastically in price.



Juana needs about 70\$ a week just to buy food, and that's not counting the 10\$ butane tank and the cooking oil at 1\$ a litre. Even in she spent her entire wages on food, she would still be short at the end of the week. Little wonder then that by the end of the week she and her children have to get by on one meal a day. Only very rarely can she afford meat and chicken –

mostly she just buys chicken bones to make soup.

Because of course there's also the rent to pay. Juana lives in a small shack with a tin roof and a makeshift wall between the kitchen and the bedroom where she sleeps with her three children. There is a small sink in the corner with a hose which passes for a shower. When it rains the roof leaks and the dirt roads fill with mud. Even though she doesn't have water or electricity for much of the day, the utilities still cost her another 10\$ a month.

And transport. She spends two hours a day on crowded buses, and that costs her another 8\$ a week.

Then there's the 3\$ payment she has to make every week to pay off the fridge she bought on credit. By the time she pays it off it will have cost her 16 weeks wages and taken four years to pay off.

Let's not forget school fees, another 10\$ a month. Clothes, when she buys them, usually come from the second-hand stall.

She sends a little money every month to her mother as maintenance. She'd like to be able to visit her oldest son more often but she can't afford the fare.

Her union has worked out that in order to meet the needs of herself and her family she would need to earn 7,000 a month. But when her union demanded a 35% wage increase on the basic wage during pay negotiations, management said it was struggling to compete with China and Vietnam and increasing wages would force the company to close. Instead, the company offered to pay a 2% additional increase whenever the government increases the minimum wage. The last minimum wage increase was 18 months ago.

Zarina Akhter, Bangladesh

Zarina Akhter has worked for five years at a Korean-owned garment factory in Dhaka producing shirts for the international market.

Zarina is married with two children. Her husband lost his hand in an industrial accident two years ago so she is now the sole breadwinner of the family. Most days Zarina starts work at 8 o'clock and usually doesn't finish till eleven at night. She works seven days a week and hasn't had a single day off in the past two and a half months. Twice already this month, when there were urgent orders, she had to work through till 4 am. On those nights Zarina slept a few hours on the factory floor before starting her next shift at 8:00 a.m.

Zarina earns a basic wage of 1,851 taka a month based on a 48 hour workweek. As a senior operator she is now finally earning a little above the minimum wage. But even so, a monthly income of 28 dollars a month means Zarina and her family are living on less than a dollar a day – recognised by the UN as the level of absolute poverty.

The minimum wage of 1,662 Taka (\$25) was fixed in 2006, twelve years after the previous increase. But even the government admits that only 51% of garment companies aren't even paying the minimum wage. Since the minimum wage was last increased, the prices of rice and other food items have doubled or in some cases tripled.

Zarina has always lived on the razor's edge of poverty, but with food prices soaring feeding her family has become a constant worry. One kilo of coarse rice, enough to feed her family for one day, now costs 35 taka (50 cents). Thirty kilos of rice for the month would cost 1,050 taka, which is more than she can afford after spending 700 taka on rent and another 150 Taka on bus fares.

Zarina and her family were accustomed to living on two meals a day, sometimes less. Lately they have had to cut down to one meal a day, which consists of rice and a few vegetables. Meat, fish and eggs are totally unaffordable. They have also had to stop saving money.

When the minimum wage was fixed in 2006, the garment unions in Bangladesh conducted some in-depth research and calculated that in order to subsist a family would need 4,500 Taka a month.

Not that Zarina is a union member. How could she be, when trade union activity in the garment sector has been banned since last January.

At Zarina's factory there are ten workers on her line, and the target for the line is 900 T-shirts a day. Each worker is earning 71 taka a day to produce 90 shirts. Thus, the unit labour cost of a T-shirt that retails in the US at 25.99 is 0.8 taka, or one cent.

If Zarina's wage was increased to 4,500 taka a month, a figure approaching a living wage, the labour cost of the T shirt would still only amount to 2.5 cents.

Daily wage for a senior operator in Bangladesh:

71 taka

Number of workers per line:

10

Target number of T-shirts per day per line:

900

Unit Labour Cost for a 25.99 T-shirt:

0.8 taka or 1 cent.

Unit Labour Cost if wages were increased from 1,851 taka to 4,500 taka:

2.5 cents



Workers in Bangladesh are often skipping their own meals so that their children can eat

Youssa Diop, Senegal

Youssa Diop works as an operator in a textile factory in Dakar and earns 55,000 CFA (US\$ 132) a month.

The biggest burden on his shoulders is his monthly rent, and that's saying something in a country where food and fuel prices have skyrocketed over the past year. Youssa, his wife and their three children live in one small room in a poor neighbourhood on the outskirts of the city. The rent costs 20,000 CFA a month and the landlord is threatening to put the rent up for the second time this year. After paying for gas, electricity and water he is left with 25,000 CFA.

School fees for the three children cost 3,000 CFA a month. Public transport costs another 4,000 CFA a month, which is 2,500 CFA more than he was paying before prices went up a few months ago.



Workers in West Africa are struggling to cover their most basic needs

So Youssa is down to 18,000 CFA before he even starts buying food. Most of what's left goes to buying cooking oil and rice. A kilo of rice costs 360 CFA, up from 250 last year so a 30-kilo sack - which doesn't see them through to the end of the month - costs 10,800 CFA. A litre of oil costs 1,050, up from 900 last year. That leaves about 1,500 CFA to spend at the market each week. That amount will only buy a bit of fruit and a few vegetables, but no fish or meat or chicken.

While prices have been going through the roof, wages have remained unchanged.

Youssa also gives a little money each month to his sister, who is alone with five children since her husband died.

Ivanka Popova, Bulgaria

Ivanka Popova, a single mother of two children, works as a homemaker stitching the uppers of leather shoes that sell at high street retailers for 49.99 €.

She collects the shoes from an Italian-owned factory in the Bulgarian capital Sophia. At home she makes an incision in the heel and inserts a reinforcing strip, then glues it and taps it down with a hammer. She inserts the lining, trims the excess, sews the hem, adds the front and back pieces and the tassels and other accessories. Then she returns them to the factory to be attached to the soles.

She is paid on a piece rate basis for the work. On average she works about forty hours a week for which she generally earns about 250 leva (125 € a month). The work is irregular. Some days she has no work, and other days she has to work late into the night to finish. Sometimes she has to pick up a batch on Friday evening and work all weekend, often with the help of her children, so she can return it on Monday morning. She gets no overtime pay and no holiday pay.

Ivanka has to pay her own overheads such as heating and lighting. In winter the electricity bill for her small flat is 100 leva a month.

On her income, Ivanka often has to make a choice between paying the bills or buying groceries. A loaf of bread costs her 0.90 leva, the equivalent of 42 minutes work. A kilo of potatoes costs 0.70 leva, the equivalent of 33 minutes work. A kilo of flour costs 1.25, the equivalent of 59 minutes work. A kilo of beef comes to 7.85, or 6 hours and 13 minutes of work. A kilo of sugar, 1.75, the equivalent of 83 minutes work. A litre of cooking oil costs 3.13 leva, the equivalent of 2 hours 29 minutes work.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a living wage ?

A living wage is a wage for a standard working week that is sufficient to meet basic needs and to provide some discretionary income.

Do workers in the garment industry earn anything close to a living wage?

No. While many retailers and merchandisers have included provision for the payment of a living wage in their codes of conduct, very few have even attempted to put this principle into practice. In reality, most still struggle to get their suppliers to pay the minimum wage, let alone a living wage.



Garment workers' wages for a standard working week are frequently below the UN threshold for absolute poverty.

Base wages in the garment sector rarely exceed the statutory minimum wage; instead of representing a minimum floor below which no worker can fall, they have become a ceiling above which few workers can go. Minimum wages are generally not adjusted for inflation on a regular basis and are usually totally inadequate to meet basic needs. The global rise in food prices has made the situation even more desperate. In fact, wages in the textile, clothing and footwear industries for a standard working week are frequently below the UN threshold for absolute poverty. In many countries the minimum wage would need to be doubled or tripled in order to meet basic needs.

How should a living wage be defined ?

While many brands and almost all the multistakeholder initiatives (with the exception of the FLA) have included living wage provisions in their codes of conduct, there is no internationally accepted definition of a living wage. For instance, there is debate about whether a single wage earner should be expected to support the entire family, about how many dependents should be supported, about what 'basic needs' are meant to include, about how should non-wage benefits be factored in, and about how should regional differences be dealt with in places where the cost of living can vary considerable from one part of the country to the next. Nor has a methodology been specified for calculating a living wage.

The fact that nobody has adequately defined what a living wage means is often used by brands and suppliers as an excuse for not paying a living wage.

The ITGLWF believes that less emphasis should be placed on developing a universal formula for calculating a living wage and instead workers in each country need to decide themselves how much they need in order to provide for themselves and their families. It is therefore essential that trade unions take the initiative and establish, country by country, just what a living wage should be, based on the basket of needs approach, including staple foods, housing, transport, education, medical costs etc and including 10% for discretionary expenses or savings.

If fashion brands are flourishing, why aren't the workers who produce the source of this wealth earning a living wage ?

The fashion and sportsgoods industries, among the most lucrative of all industries, are controlled by multi-billion retail and merchandising giants.

These are the companies that make 240 billions of dollars in sales annually, that pay their CEOs 8.8 million dollars a year in compensation, that pay 13 million dollars a year to a single sportsman in sponsorship, or that wield advertising budgets of one billion dollars a year.

These companies do not own their own production facilities or employ workers, but rather they subcontract production out to a range of suppliers in low-wage countries - a practice which gives them tremendous flexibility without having to bear the responsibility for the workers who produce the source of their wealth.

This combination of power over suppliers without responsibility towards the workforce creates a system in which the retailers and merchandisers are able to dictate cut-throat sourcing prices designed to keep their costs low and their profits high.

Target Corporation's annual advertising budget:

\$1.028 billion a year

Nike CEO's total annual compensation:

\$8.8 million a year

Amount earned by Tiger Woods in sponsorship and endorsement fees during his career:

\$ 750 million

Annual wages of a Bangladeshi worker producing for these companies:

\$300 a year

An example of this is what is known as the 'reverse auction' in which suppliers are forced to undercut each other to win orders. In such a system existing unit labour prices are quickly forgotten by suppliers anxious to clinch a deal.

As a result of this downward pressure on prices, manufacturers in one country reported a halving of the assembly price over an eight year period.

And, of course, when retailers and merchandisers squeeze their suppliers, their suppliers in turn squeeze the workers, in the form of poverty wages, excessive working hours, poor conditions and the denial of the right to organise and bargain collectively.

Thus, whether they are producing jeans in Bangladesh or sweatshirts in Honduras, it is not unusual to find workers earning less than half of one percent of the garment's retail price. In other words, workers are earning as little as 25 cents for every US\$ 50 garment they produce.



Behind the glamorous image, the grim reality



With brands imposing cut-throat buying practices, how can producers afford to pay a living wage ?

When unions attempt to negotiate a living wage, the response is always the same: 'the prices we are getting from our customers are so low, and other countries produce for so much less, we can't afford to pay higher wages'.

But these same suppliers are quick to undercut each other to secure orders, often offering prices and delivery times that can only be achieved through long hours and low wages.

And while they are quick to plead poverty, these same companies refuse to provide a full and fair picture of their economic performance to unions with whom they are negotiating. In fact, many of them are doing a lot better than they would ever admit to their workers.

Where companies are failing, it is often because of poor management. Those with the worst labour conditions are also those who fail on quality and delivery on time. Poor labour conditions promote inefficiency and waste. They have become accustomed to relying on low wages – essentially, they are living off a subsidy from their workers.

What impact would wage increases have on the consumer ?

In reality, paying a living wage in low-wage producing countries would add only a few cents to the retail price of a garment.

Not uncommonly, the 'factory gate' price (including fabric and trim, factory overheads and profits as well as labour costs) amounts to about 20% of the retail price. The actual labour costs themselves are minimal.

If retailers agreed to work together and to pay prices that would enable suppliers to pay a living wage, would that solve the problem ?

While brands and retailers need to be answerable for labour standards along their supply chain, the legal responsibility for workplace conditions rests with the employer. And employers in the industry are notoriously bad at respecting worker rights; workers rights abuses are the norm and workers are regularly cheated on wages. In this situation, retailers could double their prices without it making a cent of difference to workers wages.

Moreover, while piece rates vary from order to order, wages are not directly linked to a particular order – otherwise, with most suppliers producing for a range of different customers (some more ethical than others), this would mean that workers in the same factory would be earning different wages depending on the order they were working on and their wages would fluctuate as the orders changed.

In this situation, it is clear that some form of common approach on the part of retailers is required. The problem here though is that anti-trust legislation in many countries means that retailers may not exchange information or form agreements with one another as to the prices or other terms which they are prepared to provide to their suppliers. Each retailer must negotiate its own prices and terms of trade independently with each supplier.



In Haiti and elsewhere riots have broken out over low wages and high food and fuel prices

Won't the payment of a living wage fuel inflation and result in job losses and investment cuts ?

In the face of rising food and fuel costs, workers cannot be expected to endure starvation wages with minimal or no pay adjustments while the income gap between rich and poor continues to grow.

Paying wages that represent barely one fifth of what workers need to live is not the solution to a stable economy. Better pay would improve consumer spending thus strengthening the local economy.

At the factory level, increased productivity will have to play a vital role in meeting the challenge of rising wage costs. In this regard, rising wages will act as an additional incentive to improving productivity.

How can a living wage be implemented ?

The time-honoured manner of improving pay and working conditions is through collective bargaining between unions and employers. But collective bargaining cannot take place in a void: workers must have the right to organise and the right to negotiate must be upheld - rights which are systematically denied in many producing countries.

That's why the ITGLWF's living wage campaign includes not only a demand that merchandisers and retailers require the payment of a living wage to all workers, and that they should factor in this obligation to their price negotiations, but also that the right of workers to organise and bargain collectively must be upheld.

Unions then need to begin to bargain with employers nationally, regionally and at factory level. Even if this is not achieved the target should be maintained and publicised in an effort to gain wider acceptance for the figure.

Unions also need to be pressing for regular increases in the minimum wage in order to ensure that it amounts to a living wage in order to ensure that all workers – whether or not they are covered by collective bargaining - benefit from improved wages.

Of course, both employers and governments in any particular country are likely to argue that wages need to be contained in order to remain competitive in international markets. That is why bargaining for a living wage requires a coordinated concerted international effort.

What should retailers be doing ?

It is not enough for retailers to make sure that they pay prices which allow their suppliers to pay their workers a living wage. When retailers and merchandisers squeeze their suppliers, their suppliers in turn squeeze the workers. But the reverse is not necessarily true: retailers could double their prices without it making a cent of difference to workers wages.

Retailers should therefore require the payment of a living wage to all workers and they should factor in this obligation to their price negotiations. Accordingly, they must require that suppliers disclose details of wage costs, including the unit labour costs based on the current wage as well as the assumptions about production targets for workers.

In addition, retailers need to ensure that the right of workers to organise and bargain collectively is guaranteed and they need to promote a climate in which industrial relations can develop with the objective of ensuring that workers can negotiate a living wage.

Retailers also need to support their suppliers in bearing the risk of implementing higher wages., including providing greater stability in orders and advance notice of any reduction in or suspension of orders.

What should suppliers be doing ?

The responsibility for wages and working conditions rests with the employer. Suppliers need to introduce mature systems of industrial relations aimed at ensuring the payment of a living wage for a standard work week.

Systems of mature industrial relations should involve genuine worker representation, collective bargaining and agreed management systems including company rules, disciplinary and grievance procedures and protocols for management/trade union relations.

In order to ensure genuine worker representation, suppliers should give their workers a 'right to organise' guarantee that ensures the right of workers to join or form a trade union of their choice, backed up with agreements on access to all workplaces for trade unions together with commitments to bargain in good faith when a union is established.

Improved industrial relations will have a positive impact on productivity, thus helping to meet the challenge of rising wage costs and indeed providing an incentive to do so. Suppliers must ensure that production targets must be fair and achievable, and payment and incentive systems must be transparent.

Suppliers will also need to ensure they are able to negotiate a fair price from their customers that enables them to pay a living wage.

What should governments be doing ?

Governments need to ensure that fundamental rights, including the right of freedom of association and collective bargaining, can be effectively exercised and that labour standards are upheld.

And governments urgently need to ensure there are regular increases in the minimum wage and ensure that the minimum wage represents a living wage.

What should the ILO be doing ?

The ILO needs to insist on the application of Conventions No. 87 and 98 to ensure that workers everywhere have the freedom to join a trade union of their choice and to bargain for a living wage.

The concept of 'Decent Work' must be fleshed out to include the payment of a living wage for a standard weeks' work. And the ILO should provide practical assistance to help the social partners, country by country, define and determine a living wage.

What should unions be doing ?

Unions everywhere need to take the initiative on the living wage issue.

The living wage needs to become a priority issue that has the full involvement of members and leaders at all levels.

Unions first need to establish, country by country, just what a living wage should be. Members and leaders at all levels should be actively involved in this exercise. The agreed figure needs to be accepted both within the broader trade union movement and externally and needs to be implanted in the public mind through campaigning.

Of course, the most effective way of securing a living wage is through collective bargaining, but unions cannot bargain effectively unless they are representative and strong. The living wage should therefore be used as an organising issue and organising must be a top priority. Unions should secure the introduction of mature systems of industrial relations and insist on 'right to organise' guarantees that ensure the right of workers to join or form a trade union of their choice, backed up with agreements on access to all workplaces for trade unions together with commitments to bargain in good faith when a union is established.

The living wage figure needs to be conveyed to the government and to employers, and included in wage bargaining at all levels. Even if the target is not achieved, the target should be maintained.

Planning a living wage campaign

Make the living wage a trade union issue

- ? Seek a decision from the trade union leadership for a living wage campaign.
- ? Establish a clear timetable for the campaign which should include a series of time bound activities that include the full engagement and involvement of members at factory, branch and national level.
- ? Conduct a series of members' meetings at all levels within the organisation on the living wage issue.
- ? Seek the involvement of the national centres and where there is more than one union in the sector, seek broad trade union support for the campaign.
- ? The campaign should be presented in a positive way as an effort to eliminate tensions in the face of rising inflation, and should focus on the cost of living in the country and the principle that the minimum wage is inadequate.

Determine a living wage figure for your country

- ? Within your organisation establish a working group tasked with determining a living wage figure. In some instances it might be appropriate for the whole Executive of the union to function as the working group. Or it might be appropriate for the working group to be comprised of representatives of different unions in the sector.
- ? The working group should be mandated with collecting statistics, collecting input from different groups and determining the figure which would then need to be agreed by the union's decision-making bodies.
- ? The ITGLWF's questionnaire on 'calculating a living wage' can be used to begin to collect basic data on cost of living prices.
- ? In order to get the widest possible input, set up a series of subgroups, for instance a subgroup made up of just women or young people, or subgroups from different regions or sectors of the industry. Each subgroup should submit their conclusions what a living wage should be to the working group.
- ? Invite input from different groups, eg from the subgroups that have been set up, from academics, from politicians, from NGOs.

- ? Present the conclusions of the working group to the Executive Committee for decision.
- ? Communicate the agreed figure to the ITGLWF, with information on how the figure was calculated and the process that was followed.
- ? Once the figure has been determined, the agreed figure should be the centre of all activity in order to get broad acceptance and support.



Unions need to involve members at all levels in determining a living wage figure

Seek acceptance for the agreed living wage figure

- ? Internally: Seek acceptance for the living wage figure at all levels of the organisation - factory by factory, branch by branch, region by region, as well as by all the decision-making bodies.
- ? Externally: Seek the support of your national centre, of other unions in the sector, of NGOs, of academics and politicians.
- ? It might be appropriate to set up a living wage coalition in which case you will need to seek consensus within the coalition regarding the living wage figure.

Garner broad support for the campaign

- ? Workers and their unions need to be at the centre of efforts to determine what the living should be, but unions also need to work closely with other supportive groups to secure support for the figure that has been arrived at. Consider forming a broad-based 'living wage coalition' including labour rights' groups, academics, advocacy groups, student organisations, faith organisations, politicians etc. Agree the objectives and targets of the campaign.

- ? Get support from local businesses that stand to gain from an increase in workers' purchasing power. Encourage local business to post signs such as 'This Local Business Supports a Living Wage'.



Seek media attention

- ? Hold a press conference to mark the launch of the living wage campaign as well as regular press conferences to keep the media informed of developments.
- ? Issue regular press releases about the campaign. For instance, release information regarding the input from the various subgroups, from politicians, NGOs, academics etc.
- ? Stress the campaign in a positive light, as an effort to eliminate tensions in the face of rising inflation, and should focus on the cost of living in the country and the principle that the minimum wage is inadequate.
- ? Once a living wage figure has been agreed, highlight this figure in every release and every press conference.
- ? Write letters to the editor. Encourage members and activists to do likewise.
- ? Provide detailed reports to the media about the cost of living in an easily understandable manner. Set out in straightforward terms the life of an average worker in the sector, what they earn, how they spend their money and what items they have to do without. Also provide figures on the inadequacy of the minimum wage.

Organise and bargain for a living wage

- ? Use the living wage as an organising issue. The most effective way of securing a living wage is through collective bargaining with employers. But workers cannot bargain unless they are organised in trade unions, and they cannot bargain effectively unless they are representative and strong at all levels.
- ? Insist that companies introduce, in consultation with unions, systems of mature industrial relations should involve genuine worker representation, collective bargaining and agreed management systems including company rules, disciplinary and grievance procedures and protocols for management/trade union relations. This should include a 'right to organise' guarantee that ensures the right of workers to join or form a trade union of their choice, backed up with agreements on access to all workplaces for trade unions together with commitments to bargain in good faith when a union is established.
- ? Include the living wage figure in your wage bargaining with employers at all levels, from branch level to national level.
- ? Provide training and support for union negotiators at all levels on bargaining strategies as well as on the living wage issue. Prepare union negotiators to

argue effectively in support of the living wage in relation to the basic needs of the workers in question.

- ? Even if you do not succeed in negotiating a living wage or an increase in the minimum wage, maintain the target and campaign to secure popular support for this figure.

Seek international support

- ? Convey your living wage figure to the ITGLWF, along with details of how the figure was worked out, including the shopping list and other costs so that we can pass this figure along to retailers and buyers and publicise them internationally.
- ? Convey to the ITGLWF details of your bargaining efforts, including details of the demands that were put to employers as well as the agreements reached.

Campaign in support of a living wage

- ? In industrialised countries, put pressure on the brands and retailers in your country to pay prices that allow employers to pay a minimum wage.



Sri Lankan garment workers add their names to a 60-m memorandum to the authorities demanding a living wage

- ? Demand that the government increase the minimum wage in line with the living wage. Make the living wage an election issue. During election campaigns, ask the candidates whether they would support the payment of a living wage. Distribute a pamphlet documenting their responses.
- ? Organise a round-table debate on the issue and send out invitations to employers and politicians as well as supporters.

- ? Suggest to your local newspapers or radio stations that they cover the issue. Issue regular press releases about your efforts. Write letters to the editor.
- ? Produce a giant letter addressed to the government, to politicians and to the employers' association. Obtain massive amounts of signatures from workers and supporters. Organise a public event to hand the letter.
- ? Hold rallies in support of a living wage. Slogans could include 'Starvation pay, no way'; 'wipe out working poverty'; 'No to a dying wage, yes to a living wage', etc. Try to secure the widest possible turnout of workers and supporters, including those who are likely to support the goals of the campaign such as food vendors, taxi drivers, etc.
- ? Produce a series of photos depicting the living conditions of workers in the industry. Put them on display and send out invitations.
- ? Provide politicians or employers with a basket containing the bare basics that workers can afford and challenge them to get through the week on what it contains.

Calculating a living wage

Using the attached list of staple foods and other necessary costs for a family of four please estimate the living wage in your country as follows. The list is provided as an example only and should be freely amended to reflect the staple diet in your country.

I. WEEKLY SHOPPING BASKET (Please adjust freely in order to reflect local staple foods)

	<i>Price (specify quantity)</i>	<i>Amount required for family of 4 per week</i>	<i>Average actual spending per week</i>
Meat, fish, beans, eggs			
Meat (please specify type)			
Chicken			
Fish			
Lentils			
Beans			
Eggs			
Other (please specify)			
Grains and bread			
Bread			
Flour			
Rice			
Pasta			
Oats			
Other (please specify)			
Dairy products			
Milk			
Yogurt			
Cheese			
Other (please specify)			

Vegetables			
Onions			
Tomatoes			
Carrots			
Salad greens			
Other (please specify)			
Fruits			
Oranges			
Apples			
Bananas			
Other (please specify)			
Oils, fats & sweets			
Cooking oil			
Butter			
Sugar			
Other (please specify)			
Other			
Toothpaste			
Toilet paper			
Soap and shampoo			
Other toiletries			
Other (please specify)			

II. OTHER COSTS (PER YEAR)

	<i>Cost for a family of 4 per year</i>	<i>Average actual spending</i>
Rent (describe type of accommodation)		
Transportation (describe type of transportation)		
Heating fuel		
Electricity		
Butane gas		
Water		

Phone costs		
School costs		
Child care (please specify)		
Clothes (please specify)		
Medical costs		
Taxes		
Other (please specify)		

Cost of weekly shopping basket x 52 weeks =
 Other costs (rent, heating, transportation, etc) per year:
 Subtotal

 Discretionary income (add 10%)

 Total per year