

LIVING WAGE

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Families who work for low wages face impossible choices — buy food or heat the house, feed the children or pay the rent. The result can be spiraling debt, constant anxiety and long-term health problems. In many cases it means that the adults in the family are working long hours, often at two or three jobs, just to pay for basic necessities. They have little time to spend with their family, much less to help their children with school work or participate in community activities.

The story of child poverty is very much a story of low wages. More than half poor children live in families where at least one person has a full-time job. The living wage is a call to private and public sector employers to pay wages to both direct and contract employees sufficient to provide the basics to families with children.

The living wage is one of the most powerful tools available to address this troubling state of poverty amid plenty allows us to get serious about reducing child poverty, and ensures that families who are working hard get what they deserve — a fair shake, and a life that's about more than a constant struggle to get by.

A living wage is not the same as the minimum wage. The living wage differs from the minimum wage in that the latter is set by law and can fail to meet the requirements of a living wage - or is so low that borrowing or application for top-up benefits is necessary. It differs somewhat from basic needs in that the basic needs model usually measures a minimum level of consumption.

The minimum monthly wage for 2011 was set at UAH 941 from January 1, 2011, UAH 960 from April 1, UAH 985 from October 1, and UAH 1,004 from December 1, while the minimum hourly wage was set at UAH 5.66 from January 1, 2011, UAH 5.77 from April 1, UAH 5.92 from October 1, and UAH 6.04 from December 1 (UAH 7.95 / USD 1).

The living wage and the minimum wage for able-bodied citizens in Ukraine in 2012 will grow by 12.9%, from UAH 1,004 to UAH 1,134.

In an era of globalization we need new institutions to rebuild the social contract and to reassert democratic goals of equity and inclusion. For both economic and political reasons, the future of workers and communities is tied to labor markets and industry clusters that are regional in scope