

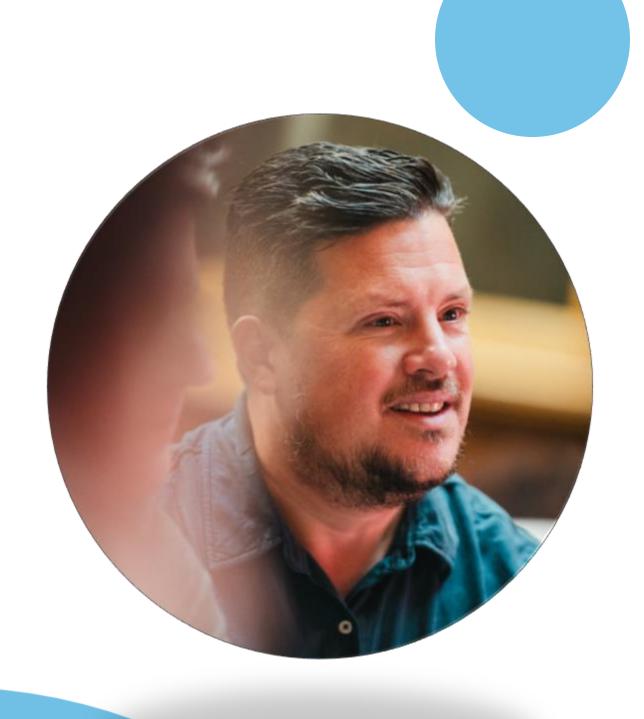
# Decent (minimum) pay for dataworkers

**Establishing Decent Pay Standards for dataworkers** 

A presentation at the Stakeholder Engagement event by the Data Labelers Association

Martijn Arets - WageIndicator Foundation





#### **Martijn Arets**

- Independent researcher and expert on the impact of platforms on society;
- Lead gig team at the WageIndicator Foundation;
- Founder of GigCV;
- Author of Platform Revolutie (Dutch), Brand Expedition and two books on crowdfunding;
- Associated to the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences;
- Father of Joep, Sophie and Anna.



### WageIndicator Foundation

Our mission is to ensure improved labour market transparency for workers, employers and policy makers worldwide.

## WageIndicator journey

A timeline of our databases



Started in The Netherlands, now in 75 countries

#### **Labour Law**

Started in Mozambique now in 145 countries; + a Labour Rights Index

#### **Living Wages**

Started with a model in 100 countries. Now 400 on-the-ground data collectors do the job in 175 countries.

 1999
 2006
 2008
 2011
 2014
 2024

## Minimum Wages

Started in Paraguay, India and now in 2008 countries

## **Collective Agreements**

Started in Sub Saharan Africa, now in 75 countries

## **Living Wages Publication**

Supported by a group of big firms, costly Living Wage data can be shared with trade unions, workers, small firms

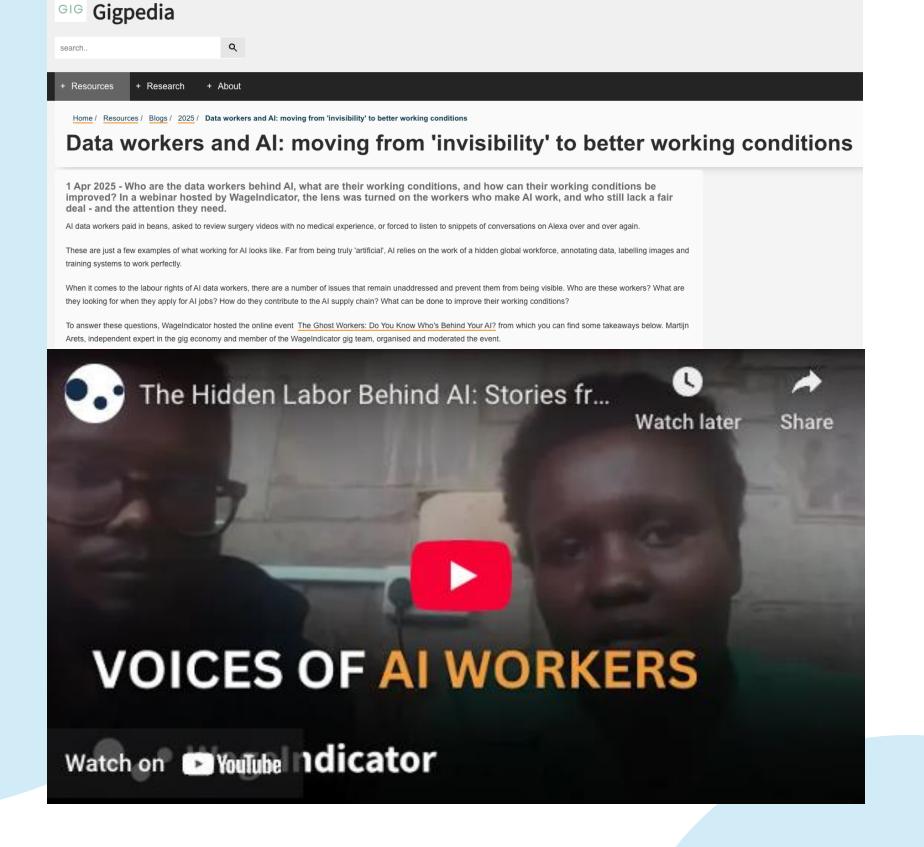
WageIndicator

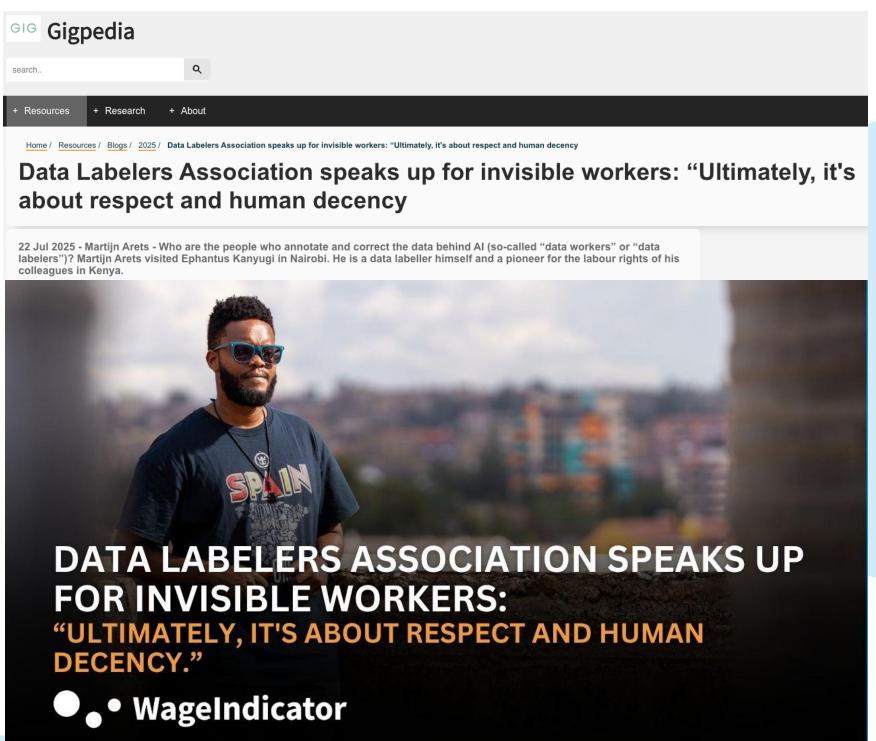
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#### Our link with the Data Labeler Association







### **Decent pay for dataworkers**

- 1.Conditions
- 2. How much pay is decent (minimum) pay?



#### 1. Conditions



June 2025 # 48

Tianling Yang, Christian Strippel, Alexandra Keiner, Dylan Baker, Alexis Chávez, Krystal Kauffman, Marc Pohl, Caroline Sinders, Milagros Miceli

#### **Ethics of Data Work**

Principles for Academic Data Work Requesters

#### ••

#### 1. Conditions

## Short summary on the pay section of this discussion paper (my own interpretation)

- Pay all the time needed to execute the work / a task;
- •Avoid unpaid work (don't put the risk of unpaid work on the shoulder of the individual worker);
- Payment should cover resources needed to complete a task;
- Take foreign currency exchange and platform provision into account;
- Pay on time;
- Respect (and reward) the expertise of the dataworker.





		Minimun	n based on		
101		Consensus based rates	Actual costs based rates		
Legal status of the worker	Employed				
	Self-employed				



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Legal status of the worker	Employed	National: statutory minimum wages Sectoral: minimum wages in collective agreements				
	Self-employed	Sectoral: minimum tariffs in collective agreements or code of conducts Sectoral: minimum tariffs set by intermediaries (like online gig platforms) Minimum tariffs set by local or national government				



		Minimum based on				
25		Consensus based rates	Actual costs based rates			
Legal status of the worker	Employed	National: statutory minimum wages Sectoral: minimum wages in collective agreements  Regional: Living Wage				
	Self-employed	Sectoral: minimum tariffs in collective agreements or code of conducts Sectoral: minimum tariffs set by intermediaries (like online gig platforms) Minimum tariffs set by local or national government				

## WageIndicator Method

Standards

How do we calculate Living Wage estimates? (and Living Income, Living Tariff)

WAGEINDICATOR CALCULATES
LIVING WAGES FOR

#### **Typical\* Families**

in a range

2 earning adults
No. of children is determined by
national
fertility rate

Lower Bound is seen as the global baseline

One works 100% of permissible hours, other's hours are based on the national labour participation rate, unemployment rate and part-time work rate

\*We also calculate for standard families

Single Income Earner for a Family in a range

1 earning adult. No. of children is determined by national fertility rate

Lower Bound is seen as the best from a Human Rights

perspective



As of October 2024.

child care and private

## Our Living wage database

WageIndicator has continuously improved the calculations, coverage, and scope of its Living Wage database to ensure easy access to up-todate estimates

WageIndicator calculates its estimates based on cost-of-living data collected by ~400 data collectors worldwide. Each quarter fresh data! No drama with inflation, the data will show the prices.

Currently there are Living Wage estimates for 175 countries, covering 3000 regions. Available for sale, as well as partly publicly available on our websites.



## Living Wages are connected with other databases on:

Labour Laws Actual Wages

CBA's

Minimum Wages









## What about selfemployed workers?

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"According to ILO estimates (2023), selfemployment accounts for approximately 46% of total global employment, while salaried workers represent around 54%."







Table 3. Distribution of issues over which platform workers protest by region (%).

Issues	Total (%)	Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America	Africa	Australia and NZ	n
Pay	63.4	62.1	74.9	59.6	50.4	67.2	65.7	1268
Employment status	20.2	30.1	5.7	37.I	13.3	4.7	40	1267
Health and safety (H&S)	19.1	7.2	14	14.8	46.7	34.4	8.6	1268
Other regulatory issues	14.2	9.1	17.4	6.9	23.3	20.3	5.7	1268
Non-pay benefits	9.0	8	14	7.4	4.2	6.3	17.1	1268
Running cost/equipment	7.2	6.9	4.3	6.4	3.8	35.9	14.3	1268
Deactivation	5.7	6.7	2.6	5	7.9	6.3	8.6	1267
Union representation	5.6	7.2	3.1	9.9	5	1.6	0	1268
Working hours	4.8	4.3	6.8	2	2.5	7.8	8.6	1268

Umney, C., Stuart, M., Bessa, I., Joyce, S., Neumann, D., & Trappmann, V. (2024). Platform Labour Unrest in a Global Perspective: How, Where and Why Do Platform Workers Protest? Work Employment And Society, 38(1), 3–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170231209676



# JOINT DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF STANDARDS ON DECENT WORK IN THE PLATFORM ECONOMY AT THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE 2025

Guarantee of fair and living wages: Workers in the platform economy are struggling to
earn a minimum and living wage. They find themselves submitted to earnings
fluctuations, arbitrary pay deductions and opaque earning calculations that fail to
properly reflect time spent at work and often rely on unpredictable models of dynamic
pricing. The standards should ensure the income of digital platform workers meets
minimum and fair standards and recognise the particularities of their working
conditions, notably by including wait time.



		Minimum based on				
25		Consensus based rates	Actual costs based rates			
Legal status of the worker	Employed	National: statutory minimum wages Sectoral: minimum wages in collective agreements  Regional: Living Wage				
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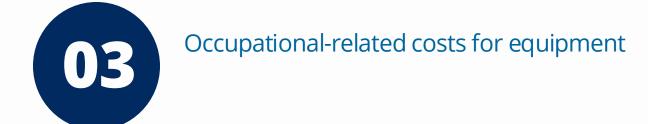


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**Net living wage:** The methodology takes the year-round working days in a country as a basis and deducts the annual festive days and annual leave days from this. This results in a net living (hourly) tariff.



Cost of income taxes and social security contributions for self-employed workers



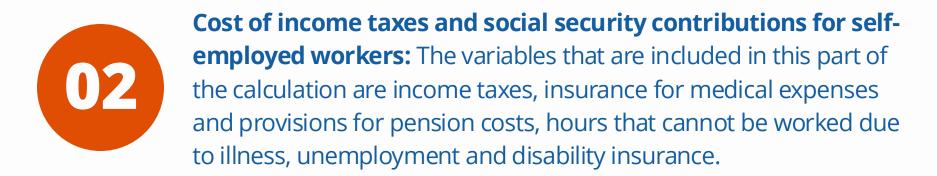
Occupational-related costs for equipment



Occupational-related overhead time

























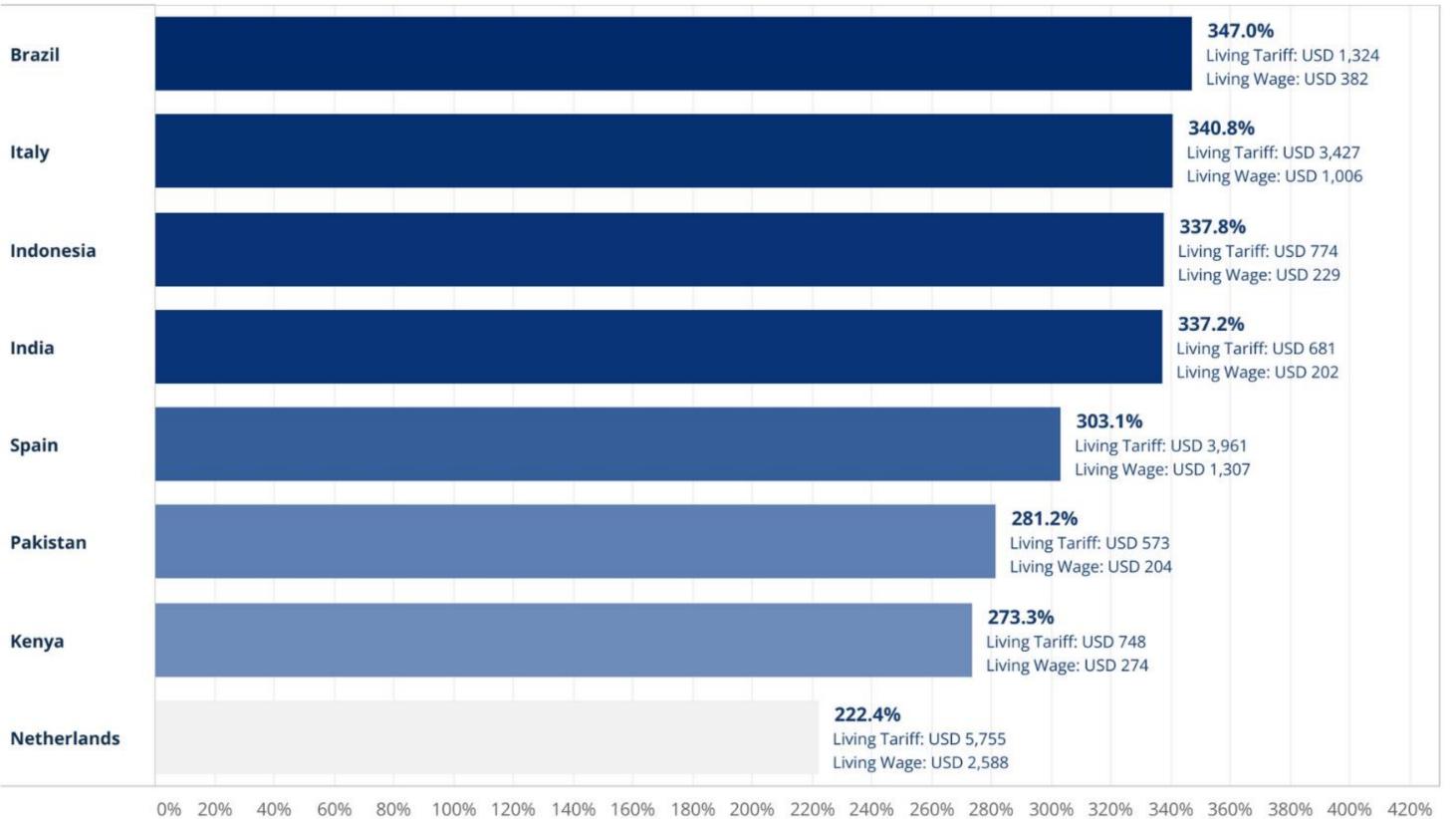




Occupational-related overhead time: refers to time that the selfemployed worker must spend on their profession but which is not directly deductible. Examples: compensation for time spent on administration, acquisition and communication with customers, training to maintain and develop skills, and job-specific variables such as waiting time in the case of taxi drivers and delivery riders.

### **EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS**

Living tariff and living wage levels and the ratio between the two pay floors (per occupation, in USD).



090 2090 4090 6090 6090 10090 12090 14090 16090 20090 22090 24090 26090 36090 32090 34090 36090 36090 40090 42090

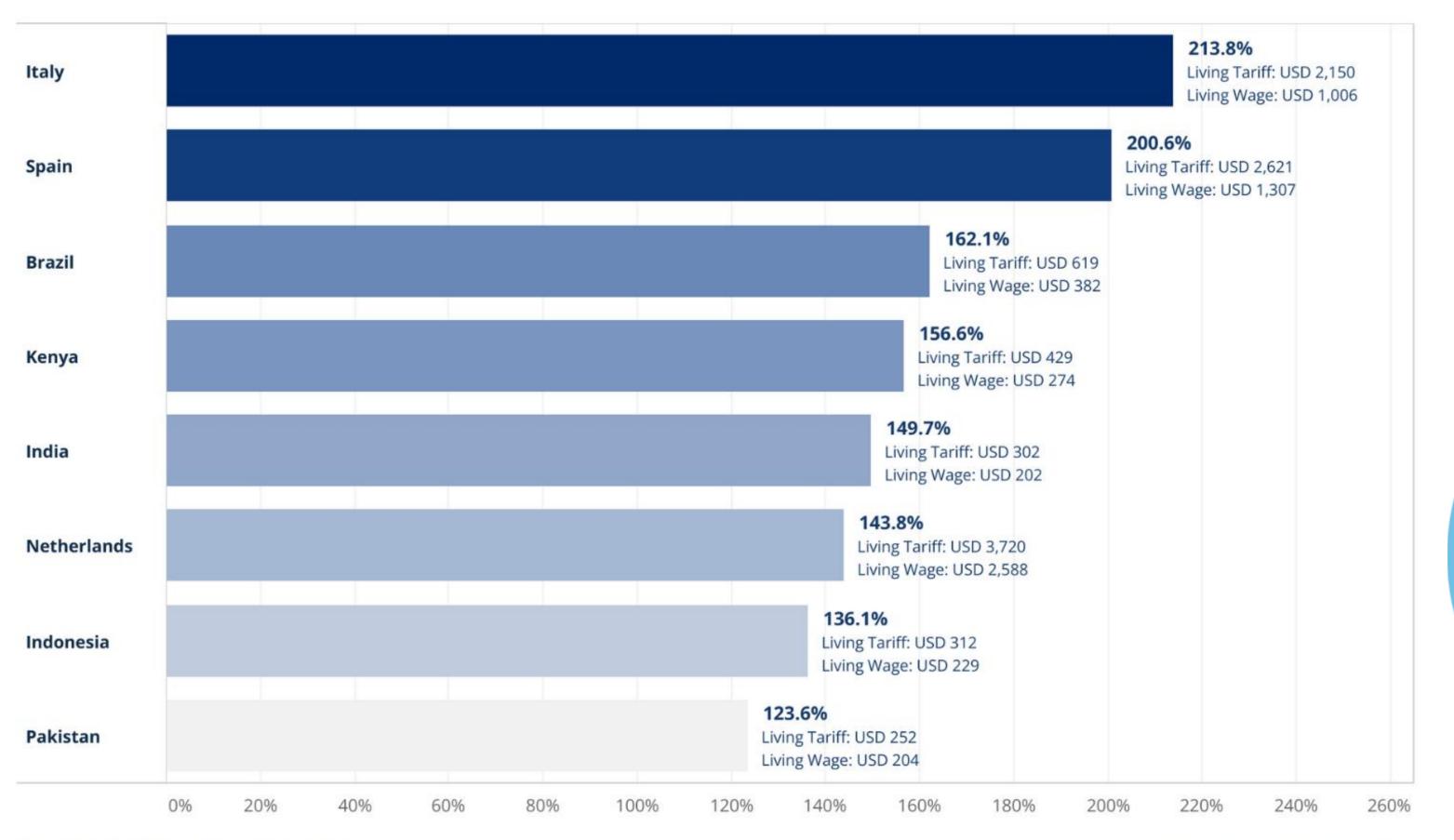
Percentage = Living Tariff / Living Wage \* 100%

Source:

- 1. WageIndicator Car Taxi Driver Living Tariff (April 2025)
- 2. WageIndicator Living Wages Guidance Typical Family (2024)

Source: the authors based on data from the WageIndicator Foundation.

\*USD rate as of 18th June 2025



Percentage = Living Tariff / Living Wage \* 100%

Source:

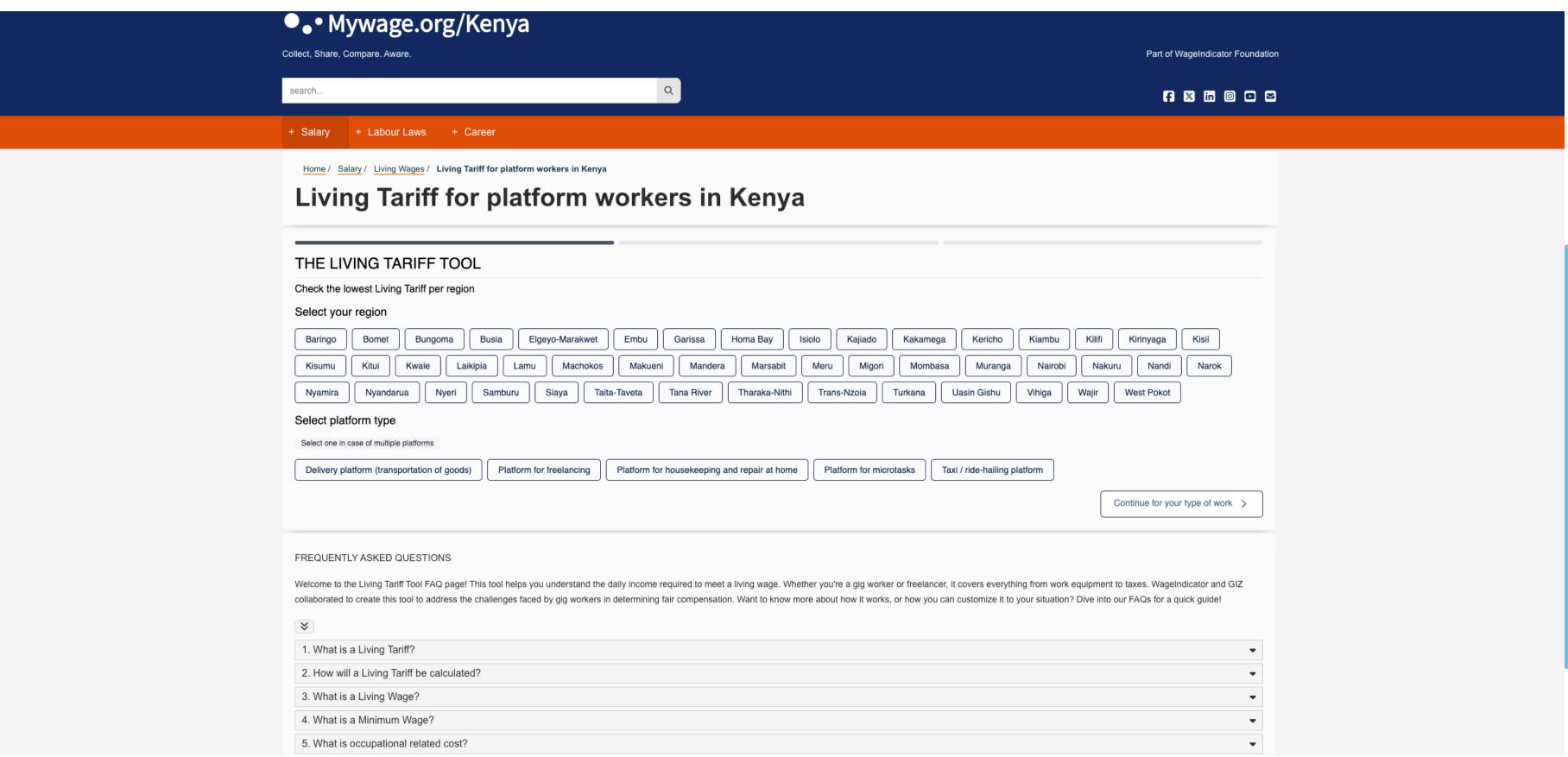
1. WageIndicator Web Design Living Tariff (April 2025)

2. WageIndicator Living Wages Guidance Typical Family (2024)

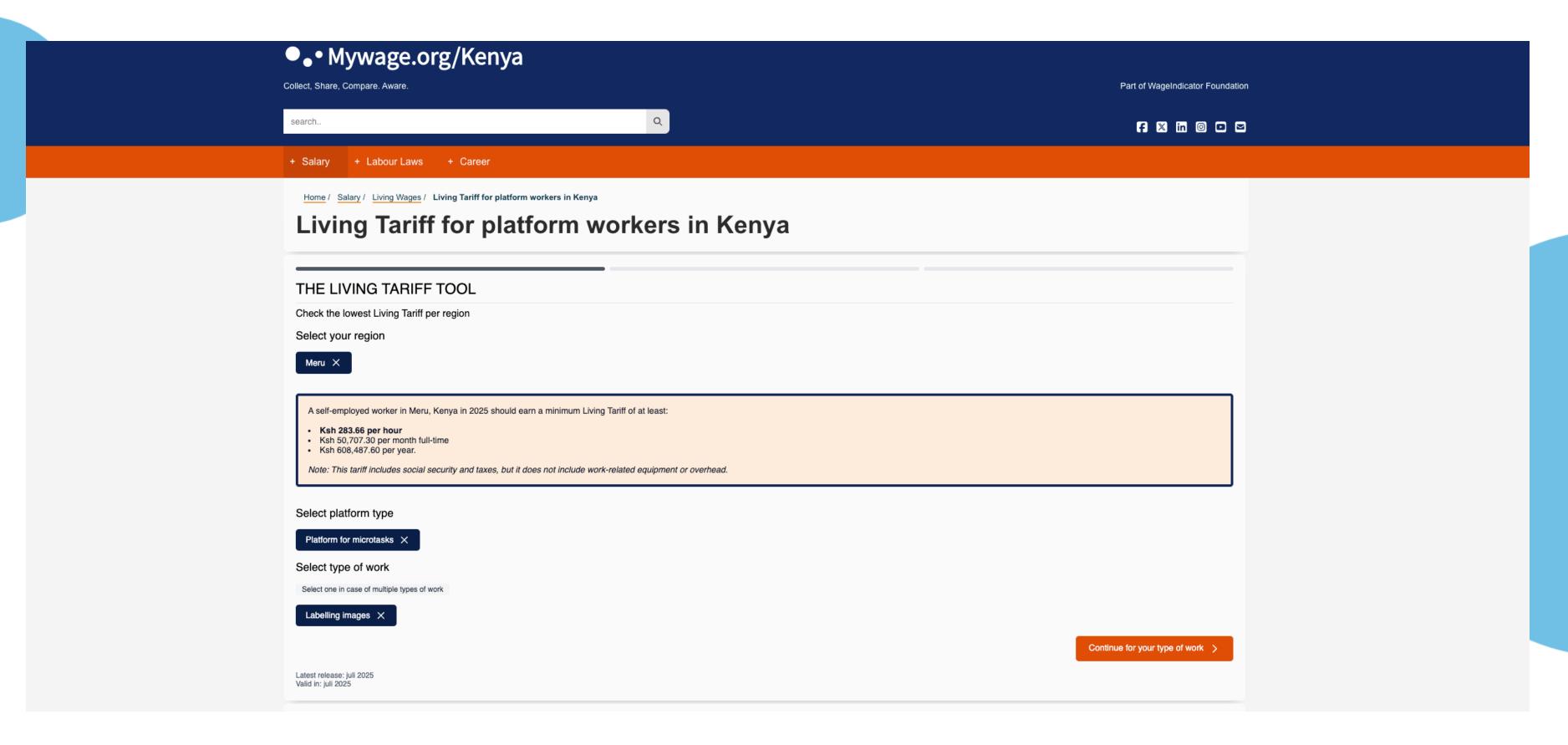
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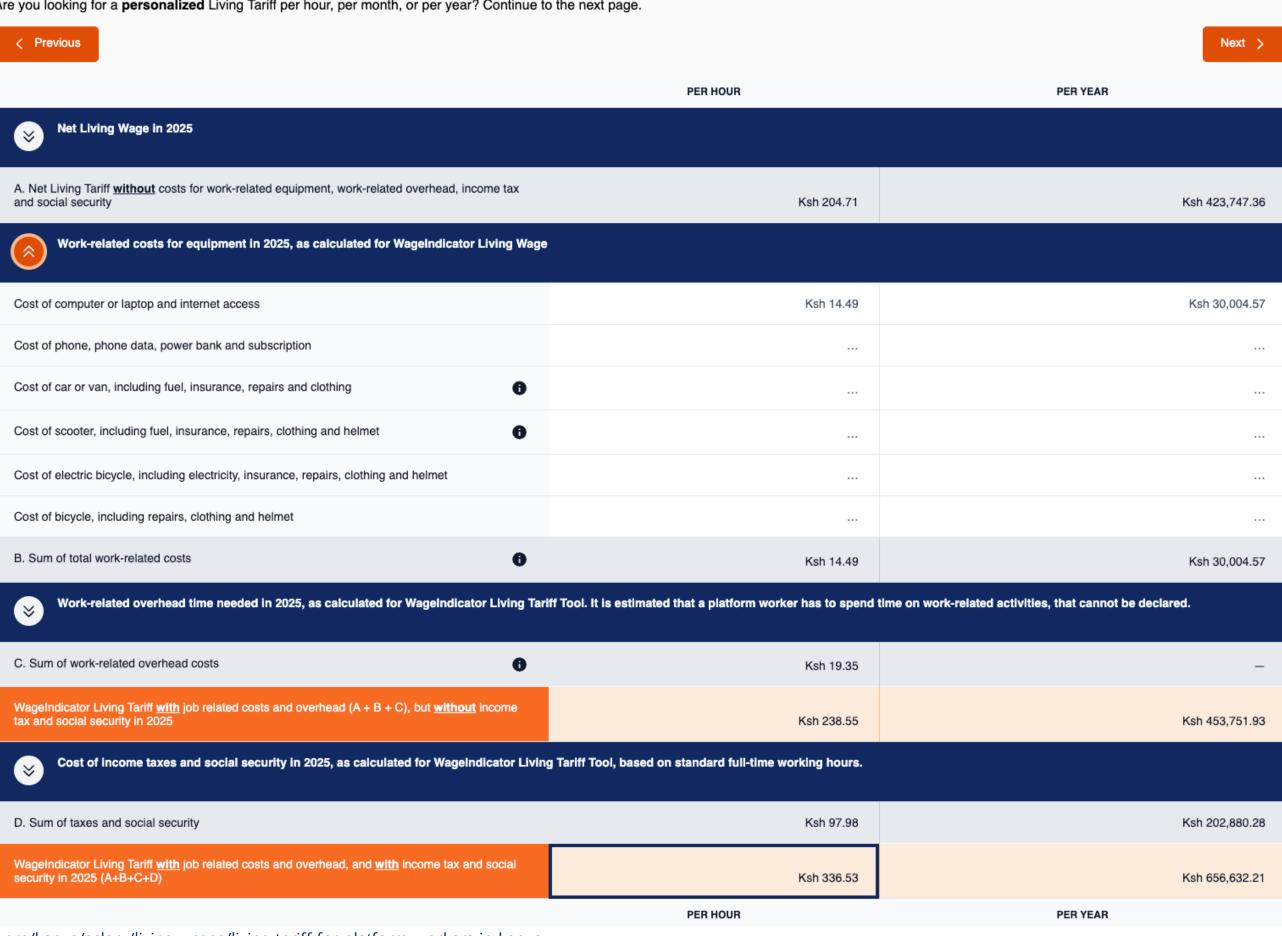




#### LIVING TARIFF FOR LABELLING IMAGES IN MERU

See the Living Tariff for Labelling images in Meru in Kenya. All components of the Living Tariff are shown below. The column 'per hour' indicates the Living Tariff for an hour of work. The column 'per year' refers to the Living Tariff for a whole year of work.

Are you looking for a personalized Living Tariff per hour, per month, or per year? Continue to the next page.







Who is responsible for decent (minimum) pay?



## Who is responsible for decent (minimum) pay?

- BPO / platform
- Policy makers (regulation AND enforcement)
- Workers / worker representatives
- Clients (2B)

## WageIndicator's work with companies

WageIndicator provides data to the largest multinationals in the world. It delivers access to data for free to many small firms, SMEs. On top to trade unions, researchers, and journalists. All these parties need credible, reliable, regularly updated living wage estimates for reporting and compliance with legislation. Many multinationals are frontrunners moving beyond the race to the bottom by starting implementation in their supply chains.

#### **WageIndicator services:**



Access to Living Wage
database with ongoing
support for data
interpretation and informed
decision-making.

Support with wage gap analysis, salary data collection, policy development, and supplier engagement in supply chains.

& policy support

## Full gap analysis and support

Wage gap analysis, compliance assessment, and tailored recommendations for companies and suppliers.

# How do Living Wage payments benefit employers, and the economy?

It enables labour market transparency, allowing employers and employees to make informed decisions

(in this presentation we talk about employees, not self employed. WageIndicator developed a Living Tariff for self employed)



This creates a larger market for goods and services, boosting business.

Improved employee morale reduces attrition

Which lowers the cost of recruitment, training and dispute resolution.

Living Wage payment is also central to the achievement of multiple SDGs





#### Discussion and conclusion

- This is not new. This is not rocket-science. This is about decent pay and decent payment conditions. Don't frame the datawork industry as an exception;
- The benefit of the datawork sector compared to other platform companies is that it serves a tobusiness market;
- The wage and tariff floors I presented are not a benchmark, but as a cost-of-living-based minimum tariff. Its primary practical function would then be to provide a protective floor, particularly for vulnerable self-employed workers such as undeclared workers;
- Pay floors do not operate in a societal vacuum; they intersect with market dynamics, informal labour practices, and broader societal debates about the valuation of work. Operating in an informal or low-wage market does not exempt clients from the responsibility to pay fair compensation.



# THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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