Calculating a Living Wage for Bangladeshi Garment Workers

What is a living wage? An organization called Labour Behind the Label says that a living wage should cover the basic needs of workers and their families, including nutritious food, clean water, shelter, clothes, education, health care, and transportation. See <www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras> for solutions to the questions below as well as additional activities.

A family of four in Bangladesh needs $2.27 each day for food. Multiply $2.27 by 30 to find out how much a family needs each month to pay for food.

A garment worker lives in this room with her family. They pay $15.12 per month for rent. Add the rent to the monthly food costs (which you calculated above). What is the family's total expenses?

This family cannot afford to send their children to school. They hire a tutor instead. They pay her $4.32 per month. If you add food, rent, and education, what is this family's expenses?

What other expenses does a family have to pay for? If the minimum wage is $24 per month, how many garment workers would you need to support a family of four? How do you think families survive?

This is a picture of two young garment workers, Jhumur, 16, and Rupa, 14. What do you think their life is like now? What would it be like if their parents earned a living wage?

Calculate the monthly costs of food, shelter, education, health care, and other necessities in your area. What hourly rate would constitute a living wage?