

2025 Update: Living Wage Calculation for Kolwezi, DRC

Calculation for Briefing Paper: Workers' Rights Under Scrutiny: An Update on Labour Conditions in the DRC's Industrial Mines

This calculation is based on the Minimum Expenditure basket (MEB) methodology and uses as a reference the UNICEF MEB conducted for Congo in 2016. It has been adapted for the Kolwezi context in consultation with Lualaba based organisations and in-person assessments of prices in the local markets in Kolwezi. It assumes an average household of 6 people (2 adults and 4 children). In October 2021, RAID and CAJJ calculated the living wage to be \$402.65 then \$480.37 in 2023 and \$501.25 in 2024. The table below provides a new calculation based on prices in Kolwezi markets in April 2025.

RAID and CAJJ adjusted the MEB as follows:

1. We modified the “education” criteria to cater for the fact that Congo made access to primary school education free in 2019, although the practice remains that parents provide some subsidy. We calculated an average subsidy based on fees for state schools and budget-friendly paying schools.
2. We adapted the “food” category to portray more accurately eating habits in Kolwezi.
3. We added a “transportation” category which was calculated considering public transport between Kolwezi and the Luilu neighbourhood where most mine workers live.
4. We added a small amount for “leisure activities” because the MEB applies only to the very minimum needs in situations of humanitarian emergencies. This was also an item added by other civil society groups when determining the living wage of artisanal miners in Congo's Kivu provinces.

**Exchange rate (on in April 2025): \$1 = 2,800 FC*

Living Wage Calculation Kolwezi

Note: This calculation is based on the Minimum Expenditure basket (MEB) methodology and uses as a reference the UNICEF MEB conducted for DRC in 2016. It has been adapted for the Kolwezi context in consultation with Lualaba-based organisations and in-person assessments of prices in the local markets in Kolwezi in April 2025. It assumes an average household of 6 people (2 adults and 4 children).

Item	Average cost per item	Cost per month per average household (FC)	Cost per month per average household (\$)	Assumption
FOOD ITEMS				
Manioc	1 500 FC or 0,53 USD / kg	108,000.00 FC	\$38.57	12 Kg per person per month
Maize	2 000 FC or 0,70 USD / kg	144,000.00 FC	\$51.43	12 Kg per person per month
Staple crops (average for manioc and maize)	1750 FC or 0,61USD / kg	126,000.00 FC	\$45.00	12 Kg per person per month
Vegetables (other than tomatoes/onions)	2000 FC or 0,70 USD / kg	43,200.00 FC	\$15.43	3,6 Kg per person per month
Tomatoes	7500 FC or 2,65 USD per unit (approx 3 kg)	45,000.00 FC	\$16.07	1 container per person per month
Onions	1 000 FC or 0,35 USD	6,000.00 FC	\$2.14	1 container per month
Chicken legs	8 500 FC or 3,00 USD / kg	81,600.00 FC	\$29.14	1.6 Kg per person per month
Fresh fish (Thomson)	7 500 FC or 2,65 USD / kg	72,000.00 FC	\$25.71	1.6 Kg per person per month
Dried fish (Bitoyo)	10 000 FC or 3,53 USD / kg	40,000.00 FC	\$14.29	4 small containers per month
Little fish (fretin)	6 000 FC or 2,12 USD	24,000.00 FC	\$8.57	4 small containers per month
Cooking oil (table oil)	6 500 FC or 2,29 USD / L	35,100.00 FC	\$12.54	0.9 Kg per person per month
Cooking oil (palm oil)	4 000 FC or 1,41 USD / L	21,600.00 FC	\$7.71	0.9 Kg per person per month
Salt	2 000 FC or 0,70 USD / kg	1,800.00 FC	\$0.64	0.15 Kg per person per month
Sugar	4 500 FC or 1,59 USD / kg	4,050.00 FC	\$1.45	0.15 Kg per person per month
Tea	3 000 FC or 0,10 USD	2,700.00 FC	\$0.96	0.15 Kg per person per month
HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD GOODS				
Rent/living quarters	200 000 FC or 70,67 USD	200,000.00 FC	\$71.43	
5-litre pan	26 000 FC or 9,18 USD	2,166.67 FC	\$0.77	Replacing it once a year
Kitchen knife	3 500 FC or 1,23 USD	583.33 FC	\$0.21	Replacing it twice a year
Bar of soap	1 500 FC or 0,53 USD	9,000.00 FC	\$3.21	1 bar per person per month
Mattress	150 000 FC or 53,00 USD	12,500.00 FC	\$4.46	Median costs, 1 mattress per 2 persons, replaced every 3 years
Blanket	50 500 FC or 17,84USD	12,625.00 FC	\$4.51	1 per person, replacing it every 2 years
Pagne/cloth	16 000 FC or 5,65 USD	4,000.00 FC	\$1.43	1 per 2 persons, replacing it once a year
Jerry can	5 000 FC or 1,76 USD	833.33 FC	\$0.30	2 per household, replacing them once a year
Washing basin	35 000 FC or 12,36 USD	2,916.67 FC	\$1.04	1 per household, replacing it once a year
Bag of charcoal (60/80 kg)	30 000 FC or 10,60 USD	30,000.00 FC	\$10.71	1 per month per household
7-litre pan	32 000 FC or 11,30 USD	2,666.67 FC	\$0.95	1 per household, replacing it once a year
Mug	1 900 FC or 0,67 USD	950.00 FC	\$0.34	1 per person, replacing them once a year
Small spoon	1 000 FC or 0,35 USD	1,000.00 FC	\$0.36	1 per person, replacing them twice a year
Large spoon	1 500 FC or 0,53 USD	250.00 FC	\$0.09	1 per household, replacing it twice a year
Small bowl	9 000 FC or 3,18 USD	2,250.00 FC	\$0.80	3 per household, replacing them once a year
Big bowl	28 500 FC or 10,07 USD	2,375.00 FC	\$0.85	1 per household, replacing it once a year
Large bag	2 500FC or 0,88 USD	416.67 FC	\$0.15	2 per household, replacing them once a year
Tarp	23 500 FC or 8,30 USD	1,958.33 FC	\$0.70	1 per household, replacing it once a year
Clothing items	34 000 FC or 12,01 USD	34,000.00 FC	\$12.14	2 pieces per person, replacing them once a year
SANITATION AND HYGIENE				
Hygiene kit	27 000 FC or 9,54 USD	13,500.00 FC	\$4.82	1 per household, replacing it every 2 months
Latrine maintenance	70 000 FC or 24,73 USD	5,833.00 FC	\$2.08	once a year
Water treatment tablets	1 500 FC or 0,53 USD	1,500.00 FC	\$0.54	once a month
Fees for potable drinking water (town supply or public taps)	33 000 FC or 11,66 USD	33,000.00 FC	\$11.79	once a month

EDUCATION				
School fees	43 000 FC or 15,19 USD	129,000.00 FC	\$46.07	once a month for 1 child, for 9 months of academic year
Uniform	36 000 FC or 12,72 USD	12,000.00 FC	\$4.29	once a year for 1 child
School materials	28 000 FC or 9,89 USD	9,333.33 FC	\$3.33	once a year for 1 child
HEALTH				
Health expenses at dispensary/hospital	80 000 FC or 28,26 USD	20,000.00 FC	\$7.14	cost of an admission for a serious episode of malaria, 3 times per year for 1 household
Painkillers and other medicines	2 000 FC or 0,70 USD	24,000.00 FC	\$8.57	12 packages per month
Mosquito net	10 000 FC or 3,53 USD	833.33 FC	\$0.30	1 for 2 persons, replacing it every 3 years
Anti-malaria tablets	10 000 FC or 3,53 USD	1,666.67 FC	\$0.60	1 package every 6 months
TRANSPORTATION				
Public transport	5 000 FC or 1,76 USD per roundtrip	50,000.00 FC	\$17.86	5 times a month for two persons travelling
OTHER				
Cheapest mobile phone in the market	25 000 FC or 8,83 USD	1,388.89 FC	\$0.50	2 per household, replacing them every 3 years
Average phone credit	5 000 FC or 4,24 USD	80,000.00 FC	\$28.57	credit for 2 phones per household, recharged twice a week
Leisure (meal out, cinema, public holiday celebration or other)	70 000 FC or 24,73 USD	11,666.67 FC	\$4.17	Average for two outings a year for the household
TOTAL		1,457,596.89 FC	\$520.57	

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- (ii) We adapted the “food” category to portray eating habits in the Kolwezi area more accurately.
- (iii) We added a “transportation” category which was calculated considering public transport between Kolwezi and the Luilu neighbourhood where most mine workers live.
- (iv) We added a small amount for “leisure activities” because the MEB applies only to the very minimum needs in situations of humanitarian emergencies. This was also an item added by other civil society groups when determining the living wage of artisanal miners in Congo’s Kivu provinces.

Exchange rate used USD to Franc Congolais

1 FC = 0.00035
\$1 = 2,800.00