

# Gilad Isaacs ~ South Africa's 5 Million Working Poor



Every day millions across South Africa do arduous work in jobs that cannot keep them and their dependants out of poverty. These are the “working poor” and according to a new study, there are about five and half million of them.

In a [study of the South African labour market](#) prepared as part of broader research on the national minimum wage, University of Cape Town economist Arden Finn attempts to determine the wage level at which, on average and all other things equal, a worker and his or her family could be brought up to the poverty line.

This is not a question easily answered, but R4,125 is the carefully qualified answer this study gives.

[Finn's study](#) makes use of a new poverty line developed by the [Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit \(SALDRU\)](#) at UCT (forthcoming). Researchers Joshua Budlender, Murray Leibbrandt and Ingrid Woolard adopt the internationally established Cost of Basic Needs approach in order to quantify, in money terms, the most basic food items and other necessities that a person needs to live. They find that, in April 2015 rands, this amount is R1,319 per person per month.

But workers do not only support themselves, and wage income is not the only source of household income.

– See more at:  
[http://groundup.org.za/article/south-africa-5-million-working-poor\\_3242](http://groundup.org.za/article/south-africa-5-million-working-poor_3242)