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Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

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*Oxford Dept of International Development,
Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford*

Agathe, Madagascar

Multidimensional Poverty Index Profile



Agathe is about 70 years old. She lives in Manarintsoa, one of the poorest districts of Antananarivo, Madagascar, with six members of her family, including her 28 year old daughter, Evelyne, Evelyne's three children, and another of Agathe's grandchildren. Agathe has been married twice and has given birth to 16 children in total, six of whom are still alive and have built their houses on the family plot in Manarintsoa. Following a fire that happened in 2001, Evelyne rebuilt the brick house with her husband. Although she is relatively old and has an affliction that means that tears constantly flow from her eyes, Agathe is still spirited.

Agathe earns her living by collecting used cans and bottles that are dumped at the rubbish tip to sell. She has the privilege of having her own rubbish bin, after having worked at this site for more than 10 years. Families living around the tip used to give her a few pennies to clean their houses, but nowadays her physical condition prevents her from taking this work.

Evelyne, Agathe's daughter, helps her mother to sell the goods that she collects from the rubbish tip now that she lives with Agathe. Evelyne and her three children moved into live with her after Evelyne divorced from her husband in 2008. They usually make about 0.9 USD in total from the goods they sell each day, and from time to time, Evelyne's ex-husband visits and gives them a little money. Agathe's children also do what they can to help her. On a typical day, Agathe gets up at 5 am and has a coffee for breakfast, which costs about USD 0.1. She helps Evelyne to spread out their goods ready for sale during the day. At about 8am, she takes her usual position in Ambondrona and remains there until 8pm, sometimes until 8.30 pm.





Agathe does not eat at noon, she just drinks a coffee for USD 0.1 at the corner tavern, and another late in the day. She only eats rice in the evening, once back at home. When she does not have enough money for a meal, she just picks out what she can find in the rubbish tip. Sometimes, when she is unable to physically carry what she has collected from the rubbish tip in the day she returns home without any products to sell, but her children will help her to carry her pickings when they can. After dinner, Agathe goes out and talks with her neighbours. At about 9.30pm, she returns home and goes to sleep.

Evelyne takes care of household chores and other members of the family. She goes to the market, cooks and cares for her youngest child who is not old enough to go to school yet. Other members of the family help with the sale of Evelyne and Agathe's bric-a-brac products, with Agathe and her children sharing the same stall location that they lease for between 0.09 and 0.23 USD per day depending on the quality of goods that they have. Agathe does not have much hope for the future. She seems to be tired of living but cannot stand idle and does not want to depend totally on her own children. When her children ask her to stop and say that they will support her, she replies: "I must have money in my pocket for my tobacco."

Agathe household is poor according to the local income poverty line and the MPI. The shaded boxes of the figure below show the deprivations that her household faces.

