

# OPHI

## Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

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Tabitha, Kenya

### Multidimensional Poverty Index Profile



Tabitha is 44 years old and lives in the Lunga Lunga slum just outside of Kenya's capital, Nairobi. Twenty one years ago Tabitha migrated to the area from her home village to look for a better life. She lives with her husband and their six children (who range from 2 years and 4 months old to 13 years old). Tabitha's husband has no permanent work so she is the main breadwinner for the family. She depends on casual jobs, including washing clothes for others in the neighbourhood, where she is paid Ksh 50 per wash (USD 1.65). When no one has clothes to be washed, Tabitha goes

to the nearby rubbish dump and finds old clothes to sell to a local clothes recycling dealer who buys 1kg of clothing for Ksh 10 (USD 0.33). On a good day, Tabitha can manage to collect 1-5kg (total; USD 0.33-USD 1.65) of clothes from the rubbish.

Despite having such a low income, Tabitha's four school-aged children attend the local school. She has high hopes for her children, as neither Tabitha nor her husband had the opportunity to go to school. She prays that they are able to continue with their education through to secondary school. "My hopes for the future are that I can support my children to continue their education," she says. Tabitha worries that she will not be able to pay the school fees for secondary level education though, and that they will have to drop out of school.



The family lives in a rented house made of iron sheets and a cemented floor. The house has no toilet, electricity or running water. The family uses one of the public toilets which cost Ksh 5 (USD 0.16) per visit and buys their drinking water from the community water point for Ksh 5 (USD 0.16) per jerrican. Because there is no electricity, Tabitha works to daylight hours; she gets up early to prepare her breakfast for her family, if there is food available. Going without meals is a weekly occurrence for Tabitha's family, but because it happens often, she talks about it in a light-hearted

way: “Going without meals; this is normal for us”. For the evening meal Tabitha prepares Ugali (made from boiled water and maize flour) on charcoal. Having no TV or radio for entertainment, the family spends their evenings sitting together as a family and talking about their day. Once in awhile, she helps her children to do their homework and gives advice about life.

Tabitha’s household is poor according to both the local income poverty measure and the MPI. The shaded boxes of the figure below show the deprivations that her household faces.



