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Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

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Valérie, Madagascar

Multidimensional Poverty Index Profile



Valérie is 32 years old. She has lived in Manarintsoa, one of the poorest districts of Antananarivo, Madagascar, throughout her life. She currently lives with her two sons (14 years and 9 years old), daughter (10 years old) and husband, to whom she has been married for 11 years. Valérie's eldest son used to live with his grandmother, but has come to live with Valérie and her husband recently. The family live together in a little cabin made of recovered wood, stuffed with cardboard, with a roof made of plastic bags, which they rent for USD 4.54 a month.

Their home has no electricity so they use candles for light. Valérie left primary school at the age of 13 to work as a maid, but had to stop work after the birth of her first son. At the moment, she has no regular work. From time to time she does laundry for others, for which she may earn up to USD 0.72-0.90.

Valérie's husband works in a shop and brings home USD 0.90 per day. Her children are supposed to be in the elementary class and first grades at primary school, but they left this year because Valérie and her husband were very behind in paying the school fees according to the director of the public primary school. Now the children find bits of scrap metal to sell, and help their mother with chores such as fetching water for their home, rather than going to school.



A typical day for Valérie begins at 6am in the morning. The family drinks coffee for breakfast. Valérie then deals with daily household chores. At 8am her husband leaves for work, while she runs door-to-door to ask for linen to wash. If there is none, she returns home and plays cards (rummy) with her neighbours. The duration of the game depends on the money she has saved, but it may last until late afternoon. Because there are now 'Restaurants from the Heart', a food aid project financed by UNICEF where people in



the poorest districts of Antananarivo can buy rice dishes for USD 0.05 and USD 0.10, she does not cook at home anymore, but simply buys food to share with her family.

When she has no money, she does not eat at lunchtime, nor do her children unless they have been able to make some money by selling the metallic scrap that they collect. Her 10 year old daughter sometimes earns USD 0.22 a day by looking after a neighbour's child, which she shares with Valérie. In the evening, Valérie buys what is needed to prepare dinner, which usually

includes rice with sautéed vegetables and charcoal for the fire, as well as some rice for the next day. Sometimes when there is no rice to cook, she waits for her husband's return from work because he gives her money. The family rarely goes to sleep early except on Sundays. Valérie lives and thinks on a day to day basis and does not make plans for the future.

Valérie's 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.

