

Baby's story

Baby comes from Tanzania. She is 11 years old and lives with her aunts Sofia and Flora, as well as her grandmother and uncles.

Baby started school just two years ago. She loves school but it is sometimes hard for her to go. This is because her family have to find money to pay for her lunch, books and pencils.

Money is a big problem for the family; drought has ruined the maize that they grew to eat and sell and they have to buy water for their cows and goats.



"This compound is the only home I have ever known. I sleep in a hut with Sofia, who is one of my aunts. My mother is dead and my father went away to the city to work.

I walk to school with my friends. It takes about an hour. I wear a school uniform that is a blue dress – I only have one but I try and wash it every day when I get home. I don't have any shoes but I have a school bag that I keep my books and pencils in.

I like school so I always try to go. My classroom is beautiful and big and my favourite subjects are English and Science. Every day at school we have a lunch of maize and makandi beans. We have to give 2500 shillings (£1.15) each year to pay for our lunches. We like to play games like Rede and skipping. To play Rede one person stands at either end. Then we throw balls to each other and try to hit the girl standing in the middle to see if we can get her out!

We don't pay for school fees because our government made it free for all children to go to primary school. Sometimes it is still hard for me to go because my grandmother doesn't have any money to buy books and pens. Also last year we all had to contribute 500 Tanzanian shillings (23p) to build some school toilets.

It is normally Sofia and me who make supper for the family. I like cooking but sometimes there isn't enough maize to go around, or we don't have oil for cooking. Water is a problem, we buy a bucket for 50 shillings (2p), and if we don't have money we go to the dam, though the water there is very dirty.

One day I want to become a teacher. I would like to move away from here to live somewhere else just to see what it is like because I have never left here."

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