

Dalila's Story

Labour laws & Succession Issues

Dalila* is a HIV positive widow in her fifties caring for nine orphaned and abandoned grand-children. She has lived a harsh life, bringing up her own seven children single-handedly until her first daughter, Kesi*, got a job as an office assistant in a government office. Her daughter was un-married with three children but was able to care for Dalila and seven siblings as well. Kesi bought some land and put a small house where they all live together. She began building a few rental rooms to earn income for the family, but did not complete them. Kesi was diagnosed with cancer and all savings and income went to her treatment. Once again her siblings and children had to drop out of school as the family went into debt in medical bills. Eventually, Dalila's daughter succumbed to the illness and passed on leaving her three children with their grand-mother. At the same time another married daughter lost her husband and became mentally ill and abandoned her four children at Dalila's house.

Dalila went to WOMEDA seeking help in claiming benefits of her late daughter from her employer. A lot of promises had been made to her from the office who catered for all burial expenses. Through WOMEDA's help, the employer released some moeny which she used to pay their debts and complete the rental houses. But Dalila was aware that there was a lot more money available from the National Social Security Fund. She did not know how much it was or how to ask for it. WOMEDA helped her make a formal appeal to the government but it was concluded that her daughter was a low income earner and was not entitled to benefits. WOMEDA launched a second appeal from which Dalila got One Million Tanzanian Shillings, (about \$880).

With this money she was able to pay her children and grand-children's School fees and start a successful tomato selling business. Unfortunately she has had to stop the heavy work as her health has deteriorated. WOMEDA continues to support her under the Jali Watoto project by educating some of the children. She hopes her two youngest daughters can complete their school and get jobs to take care of their nieces and nephews. She fears for her health and would not like to leave her family in poverty in the event of her death. WOMEDA is helping her legally secure all property through acquiring title deeds and writing a will for the sake of her children. She maintains hope that her health will improve soon, but with WOMEDA's help she is as prepared as possible for whatever might occur.

* Names have been changed to protect the identity of clients