

The Gosai Story

Legal issues affecting women in Domestic matters & Marriage

Afiya and Elimu Gosai* are one couple that WOMEDA serves. The HIV positive couple has received legal counseling, child support for education, a water tank and a dairy goat. They live in a village 30 minutes walk from Karagwe town. They have six children between the ages of 13-20 years, three of whom are in High School. They are subsistence farmers growing maize, cassava & sweet potatoes for food and a few coffee bushes as a cash crop. Their fertile land also grows pineapples very well, but there is no market since everyone grows their own. The recent decline in Coffee prices has impacted the family greatly.

In a unique legal case, Afiya approached WOMEDA for support when the couple started having marital problems. Elimu was failing to take responsibility as a father and husband. He was being unfaithful, then blaming his wife for infecting him with AIDS. He threatened to chase her from their home of over 15 years to marry another wife and was planning to sell their farm. He did not contribute to feeding his family or educating his children, leaving his ailing wife in a hopeless situation. Eventually, all the children were kicked out of School for unpaid fees.

WOMEDA first worked to counsel and reconcile the couple. Afiya stated her case. Elimu denied that he was being unfaithful, but agreed to help in caring for his family and not to chase her out of home and not to sell the land. He signed a statement with the lawyers but they later had to report to authorities when he failed to keep to his word and chased his family away. That was several years ago.

With continued legal advice and marital counsel, this has ended up as a success case. The couple is now living and working together. Their dairy goat from WOMEDA gives them a common goal of enlarging the flock and purchasing a cow. WOMEDA volunteers visit the home regularly to check on their progress and WOMEDA provides support for part of the School fees for one child.

**Names have been changed to protect identity of client*