

## **Family of 8 live in one-room mud house**

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### **Disabled daughter doesn't get her grant because of a birth certificate problem**

By Yamkela Ntshongwana



Members of the Mafuna family live in a one-room mud house: (from left to right) Ntombiyakhe, Nomvuyiso, Khaliphile, Athandiwe, Siyaphumelela, Ongezwa and Someleze. Photo: Yamkela Ntshongwana

Nomvuyiso Mafuna lives with her six children and grandson in a one-room mud house. Her husband died 17 years ago at home after a short illness.

The Mafuna family stay in Buthongweni Village, Mthatha. Their house is old and in poor condition. The roof leaks in the rain; the windows are broken; the front door no longer closes properly. When it

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rains heavily, they go to the neighbour's house.

No one in the family is employed. Mafuna's husband was a mine worker in Welkom. After he died, she did not receive any payouts from his employer and she does not know how to go about finding out if any money was due to him.

"We all depend on R1,140 from the child support grants I receive for my three youngest children," she says.

Mafuna gets piecemeal jobs in a nearby village doing washing for people. She leaves at 7am every day to look for work. People pay what they can, sometimes only R10.

Her 34-year-old daughter, who is mentally challenged, does not have an ID book and therefore cannot get a disability grant. Mafuna says it is because she has no birth certificate. The birth was at home. Home Affairs said she should bring the person who assisted her with the birth, but that was her mother who has died. "Unfortunately, they [Home Affairs] could not help me," she says.

She says her 20-year-old son is also mentally challenged. When he was in Grade R, "the teacher told me that she thinks that my child is mentally challenged, because he was refusing to talk and write in class. He always wanted to play. The teacher said she noticed that my son had temper problems and was very aggressive towards other kids."

Mafuna took the school letter to a local clinic who sent her to Canzibe Hospital. "I showed the doctors the letter from school, but the doctors said my son is hyperactive and that does not make him mentally challenged."

"I didn't know what to do, because he was not welcome at school and the doctors saw nothing wrong with him. I decided to stay at home with him. He does not talk; always running around the house, and I do not know what I must do for doctors to see that he has a problem," says Mafuna.

"The house we live in is not safe ... At least, if we could have a decent house, they could lock themselves inside the house and I would know that my children are safe when I am not around," she says.

"This is very painful to see my family suffer like this in front of me, and I always wonder who will take care of them when I die," says Mafuna.

"Our living condition ... is shameful. It is so difficult to survive like this but I will do whatever it takes for my children and grandson not to go to bed on an empty stomach," she says.

Ward councillor Vathiswa Zondani said she was aware of Mafuna's situation and said the family was supposed to benefit from food parcels provided by the Department of Social Development.

"I will look into this matter and make sure that they get the food parcels," she says.

She says the family was on a list of people who would benefit from temporary shelter in the village and after that the municipality would build a permanent structure for the family.

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