

“PAIN FROM CURSED CELL”

PRESENTATION BY

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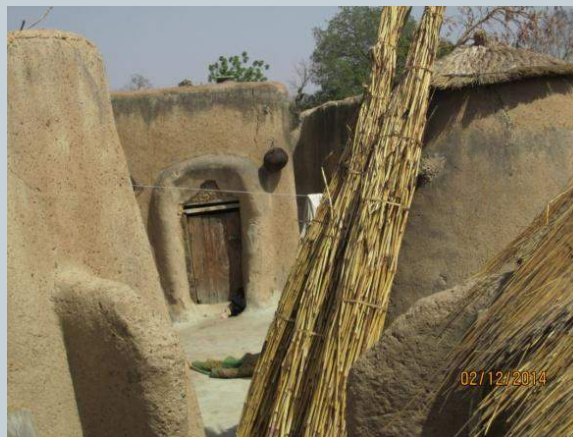
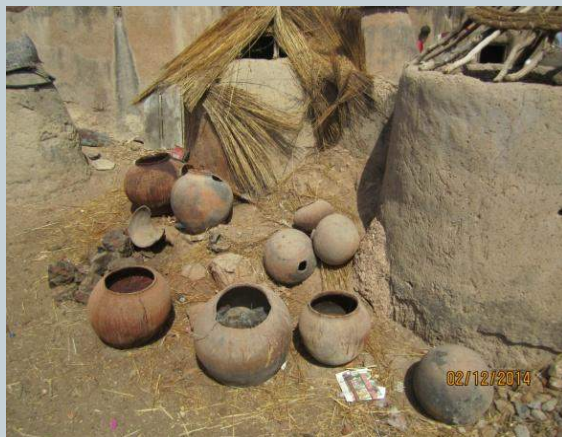
AT THE 2ND GLOBAL SCD CONGRESS IN BRAZIL



SICKLE CELL DISEASE IN RURAL GHANA



Sickle cell comes with excruciating pain. Mothers who have sickle cell say the pain is more agonizing than labor pain. In some rural areas of Ghana like **ZUARUNGU** in the Upper East Region, it is believed that only witches can cause people they hate to go through such indescribable pain.



THE STORY OF PATRICK ATUO

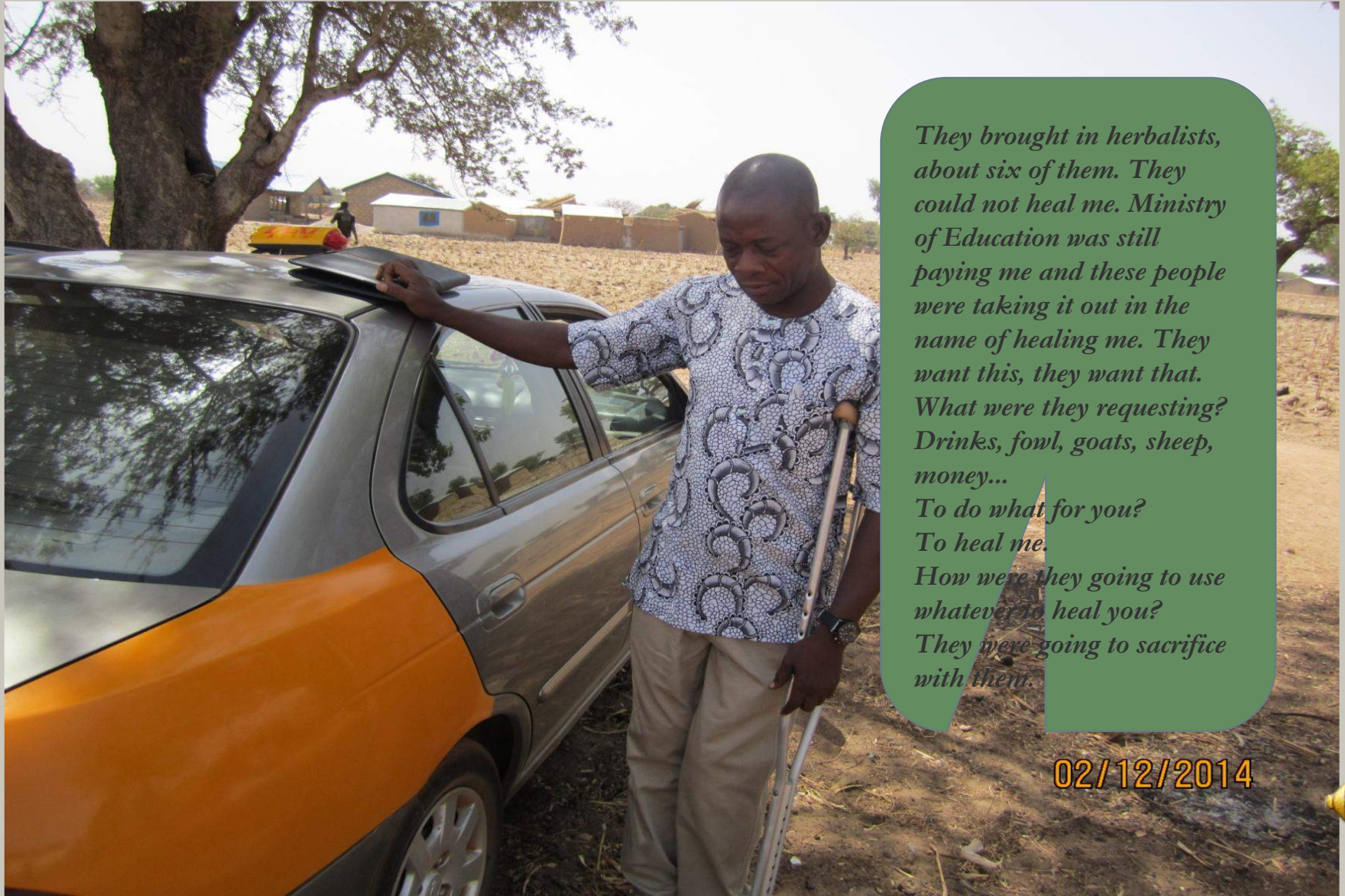


Patrick Atuo is a 45 year old former literature teacher. His teaching career got completely truncated some 16 years ago when he had his first major sickle cell crisis and by the time it was through with him, it left him walking with the help of crutches.



THE STORY OF PATRICK ATUO

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They brought in herbalists, about six of them. They could not heal me. Ministry of Education was still paying me and these people were taking it out in the name of healing me. They want this, they want that. What were they requesting? Drinks, fowl, goats, sheep, money...

To do what for you?

To heal me.

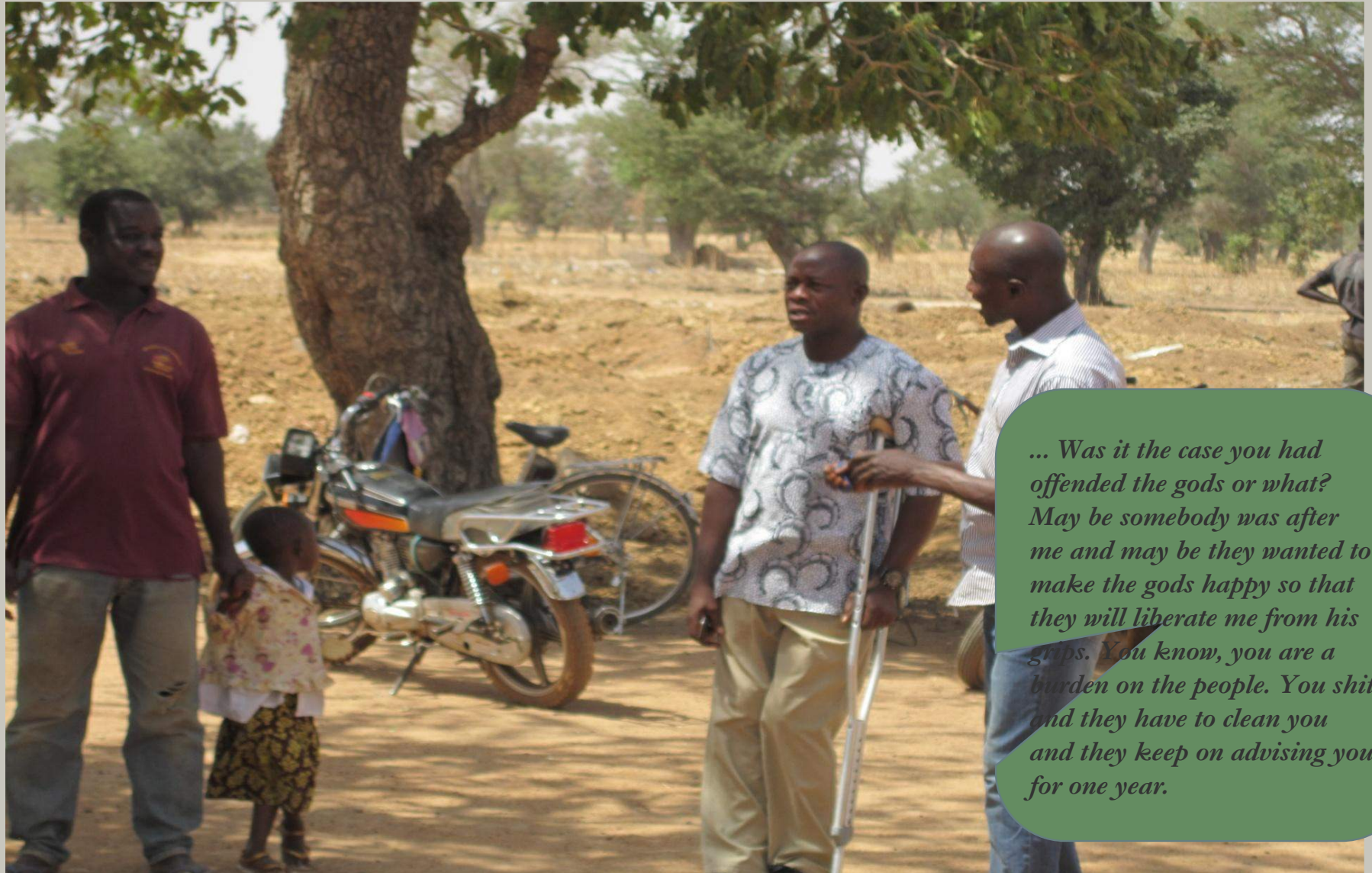
How were they going to use whatever to heal you?

They were going to sacrifice with them.

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THE STORY OF PATRICK ATUO



... Was it the case you had offended the gods or what? May be somebody was after me and may be they wanted to make the gods happy so that they will liberate me from his grips. You know, you are a burden on the people. You shit and they have to clean you and they keep on advising you for one year.

THE STORY OF PATRICK ATUO



Why won't you take their advice? People will come here and say you just agree? Look at how you are suffering, the people really love you, they want you to get up. So I yielded and I went through that.

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THE STORY OF PATRICK ATUO



THE STORY OF 12-YEAR OLD JONAS



THE STORY OF A 12-YEAR OLD JONAS



12 year old Jonas Abuni and his parents live in the outskirts of Zuarungu. He was born with the sickle cell disease.

Jonas has suffered a lot of sickle cell crises from childhood. His father Josiah Abuni says from childhood their first port of call anytime Jonas suffered crisis has been **spiritualists**. *They told him this;*

Voice of Josiah Abuni

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What one told me was that it was a witch. There is a witch hunting him. They have taken him to where they are cooking; the stove area and that they have put the soul inside the stones they always put the pots on; they have put him on so anytime they are cooking, the heat burns the joints. What he always tells me is that he will use his juju, the black medicine and it will cure it. We don't know what is wrong with the child so if someone tells you that it is a witch that is disturbing him, you have to believe because you don't know.

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Voice of Josiah Abuni

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*If they slaughter the fowl,
anything they slaughter the
blood will go down to the gods.
And the meat they will cook it
and then eat; themselves and
the boy. They will divide the
fowl and then the head part
will go to the god's owner and
then part will go to the child to
eat.*

*For the goats, I have
slaughtered only two but for
the chicken I can't count
because we have consulted so
many herbalists so I can't
count the number of chickens I
have slaughtered for that.*



Voice of Josiah Abuni



THE STORY OF 12-YEAR OLD JONAS



Pacification of the gods clears the way for the spiritualist or the herbalist to begin his treatment of Jonas. And the process, as his father described, sends shivers down the spine.



Voice of Josiah Abuni

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Voice of Aguruko Aduko

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Since they say a witch is hunting him, the hospital if we go, they will give us drugs and drips and then it will stop but sometime, it will come again so we believed that the doctor cannot do anything so we believe that it is the witch because how can we go to a hospital today and tomorrow next the same disease. We go and another day the same disease so we are not trusting the doctors again. We believe that it is the witch but how are we finding that witch?



IMPACT OF SICKLE CELL ON A FAMILY



- **At Yorogo in the Upper East Region, Sickle Cell disease has rendered a family poor. The father of the house is Aguruko Aduko.**



Aguruko Aduko

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IMPACT OF SICKLE CELL ON A FAMILY

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What has worsened their case is that, he has used all his livestock for sacrifices to get his two boys and a girl healthy. Mr. Aduko says now he goes about borrowing animals for sacrifices for his children when they are in crisis.



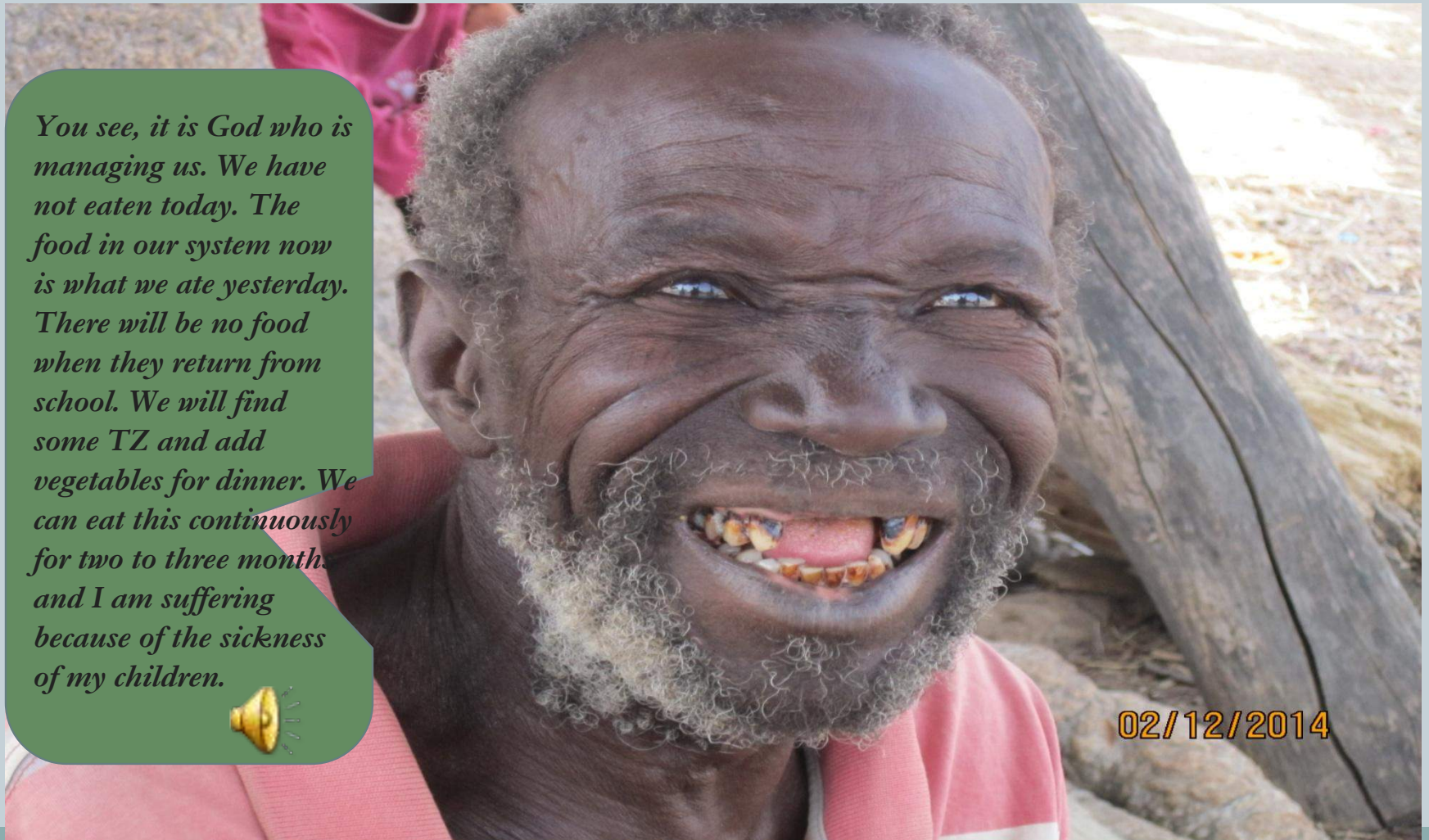
Voice of Aguruko Aduko

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You see, it is God who is managing us. We have not eaten today. The food in our system now is what we ate yesterday. There will be no food when they return from school. We will find some TZ and add vegetables for dinner. We can eat this continuously for two to three months and I am suffering because of the sickness of my children.



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Voice of Aguruko Aduko

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I am owing people money, goat and sheep. But the sickness has not gone yet. And I still tell people to lend me these things so that I will pay back when they are healed. Yet the sickness is still there. Some who are kind keep helping me because they have seen my situation. ..



Voice of Aguruko Aduko

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...Yes I go and borrow from my brothers and my family. They won't force me to pay back if they see the sickness has not gone. They know that I am poor so they won't even force me to pay...

Voice of Aguruko Aduko

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...People said if I go and bring a medicine person the sickness will go away. When he comes and he do it and there is still no healing, he goes and another one comes.

IMPACT OF SICKLE CELL ON A FAMILY



- Their 16 year old daughter Mmaa Aduko who has the sickle cell disease is a Junior High School student in one of the local schools in Yorogo.
- She says the pain that comes with the disease makes her think perhaps her family has offended God.



Voice of Mmaa Aduko

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He should forgive me of all my sins. If it is God who gave me this sickness then I pray to God that, that sickness should be prevented by his son's spirit.

When they bring the spiritualists, do you tell your Dad that no?

If I say so, my father will not agree because he is the traditional man and he does not know about the Christian own so I have to agree with him ...

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Voice of Mmaa Aduko

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*...They have agreed that they will
always sacrifice the blood for the gods to
take control of the body. They believe
that sickle cell can be prevented by a
juju man.*

And is it true?

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Voice of Mmaa Aduko

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No, because when it happens may be 5 days, 2 days, it will be gone and it will just gather at one place. The thing will not be prevented by the juju man rather the white man treatment.

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IMPACT OF SICKLE CELL ON A FAMILY



Even though they have been introduced to the hospital, Mmaa says money to even buy folic acid, which sickle cell patients need everyday, is a problem.



Voice of Mmaa Aduko

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When I go to the hospital they always give me and I will come and take.

So do you have some?

No.

But you are supposed to take one everyday?

Hmm, but they have finished and I have not been to the hospital again and my parents cannot afford to get it for me.

Why?

Because they are poor.



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IMPACT OF SICKLE CELL ON A FAMILY



The poverty story is not different at Yorogo where Jonas and his parents are. They have also started taking him to the sickle cell clinic in Bolga. His father says life is tough for them and financing treatment of the disease has now become a problem.



Voice of Josiah

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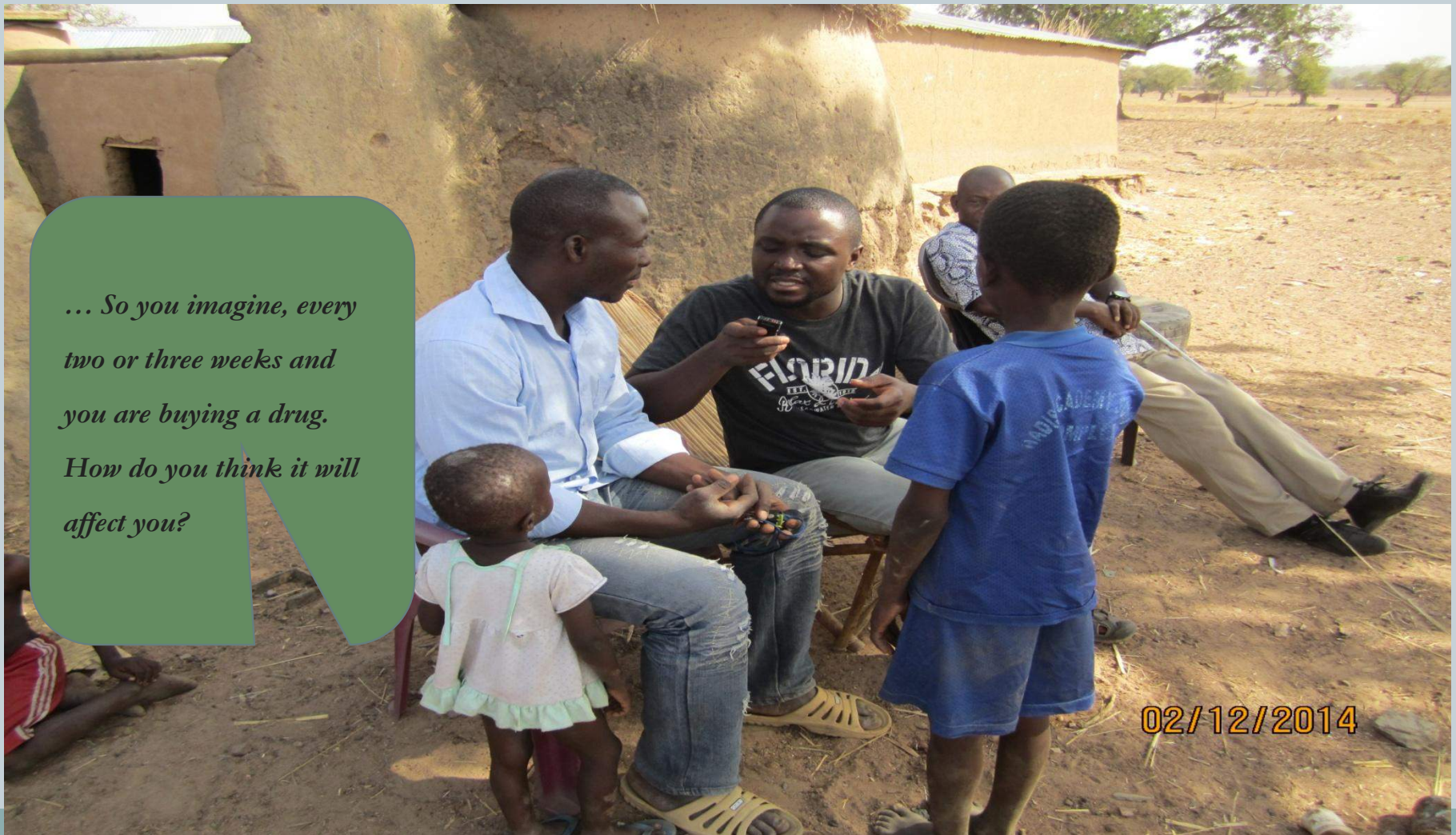
Concerning the drugs they said we should be taking everyday we are buying it. And then the blood tonic, every two weeks, three weeks you to buy and one is 5 cedis and it is a lot of money. You can catch one fowl and you have to sell it 5 cedis or some are not up to 5 cedis so you have to sell two or three fowls before you buy that drug...



Voice of Mmaa Aduko

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... So you imagine, every two or three weeks and you are buying a drug. How do you think it will affect you?



IMPACT OF SICKLE CELL ON A FAMILY



Poverty is endemic in this part of the country and this is worsening the condition of sickle cell patients. Though there is some education going on, there are still thousands in other villages yet to have a feel of this. I can only imagine how many of them are dying after drinking all kinds of concoctions and sacrificing their livestock for healing.

IMPACT OF SICKLE CELL ON A FAMILY



IMPACT OF SICKLE CELL ON A FAMILY

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THE END

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