

## **PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED TEACHER TURNS A BEGGAR DUE TO DELAYED SALARY**

Thirty two months after his appointment into the Ghana Education Service, a degree-holding physically challenged teacher of the Agormanya Methodist Junior High School in the Lower Manya Krobo District of the Eastern Region is yet to receive the first of his monthly salary, compelling him, his four teenage children and expectant wife to live on charity.

Forty three (43) year old, Godsway Michael Kosi Patamia who doubles as the assistant headmaster of the school has been teaching since September 2009 but all efforts to get his documents processed to facilitate his payment have yielded no result. He has since managed to survive- together with his dependants- on the benevolence of his colleague teachers and friends.

At present not only is he unable to provide the daily needs of his families but he faces ejection from his single bedroom apartment which was hired for him by the Agormanya Methodist Church where he worships. Since the expiration of his rent in October last year, he has been unable to renew it necessitating threats of ejection from the landlord.

As a result of his predicament, two of his children have been relocated and are currently putting up with his 60- year-old mother at Keta in the Volta Region with the remaining two living with another relative at Ayikuma in the Greater Accra Region.

Additionally, he still uses his worn-out prosthetic leg which he has been using since 1988 when it was first fitted on him two years after the accident which left him an amputee. He has since not been able to do any effective maintenance or replace it because of his unending financial difficulties and still experiences great pain –anytime he stood for long hours- in the scar-ridden left leg which miraculously survived the accident.

Although he has been teaching since September 2009 as detailed in his appointment letter from the Lower Manya Krobo District Directorate of Education with reference number A.15B/Vol.1/59 dated October 8, 2010 and signed by the then Ag. District

Director of Education, Mr. Augustus Nii-Lantei Cleland, another supposed to be his re-engagement letter from the Regional Directorate, Koforidua with reference number PG484/VI29/96 dated April 20, 2010 and signed by Rene O. Boakye-Boaten, the Regional Director, sharply contradicts the earlier one.

The letter, copies of which have been served the Director General (GES), The Controller and Accountant General, The Head of IPPD Unit all in Accra and the District Director, (GES, Odumase-Krobo) however indicated that Mr. Patamia's appointment took effect from March 1, 2010 instead of September 1, 2009.

Narrating his experience at his residence at Agormanya, Mr. Patamia said he cumulative taught for three years at Apowa Methodist Junior High School in the Ahanta West District of the Western Region and at the Ayikuma Methodist Primary School in the Shai Osudoku District of the Greater Accra Region after his graduation from the Accra Teachers Training College in 2002.

According to him, as per the rules of engagement of the Ghana Education Service, his 3 year teaching service after the training college qualified him for further studies but he was refused study leave with pay when he approached his employers (GES) in 2005 for the offer.

He indicated that despite the refusal, he proceeded to school same year having already gained admission into the University of Cape Coast and returned after his graduation in May 2009. He was subsequently re-engaged at the rank of Principal Superintendent and posted to his current post where he has since been teaching.

He said after the re-engagement, he went through all the needed processes and submitted to the district directorate all relevant documents required for the processing of the salary due him, but has not receive any payment close to 3 years after his re-engagement.

He said "Now I have virtually resigned to fate after the series of futile attempts to access my salary", adding "It still beats my imagination how I have managed to survive the hardship with my family till now in my current condition as an amputee. I have lost my

prestige because I have had to virtually turn a beggar, soliciting financial support from my church and individuals to supplement the occasional donations from my colleague teachers and friends”.

Although she didn't deny knowledge of the man's plight, Mrs. Irene Ayernor, the District Director of Education said, there were similar cases she has had to work on since assuming office barely a year ago.

She said “I have personally taken interest in the case and would investigate the cause of the delay and personally work with the relevant officials to rectify the anomaly”. She however could not give an idea when the man was likely to be paid to relieve him of his current predicament.

#### **PICTURE CAPTION**

- 1. Mr. Patamia in his office at the Agormanya Methodist Junior High School**
- 2. . The worn-out prosthetic leg on which Mr. Patamia goes about his daily activities**
- 3. A shot of him on the school compound**