

Anderia Garang

Age: 29

Region: Upper Nile

I am from Bor. I don't remember when I left my home or why.

When I left Bor, I traveled with a lot of people. I traveled with my older brother. We went to Ethiopia together. He went back to Bor when I went Kenya so I could go to school. My mom, dad, and two sisters were in Bor.

On my journey, I stayed in Panyido and Kakuma refugee campus. I lived in Panyido for three years and in Kakuma for seven. In Kenya, I went to primary school where I learned English and Swahili.

There were a lot of difficult things I remember about traveling. A lot of people were hungry. When we went from Panyido to the Sudan border, we had to cross the river. Many people died. It was terrible. War terrible.

I got lucky. I went to Pochalla after I left Panyido. The Red Cross provided some food and water when we went to Pochalla. When war broke out in Pochalla, I got a ride from the Red Cross on a convoy across the desert Kapoeta. When we were in Kapoeta, another war broke out. After I left Kapoeta, I stayed in Narus for about two months and then went to Lockichogio and then Kakuma.

I arrived in the United States on May 29, 2001. I went to New York, Kansas City, and then to Phoenix. I came to Phoenix at midnight. I was tired. I remember seeing my name on a paper when I got off the plane. Nine members from the United Methodist church came to meet me. When a problem happens, the church helps.

The U.S. is good. When I first came to the U.S., a lot of people wouldn't understand me. In the U.S., you have an opportunity to get a job and go to school. I want to go to school. I need to get a job and get a car to make it easier to go to work and school. Right now, I take the bus. You need to have some plans before you go. I want to go to school straight away.

I send a quarter of my money to Africa for my mom. My dad and brother are working in Bor. If they need help, you have to help. They are part of your body. You need to stick with them and give them hope.