

Tut Gatyiel

Age: 27

Region: Upper Nile

Not knowing where we were going or what we would eat next were the scariest things for me as I traveled from the Upper Nile region of Africa, going through Ethiopia, Sudan, and finally arriving in Kenya.

I began my journey at the age of ten, following the footsteps of those traveling ahead of me. I traveled with my cousin and nephew, and made many friends along the way, some whom I still see. We ate wild animal carcasses that we found along the way. I used my swimming skills when crossing the Gilo River into Sudan; those who couldn't swim had to pull themselves across with ropes.

In Kenya, I stayed at a camp called Kakuma. I attended school there, and loved learning about the world. I also liked physics. But once I finished school, there was nowhere to go, no job waiting for me. Luckily, I was able to come to the U.S. God planned for me to go. I felt confident that I could do whatever was necessary to succeed. Now that I have been in Arizona nearly five years, I feel I can give advice to others. Getting used to the heat in Arizona was difficult, as was learning to pay bills. But people understand me, and I now know the system and what is needed to get a job done.

I am attending Phoenix College and work for Delta. I am studying Industrial Engineering. Eventually, when I feel it safe to return to Sudan, I want to work with petroleum. There is oil in my country and I want to help make gas more affordable.

Although it is difficult working and going to school, the best thing about life in America is the choices I can make. I feel I have power here.