

Abraham Deng Magot

Age: 26

Region: Upper Nile

I went to school in Mading, near Bor. I lived at the school for two years and learned Arabic and Dinka. I left school and went back to my home in Bor. I kept cattle and I had a lot of cattle. I wanted to stop taking care of cattle, so I attended a school that opened in Bor. I learned basic English and the alphabet.

War broke out, so everyone left the village and hid in the bush. We didn't have food and we only had a little water. We ate a lot of leaves. Animals looked at you when you were walking. They came and smelled you. We killed the small animals and ate them.

The animals got into the water and moved around and made it muddy, so we had trouble getting good water. We dug a little hole beside the river. We put four sticks into the ground between the river and the hole and then put grasses between sticks. After a few hours, the water would pass into the hole and the grass would trap the mud. This would give us good, cool water without the mud. Other people put water in a gourd. After a while, the mud goes down and the leaves good water on the top.

People had a lot of diarrhea and malaria. People were crying because they were thinking of being back home. People were scared. They also made noises to keep the animals away. This life was typical until we got to Ethiopia. It took about three months to walk to Ethiopia. We didn't know where we were going to go. We just kept going. We counted on each other and made them our brothers. If someone was missing, we knew who it was.

I was in Panyido, in Ethiopia, until 1991. We left when the war broke out and tried to go back to our country. When we got back, it was still too bad. There was shooting so we ran again. The Red Cross came to the Sudan border and gave us a little food, oil, and blankets. They took people who were going to cry at night, who were tired, or who had wounds and brought them by car to Kakuma. People who were strong walked to Kakuma. I walked all the way to Kakuma.

I came to the U.S. one day five of 2000. I came with the people I was with in the bush. I lived with them. They were like my family.

Life is good. Everything is good. I worked at Honeywell for one year, but then the company closed. I have worked in the PetSmart Warehouse for six years. When I was in Kenya, I was in the Don Bosco School. I received a Certificate in building construction. I know how to design buildings. A church in Phoenix put me in school to learn soldering and electronics. I want to go back to school, but I need to work to pay for my sister's son's school in Nairobi. My mother and brother died and sister is the only one alive in my family.