

Deng Kuek

Age: 27

Region: Upper Nile

I am from the province of Bor. Part of the Bor culture is swimming, raising cattle, and deer hunting. I used to take the cattle to graze and herd them. That is how you become brave. When I was about six, Bor was attacked. Our village, Anyedit, was two miles away. People were sent to warn us to leave the area and go to Ajakgeer. I left my mother. They weren't killing women. They were interested in killing young boys and men. I traveled with elder people. The walk from Ajakgeer to Panyido, Ethiopia was difficult. I only had bare feet and only wore underwear. We ate peanuts and leaves from trees.

I stayed in Panyido for four years. People died from communicable diseases because there wasn't good food, sleeping blankets, or clinics. After about a year, the Red Cross brought food and medicine.

In 1993 the Ethiopian government was overthrown and we returned to Sudan. We had to cross a river called Gilo. Rebels from Ethiopia followed us. Many people didn't know how to swim. When you jumped into the Gilo River, people would pile on your back and you would drown together. Luckily, no one piled on my back. Swimming saved our lives.

After we crossed the Gilo, we went to Magos, and then to Narus, Lockichokio, and then Kakuma. I lived in Kakuma from 1992 until 2001. When we first came to Kakuma, there wasn't adequate food. There wasn't anything. Eventually they built huts for us and brought food, clothing, sleeping material, and opened schools. I went to school until I finished elementary school. Life turned from bad to good in Kakuma. The Kenyan people in Kakuma in charge of food distribution were corrupt. That made life bad some times.

I came to Texas on May 29, 2001 and stayed until 2008. I came to Phoenix stay with my cousin, Peter Garange. I've been in Phoenix for one month and I am looking for a job. In Texas, I attended Tarran County Community College. I plan to transfer to Phoenix College so I can study geology and work in the oil industry.

I like the way they make the Western World. I like the good technology, the way they design the buildings and roads, and the system of law and order. I'd like to be able to talk about Western politics and may be interested in a career in politics.

American people are such generous people, like the people in the churches, volunteers, and the people at the Lost Boys Center.