

Arkangelo Arop

Age: 26

Region: Bahr al Ghazal

I don't remember much about my life in Sudan when I was six years old. I used to play with my uncles. In 1987, when U was six years old, my uncle and I left Bahr al Ghazal. I don't even remember much about where my parents were. My uncle and I traveled together. During the time we left, there was a flood. I had to try to hold onto his neck and he carried me on his back. We walked to Ethiopia. When the war broke out in Ethiopia, he went back to Sudan. The whole time I was traveling, I didn't know where my family was.

I stayed in Panyido for about four years. That was where I started school and learned my ABC's. I left in December 1991 and about one thousand other boys and some teachers. We walked from Panyido to Pochalla and stayed for one year. Ethiopians attacked the camp in Pochalla in December 1991 and had to leave.

It was difficult to leave, because my Uncle wasn't there care for me. There were a lot of wild animals and we had to sleep under trees without mosquito net. We went twenty-four hours between meals. I didn't have anyone to depend on. People died of starvation every day. The food we had was very little. We had to feed on wild fruits, the leaves of trees, or roots to get water. Sometimes we would chew he leaves from trees to drink. We didn't know how it would work out, but we had to try anyway. Sometimes people would get sick from eating the insects on the leaves. A lot of people died from cholera and malaria.

We eventually went to Kakuma, in Kenya. We were the first Sudanese to settle in Kakuma. There were only some construction workers and us. We cut timber and made a hut. We lived in a hut for five months until we had other stuff to build a house. I tried to help other people in Kakuma by bringing them water.

The best thing about Kakuma was the education. It was better than Ethiopia. The teachers were qualified there. In 1998 I got my Kenyan Certificate for Primary Education (KCPE). Then I went to high school from 1999 until 2001.

I came to the U.S. on July 17, 2001. Life in the U.S. is quiet hard, especially the first three months, because in Africa, work is different. I am working as a cashier at the Phoenix Sky Airport from four to midnight. I study and go to school at Everest College where I study management.