

Emmanuel Kutil

Age: 23

Region: Bentiu

I left home when I was almost eight years old. When war broke out in Sudan, I fled my home, and my family members all ran in separate ways. I walked for three to four months and stopped in Ethiopia. I traveled with about fifty people. My journey was horrible; I can't believe I survived. Most of us died because we were desperate with little food and no water.

When we finally arrived in the Kakuma refugee camp, the skin on my feet was raw. There were difficulties in Kakuma, too. Some people were scared to receive help because they didn't know who to trust. I knew how to read and write some, but I learned more once I was in Kakuma. I was the one who wrote the letter to the United Nations asking them to build a school in Kakuma, and they did! I was also able to write a letter to my family with help from the IRC. I have six brothers and six sisters still living in Sudan; they wrote me back a letter six years ago. I lived in Kakuma for 12-13 years before the U.N. helped me get to the United States.

In the U.S. everybody has rights. Here you were responsible for your self. There is freedom but there are also consequences. Sometimes that's hard because you could face your challenges alone, but it's also good because no one interrupts your life or tells you what to choose.

I go to Phoenix College because I wanted to become a History teacher. When I was in Africa, I learned a bit to help my people. My main goal isn't about a job, it's about going to school so I can make my goal of becoming a teacher. I'd like to make a difference here and in Sudan for now and for the future.