

Michael Monyjok Thon  
Age: 28  
Region: Western Upper Nile

I had just finished eighth grade and was sixteen years old when I left my village. I was taking care of the cattle when the war broke out. I heard gunshots at about six in the morning. I went and hid by the riverbank while the men took our cattle.

I traveled alone on my journey; I had no relatives walking with me. When I was traveling, there were mixed languages like Dinka and Arabic. I learned how to speak a little bit of each. On my journey, the grass cut my leg and it hurt.

The best thing about the camps was that we could go to school. The worst thing was that it was very windy at the camps because when we tried to do our schoolwork, the dirt would blow all over the papers.

I came to the U.S. on July 26, 2001. I was called for an interview where they asked me things like why I left Sudan. I told them that I left because of war and to survive.

I learned that there were a lot of problems but you have to take it easy. There was always the issue of getting food, or clothes, or shoes.

America is good. I can get a job, work and go to school. Here I am with the ability to make money to send back home to my family.

I am currently studying contracting and have been for three years. I work in Maricopa filing documents.

I used to play basketball but not anymore because I have no time because I work.

I am very happy to be here in the United States. I plan to go to Phoenix Community College and become a businessman.