

Who tells your story?

I was born in Madiang Aweil, South Sudan. Aweil is good, the trees are good, farmers everywhere grow fruits and vegetables. I remember my mom and auntie cooking and it smelled good. I like it because it was my country, that was the city I was born in. My dad and uncle worked as farmers and grew lots of fruits and vegetables like tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, raspberries, and apples. But even though life in South Sudan was good, it turned out bad because of the war.

The war in South Sudan was bad when people were fighting, but now we have our freedom, that's why we are separate now, between North and South. We are from the North. We left Aweil in 1993. It was difficult, because when we came they would find 3-5 people working and they would be killed, but when we came we just tried our best and we made it. Four days after that we came to Khartoum. We stayed there when people started fighting a lot. The war became bad and a lot of people were killed, that's why we ran from Aweil to the North. We headed to the capital of Sudan which is Khartoum.

I witnessed my dad die and my uncle die in the war. When they were dying or when they were killed, I was there. Then I ran with my mom and my auntie. I ran from my village Khoum-Nin-Neil and then I ran with my aunt from Aweil, and that's where we went to Khartoum. I ran with my auntie, that's why I left my mom. When the war was starting, I couldn't run with my mom because the people were separate. I ran with my aunt, and my mom ran to my village, and that's where I came with my aunt until we came to Khartoum. I wanted to be with my mother, but I couldn't because of the war. I miss my mom, uncles, and my dad. I miss them a lot, but they've passed away.

Then I was married in the same way other people were married when I was young. I was seventeen years old and my husband was twenty-five years old and we were married in Sudan in 1993 where it was safe. I married him in Khartoum. When I was there, I thought about how our lives would be good

and how I was going to marry Deng (my husband) and how we were going to be good. It was the best moment in my life because my auntie was there and she helped me survive, and that was one of the good parts of the marriage. When we said "We do" in our vows, I was happy because it was a new state for my life, and my new family that we would plan for months.



After we were married I gave birth to Abok and Aleker, my older daughters, in Khartoum, and then we came to Egypt and I gave birth to Akot, my older son, in 2003. After that I came here to America. Before I came I went from Khartoum to Egypt. In Egypt they had a place where people could apply to come to America. We applied and they accepted us and then they brought us here. When I left Aweil, I felt bad because our people were dying, including my dad and my uncle.

There was a big difference between South Sudan and America because we're safe here and we did risk our lives in Aweil and there's no fighting here, but in Aweil the people were still fighting until 2011. The war was over and we were separated.

We have our own country, no more fighting from North and South, that's why there's a big difference.

Then I moved to America in 2005. I worked for the first time when I came here in 2008. I worked at a children's hospital and I worked as a housekeeper. It was good, but the reason why I left was because no one took care of my kid, Garang. That's why I left that job and applied to the daycare because I can take care of my kids there. I have worked there since 2010. Now I have 7 kids. When I came to America I had three kids, when I came I gave birth to four. Abok as a first child, I was happy when I had her. My daughter Aleker was a wonderful kid who was stubborn but good. My son Akot was a quiet boy who didn't speak. Kon, my other son, is brave and a good boy. Garang, my other son, spoke good Dinka when he was young. Gial is an understanding kid and is good, and Obama is a crazy kid but good too. **What I want for my kids is to be successful and to become something in life that can help with the family, that's my American Dream.**



story told by: Gial