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Interviewer: Gabriel Lê Espiritu (GE)
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GE: So, my name is Gabriel Espiritu and today's date is May 11th 2018 and we're in the East African center in City Heights and I'll be interviewing someone um that works here's uh can I get you to spell your name please?

AA: Awichu Akwalyn A-W-I-C-H-U A-K-W-A-L-Y-N

GE: And when were you born? Like your date of birth.

AA: I was born November 1974

GE: Uh Where at?

AA In Pakwach Uganda east Africa

GE: Could you describe your birth place or your hometown?

AA: Um my hometown i would say we have there fish mongers and black smith that pretty much what people do there. We because we are near by river Nile so most the people live there whether they are fisherman or blacksmith and the ladies well they do own and go farming.

GE: Mmm I see

AA: Yeah

GE: Um how was your childhood home? Like you where you lived?

AA: Um my childhood home where I live we live we when I was growing up we are living in huts

GE: Hmm

AA: And huts made of grass up and then the mud in the middle and the bottom was maybe mud. Get up daily in the morning. I didn't start going to school until I was 7 years old. And then I started going to we walked to school about 20-25 miles to go to school

GE: So do you have any childhood memories that are your favorite?

AA: Mmm yeah, I have a lot of childhood memories every time we used we used to play in the evening and when like the moon is out we play a lot outside or like we play up to maybe 1 am we are still playing

GE: So, we're going to ask questions about your family and kinship now. What do you remember most about your parents and grandparents as a child?

AA: Umm, my parents are, I didn't stay a lot with my parents uhh, I stayed mostly with my mom, my dad was always on and off because of work and then he was a policeman and then my mom was a midwife and uh my dad used to be travel a lot because of her is kind of job. Then my parent my grandparents to of my dad never saw any. They all passed before I was born. And then on the side of my mom I saw them both. Umm I think my grandma passed around early 80s and then my grandpa passed around 88\ . That's and then my dad passed in 89.

GE: Okay

AA: Yeah

GE: Um you said they were a midwife and a police officer?

AA: Yeah, my dad was a police officer.

GE: Do they have um any high school education or college education

AA: Um I would say high school

GE: Highschool?AA: Yeah and then profession they took over professional

GE: Did you have any siblings? A: Yes, I did have siblings, my dad had three wives umm my mom gave 13 kids and then another step mom gave 4 kids and another one gave 6 kids.

GE: So, were you the oldest? Or how old?

AA: No on the side of my mom I'm the second last born and then the side of my dad I'm the 4th last born

GE: Are you close to your siblings do you know what they're doing now?

AA: Yes, I pretty much I can know all where each everybody else is. I have our first born is in London, and then the second one um he's in Uganda. Most of them they're in Uganda there's one who is in Iraq middle east and then one of my sisters she's in qua, qua, somewhere in middle east, quataria, I think that is the place. and the rest two are in police serving police and

then one she is a public health nurse. My brother another one is he manage a local dairy farm. Yeah pretty much that's all my kin who are working and the rest are not working.

GE: So, uh you have a lot of siblings, so was that hard for your parents to give you rules and advice about marriage or dating or relationships?

AA: Well that has never been come into place. It depends on how and parents never gave us advice of any kind. I will give an example like me I did not stop dating until I was 29\ . That's when I started dating.

GE So do you have a spouse or partner right now?

AA: No, I don't

GE: And no children?

AA: I have two boys

GE: Okay

AA : Yes

GE: What do they do?

AA: Uh one is just turned 8 and then the other one is 14.

GE: Do you tell them about your history?

AA: Yeah some of about like my son was here and I know I tell him a lot and we try at least to go home like every time he finds house save some money.

GE: How often would you say go back?

AA: We haven't been back since like 2014

GE: And every time you go home you stay with family/

AA: Yes, I stay with my family yeah

GE: So, the next set of questions will be about your education and career. So what kind of schools did you attend?

AA: Uhh I did at first when I had a lot of on and off during my early school. And then when I can or try still stabilizing and graduate I went to I during high school when I was 20 years old that's when I during high school and then I finish when I 24. Then I went to started uh working a

restaurant at same time going to school being to do hotel and institution of catering. So, I did that, and I did a diploma in it and when I finished that I was working with Uganda Red Cross, so I was trying to look for what can serve me best. So, I went and then I did psych tech a lower level diploma. Then from there I went on I continued bachelor's degree in community psychology. So that is where I stop as for now.

GE: And you said you wanted to go back to school?

AA: Yes, I would love to maybe uh Spring and I may be enrolling I'm trying to see of how I can start to do so that I can do my Masters heading to the PhD god willing.

GE: And what kind of subject?

AA: Apparently, what I'm looking at I'm looking at a master's in public health which is a one-year course which if I concentrate very well it will take me just a year and from there I will continue to do my PhD in psychology.

GE: That's what I want to do haha.

AA: OH

GE: Um are there any differences in like student teacher relationships in your country vs the U.S.?

AA: Yes, its very great, I would say here teachers normally concentrate more they look out for their students but back home you have to at least focus more, and you have to at least focus more, and you supposed to be looking after teacher too instead of teacher looking after you.

GE: Did you participate in any outside classroom activities?

AA: Where?

GE: Um here or at home.

AA: Yes, I did a lot home. I did a lot because well my degree was supposed to end in 2 years, but I finished it in 3 years because of long distance hours taking I was like said I was working red cross and the same time working with YMCA. So, I would do a lot of things outside instead of going to I would not attend much classes.

GE: Um what career was your dream career as a child?

AA: At first, I used to think if I become too I would think of working in a bank so and then later on but in my childhood, I wanted almost all the time to work in a bank. But later on in life things changes and then I started to thinking of subject which can at least help me like uh recuperate for more I've gone through and also help so that I can give back to the community so

that I found that community psychology was the best subject for me to help so that I can at least help because we didn't have counseling things like counseling in our area so I thought that would be the best thing for me to do. Yeah.

GE: Did you work while you went to school?

AA: Yes, all the years. So, at first, I was doing a like I said I did hotel and catering, so I used to do to cook and then work in the restaurant and so I and then later on in 2000 I open up I started up my catering services. I do I cook food I also do decoration then I started to hiring people to do for me photography. If I get an event I get all the combos so that I have video graphics, pic live pictures, music, food, decorations so I was doing that meanwhile I was same time going to school. Yes

GE: Was that all the jobs that you did before this job?

AA: All those job I did in Uganda.

GE Oh okay okay

AA: Yes, so when my coming to the United States I came in with YMCA because I was working YMCA as a youth counselor. So, when I came to the United State I was working with the YM I worked in YMCA for about 2 or 3 I think 3 as. And then I left YMCA I went for uh Scripps Memorial Hospital where I was there for about oh say I think 5 years because I didn't try to looking for something which can be in my field where then I got a job with Mental Health America. I worked with them I think for 9 years before I came here. So now I'm here.

GE: What made you choose here?

AA: Actually, I would say that because it was kind of direct to my community and I wanted to be more closer to them.

GE: Would you say that this is like your favorite job that you've had so far?

AA: OH favorite? Yes. But not quite favorite because the pay is not quite like what I had in other jobs.

GE: Oh okay.

AA: This one has no I would not, I don't have health insurance in this I don't have 401k in this one. But the other job I left, which I had for 9 years, it has everything. Where by that's what I possibly consider as favorable job because it have all the benefits you need. Yes.

GE: So, what would be a typical work day here at the center?

AA: For me actually I don't know what a typical work day would be for me because most of the time I sometime even before I get out, I already got a call. Hey somebody is coming to the center and you need to be there by 7 so that you can do this and I've most of the time I come here maybe 7 or ladies maybe 9 and then I'm the first to come here and I'm the last person to leave here. So, most days I don't know what typical means for me.

GE: Mmm.

AA: Yeah. And I'm always 7 days like that. 'Cause if there's anything happening here I have to be here. I have to come and open, I have to come and close, I have to come and see the bathrooms are doing okay, everything's alright, water's running alright and then I leave. So, if any center is open I have to be aware of it.

GE: Seems stressful.

AA: Umm not try to live with it that way but I don't want to be stressed.

GE: What age did you say you came here?

AA: I came here when I was 30.

GE: 30? Okay

AA: Yeah

GE: So, you're an adult, right?

AA: Yes.

GE: Had did you adjust to working in the U.S.?

AA: Luckily enough like I said when came to United States, I came with a job, I had a job. So, I just started work with YMCA doing their routine job what I was doing. I started doing working with people developmental disability. Uh the program I was working is called International Camp Counselor Program. So, you come and try to tell them what's the differ the cultural differences between other people. So that's what I was trying to educate the other people their kids with developmental disability in United State.

GE: Do you think the job opportunities are different in the U.S. versus your country?

AA: Definitely yes. The job opportunity are different and the opportunity are higher in the United State. *Cough* Excuse me. Um back home it's really hard. You may graduate with a PhD or a Master degree and you fail to get a job unless you have somebody who knows you and work in that department or in that field or you have your own business own family business and then you join. Whereas in the United State you give us as long as you have the credential you

always have a chance to get a job. And if not, you don't a job in your field you'll have to get at least something at least similar to that or something close to that.

GE: Mhm.

AA: Yes.

GE: Do you think that's still the case currently today? AA: What did you say?

GE: Like do think that uh that difference is still currently present?

AA: Yes, the difference is still there and because of the political and the dictatorship rulement in the country that's how it is.

GE: Oh, I see I see.

AA: Yes mhm.

GE: Um so these next questions will be about culture

AA: Yeah

GE: How did your family celebrate like new year's, birthdays, funerals, or other special occasions? And how did it change in America?

AA: Well um, it depends actually mostly the faith of the person, but I would say that with us me I'm a Catholic growing up, brought up Catholic. We do celebrate recognize Christmas so well so much. And we there are days where recognize more like Mother's Day we normally all of us have to go stay at home where mom is and celebrate Mother's Day with her. Um celebrate Christmas but what I never heard of like here what they celebrate most is the Thanksgiving. Back home we don't celebrate that as hard as they do it here. Back home it's just going to church and come back it's a shame normal day. Um what other days did we...? Back there we recognize year we recognize last day that sometime like okay. All the person who is having they birthday maybe can throw maybe like a party at their house. We go all celebrate it with them.

GE: `So do you do those things still in America?

AA: Yes, I still do, but not for me. I don't remember when I last celebrated my birthday but for my son I normally do. I celebrate it his birthday whenever it come. I buy him a cake, throw him a party if it's affordable. Um so yeah pretty much what I do here.

GE: Do your sons live with you?

AA: What's that?

GE: Do your sons live with you?

AA: Yes my son lives with me, but right now he's visiting his mom in Phoenix. But he'll be here June the 10th he will be here.

GE: Um so did you have any religion growing up?

AA: Did I have what?

GE: Any religion? Like religious beliefs?

AA: Yes, I'm a roman Catholic so I still believe and I'm still Roman Catholic.

GE: And do you attend Church every Sunday?

AA: Yes. I'm so active in my Church and I do right now I'm working a lot you see that we have a lot of people who are in the same denomination, but they don't speak English, so they find it hard to go to the Catholic church because its only they speak English. So, they end up going to other Christian churches where they will teach in the language they understand. So right now, I am working on that to see that we can develop that culture back and I've been meeting with some religious leader in Catholic to see how we can at least have people where we have priest who can preach in the language they understand, and we aim to that. Like this Sunday we are planning Mother's Day celebration. We've been working a lot I'm trying to put everything together decoration, food, music, so I've invited different kind of priests to come and be around and I'm inviting those new people whom I know they don't speak English so that they can come and celebrate with us and see how juvenile this day is.

GE: What about your favorite food? What is your favorite food?

AA: Um my favorite food is banana, here they call it green banana. But locally back home we call it matoke but it's similar to it or sometime here they they call it Hawaiian banana. So, we normally go first steam it, I mean cook it, boil it, then we mush it, then we put it banana leaf and then we put it the oven to steam. That's my favorite dinner source with smoked fish.

GE: Is that like a recipe passed down in your family?

AA: Is I would say, maybe I would say that but yeah but uh we also eat a lot of rice and corn meal. Corn meal with corn powder put in hot water and then it come like hard a little bit, so we eat a lot of that too. Most of our things, food source are cooked boil and everything we eat we eat with a sauce. They are mostly boiled. Yeah, we don't eat a lot of fried.

GE: Ahh

AA: Yes

GE: Do you have any like favorite food related memories?

AA: Yeah that's like the matoke I just told you. Yeah that's a lot of, back home it cooked really quite different. Here we try to make it good to similar to that where how it is but.

GE: Not the same.

AA: Yeah

GE: Are there any songs or imageries or artifacts that remind you of home?

AA: A lot, a lot and every time when we play music here people know me I go hard on it 'cause that's the only thing I can express my feeling on time when musics playing. And most the time if I'm in my car I forget know that I'm in America because I play my music so loud. Then we have some local radio stations, internet radio stations which I can connect from on my phone. Then we go ahead and listen my car, that's I feel comfortable in it

GE: So mainly music?

AA: Yes.

GE: Do you possess any family heirlooms or mementos?

AA: What are those?

GE: Umm like things that are passed down from generation to generation.

AA: No! Even my name I changed my name.

GE: Oh okay.

AA: Yeah

GE: Is there a reason behind that?

AA: Yes, because they its normally if you or you...in my I'm supposed to be one of the, my grandfather was a chief. So there normally, oh there, there's a way a child is born. So, if the child is born like that they normally pick them the chief. So, when I was born I was born in normal of that style. Then they named me my grandfather's name. So, what I did, my name was Awich, so I had to add on a U in order not to have that. At the age of I think at the age of 16 that's when I realized so I had to add on an U. You know that to see that I don't have that lineage following me out. Yes.

GE: Um do you preserve like any traditions or customs?

AA: In terms of?

GE: Like where you come from? From your family?

AA: I don't think so I don't have any custom or traditional following.

GE: Okay

AA: Yes

GE: Uh what do you do for fun then or entertainment.

AA: Mostly I would say cooking I like I love cooking and I like listening to music a lot.

GE: Do you make any music?

AA: No

GE: Just listen? *laughter* AA: Yeah, I like listening to music a lot and I like dancing

GE: Yeah *laughter*. Um what languages do you speak?

AA: Oh, the one I speak and confident in either about I think about 9.

GE: Okay

AA: Yes. I speak Luganda, speak Narangga, speak Kirundi, speak Acholi, speak Lango, I speak Swahili, Alur and then Runyoro and Otoro. Yes, without English.

GE: What do you speak at home?

AA: Ah English.

GE: To your sons then?

AA: Ah English yeah.

GE: Um what do you think the differences between the first generations and the second generations are? Like your sons and you.

AA: Um what do you mean by that?

GE: Like well. What do you think what culture is different between like you and your sons?

AA: Well because with them the way they are living is not the way we used to live. With us we used to live in that kind of harmony I would say. And we normally uh carry familyship a lot closer and recognizing the other family members a lot. Whereas with them, I don't think they have that with them.

GE: Would you say so about the students that come here too?

AA: Yes. Yes. And that's the main the background of this place. We try to get them in order to think like home. They should take the value of their culture and keep it going but whereas that's not what you see. 'Cause they are here few hours then outside, they get more hours out there. So, their culture is kind of they're mixed balancing within. But at least we try to make it.

GE: What do you think is the most from important thing to remember from their culture or heritage.

AA: Oh, I think the language.

GE: The language?

AA: Yeah. And food yeah. When they keep up the food and the language that will be a something they will have to keep on with for quite a long and they'll always pass it along. If they learn something in their language and their culture, food wise that will be great.

GE: So, these next questions will be about the immigration and resettlement in the U.S.

AA: Yes

GE: Um so you were 30 years old when you left right?

AA: Uh yeah, I was 29 I would say.

GE: 29?

AA: Yes

GE: Um did you want to leave?

AA: Yes and no but I would no circumstance I had, I had a lot of. I've been, the government, a little bit back I was a child kidnapped as a child soldier and was taken in as a child soldier, so I stayed there for about for quite a long time and then later on like I told you I was working Red Cross. So, during that my work Red Cross I want because I wanted to give back. So I was going back in the war zone area and then the government started following me and asking why is he going there, he was wanted to go here and then now he's trying to back I guess I think is part of the rebel group is trying to, he's getting help and I was traveling a lot going outside, going to India coming to United States going to UK going to other country because of YMCA and Red

Cross. So, they thought I was being maybe a spy or something like that. So, the government started looking for me so when I came I got a chance I explained to my boss they say okay we going to send you to United States and work in United State. So that's how I came to United States. Through asylum.

GE: How long did that whole process take?

AA: Uh it's still going on. I'm not a citizen yet so I'm a permanent residence so I'm still working on that hopefully. Uh they told me to pay \$800 to see if I can get my citizenship again but uh looking to it maybe god-willing next month I will try to raise that money and pay and still apply if they will approve my citizenship. Yes.

GE: Did you any possessions with you?

AA: Like?

GE: Like pictures or...?

AA: Um no I brought maybe certificates uh my school certificate. Those are the thing I brought with me but pictures not quite, I don't have any old pictures only brought education stuff.

GE: Was there anything you wish you brought that you didn't?

AA: Yes. Mostly my family.

GE: Mhm.

AA: Yeah. I wish I'd come with my family.

GE: Um did it cost you any money to take this journey to America?

AA: Yes, a lot. Yeah, I had to borrow money and I had to sell some of my property in order to come to live here. Yes

GE: So the U.S. didn't do anything to help?

AA: When I came they didn't know what I was going through and by the time they I was granted asylum I was already working with the YMCA so I didn't get any government assistance.

GE: So you came by yourself right no family?

AA: No, no family came by myself.

GE: Um are you still in contact with all of your family?

AA: Yes, I'm with my I'm contact my family and we do speak talk every night and um my brother came and visited me once. The one who is in UK. And I do speak to more-so them then back home because of the internet we have well communication, easy communication.

GE: You said you went to a lot of places on your way to the U.S., could you like describe them more? Describe your most memorable memories of those places.

AA: Okay so when I was coming to the United State I didn't go through but during the time going to United State I was going through different areas. So, I have been Nigeria, I've been to South Africa, I've been Australia, I've been to India, been to U.K., Then when I go to United State they send me around. I went to Connecticut, I went to Vermont, I went to Colorado, uh uh went to San Francisco and then I was brought to Chula Vista. So, when they brought me Chula Vista I requested to stay because the weather was favorable for me. So I ended up in here. Yeah

GE: So the U.S. is the country where you wanted to stay at?

AA: Uh yes so far yeah I think this is the place I want to settle down.

knocking

GE: What did you feel about America when you were living in your country?

AA: Um because what I would do normally here and seen the movie I thought it was the greatest place to live so far. Yeah.

GE: So has it changed?

AA: Not quite. It still greatest place and they're a lot of opportunities. So yes I like it.

GE: Um who greeted you when you first arrive in the U.S.?

AA: Um. Who greeted me? GE: Or were you just here by yourself?

AA: Yeah I was just by myself like when I came I came by myself and I came like I said I came by through YMCA. GE: Um what were your first impressions or early experiences in this country?

AA: Well at first, it was English. Because every time I speak like people would say you are not speaking great English and every time I thought that we I knew English very well but every time I speak people say they don't understand me so that was something which really put me off so much.

GE: How did you know English already?

AA: In school in Uganda they teach us English. Actually, when from elementary you start uh I would say pre-school. If you're in the city you gunna start learning from English but if you're far

away not from the city definitely start learning from that local language where you were, the language you are speaking that's what you speak.

GE: So, was it hard for you when people said that you didn't know any English here?

AA: Of course, yeah it was hard, but you know you just have to persevere and see how you can conquer it.

GE: You said you used stayed in Chula Vista here first?

AA: Yes, my first place was in Chula Vista. I stayed in Chula Vista I think for about 4 years and then I moved around North Park and then from North Park I moved here in City Heights and I've been in City Heights.

GE: Why did you decide to move here?

AA: Uh because of the area I was working. Most people I was working with they are within this area, so I decided to move around here. GE: Hmm.

AA: Yes.

GE: Um how did you like find housing when you first came here?

AA: Um with the help of YMCA I started staying at the courtyard YMCA courtyards and then from there I moved apartment with the help of some of my co-workers they helped me got apartments. Then life moved on.

GE: And you found housing now like by yourself?

AA: Yes.

GE: How did you make a living after resettlement?

AA: After resettlement, like I already told you I was already working with the YMCA so I already have some little bit of income.

GE: Um did you have like any changes in lifestyle here in the U.S. compared to back home?

AA: I don't think there is any changes of lifestyle I kept up with every thing I used to do. Uh only maybe one thing I saw what I changed I never used to put on jeans. But when I like in 2013 then that's when I started putting on jeans. Then I found oh this really thin, but I used to think that jeans are not for uh what should I say. They are for people who are I don't think you don't look classy when put on the jean. You don't you are not presentable in a jean so that's a but when I started dressing in jean I'm like oh it's still good. And people, "yeah you look nice!" But I used not to put on jeans.

GE: So, you wore slacks?

AA: Uh no I used to use put on dress clothes dress clothes only. Yeah.

GE: Mmm.

AA: Yes.

GE: Did you have any hopes for yourself or your family when you first arrived?

AA: Well at first, I didn't know what to do. At first, I thought I was gonna go as soon I as I came my main aim was to go back to school then when I got here they're like you have to be a resident of United State unless you are going to pay out of pocket. So then one of my friends started telling me of how I can become a U.S. permanent resident and then they told me how to write my write my story up to apply for asylum. So that's how I ended up started writing this story and put everything up together um submit and then they granted me asylum in like uh two years. Yeah

GE: Were there any challenges when you started, trying to start a new life here?

AA: Yeah there were challenges meeting new people because I didn't know anybody, I didn't know any Ugandans here. So, I started developing getting friends to get me to introduce me to people and then started getting to know people and then uh life kicked off. I met a lot of Ugandans, started traveling to LA then I started to going for Ugandan conference when I went for the Ugandan Conference that's when I started meeting a lot of Ugandans here they started introducing me to different different people. And people who decided to introduce around, there's this person here there's this person living here. That's how I started connections. GE: What do you feel about your decision to to come here to the U.S. today?

AA: Uh being that it wasn't my own wish to decide but I think I would prefer to stay at home if life was okay but the decision I made I think it's okay with life. 'Cause mostly there some people are killed because of not being what they think I am and they are not the one.

GE: Do you miss anything about your life back home?

AA: Yes, a lot. Can you pause? Can pause?

GE: So, this is just going to be a follow up interview from before:

AA: Okay

GE: Have you ever experienced discrimination be it in your community, school, or the workplace?

AA: Maybe my previous workplace when I was working Mental Health America. Some of the employees were not you could see that they are really kind of like discriminating. But apart from that in my community not too much because we have a lot of immigrants in that area. So, it doesn't really show up much. Maybe somebody came at the workplace and wrote "All Somali Muslims should go back to their country" things like that. But in directly as me a person no. Apart from that from a workplace.

GE: Are there any differences in gender roles for living in your country versus America?

AA: Yes. Great. That one is quite quite quite different. Um the gender from home, women are taken different compare with men. Whereas here they are kind of like I would say treated equally. As long you are capable of doing what you can you can show that you can do what you are given to, the gender is not very much put into place. Yeah

GE: Has it like affected yourself? The gender roles?

AA: No no. Just trying to live my life

GE: Are you involved in any organizations? And if so which one?

AA: What do you mean organizations?

GE: Community organizations. Like UWEAS.

AA: United Women of East Africa? Yes, I am involved in organization. There is one called Uganda North America. So, all the Ugandans who live in diaspora, we meet once a year. And then I have Ugandan living in Southern Californian. That organization where I am sit on the board. I sit on the board. And then I another organization for Ugandans from West Nile, that's the region where I come from, where I chair that organization. So also, with East African Community Cultural Center I sit on the board. And then East African Chambers of Commerce where we are trying to have locations in different area in North America. So far, we have three. East coast, west coast and Midwest. Yeah.

GE: What would you is the goal or the mission for most of these are?

AA: Most of these actually still see that the organization I would say to unite the community. Like the Ugandan North America we try to see that we can look out for each other to find that if there some people that just came what do they need help? And we help the `how if people want to go back to school how can help them go back to school. Or they are looking for job or we want them to stay in line of things they are doing back home to continue with it right here. Yeah

GE: Do you keep in touch with you family, relatives, or friends from back home?

AA: Yes I do keep in touch. We have communication links like I do Facebook and there's another called WhatsApp each family we created a form of family called Chatroom where there we can communicate know everything happening come every day. And then I have I started up some old school association for the where I went to high school. So, we normally communicate and we I can try to tract all my kids I went to school with, know where they are, so yeah.

GE: Do you send money or gifts to your home country? And if so to whom? And what do you send? And what do they use the money for?

AA: Most of the time maintaining the home where I come from and also paying school fees for those who cannot afford to pay school fees like brother. My brothers and sisters have some too. My late brother, Kate, I do pay school fees for. So, I send the money though my brother and then he pays school fees for those kids. And also, to maintain feeding, things like that, medical treatment because we don't have insurance back home so if you get a sickness you have to pay out of your pocket, so I do send money to help in those kind of stuff.

GE: How often do you send?

AA: I would say every two weeks. Yeah and the school system there, its all you pay. So, they do semester, so each semester is three months so every three months you have to pay school fees. So, like this month is the month with kids going back to school. So, I think I've sent \$2,300 only this month.

GE: Do you travel to your home country and what is the purpose and for how long?

AA: I have not been there since 2009. When I went my mom was very sick. So, I went to go visit my mom, but I haven't been there back because it's kind of costly for me. For me going there there is no need because what they need is money. And right now, communication is kind of its easier, so I do communicate get to know everything. But I'm planning maybe in a year or two I'll go back and visit.

GE: What do you plan to do there while you're there?

AA: Um catch up with old friends um meet my family, party that's it. Yeah

GE: Would you want to move back to your home country to live there?

AA: Yes, I would love to return back home if possible.

GE: What is not possible? Or making it not possible?

AA: If possible, if I happen to save, I'll build a house, and my kids are in colleges, so I will be able to go back home and retire.

GE: What do you think the changes have been to your home country over the past years?

AA: There have been quite a number of development compared to the way it was before. Because there are people who are getting educated and trying to implement whatever people have traveled a lot around the world. So, whatever they travel those who have money, they go back trying to imitate the same kind of thing to develop back home.

GE: So, like gentrifying it?

AA: Umm. I think yeah. Because they kind of like, those who are to retire from here are going back home. They are trying to live the life they are living here so they try to make up things similar to what they were within the United State. Yeah

GE: Um so you talked about being kidnapped as a child soldier. Can you expand on that? If you're comfortable with that.

AA: No, I'm not comfortable with that.

GE: No? Okay.

AA: Yeah

GE: Because the past still the affects you today?

AA: Hmm?

GE: You still have, um I heard you still have PTSD from that.

AA: Yes but if you want to know more, because I think there are about two clips where I was speaking at UCLA. In 2007 or 8 so when you go on YouTube there you just put in Awichu's story.

GE: Okay

AA: So, you can get Awichu's story one, Awichu's story two. I think 2008 yeah

GE: Okay. Um is there anything else that we haven't covered that you would like to talk about?

AA: Not really unless you ask for it. But that one I can't tell you.

GE: Okay.