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My name is Kenny Mayifilua and I'm from Congo (DRC). I'm a student in the ELTI program in level 5. I'm going to tell you how my international experience has affected my view.

I came here in January and I would like to improve my English to get in to the graduate school to study finance. My one and only family is my young sister. She helps me a lot by showing me some important things to know such as the bus stop, the university, the bank, stores and also the hospital because I arrived with an headache due to work and I was supposed to go to the hospital the day after . Like all humans, I realized my dream of coming to this tremendous country to pursue my studies. When I arrived, I really appreciated the city. As I come from a poor a country where there was not as much infrastructure as here, I was astonished by the beauty of this country and the way things are regulated. In this part of the life, I really want to take this opportunity to congratulate the leader of this country and those who from far or close do good things for the United States of America in order to facilitate things like bus, school being in orderly way. On the other hand, I noticed that others things are not well regulated such as the cost of the hospital. I thought that I was dreaming the first time I received my bill because in my country, although people are not rich as here, the medical care cannot reach higher amount like here even for the surgery operation. For a long time, I felt guilty because my parents had already spent a lot of money for my trip and because of my stupid headache they were obliged to pay the expensive bill. For the first time of my life, I put myself in their place and understood that living

in abroad country where you don't understand how things work, where you don't have any relatives is a big challenge. However, this experience helps me to remove the idea that living in the United States is not easy and is really challenging.

When I came here I was looking for consolation from other people. I left my brothers, my cousins, my colleagues and all friends back home. I was looking for a second family. I was in your world and I thought that I was also everybody's brother. But for other people I was neither friend nor a brother; I was just somebody that you can meet today and forget the day after. For the majority of international students, the first concern is to learn English faster. And we all know that practice makes perfect so we are really enthusiastic to meet some Americans in order to improve our English by speaking. Some lucky international students have met good partners or friends, but for those who were unlucky like me it was a disgusting and complicated experience. I understood that sometimes we are not welcome. We are like outcasts in their faces, we are different from mankind. Personally, I encountered more than 3 native speakers and I can't describe how I was rejected and ignored. Sometimes when you try to contact them you have the feeling that you are useless to them and they don't consider you to have much worth. In the beginning, I was frustrated by this kind of a behavior. I was wondering if I was cursed or I did something bad for being punished like that. Fortunately, I also met good teachers and good friends in ELTI. Some days, one of my teachers brought me a dish whereas I never asked for it. I want to thank them for what they have done for me. When I arrived, I thought that this country, where everybody is smiling you when you across streets, was a perfect country, but it is not the paradise as Jesus promised us in the Bible. I realized that the United States was a normal country with its own particular problems. In this country where I'm strange, I see a lot of reality that offends me a lot. In this society, people are not welcome in some places. In the bus for instance,

everybody is concentrating on his cell phone, book or iPad and you can't expect anybody to talk to you. I grew up where people are kind. In the bus people can begin to talk each other even if it is their first time to meet. One day, I was in my way back home and I saw how things are different from my country. The bus was full and there was no place to sit. There were around three or four people who got on the bus and in this group there was a black grandmother who was standing up because no one gave his seat to this black old girl despite her age.

To conclude, these experiences change my way of seeing things and now I'm stronger than ever before. With all I have seen since I came here I know that I can't rely on people. The only way to succeed and to reach all my goals is to be independent, to study and to be confident. I know also that in the life you will be up and down. In the life when you are surrounded by good people you will progress and be happy. I hope that I will meet good people in my life. I want to say that living away from my family permits me to see things differently that I was seeing it before. This experience in the United States gives me more independence and makes me feel more responsible than I have never been before. Now I'm an adult and I will reach all my goals.