

# Homeless in another country

The weather is cold and snowy and people are running around during the lunch break. I walk into the shopping centre Triangeln to meet up **Joseph\*** who is an undocumented person, homeless as many refers to it. I walk up to Espresso House looking for him and after a while he arrives and we sit down at the café, drinking some coffee which I bought for both of us.

The homeless people's situation isn't easy and it is especially hard during the winter months when it is cold. Many homeless people end up at the streets but some are lucky to get a roof over their heads and somewhere to stay for a while. Life isn't easy but it is very hard when it comes to the homeless ones. Especially if you are considered as an undocumented person. The days are long and each day is a day full of struggles and other obstacles than can be critical as well as a blessing, but you never know what day it will be until the moment hits you.

"An ordinary day is usually not an ordinary day as for other people. Me and the rest of my friends, who are as well undocumented, have almost the same kind of day. The days are useless, no activity, no school, no job, nothing. It is very depressing and boring. Sometimes we try to hang out with friends to have some fun but we have to always meet up outside. We aren't allowed to go inside each other places, like that or to be guests." Joseph says and drinks slowly from the hot coffee he had in his hand.

Even though it is tough and days can be very harsh, there are people who do help out for those who are undocumented. Many of them are volunteers and do help out with food and sometimes reach out and let people stay with them.

"Yeah, there is a group called "Asylum Group" and it is some kind of network and they ask people too to become volunteers. They usually let us "undocumented people" stay in their apartments for some time to help us out with food and somewhere to stay. After a while we have to leave and look for another place because we won't survive on the streets. Especially not during the cold winter months." Joseph says looking a bit concerned on the people with their thick winter jackets. He himself didn't have any thick jacket but a blue-grey thin jacket.

"It hurts deeply. Kind of insulting. I feel ashamed to live in a stranger's place. I know it is very nice of them to help us out, but when I say "strangers" I mean it is not my own place, not my own room. There is no privacy, nothing. I feel like I am invading their privacy." Joseph continued.

There are not only volunteer who do help undocumented people out during crisis but even the social services can sometimes bring out some money but it isn't a lot. Many undocumented people go to the social services when the crisis is too high and kind of emergency. For example if you can't fix food at all you can go there and get some money but as I said, it isn't much to live on.

"Sometimes the social services gives us an amount of money weekly but it is around 400kr per week. We have to live on 400kr per week only and that money has to be for everything we need..." Joseph said looking down at the table.

There were a lot of people around us and many stressed away during the lunch break. Joseph looked concerned and worried, looking over his shoulder a couple of times. He has the right to be worried. Most of the undocumented people are threatened to be arrested by the police due to deportation decision from the Migration Board. Every day is a critical situation for the undocumented people and to live hidden isn't easy as we can understand by this point.

"Every day that pass is a critical situation. The fear of getting arrested by police for nothing, fear of deportation, lack of economics, lack of places. Sometimes there is no places for us to go so we have to either go to the church and seek for help or beg the owner of a place to stay there over the night or some nights. It is very harsh and some people are not nice at all. The money... oh we are just eating twice per day to save the money. The food isn't so cheap for us who live on 400kr each week. It is a constant life of moving around and not knowing whether you'll be fine the next day or arrested or deported to where you first fled from. It is very stressful..." Joseph said drinking up the last drops of the coffee.

All of a sudden he must go and he thanked me for the coffee and then he went away rapidly. I went out in the cold and freezy weather, thinking of those who do not make it to the other day. On those who are arrested, deported or worse cases: dies due to the weather or lack of hope.

**\*Joseph isn't his real name as he lives under another name and wanted his identity to be protected.**

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