

The Battle

an insight into Estonian reality of
homelessness

Reality

- There are more homeless people in Estonia than ever before.
- Due to the financial crisis new groups of homeless people are found (e.g. elderly people, single mothers, young people).

- No one knows the exact number.
- There are many of them who do not even have an Estonian passport.
- The problem is more actual and visible in the capital (Tallinn).

Facts

- Average age among adults is 46 years.
- Average age among children is 8 years.
- 65,1% are men
- 34,9% are women
- 66,4% do not speak Estonian

- Main reasons for homelessness are:
 - losing the apartment (22,4%)
 - losing the family (18%)
 - difficulties in paying rent (18%)

ATTITUDE

- An average Estonian finds nothing in common with homelessness.
- The people who find their food from the junk or who froze to death at winter seem to be like from another planet.

- This attitude is mostly thanks to our media.
- It tends to forget that a homeless person is a human too!
- In newspapers or on tv they never use the name of the homeless person when something happens.
- They lose their right to be an individual.

ANY HOPE?

- Many of them believe that finding a job could put them on their feet again.
- Research has shown that when it does not happen during the first year after losing job/ home the percentage to find a job is down to zero.

- Unfortunately in Estonia our employment policy means that once you are off the track it is almost impossible to find the way back.
- Our system does not have active methods for homeless people to bring them back to work.
- So far all the hope ends when you get a place in the shelter and that is it.
- In the morning everything starts all over again.

- More effort should be put into prevention, rehabilitation and integration.
- Enormous lack of information between the people who need help and these who could help.
- We have to increase the awareness about our rights, possibilities and choices.

IMPORTANT

- Reality is that more than 600 accomodation places are needed asap for people who wait on lists for a shelter at the moment.

- Most important is to change the attitude towards homeless people and to understand that everyone has a right to a decent life!