

Unsang Hero



Intro: A young asylum seeker Amine Diare Conde from Guinea organizes a foodbank to supply both the Swiss and refugees in need during the height of the Corona pandemic at the local Autonomous school in Zürich, Switzerland despite his own undocumented status as an asylum seeker.

Hi. I am Yvonne Apiyo Brändle-Amolo and today will be our first VLOG in two languages, English and German. I wanted to show you a positive example that has resulted from COVID-19. Take a look at what the young man Amin is doing as his contribution to COVID 19. When I first heard of this young man Amin I was so excited I wanted to interview him immediately. So I called the newspaper where I had read about him and I asked for his contact. I made this phone call sitting in a bus in full civil-service uniform on my way to work. I was working because of the COVID 19 patients.

So during this conversation. The bus driver stopped the bus and shouted at me "Hey Civi! Could you stop making that phone call or get off the bus. You are scaring some of my passengers, most of my passengers.

Completely shocked I stopped making the phone call and sat silently until I had to get down to work. Also another reaction to COVID 19. But atleast today, we show you a positive one!

Apiyo: Hi Amin. I am glad to be here. We are here today to see how you organise your foodbank? But before you tell us about that, please introduce yourself so that our listeners can get to know you.

Amin: My name is Amin. I am originally from Guinea. I have been in Switzerland for 5 years and live in the canton of Zürich

Apiyo: You do not have a residency permit for Switzerland but spend your time organising a food bank. Shouldn't you concentrate of getting a residency permit?

Amin: Yes it's true that I do not have an official residency permit for Switzerland but in my heart I feel a Swiss resident. There are priorities. When the Corona pandemic broke out, I knew there are hundreds of people in Switzerland need help and do not receive it. I know that one cannot survive on eight Francs a day in this country. That was my priority. How can I help such people and all those other who need help in Switzerland.

Apiyo: Where are all these people from. Your initiative is called "Food for all". Who do you supply?

Amin: When someone needs help it is our responsibility to help/support them because not everyone has the same possibilities to find help. People with diverse backgrounds come to the canton of Zürich. We don't judge anyone. We help all those who need it. There are those who can't come here because they don't have the means to. Like asylum seekers who would have to spend thirteen Swiss francs on transport from their asylum centres to get to us. We make deliveries of the food supplies to the centres for these people. For example, I will delivery at least 200 food-kits to the asylum centre in Zürich today.

My initiative is called "Food for all" and represents just that "food without boundaries". We supply everywhere we know there is need and make sure everyone gets help.

Apiyo: where do you get the supplies from? Can I, as a private person come to you and say, "Hey Amin, I have an excess of supplies, water, orange juice, cooking oil or spaghetti. I'd like to donate it for you to distribute" or do I have to belong to an organisation?

Amin: We believe in the idea that everyone can help. You may not have the financial capacity but you have time to invest. You may not have the time or you belong to the endangered group but you have a great network and can inform people. There are also the free donations, or donations from organisations like Migros who recently donated baby food. Chocolates, bananas all these food donations. There are those who stocked up on food when the pandemic was announced for fear of food shortages and now have an excess of supplies. These people also donate. We accept all donations even if it is a loaf of bread.

Apiyo: What does the future look like? What do you want to do with "Food for all? Any plans?

Amin: Yes. My only hope at the moment would be that the army takes over these kind of initiatives. I wrote an open letter yesterday to the army concerning this. The military is supposed to protect its people against enemies. In my eyes this hunger is an enemy that everyone will have to deal with at some point. I know there are people who really need help. I am not blaming anyone but I wish the governmental officials would help these people.

Apiyo: Amin I thank you for the invite and possibility to come and visit. of the people.

Amin: Thanks a lot.

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