

THE MESSIE - PHENOMENON

My interviews with nurses and social workers who served people in Slovenia and Croatia.

A story of a nurse who served Mrs. F.Š.

The family had many children and their way of life was very heavy and insecure. She loved her mother but never talked about her father. She was a widow and she was living on her own in a double-room apartment. She had two daughters. She had her pension and larger savings and was lending the money. She was independent. She did not accept visitors. She was collecting paper, tins and shopping bags. In winter she was in danger for not sleeping in her apartment. She slept and washed herself in a coal cellar. Neighbourhood and local community were the ones who made an alert to the nearest medical clinic. The entrance of the apartment and all other rooms were heavily loaded with things from floor to the ceiling. Yard has been filled up with junk as well. She spent the major part of her day on the street. She never let anyone to clean up for her and she also refused any kind of help. The pressures of the local community, police and nurse did not help. The woman did not allow to remove all her junk. She became aggressive. She became ill – her diagnosis: skin cancer. At the time, her daughter took her to live at her apartment. Then they could remove all the junk she has collected so far. They took away four containers. That was three decades ago.

A story of a nurse who was paying visits at home

A man collected firewood, wooden bars. He was looking for shops and wooden crates. He came home very tired because these wooden bars were brought home manually. His room was already filled up, just the table, chair and bed were still empty. In the kitchen everything was filled up to the height of the oven. Neighbours were concerned about the possibility of fire. The apartment was smelly, the man was completely neglected. He did not have any relatives, he lived completely on his own. He was very aggressive. He got furious when someone approached. He had his own pension. He was forced to the home of pensioners.

An interview with a nurse who works in the home of pensioners

Clients collect cloths (1000 pieces); employees find cabinets full of diapers, towels, sleeping shirts, sweaters. From nursing trucks they steal liquid soap. They collect and store food, boxes, shoes ... When these things were taken away, the clients are upset and can not sleep all night. They often get medicine to ease them (Apaurin).

A story of a nurse who had known Mr. and saw the environment in which he lived

These were tons and tons of litter. It was almost one came to a dump yard. This man did not have space nor to stand up or to lie down. The bed was full. He lived on the ground floor and he made himself way through the window, because the front dorr was already filled up. Diagnosis: Shizofrenia. After he died, they managed to collect and remove his stuff.

An interview with asocial worker who works in the home of pensioners

A client was always nicely dressed – a white shirt, a tie and black suit. He was very active. At first, he was located in a double- sized room, but after a while he was moved to one-sized room. He collected newspapers, boxes, bags, clothes. He could not get rid of things. He was warned by the head of the home of pensioners that he has to remove his things. When he was forced to remove them, he took a chair, sat down and overlooked each paper before he tossed it away. When he was confronted with the messi issue, he got very sad. He said that something has died in him and he was not the same since then. He was active before but now he is not. He also hot divorced. He has two children. He is rch and he writes books and poems.

At last an insight into a foreign country, Croatia

Mrs. did not have space to sleep anywhere. She collected things from dumpsters. Her kids were highly educated but could not do anything. There were mice and rats in the house. Health authorities and local community were pressuring her. She had to leave her home and move into a home of pensioners. The house was demolished. It took seven lorries to remove all the rubbish and things she collected.

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BA pth.
Maribor, Marec 2010