

# Loneliness – the world’s largest community

A publication for unaccompanied refugee  
children written in easy English

Anna Gorki & Joy Dison



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# Preface

What you are holding in your hand is a publication that is written for unaccompanied refugee children. This is the second edition, updated with current information. Author of this writing is Anna Gorki and Joy Dison and it has been a part of their project work where they focused their attention on unaccompanied minors. Both of the authors went to Östra Real Gymnasium in Stockholm.

In this publication you will get to follow a fictional boy called Amir that comes from Afghanistan. Amir has left Afghanistan to seek asylum in Sweden. In this writing you can read about Amir's thoughts, the people he meets and the places he visits in Sweden.

We have with the help of easy English and images tried to explain which people unaccompanied children get to meet when they come over and why they get to meet these people. For you to understand everything we have also clarified the asylum process by explanatory information boxes.

Continued pleasant reading!

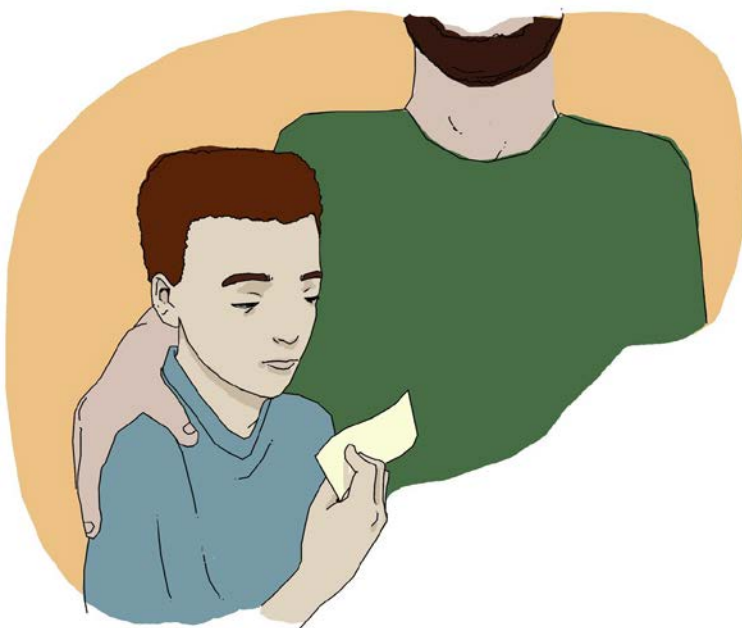


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# Farewell

Amir looks down on the ticket, he is about to go on the airplane. He hear his father say, "Do not worry, you will be better off in Sweden". Amir has long known that he must leave Afghanistan. In the city where he lives there is war and his family is poor. His father has saved money for a long time to buy the ticket that Amir now holds in his hand.

*I do not want to leave Dad, I do not care if Sweden is a better country. What if I never come back and never see my dad again? I have to get a job and earn money, otherwise dad will get disappointed.*



# Arlanda airport

Amir is at Arlanda airport and looks up at the blonde woman standing behind the glass. She speaks in a language that Amir does not understand. Amir shakes his head when she repeats the same thing again. The blond woman works as a passport controller at Arlanda airport. She now makes a call.

*Oh, how different she looks! She looks so exotic with her yellow hair! I do not understand what she's saying! Who is she calling? What is going to happen with me now?*



## FACTS

Arlanda airport is the largest airport in Sweden. There are a lot of people working at Arlanda. When you come from a country outside of Europe you have to show your passport to a passport control officer, who checks that the passport is genuine and that you have a valid visa.

# Police interrogation

A police officer asks Amir to follow him. They walk into a room. The police officer says things that Amir do not understand, so he is silent.

The officer is also silent for a while, but asks doubtfully in the language Pashto "What is your name?". Amir who speaks Pashto answer in the same language "My name is Amir, I am seeking asylum in Sweden". The police officer asks some questions about his passport, and how Amir got here. The police officer then explains that he will drive Amir to the Swedish migration agency.

*He must be a police. What kind of a room is this? Will they beat me up? I do not understand what you are saying. I do not know what you want me to do. Wait. I understand. You speak Pashto! You come from Afghanistan and you work as a police officer in Sweden! What if I also can become a police officer one day?*



## FAKTA

The police officer's task is to find out who the unaccompanied is, and how the person came to Sweden. The police need to check this to determine if the person who came to Sweden have a right to be here or not. If you want to stay in Sweden you must say that you are seeking asylum. To seek asylum means that you want protection and want to stay in the country.

# The Swedish migration agency

Amir arrives at the Swedish migration agency, where there are many people waiting. They are refugees who are waiting to get help. Amir sits on a vacant seat and also waits for help. He sits and waits for several hours, until a man shows a piece of paper with three digits.

*So many people! Do all of these people want to live in Sweden?  
Now I understand! I have to take a piece of paper that has three digits to get help.*



## FACTS

A refugee is someone who has fled their homeland because they seek protection. People flee because they are treated badly, have a different faith or belong to another group of people. Immigration Service are responsible for the refugees who seeks asylum in Sweden. They are the ones who decide if a refugee has sufficient reason to stay in Sweden or not.

# The case worker

He meets Eva, who works at the Swedish migration agency. She works together with an interpreter named Khaled, he translates what Eva says so that Amir understands. Eva asks questions like:

- What's your name?
- How old are you?
- Are your parents alive?
- Where are you from?
- How did you come to Sweden?
- Do you have any passport or ID card?



*Why did she ask so many questions? I want to tell her everything. But what if Khaled and Eva tells someone else? Or what if Khaled work for the military in Afghanistan? Then I might have to go back to Afghanistan.*

## FACTS

Those who work at the Swedish migration agency asks similar questions as the police do at the airport, to find out everything that the police did not. An interpreter must translate what is said without changing anything. Another interpreter can take over if the first one does not handle the job or if it is alot being said.



# Identity

Eva photographs Amir and take his fingerprints. Eva uses a large database where there are lots of fingerprints from countries in Europe that also comply with EU law, and compares them with Amir's. If Amir has applied for asylum in another EU country Eva will be able to see it in the database.

*What is she doing? Why does she touch me? Why is she taking a photograph of my finger?*



## FACTS

A photograph and a fingerprint makes it easier to determine a refugee's identity. In EU it is the Dublin Regulation, which determines the country in which asylum seekers should apply for asylum. The first country in the EU where a refugee comes from outside the EU, will be responsible for handling the asylum application.

# Transit accommodation

Amir has no relatives in Sweden that he can live with. Eva tells Amir that he will have to sleep in a transit accommodation in Sigtuna. There are many others who live there who are also seeking asylum in Sweden and do not have anywhere to stay. Amir will get to stay there for a short time. Eva also says that Amir will get a guardian and that it may take a week.

*Where will I live now?*

*Will others who live there be mean to me?*



## FACTS

The municipality that you first arrive in and where you state that you are seeking asylum is called *ankomst kommun* in Swedish. The arrival municipality is responsible for arranging accommodation until there is a municipality that takes over responsibility. There are special accommodations for those seeking asylum, they are called *transit boenden* in Swedish and you should only stay there a short while.

# Guardian

After a few days at the transit accommodation Amir receives a letter, which says that he got a guardian named Anna. Anna comes to the place where Amir is living on the same day and try to get to know Amir.

*I'm so lonely. How long will I be here for? Did not Eva say just a week? I have nobody to talk to. It's hard not to understand what others say.*



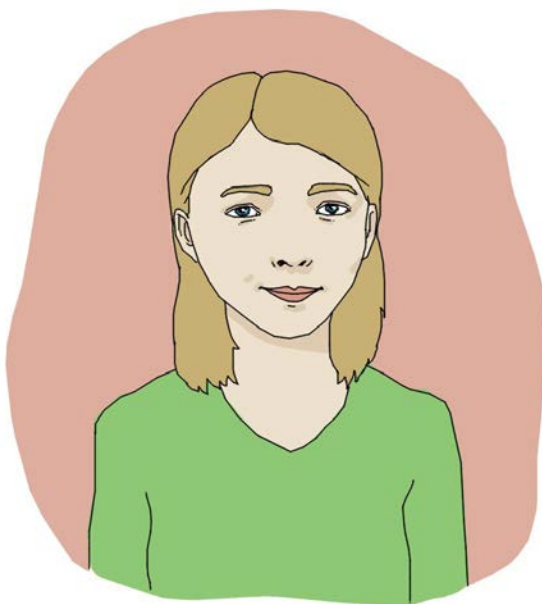
## FACTS

All unaccompanied children who come to Sweden gets a guardian. In Swedish it is called *god man*. The guardian is responsible for everything around the child except for the daily care and has no dependents. They are also responsible of the child's money. The *god man* will also be involved in all meetings and information about the Swedish culture.

# Asylum application

Anna follows Amir to the Swedish migration agency where she writes an application for asylum for him. Khaled helps Anna to understand why Amir wants to seek asylum in Sweden.

*Anna is kind, I know she wants my best. I do not want to answer all her questions but still she is willing to help me so much.*



## FACTS

The guardian (Anna) writes the asylum papers for the child. Children are not allowed to seek asylum without an adult.

# Public counselor

Amir meets Eva at the Swedish migration agency and this time he also meets with Esther. Khaled explains that Esther is his public counselor which is called *offentligt biträde* in Swedish. Esther tells him how the Swedish migration agency will take care of his asylum application. Amir can ask her questions about his application for asylum or regarding the Swedish migration agency. Esther also shows him the child convention called *barnkonventionen* in Swedish.

*She is so smart this Esther. In Afghanistan, it is mostly men who go to school and read law.*



## FACTS

All children seeking asylum are entitled to a public counselor. The public counselor has read Swedish law and can help those who have not read the law. The child convention states, amongst other things, that all children have the right to say what they think. It also says that one should see to the child's best interests in all decisions.

# Group accommodation

Anna comes to pick Amir at the transit accommodation, she tells him that he is moving to *Gladhem*, a group accommodation called *gruppboende* in Swedish. There are about 15 other young people who appear to be Amir's age. The others have just like Amir arrived in Sweden all alone from different countries. They are kind and greet Amir welcome. The first evening they all sit and watch television together then Amir follows his new friends to prepare dinner that they eat together.

*Everyone is so kind towards me here, although the food did not taste well it was fun to cook with the others.*



## FACTS

Group accommodation is called *gruppboende* in Swedish. You can stay here until you get your decision from the Swedish migration agency.

# A friend

One day Amir is looking for a sock that is lost. A boy named Ali enters the room. Ali helps him to look for the lost sock. They find the sock and Amir thank Ali for his help in Swedish. They become best of friends.

*For the first time over here, I have a friend. Ali always helps me, and teach me everything he knows, he's like a real brother tome.*



# Rights and regulations



There are always staff at Gladhem. Amir is allowed to go to school, exercise, participate in different activities and visit the doctor. In Gladhem there are rules you must follow in order to live together. Examples of rules include:

- You should be home no later than 10 p.m.
- You should wash your own plate after use
- You should make your own bed in the morning
- You should show respect for the others who were also staying at Gladhem

*I like school, today I learned five new Swedish words. I can already do maths, so it's easy. I and the other guys think it's a little awkward with the rules in the house but we must do what the staff says.*

## FACTS

There are always staff who work at group homes, their task is to help the unaccompanied children. They plan different activities for the minors. Rules are everywhere, both in school and at home. The vast majority of Swedish homes have rules that everyone in the family must follow.



# In depth investigation

Eva at the Swedish migration agency has called Anna and Esther, they want to meet Amir again to find out if there is sufficient reason why he should be granted asylum in Sweden. This procedure is called *fördjupad undersökning* in Swedish. Amir cannot go back to Afghanistan because he risks losing his life. Esther tells Amir that he seeks asylum because he needs protection. It is his grounds for asylum.

*Why should they ask the same questions all the time? I have told the truth since the beginning.*

Why do  
you seek  
asylum?

## FACTS

For the Swedish migration agency to decide if refugees need protection and should stay in Sweden, they must make a careful examination of the evidence.



## Family tracing

Amir is under 18 years of age. It is important for the Swedish migration agency to find out where his parents or close relatives are located and how they feel. Amir tells Eva that his mother died when he was born but he has lived with his father in Afghanistan. Amir's father sent him to Sweden because the war has been going on for a long time in Afghanistan and if he stayed with his father, he might had become a child soldier. Amir has not talked to him since. The Swedish migration agency tried to find Amir's father in Afghanistan, but could not find him.

*No, why can't they find my father? Something must have happened to him. What if he is not alive!*

### FACTS

Sweden believes that it is important to find out if the parents of an unaccompanied child is alive. The Swedish migration agency wants children who come to Sweden to feel good about staying here. Sometimes they decide that the best thing for a child is to go back to their homeland and their parents. The childconvention states that all children have the right to be reunited with their parents and live together as a family.

# BUP

After the migration officer told Amir about his dad, the staff at Gladhem tells Amir that he could talk to an adult at BUP. People who are willing to listen and understand children work there. Amir gets to talk with Peter, he is a psychologist and works at BUP, they meet once a week.

*How will Peter be able to help me? It's my problem, what does he have to do with it? Peter always asks how I am and what I feel, but I do not know myself.*



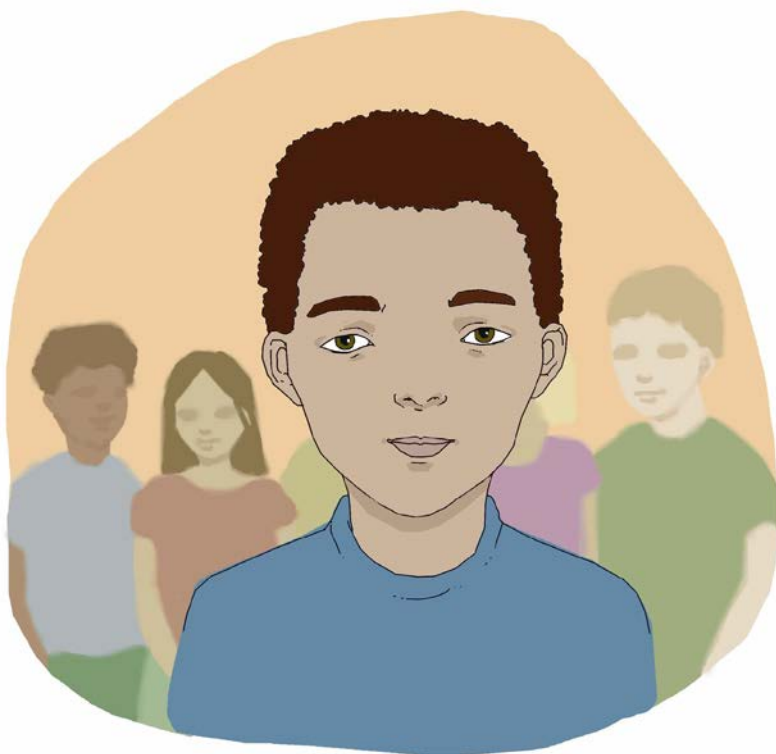
## FACTS

BUP stands for *Barn- och ungdomspsykiatri*. The people who work there are used to talk to children and are good listeners.

# The wait

It's been two months since Amir was at the Swedish migration agency and now he is waiting on a decision on whether to get a residence permit or not. Amir is confused but he does not feel alone. He knows that the other young people who live in Gladhem with him also are waiting on a decision from the Swedish migration agency.

*I've gotten to know so many nice people. I miss my father very much, but I still do not want to leave Ali, Anna and Peter, they have become like my family here in Sweden.*

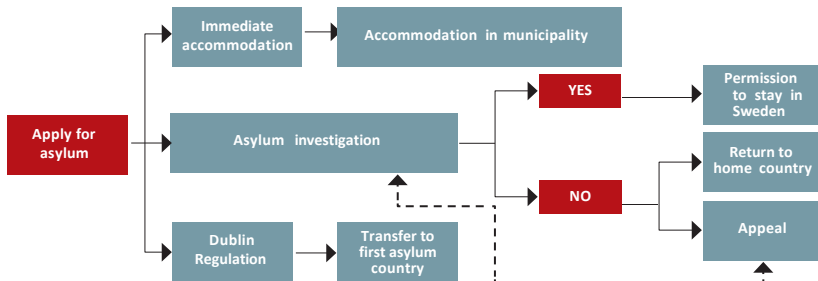


# The decision

One day, Anna comes to Gladhem, she says she received a letter from the Swedish migration agency. The letter says that Amir has gotten a residence permit and can stay in Sweden.

In 2014

- About 7,000 unaccompanied children sought asylum in Sweden compared to 2393 back in 2010.
- Most asylum seekers came from Syria and Eritrea.
- In 2014, 75 % of those who had their applications examined in Sweden received a residence permit.
- Of the total number of asylum seekers in 2014, 8 % were unaccompanied children and adolescents.



*The asylum process for unaccompanied refugee minors.*

*Source: Swedish migration agency*

## FACTS

When you have been granted asylum to stay in Sweden, it means that you have permanent residence permit which is usually shortened to PUT, *Permanent Uppehållstillstånd*, in Swedish.

# Checklist

## AS A UNACCOMPANIED MINOR YOU ARE ENTITLED TO:

- A guardian - *god man*
- A public counsel - *offentlig biträde*
- An interpreter- *tolk*
- To talk to a psychologist at *BUP*
- An accommodation - *boende*
- Daily allowance from the Swedish migration agency / Income support from social services

## IN SWEDEN, IT IS FORBIDDEN TO:

- Get forced to work
- Get forced to have sex
- Hit someone else

## WHEN YOU ARE UNDER 18 YEARS YOU MUST NOT:

- Buy cigarettes, snuff or alcohol
- Obtain a driving license
- Marry
- Vote
- Sign any contracts without parental permission

## HOUSING AND MONEY:

- Sometimes there are training apartments that one can stay in before moving into their first apartment. One can only stay there until they are up to 21 years of age.
- When you move to a new home, it is important to sign contracts saying that you are living there, *bostadskontrakt*.
- Anyone who rents out a home or a room secondarily should not require too high of a rent.
- When moving to a new residence one must notify the Tax Agency, *Skatteverket*, so that letters and bills are posted to the right address. One should be registered at one address, *folkbokförd*.

- Home insurance provides compensation when something is broken, or if someone has broken into your home.
- *Bostadsbidrag* is a form of support for students and young people who need help paying the rent or the monthly fee for their accommodation. If you are up to 29 years you can apply to *Försäkringskassan*.
- *Centrala studiestödsnämnden*, CSN, lend money to students who need to buy, for example; furniture and books while studying. You can also get a grant that you do not need to pay it back when you study called *studiebidrag*.
- Anyone who wants to rent a home in Stockholm can register at *Stockholms stads bostadsförmedling* on the internet. It costs 210 SEK per year to stand in the queue. There are also other housing agencies all over Sweden.

#### HOW TO GET A JOB:

- At *Arbetsförmedlingen*, the employment service, and at the career counselor at school, one can apply for jobs, and also check which jobs are available.
- Most people apply for a job by sending a CV and cover letter. It says what you've worked with before, what you have studied and why the employer should choose you for the job.
- All people working in Sweden must pay tax. The tax is usually 30% of your salary, but it can be more or less depending on where you live in Sweden. The tax goes to the tax office and is used for things that we citizens use commonly in society. Such as building new roads and schools.
- If you're sick you get to stay home if you have spoken to your boss. If you are ill for longer than seven days you need a letter from the doctor. The first day you are ill you do not get paid, the other days you'll get 80 % of your salary.

#### YOU CAN TURN HERE IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS:

- BUP: 08-69 06 100
- BRIS: 116 111
- Police: 112 or 114 14
- Ambulance: 112
- Transcultural Centre (Health): 08-123 486 80
- [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se)

# Conclusion - The authors

We hope that this publication has been of help to you as unaccompanied refugee minor coming to Sweden, and that we have helped you understand the asylum process better.

This scripture could not have been written without the interviews we have conducted with the Swedish migration agency, a group home in Stockholm, and Föreningen Skyddsvärnet.

We have in this project understood how difficult it is for young refugees to come to Sweden, and we have had that hope to be able to improve the situation of unaccompanied to the extent that we can. We believe that a publication explaining the asylum process at all its sections with text and images can help minimize confusion for all unaccompanied refugee minors.

We see this publication as a step in the right direction to improve reception of these minors, so that they feel welcomed and well informed about how things are going with their asylum process.

We would first like to thank Oumie Ella Njai, Project Manager for Jalla För Alla, Skyddsvärnet, who took us under her wings, believed in us, supported and helped us throughout the writing process. This work would not look the way it does if it hasn't been for Frida Häggström Gerdt, who have put invaluable time and creativity, to give life to the publication through her illustrations.

Finally we want to thank all others who made this publication possible, our supervisor Joakim Jansson and Daniele Fava and our class SPJU8, friends and family.



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# Project Jalla för Alla

**Jalla för alla** started as a 3-year project back in 2010 and was directed to all unaccompanied young people in the Stockholm county. The project was concluded in June 2013.

**Jalla för alla** aimed to create a free forum where unaccompanied would express their opinions and talk about things that are important to them. The idea behind the project was to provide unaccompanied minors with greater knowledge about the Swedish society and also to provide a platform for development.

With the help of non-formal methods and different ways of working to meet all the needs, we have managed to create a great concept that many young people have enjoyed and learned a lot from.

Today **Jalla för alla** remains in the form of training courses aimed at adults who work with the target audience. There is more information on [www.skyddsvarnet.se](http://www.skyddsvarnet.se).

The project **Jalla för alla** was funded by Arvsfonden.

Skyddsvarnets mission is to help people so they can get through various difficulties in life. From its start in 1910, the motto has been "Help to help themselves". Confidence in the ability of people to take responsibility for their lives is the red thread that goes through the whole organization.



“Do not worry, you will be better off in Sweden” Amir hear his father tell him before he is about to board a plane to Sweden. There is war in Afghanistan, where he lives, and therefore he must flee. Amir arrives in Sweden as an unaccompanied refugee minor seeking asylum. He has no relatives in Sweden and he often feels lonely.

In this publication we follow Amir’s journey when he first arrive at the Swedish migration agency, when he meets his guardian Anna for and seeks asylum. We also learn about when he meets his best friend and how he feels before he gets his decision whether he should be allowed to stay in Sweden.

This publication is written as a guide for those who come to Sweden as an unaccompanied refugee children, in order to better understand the asylum process.



Anna Gorki



Joy Dison

*Anna Gorki and Joy Dison are the authors of this writing. They went to Östra Real Gymnasium in Stockholm, at the time. They attended the social science program focused on law. During their 2010-2011 academic year, they focused on unaccompanied refugee minors as their project. This publication is a result of their hard work.*

[www.skyddsvarnet.se](http://www.skyddsvarnet.se)

