

# SZEGED HERE I COME

I never imagined being out of Kenya. I never Imagined being out of Africa. I never imagined sitting face to face with distinguished people from all cultures, religions and all walks of life. I never imagined having friends in such seemingly remote yet personally close place. I never imagined taking a flight lasting over twelve good hours in search for my capabilities. I never imagined working with distinguished Professors in an esteemed Institution. Szeged here I come..... my imagination.

Alas the day was here to set off to Europe , destination – Budapest, Hungary. Thanks to the Tempus Foundation for this golden opportunity to set my foot in this wonderful continent that I have always dreamt of. It was nice journey travelling with my colleagues as a group and after about 14 hours we landed at Budapest Liszt Ferenc airport.

This is where my troubles started but a good experience though. This was the parting point for each one of us in the group to go to their respective universities. My colleagues departed for Budapest, Debrecen, Pecs and me to Szeged. At this point and time I felt so lonely, confused and with so many butterflies in my stomach. So where do I start? I remembered my mentor who told me the best way to Szeged was by using a train which was to be taken at Ferihegy. `` Now, what is this Ferihegy and how is it pronounced?`` I asked myself. I thought of asking someone.

`` Hallo Sir, I want to get to Szeged , Please``. I told a gentleman who was looking for customer to use his Taxi.

`` I can take you to Szeged`` Said the Taxi man excitedly.

`` No, I need to get to Ferihegy and pick the train to Szeged`` , I answered back.

`` You can use a Taxi, please get in!``

“Please Sir someone is waiting to pick me up at the Railway station in Szeged”, I answered back “so please, could you tell me how to get to Ferihegy”

“ I don’t speak ENGLISH” he retorted.

For that second, I thought to myself, did I really pronounce the word Ferihegy well or did I speak too fast? But then we spoke in English, what could be the problem? Now I don’t know any Hungarian word what will I do? I pondered my next move and looked around for anything that could guide me. Thanks to the customers information desk.

“To get to Ferihegy you need to pay 350 forints to the tickets and board the bus outside” Finally I saw some light at the end of the tunnel. I reached for my bag to take out some money to pay just to remember I had no forints so I had to for the long queue at the foreign exchange. I Finally I got my ticket and boarded the bus to Ferihegy. My problems were not yet sorted I didn’t know where to alight from the bus. So I gave a big smile to this young lady seated next to me and I asked her “ Will you please tell me when I reach Ferihegy train station”. From the look of things she didn’t understand any word I said. She shook her head as a sign of showing she doesn’t know. “ Oh My God! What will I do now?” I tried listening carefully, atleast to get someone who is talking in English but I could not get any. Atleast I managed to get some Hungarian words “Igen” , “koszonom” , “Szia”. This was my first school in Hungary. I sat there pondering my next move, but I thanked God as I saw the railway station written in bold “FERIHEGY” , I knew I was to get off the bus at the next stop. I exactly did what my conscience told me and finally I was at the railways and boarded my train to Szeged.

I got into the train very confidently to one of the coaches and sat there knowing that my problems were over. I admired the beautiful sceneries and landscape, the farms with sunflowers and the oats and vegetables and fruits. This made me know that Hungary is basically an agricultural country. At each stop I observed many people coming in and out of the train, some with bicycles and others without. I again thought to myself that bicycles would be one of the popular modes of transport in Hungary but I can’t remember the last time I cycled. All I could remember is at that time I tried riding on a bike, I

got myself in a thicket of thorns and I swore never to ride again. Now its here with me again? I will think about it later, after all its good for exercise. In my deep thoughts I found myself sleeping, as it has been a long journey and i felt exhausted. I was confident to sleep because I knew Szeged would be the last stop so I was sure to alight at the right point. In my sleep I felt someone touching my shoulders and I slowly opened one eye because I was having a nice sleep and didn't want disturbance. There stood a lady who showed me her tag and from what I could see is that she was an inspector and she wanted to validate my ticket. So I quickly and confidently gave out my ticket only to be told I was sitting in a wrong coach and therefore there were penalties for that. ``Ooooh My God! How do I even start explaining myself? This lady doesn't seem to understand any English. I am in trouble once again. "I sorted out the issue and remembered a saying that was always hammered into our heads since primary school that `` If you think education is expensive, then try Ignorance".

Szeged at last! I found a beautiful young lady waiting for the students of Szeged University thanks to ESN of Szeged who organised how to pick us up from the railway. We got to the city train and then a tram to our destination Othalmi Hostel.

Finally am home , got to my room and called it a day. The next morning was a Monday, I never expected it to rain since the previous day was hot and no sign of any rain, so I never carried an umbrella and so I was showered on. ``Showers of blessings " I thought and indeed it was. Again am alone, trying to find my way to the University and this time round trying to be very smart not to make any mistake that could land me into problems as previously.

Next was crossing the road and I had to make sure I do that only at zebra crossings. At this point there was another problem though I was already at the crossing area, I was used to looking right, then left then right again for any traffic, looking forward and back for any pickpocket and looking up and down for any tree that may fall on you, but this one seems to be opposite. I am always getting confused at the crossing but thanks be to disciplined drivers who will always stop at the crossing. `` I have rarely seen such good people,

crossing the road is the easiest thing far much easier than I thought". I boarded a bus to town bought my ticket and sat down comfortably. I forgot to punch my ticket; again I was caught up with the long hands of the law. I actually remember that experience is a good teacher. I had learnt so many lessons in a short time.

Since I didn't know the location of the University, I followed other students and at long last, I found myself at the University and immediately I knew I was sorted. , I was completely awed and struck by the cleanliness of the University. Moreover, lush of greenery and vibrant colored flowers at the park facing the main building (University of Szeged) made me feel at home.

In the international office of University of Szeged I was given a warm welcome. Smartly dressed, attractive ladies welcomed me to their office all wearing a warm smile. I was well guided and given a map that would lead me to different offices which included immigration office, tax office, opening bank accounts and knowing where different institutes are located. All these procedures were a bit hectic because some forms were not printed in English and so could not understand them but thanks to my mentor who ensured everything is sorted. During the week I made new friends from all walks of life and life started becoming easier, at least no more mistakes.

I marveled at a wonderful city in the Sun with Iconic buildings like the red-brick dom ter, one of the largest Hungarian cathedrals, not to mention a very important place Klebelsberg Library (TIK) a huge , beautiful, spacious building surrounded by well trimmed mass of green grass, good environment indeed for acquiring knowledge.

Apart from these favorable surroundings, I enjoy my studies comfortably in air-conditioned and brightly illuminated, well-equipped with high caliber projectors and expansive rooms fitted with high speed Internet access throughout the university.

As I walk from the university I am amazed by the numerous restaurants along Szechenyi ter. Mouth watering sandwiches and ice creams make my day. I think I should do some justice to my pocket since they are being depleted at a

very high rate, so I decide to take a different route by alighting at Mars ter. Not to forget Dugonic ter with its park and musical fountain.

As I walk down town I feel the cool breeze coming from expansive River Tisza with all the breath taking views. The river is known for the most famous and prestigious festivals during summer surrounded by marvelous art of sculptures.

I now boast of knowing this town Szeged that seemed to be a myth to me. I know Szeged as a city of high stature juxtaposed with well maintained ancient buildings. I am astonished with the number of monuments of distinguished people put on buildings and expansive park.

From this first encounter, I am very proud of being one of the Szegedian students as we prioritize education and discipline and one day I hope to graduate with wealth of knowledge and as more disciplined graduate who is able to effectively use the knowledge to explore the world . I CAN NOW IMAGINE!