



## Volunteer of the Year



**Elvis Ndhukire** is a Ugandan citizen seeking asylum in the UK. In 2005 Elvis received a Year of the Volunteer award for his work with the Refugee Council and St George's Crypt Leeds for the homeless.

### **Tell us about your voluntary work?**

I work with the Refugee Council in Leeds giving talks in schools and community organisations to publicise the work of the Refugee Council and tackle the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. I also volunteer at St George's Crypt, a service for homeless people, which offers food and support and sometimes a bed for the night.

### **What made you decide to volunteer?**

Firstly, I had a lot of time on my hands and wanted to put it to good use. As an asylum seeker I'm not allowed to work but I wanted to be useful. Secondly, there's so much negative publicity around about asylum seekers, as an individual I think it's good to tell people the truth rather than let them be led by negative propaganda.

### **How can we improve public perception of refugees and asylum seekers?**

The government's decision to stop asylum seekers working forces them to depend on benefits and this makes people think that's the reason we're here. There need to be discussions on radio and television where people speak out about reality, until now the only debates have been negative and there are so many positives things to talk about.

### **What are you doing for Refugee Week?**

I try not to make long term plans because I don't know what my future will be but I have enjoyed the Refugee Week events I've been involved in so far.

Refugee Week brings a lot of people together from different communities: When I was in detention local people in Leeds campaigned for my release and paid my legal costs which shows you that not everyone has a bad opinion of asylum seekers and refugees.

### **Links**

[St George's Crypt](#)

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