



## Seeking Sanctuary

### “David”

Sanctuary is where you feel safe, where you can rebuild your life and be useful not only for yourself but for the others ... being part of bigger community and, well, basically, life.

### Commentary

Sheffield is one of a number of cities in the UK in which people taking sanctuary have been dispersed or resettled.

Rodrigo waited a year to be granted refuge after he fled persecution in Uganda.

### Rodrigo Endema:

Before I left the country I was doing my Masters in Local Governance and Human Rights. I also worked for Human Rights Sudan, as a human right activist.

So really the question here is: during all this waiting period, how useful do you feel you can engage yourself and do something constructive?

### Commentary

David also fled persecution in his home country and has received a negative decision on his claim for asylum.

### “David”

My current status is Section Four, asylum refused ...And I, it's been so for seven years...you have nowhere to go and you are in danger, they still want you to leave... But refugees will never leave because they can't go back, and there's no such thing for them as 'back'.

### Commentary

There are tight restrictions on the support asylum seekers receive and on what they are allowed to do.

### “David”:

Unfortunately I can't contribute to this society in any way because all asylum seekers are prohibited to work.

It frustrates you a lot...because you can't go anywhere, you can't even afford basic things such as a bus ticket.

### Commentary:

City of Sanctuary is a network of local people and organisations, which together with those taking sanctuary is involved in a struggle change how asylum-seekers and refugees are viewed and treated.

The Sheffield City of Sanctuary group is one of 17 in the UK.

### Rodrigo Endema:

The City of Sanctuary has been a very good opportunity in, um, identifying for me channels of where I can easily fit. They have been giving me that welcoming hand.

### Commentary:

A key aim of the movement is to create a positive vision of those seeking sanctuary and through this change mainstream attitudes and challenge exclusionary policies. It does so through activities such as work placements, volunteering and Conversation Clubs.

**Rodrigo Endema:**

We want to change and show the people out there that those who have been seeking sanctuary in this country are able to have a very positive contribution towards the society,

**“David”:**

When I joined the City of Sanctuary I actually was able to improve my skills greatly by doing some voluntary work to educate other people about the myths that surround asylum.

**Rodrigo Endema:**

I was able to transfer some of my past experience, share it and analyse it within the British community.

**Commentary**

However, speaking freely or being politically active is not always easy when facing an uncertain future.

**“David”**

People who are in asylum, for them it's impossible to feel secure and that's what really policies are meant to do... and I'm in limbo in the middle of nowhere so to say I can't really risk myself.

**Commentary:**

City of Sanctuary provides opportunities for those taking sanctuary to have a political voice regardless of their vulnerabilities.

**“David”:**

What I try to do is film the events and publish them on the internet so people can learn more about refugees and destitute asylum seekers and policies and all that.

**Rodrigo Endema:**

I've got a belief that voice is power. Unless you speak out, someone may not understand what you are going through.