

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

Account holder(s)	
Address	
Bank sort code	
Account number	
To the manager of:	
Bank name	
Bank address	

PAYMENT AUTHORITY:

Please debit my/our account in accordance with the following details:

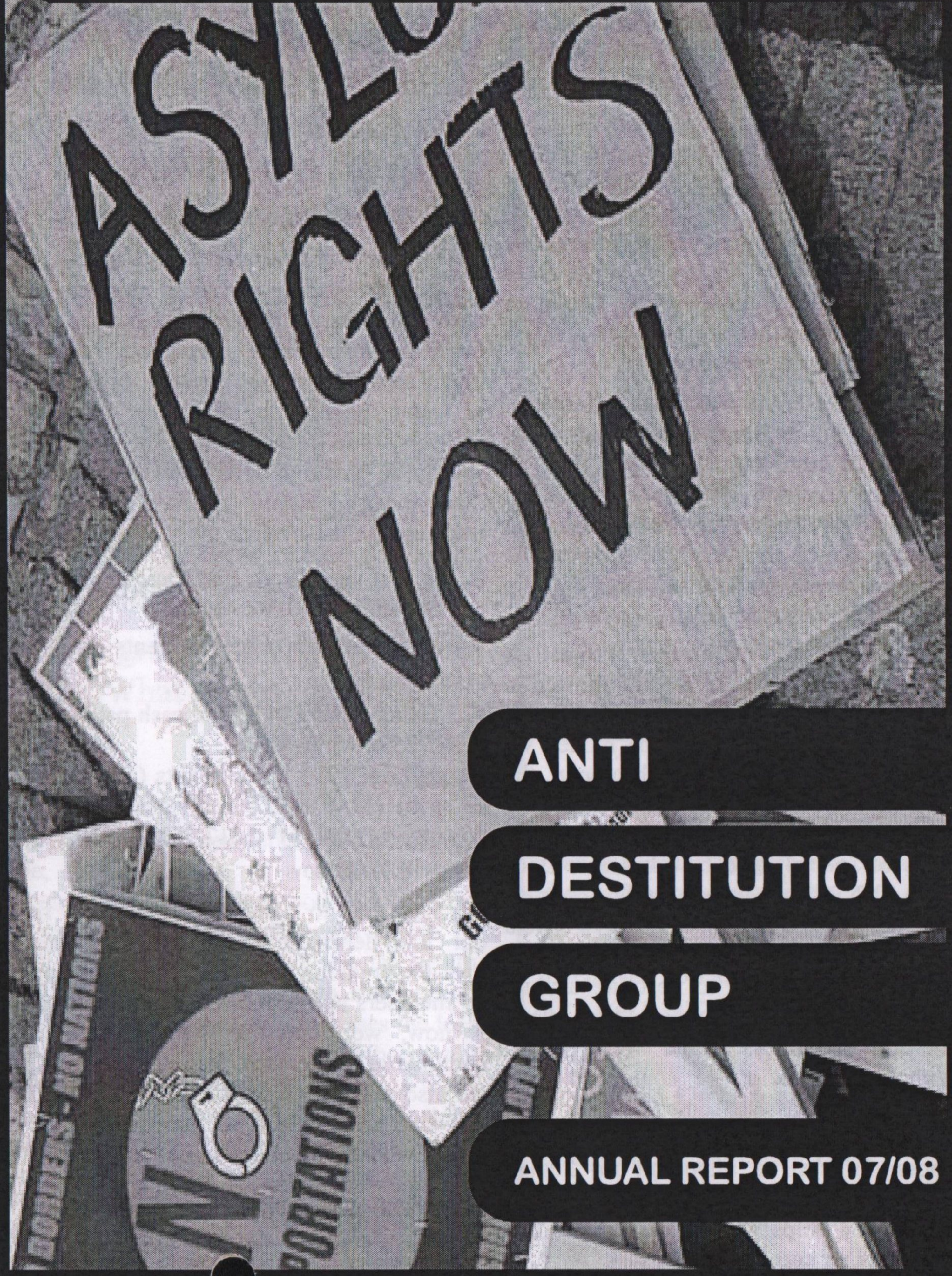
Please pay The Co-operative Bank,
 PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP
 Sort code 089299 / Account 65226311

Monthly amount	
Day of month for payment	£
Starting from	
Until further notice in writing, or	
Date of last payment	
Signed (account holder 1)	
Signed (account holder 2)	

Please complete and return to NNRF:

The Square Centre,
 389-394 Alfred Street North,
 Nottingham NG3 1AA

NOTTINGHAM REFUGEE FORUM



ANTI

DESTITUTION

GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT 07/08

DESTITUTION (CASH) GROUP 2007/08

The Tuesday morning (Cash) group continues to distribute cash, lunch tickets and referrals to the Food group. It has now done so for a total of 226 weeks (more than four years), during which time it has distributed over £75,000.

Destitute asylum seekers whose claims have failed, and who have no other means of income (and are not allowed to work,) are given £10 per month (£20 if they have severe health problems), plus a choice of referral to the Saturday Food Group or tickets entitling them to two hot meals a week in community restaurants.

Many others are also in desperate situations, but as limits to our funds mean we have to restrict our giving to those in most dire need, we are unable to help, for example: asylum seekers on Section Four who survive on £35-worth of supermarket vouchers weekly – and no fares to help them reach the supermarket.

The whole Anti-Destitution Project is voluntarily funded. We are not allowed to use any public funds, so the support of well-wishers is essential. The money we raise covers: the Tuesday Cash support, the Saturday Food Group support, and occasional one-off small grants made at times of special need by advisors. Once again, NNRF's members and supporters have been incredibly generous. We have a solid base of standing orders to fund the support we can give to destitute asylum seekers, and this is augmented by many one-off donations, some very large. Without your help, we could not have continued to assist some of the most vulnerable people amongst us. Even a tiny amount of cash is important for human dignity, affords people some level of choice, and helps with phone calls or bus fares or other special needs.

"I'm very grateful for food and cash I receive each week. Don't think any other refugee group get what we get here in Nottingham."

Women Asylum Seeker

As well as handing out small amounts of cash and referrals to the Food Group, the Cash Group has also, during our regular interviews with asylum seekers, been able to refer people to other services or advisors, soup kitchens, etc. The Group is shortly to undergo interview training so that we can pick up on needs and ways of helping with these needs more effectively.

In the past year (from start October 07 to end September 08), we have:

- Made 922 separate payments (1336 previous year)
 - Handed out £14,339 in cash payments (£17,725 previous year)
- Handed out 1074 lunch tickets (costing us £3 each) (1140 at £2.50 previous year) costing a total of £17,561 (£20,575 previous year).

We have had to tighten our criteria to fit our cloth; hence the slightly reduced giving over the previous year. However, if giving by members and supporters continues as it is now, we hope that we are able to continue at the present rate. Each April, we also make a giant Gift Aid claim, and this is a great help – so may we remind givers who have not yet signed up for Gift Aid, and who are tax payers, that Gift Aid forms are downloadable from the NNRF website or available from the Centre.

"I have been volunteering with the Cash Group for some time. It would be difficult to say that I enjoy it, as we are dealing with people in such difficult situations and we can do so little to help them. I can say that it is always interesting and that I often feel very humbled by the kind and courteous attitudes of people who have undergone such terrible traumas in their country of origin and here are made destitute and have to rely on charitable giving. At a recent session a destitute refugee from Zimbabwe who relies £2.50 a month from the cash group, said:

"I'm grateful for the Refugee Centre. What seems like little, to me is very big"

Jean

As well as causing destitution on a horrifying scale, the prohibition of work for asylum seekers also contributes to boredom; lack of contact with the host community; loss of skills through non-use; and mental health issues, including problems with self-esteem. And for the host community it causes the loss of potentially very valuable contributions – asylum seekers come with all manner of skills and experiences. They can be doctors, engineers, artists, teachers, gardeners, etc – yet the craziness of the asylum system refuses to let them use these skills, and forces them into destitution instead.

Chris Cann

People originate from a whole host of different countries. To give a clearer idea of the current situation: in the last four weeks of September 2008 (the last month for which we have full data) we supported 60 people:

Afghanistan: 2 people
Algeria: 2 people
Angola: 2 people
DR Congo: 9 people
Eritrea: 2 people
Guinea: 1 person
Iran: 15 people
Iraq: 5 people
Jamaica: 1 person
Kenya: 1 person
Korea: 1 person
Malawi: 2 people
Mongolia: 1 person
Pakistan: 4 people
Sudan: 2 people
Syria: 1 person
Zimbabwe: 9 people

Of these:

3 were born in the 1940s*
4 were born in the 1950s*
11 were born in the 1960s
21 were born in the 1970s
20 were born in the 1980s
1 was born in 1990

* When looking at these birthdates, please bear in mind the aging process caused by deprivation, fear and suffering.

12 were female and 48 were male.

1 received no cash, only a referral to the Food Group; 1 received £2.50 as a single week's payment; 30 received £10, the standard amount; 27 received £20 because of bad health in 24 cases, pregnancy in 1 case, unsupported children in 2 cases; 1 received £40, as he is blind and unable to access the Food Group or use lunch tickets.

SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

Hundreds of asylum seekers have accessed support through the destitution group at Nottingham's refugee forum. With limited funds the destitution group provides individuals and families with £5 worth of food per week to survive on. Many of the individuals accessing this support sleep rough and have endured this year's harsh winter with little or no other support at all.

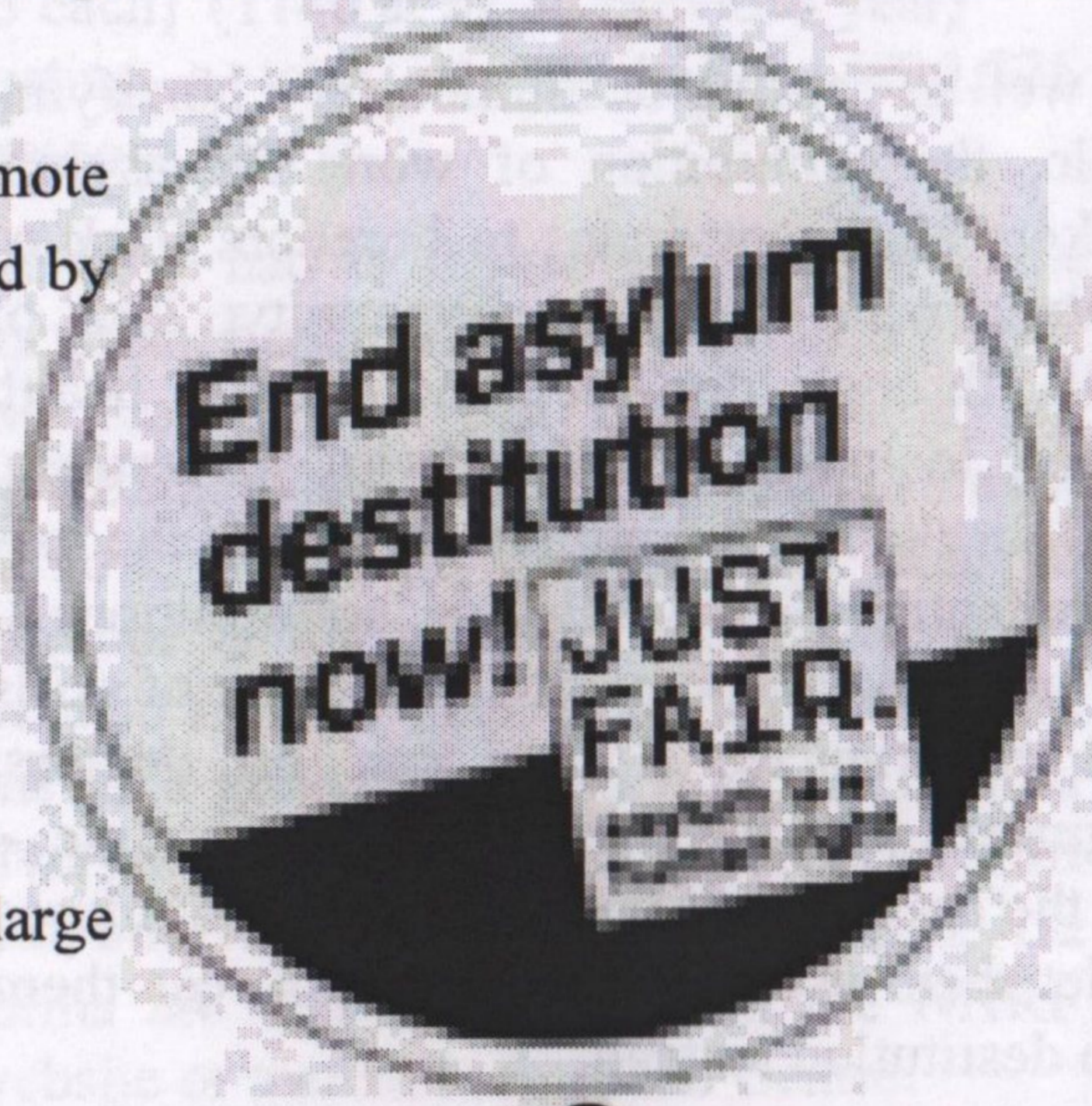
Recently more and more families have been accessing this service, endeavouring to bring up and nourish their children on food rations that would put them below the acceptable poverty line if they were valued enough to become a UK statistic. As it stands, these men, women and children are considered worthless and are granted nothing but resentment and contempt in Britain.

The fallacy that asylum seekers are granted abundant riches in the UK is perpetuated to allow such mistreatment to continue. The money spent on the bureaucracy of hounding asylum seekers would be better spent on helping and supporting those that have fled their Country. Large numbers of current asylum seekers are from Zimbabwe, Congo and Eritrea, only a few of many countries which have been and are being ripped apart.

The political objective behind destitution is to force people into the desperate act of taking voluntary leave to return. After years of homelessness in the UK many asylum seekers consider the option of returning back to a country they fear, rather than endure further long term hardship. In terms of tackling the 'immigration problems' in the UK this is an effective tactic. Their voluntary return contributes to cleaning up the immigrant population who seem to be regarded as nothing more than rubbish and the vermin on British streets. In terms of the UK's humanitarian obligation, this is covert murder: Men, women and children are returning to countries where their lives are at risk through being given no other option.

The anti destitution group aims to promote solidarity, not charity and is voluntarily staffed by asylum seekers and Nottingham residents. It is an opportunity for asylum seekers to help themselves and each other. It also aims to dispel the isolation felt by asylum seekers in their 'host country' by offering friendship and creating social groups for individuals from the same country to meet in what can be a large and lonely city.

Angela



THE RIGHT TO WORK

I am a trade union workplace rep and also volunteer with the food group at the Refugee Forum. In my role as a union rep I try to ensure that people are treated fairly at work. The people I work with as a union rep have at least the opportunity to get paid work. Asylum seekers do not have this opportunity. Since 2002 asylum seekers in the UK have not been allowed to work. The right to work is a fundamental right. It is a right that trade unionists have fought for through the centuries and across the world. It is a right that is being denied to one of the most vulnerable groups of people living in the UK today.

The asylum seekers that I know in Nottingham have a range of skills and work experience in areas such as nursing and teaching but they are not allowed to put these skills into use. They do not want hand outs or charity. They want the right to work to support themselves and their families, pay taxes and contribute to the economy. Being allowed to work would allow these traumatised people the chance to rebuild their lives. A paid job brings a sense of self respect and dignity and allows a person some control over their live. It is also a way of meeting people and making friends.

The TUC (Trade Union Congress) and the Refugee Council have a joint campaign to allow people to work. For further information see: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/gettinginvolved/campaign/righttowork

Frank McMahon



As the Public Relations Officer of NZCN, I can confirm that all Zimbabwean Asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers are not allowed by the law in this country to be employed. The problem now is that since there was a general ruling that Zimbabwean failed asylum seekers should not be deported, the little handouts they get from the government are far from sustaining them in their everyday lives in this country. Moreover they are required by the law TO REGULARLY TRAVEL LONG DISTANCES TO SIGN (E.G. LOUGHBOROUGH. Most of them have great responsibilities as they have children and close relatives or dependants to feed either or both here and back home in Zimbabwe. Some of their dependants are orphans and victims of political violence in Zimbabwe.
Innocent

FEEDING BELLY AND MINDS

The food group has been the core support for many destitute asylum seekers who suffer abuse, mentally and physically. The food group has involved asylum seekers who are left without friends or any contact with the outside world as destitution does destroy you mentally, in many different activities including football where different people from different backgrounds came together and formed a team and a music group and trips to the cinema.

The aim for this was to build bridges between communities who knew nothing about each other which was successful and we were also celebrating the fact that being an asylum seeker is not to be seen as it is your fault but rather a matter of circumstances and it can not be helped no matter what you can do but instead apply your life focussing on your strong points not on your weakness and this was our motto.

Asylum seekers are not a burden but rather people containing gifts left undiscovered waiting to be illustrated."

This year we've tried to organise lots of different events and activities that our volunteers and asylum seekers could attend and get involved with.

In December, linking up with NNRF's women's group we helped to organise at the Forum a big Christmas Party. Over 150 people attended (including over 50 children) And we had lots of activities for people to get involved with, including presents for all the children. Also in December we raised money so that all our asylum seeker volunteers could join with NNRF's staff & volunteers at The Royal Thai restaurant for NNRF'S Christmas meal

In early January, one of our volunteers faced being deported back to Burundi when he was detained when making his weekly trip to Loughborough to sign. We organised (with more than a little help from Patrick) to get his flight back to Burundi stopped and for him to be release from the detention centre.

In March, we worked with the Zimbabwean Asylum Seekers and No Borders Nottingham to organise a public meeting at The Sumac Centre and a demonstration in

the Market Square. We wanted to raise the issues about forced destitution and the right to work for the Zimbabwean Community. From this, Nottingham Zimbabwean Community Network was formed and they campaign regularly on these issues.

In April , we organised a meal at a Kurdish Restaurant for all our volunteers to celebrate Awara's 21st Birthday.

In May, some of our volunteers and users attended Nottingham May Day march in support of Asylum seekers.

During the summer, we organised weekly trips to the cinema for all volunteers and users. For some this was the first time they had opportunity to attend the cinema. Thanks to Dave for getting over 100 free cinema tickets for the group.

In August, we organised a Barbecue at the forum, we had loads of prizes, food and drink, It also was an opportunity for Ravi and Frank to perform live music for the rest of the group.

In September, to celebrate Eritrean & Ethiopian New Year, we invited John Heppel MP to the group to meet and talk with destitute Asylum Seekers. Many of our group talked with him about destitution but unfortunately many felt that he was not prepared to listen.

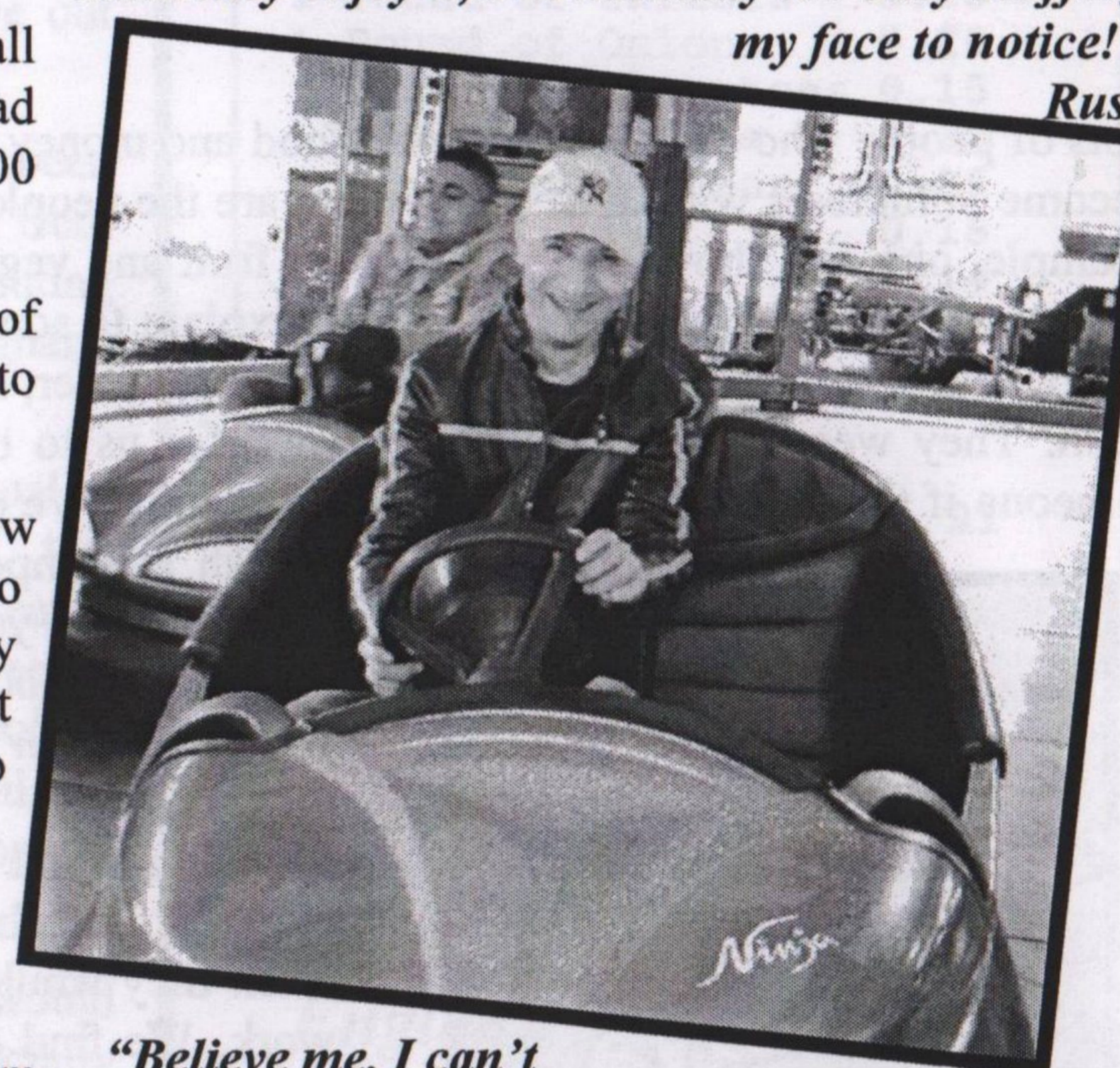
In October, we raised money for some of our users and volunteers to go to the Goose Fair.

We're currently involved in working with Asylum Seekers in setting up Small World Cinema at the Sumac Centre, Gladstone St. We hope to show on the second Wednesday of every month different films from around the world. The films will be chosen by Asylum Seekers who attend our group and we hope to have some vegan food cooked by them. After the film there will be plenty time for discussion



"Working in the kitchen for the anti-destitution group is always an experience. For a start, the facilities, or lack of, leave you struggling to pull everything together for the 12pm lunchtime. Whether it's squeezing half a pan onto one of the tiny 4 hobs or desperately looking for a serving dish to get the food out, there's always a bit of last-minute panic! We have a rotating pool of helpers in the kitchen, with Berhan, Ruth, Delilah, Mukader, Floe and myself normally found somewhere near a frying pan. The delight of volunteering in this programme is the sharing of ideas, from finding out new ways to fry fish or learning how to make cottage cheese from yoghurt to tasting the mix of foods that gets produced every week, I'm always surprised by the variety of food we end up producing and how this manages to please all the different tastes we have to cater for. At least I think they enjoy it, I'm normally too busy scoffing my face to notice!"

Russ



"Believe me, I can't thank the Food Group enough for what they have done for me. Not just for the food that they have given me, but for the other things like visiting me in hospital or going to the Cinema or the time we went to Goose Fair or the trip to Blackpool. I have made many new good friends on a Saturday. Thank you."

Mustafa



“I think inflation has it's harsh action on everyone in particular on those with less and less Revenues or earnings.

Having considered the price of food, even bread has risen up. It is practically impossible to bear the life for most asylum seekers!

For the sake of God, think for them, let them work or give them resolution.”

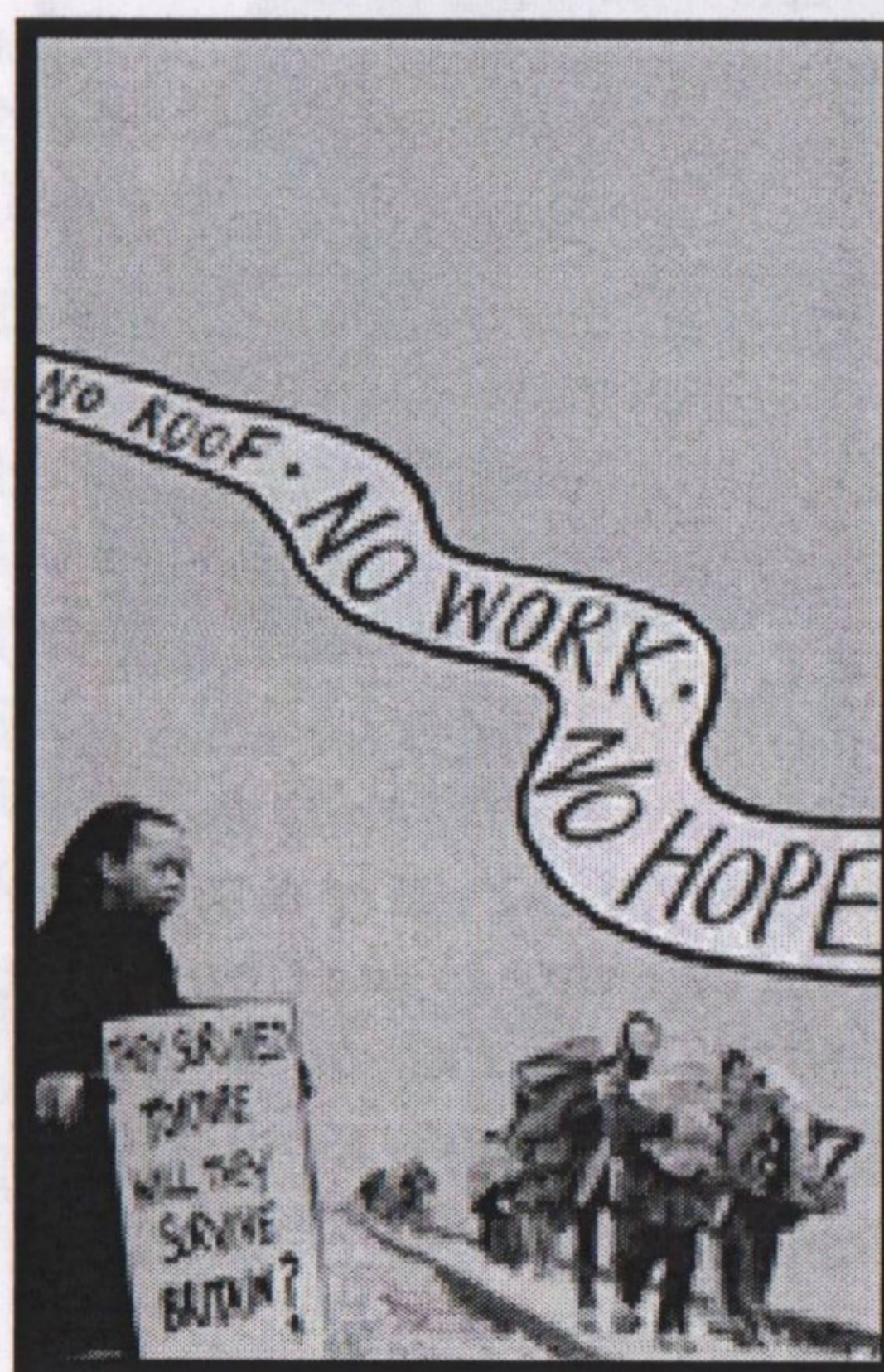
Asylum Seeker

Lots of people who start out receiving food and money from the Destitution Group go on to become volunteers with it. Some of them are the people who trained me as a volunteer. For example, one guy showed me how much fruit and vegetables we can afford to give out to each person. He also showed me how to explain to someone ‘I’m sorry, but you can’t have a pepper *and* a tomato this week, just one or the other, so that everyone can have something fresh. They were too expensive this week for us to buy enough.’ It’s hard to say no to someone if they ask for tinned sardines *and* tuna. We can only afford to give them one tin

of fish. It’s important to say this in a way that doesn’t imply that you think people are being greedy for asking for enough vegetables or protein, and that you know it isn’t enough.

Most important of all is to try to treat people not as recipients of charity. We talk to them about what work they would like to do if they were allowed to work. We find out what jobs they did at home before they fled their countries, in the days when they earned money and bought what they needed. Lots of them are better qualified than me or earned more than I earn. It’s really important to remember that it is the Home Office that stops them providing for themselves, and to let them know that we are aware of this.

Host community volunteer.



23% THE REAL COST OF INFLATION

Since the summer, we’ve noticed the weekly increase in the cost of the basic products that we buy for the food distribution.

Items such as rice has increase in price from 51p per kilo to 74p, 6 eggs from 54p to 82p, vegetable oil from 60p to 1.08p, tinned tomatoes from 16p to 26p.

In fact the overall cost has increased by over 23% since last year.

NB Rice has increase in price again this week to 95p per kilo. An increase of 21p in two weeks and 44p increase in 1 year

DESTITUTION (FOOD GROUP) REPORT 2007/08

In the year to 30.09.08, we distributed nearly 2000 food parcels (average 38 per week), this is 800 food parcels less than we distributed in 2006/07. The main reason for this is many of the destitute asylum seekers from DR Congo was able to obtain Section 4 support (£35 in vouchers and accommodation from the Home Office) this year. At the start of the year we had 10 people from DR Congo receiving food support and at the end of the year only 1 person.

During the year the numbers of different people attend has increased, and numbers of long term users has decreased. At times, about 25% attending are destitute for a short time due to errors or delays in their Government Support.

We’re currently distributing approximately 35 food parcels per week, and in the last two months have supported over 70 people.

RED CROSS

This year with the help of Nottingham Red Cross, we’ve been able to give out more food than ever before.

Since early 2008, Red Cross has been collecting surplus supermarket food from Fairshare in Birmingham and distributing it free to projects in Nottingham, Leicester and Derby.

The food we get is always good quality and includes items such as juice, tea, baked beans, tinned tomatoes & peanut butter (which helps to reduce are weekly shopping bill). We also get chocolate, soup, bags of fruit & nut, cake cereal and many other items we can not afford to buy.

At times, I’m not sure how we would manage without this support, especially as the cost of what we buy is increasing every week. This food is very much appreciated by destitute Asylum Seekers and the Anti Destitution Group and we would like to thank Robbie and all his volunteers at Nottingham Red Cross for all their support.

Bill

NNRF FOOD GROUP

	£
1 Litre of Juice	0.58
1 Litre of Milk	0.54
1 Kilo of Rice	0.95
1 Tin of Tuna	0.48
1 Baked Beans	0.29
1 Sweet Corn	0.32
1 Kidney Beans	0.18
1 Chopped Tomatoes	0.26
1 Tinned Peaches	0.28
1 Litre Of Oil	1.08
1 Tin of Pilchards	0.68
1 Peanut Butter	0.55
1 Pound of Carrots	0.20
1 Pound of Onions	0.20
2 Pounds of Potatoes	0.15
1 Pound of Apples	0.30
1 Pound of Bananas	0.25
2 Toilet Rolls	0.18
40 Tea Bags	0.14
1 Cup of Sugar	0.16
1 Cup of W/Powder	0.14

Total Cost Per person to NNRF 7.91

Total Cost to Destitute Asylum Seekers 0.00

“I was in four cities in England and I haven’t seen anyone doing as much as here. Giving people food is great. If it was twice a week it would be easy for people to plan & survive.”

Asylum Seeker

IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE, PLAY ON

The music workshop which was started last June 07 provided entertainment and attraction to those who were new to instruments including drums, guitar, and violins. The guitar was taught extremely well and at a pace that would be understandable. During the music workshop we were taught the different chords, different styles to play i.e. Arpeggio, Bar chords or just strumming and accompany it with guitar songs. It gave the destitute asylum seekers to do something new, not only face the burden of abuse in a venerable foreign atmosphere but to enable them to be attaining talent out of it.



Ravi

OUR VOLUNTEERS

We encourage everyone to get involved, so in away, everyone's a volunteer. We do not want asylum seekers to be merely the passive recipients of charitable handouts, our motto is Solidarity Not Charity. It's about Asylum seekers helping Asylum Seekers.

So our volunteers include the Algerian family who bring in make a big pan of home made couscous and soup each week, the Pakistan family who help to decant the Sugar, nut's, washing powder. The many different asylum seekers who get involved in helping by washing the dishes, bringing the food up and down the stairs, tidying away stuff at the end, chopping vegetables etc.

We also have our core volunteers (Asylum Seeker, Refugee & Host Community), who come every week (rain or shine) and help with the distribution of the food to Asylum Seekers, making the wonderful hot meals that we all eat, translating, listening and talking to Asylum Seekers, cleaning our storerooms, sorting and displaying the clothes that get donated, teaching asylum seekers to play the guitar, buying the food, collecting the referral forms and maintaining our register plus all the many other tasks we do in a week.

We're always looking for new volunteers to get involved, for details contact NNRF.

Bill

The food is good and nice. The people & volunteers are good friends

Asylum Seeker Volunteer

Last year our core asylum seeker volunteers came from the following countries:- Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Turkey & Zimbabwe

THE DILEMMA OF DESTITUTION

Half a dozen years have passed since my arrival in the UK as an asylum seeker. My application for asylum was refused, as well as my only appeal. The decision on my life was made by some judge who might never been to my country to witness the enormous pretence that it is a so-called "democracy"!

The refusal led to my support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) being withdrawn, a situation that has made me destitute, which I've endured for some years now. Throughout this time I've been helped and supported by Ms S (the most important presence in my life) and by Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF), and independent institution whose determination to tone down the burden on asylum seekers—especially those who come across destitution— would go to any length.

My life has been a dilemma between destitution and a voluntary return to my previous home country, on which I refuse to make a choice. On one hand, going back to my country would mean accepting and applauding the government and the police's disguised atrocities (including abductions and secret killings), or on the other hand embracing destitution, which would make me a supporter of the Home Office's bad handling of human rights which they proclaim to defend.

So I've chosen to hold hands with those who fight the government's immigration policy on deportation.

Thank you

Food Group Asylum Seeker Volunteer

BIG THANK YOU

The Anti Destitution Group would like to extend our warmest thanks to everyone who has contributed, and made it possible to continue supporting people who, after suffering in their own countries and during their dangerous journeys here, now are condemned to destitution in a supposedly civilised country.

Chris Cann

The Food Group would like to thank the following volunteers who left the Group this year for all the help and support:-

Richard (taking a well earned rest), Ravi (gone to University), Timothy & Suliman (moved to Stoke and Manchester by Home Office)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The food provided by the Food Group at Nottingham Refugee Forum for destitution goes a long way in making days to those in need. I must emphasise that it is very helpful.

We all know that most people who are asylum seekers and those with refused status but can not return to their respective countries due to fear of persecution which is not believed by the Home Office are not allowed to work and hence go to Refugee Forum for such help, which although is not enough, but helps when we have nothing.

Your financial assistance in this programme is most welcome and appreciated by all the destitute Asylum seekers who are supported by NNRF.

Thank you for you help.

Asylum Seeker