

RUTH FIRST EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Charity No. 1019975

Trustees: Christine Cumming, Barbara Ewin (Treasurer), Cheryl McEwan, Lotte Shankland, John Tierney, Michael Thompson (Chairman).

Patrons: Bill Bryson (Chancellor of the University of Durham), Prof. Christopher Higgins (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Durham), Gillian Slovo (writer, daughter of Ruth First).

School of Modern Languages & Cultures, University of Durham, Durham DH1 3JT
m.p.thompson@durham.ac.uk

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10

The aims of the Trust are:

- To enable southern African students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds to undertake postgraduate study at the University of Durham.
- To educate and inform students and staff at the University, as well as residents of the area, about educational and development issues in southern Africa.
- To raise funds to support these activities.

Southern Africa is defined for this purpose as comprising the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

This report gives details of activities undertaken by the Trust in the year ending 31 July 2010 in pursuit of these aims.

The Studentship in 2009-10

The Ruth First Scholar this year was Simplicio Bhebhe, from Zimbabwe. He took a Master of Laws (LLM), including a dissertation on the problem of legal jurisdiction over torture in Zimbabwe.

Simplicio was a member of St Chad's College. He did voluntary work with St John's Ambulance, and performed with Ngoma Vuma Uropa, the African vocal and percussion ensemble formed by Peter Okeno Ong'are, the 2007-08 Ruth First Scholar. He was also a member of Durham University United Nations Society. In September 2010 he returned to Zimbabwe and started working on a voluntary basis for Zimbabwean Lawyers for Human Rights and the Harare law firm Kantor and Immerman. Simplicio's webpage is at: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/bhebhe.htm>.

The Studentship in 2010-11

Once again, a large number of applications were received from all over southern Africa. All the applications were made available to the shortlisting committee electronically, which allowed Bongani Ndimba in South Africa to contribute to the process, in consultation with former Ruth First Scholars. The shortlist was considered by the full executive committee at a selection meeting in June 2010, and the Scholarship was offered to Mr Tinashe Ruswa, who will take an MSc in Internet Systems & E-Business in the School of Engineering and Computing Sciences. Tinashe is from Zimbabwe but has been studying in Cape Town. He arrived in Durham at the end of September 2010 and moved into St Chad's College accommodation at Trinity Hall. He is a talented cricketer and has joined Northern Universities Student Club-Community Cricketers Elite. Further details about Tinashe can be found on the Trust's website:

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/thisyear.htm>.

Past Ruth First Scholars

The 2007-08 Scholar, Peter Okeno Ong'are, is continuing his PhD in the Music Department. He is supported by the Department, St Chad's College and RFET. His topic is the role of music in processes of reconciliation and healing after conflict in Rwanda. He has continued to run Ngoma Vuma Uropa, the vocal and percussion group based in St Chad's College, which performed at the Banquets in 2009 and 2010, and in various venues around the University and the City.

Nomazile Chicho (2008-09) has started a PhD in Botswana on a topic related to health and nursing. Shari Daya (2001-02) has obtained a lectureship at the University of Cape Town. Information about all former Ruth First Scholars can be found on the RFET website: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/former.htm>.

Events

The annual banquet organized jointly with the Durham Palestine Educational Trust was held on 20 February 2010. Delicious food was prepared by various volunteers from both Trusts, local businesses donated prizes for a raffle, and the auction of skills and services was deployed again with great success. Music was coordinated and led by Peter Okeno Ong'are, featuring a student band during the meal and African songs and drumming by Ngoma Vuma Uropa. The event was a great success, raising about £2000 for the Trust.

The Trust helped to organize a successful visit to the UK by Ngoma Vuma Afrika, Peter's original vocal and percussion group from South Africa, in November 2009. They conducted workshops in schools around County Durham and performed in the University, churches and other venues. RFET supporters helped to provide accommodation, food and transport. The group also performed in London and Kent.

Cheryl McEwan once again completed the Great North Run and raised funds for the Trust. Mike Thompson and Simplicio Bhebhe took part in the sponsored walk organized by the DPET and raised over £500. Bill Bryson and Chris Higgins continue to be enthusiastic supporters of the Trust and Gillian Slovo, Ruth First's daughter, agreed to become a Patron.

Finance

The accounts for 2009-10 will be tabled at the AGM by the Treasurer. The cost of providing partial support for Peter Ong'are's doctoral studies in the form of half the cost of his accommodation at St Chad's was mostly covered by income from the Ngoma Vuma Afrika tour. The cost of the RF Scholarship has continued to exceed income, which makes an increase in fundraising activity an urgent priority. A mailing to all University staff will be carried out in the first term of 2010-11 in order to increase income from regular donations.

Annual grants are received from Durham County Council (£2000 per year) and the Durham branch of the National Union of Mineworkers (£500 per year). We are very grateful to both bodies for this continuing support, to Grenville Holland for his advice and timely interventions, to the University of Durham for its commitment to awarding tuition fee scholarships to Ruth First Scholars, to the Departments that provide teaching and supervision, and to St Chad's College for its valuable contribution to supporting and integrating the Scholar each year. The allowance paid to the Scholar and the payments to St Chad's for accommodation are administered through a Gift Agreement with the University, which can claim matching funds from the Funding Council.

8 November 2010

Mike Thompson

Chairman of the Trustees