

RUTH FIRST EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Charity No. 1019975

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

Patrons: Sir Thomas Allen (Chancellor of Durham University), Bill Bryson (writer, former Chancellor of Durham University), Prof. Christopher Higgins (Vice-Chancellor of Durham University), Gillian Slovo (writer, President of English PEN, daughter of Ruth First)

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ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

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 2013 in pursuit of these aims.

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2012-13

The Ruth First Scholar this year was Agnes Wizi, who is from Malawi. Like her predecessor Pearson Nkhoma, she took an MA in Social Work Studies in the School of Applied Social Sciences. Her dissertation investigated attitudes towards disability and the experiences of disabled women in Malawi. She was a member of St Chad's College, which supports the Scholarship by providing subsidized accommodation. She was elected as the Taught Postgraduate Representative on the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Health. She played an active part in the work of the Trust and, together with Pearson and their supervisor Helen Charnley, raised over £1600 from the sponsored walk.

Agnes will return home to Malawi after attending her degree ceremony in January 2014. In the meantime, she is staying with friends in Coventry. She hopes to work for an NGO or carry out further research related to social work. Aggie's Ruth First webpage is at: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/wizi.htm>.

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2013-14

There were 48 applications, 23 men and 25 women. The largest numbers of applications were from Malawi and Zimbabwe (15 each). The most popular subject area was Business, Finance, Management and Economics (13), followed by Applied Social Sciences (7) and Anthropology (5). After consultation with all the members of the Executive Committee (including Bongani Ndimba in Cape Town), the Scholarship was awarded to Barbara Mutedzi from Zimbabwe. Barbara will take an MSc in Medical Anthropology. She arrived in Durham at the end of September 2013 and moved into St Chad's College accommodation at Trinity Hall. Further details about Barbara can be found on the Trust's website:

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

Past Ruth First Scholars

The 2011-12 Scholar, Pearson Nkhoma, won a prestigious Durham Doctoral Studentship and is doing a PhD in social work studies, investigating the problem of child prostitution in southern Africa.

Tinashe Ruswa (2010-11) has continued his work to make available to organizations in South Africa the open-learning system he developed for his MSc at Durham. In 2013 he received a community award from SS4LS (Sports Skills for Life Skills) in recognition of the work he has done in making the application work for that NGO.

Simplicio Bhebhe (2009-10) has continued to do brave and important work in the defence of human rights in Zimbabwe. As a member of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, he recently defended families of miners who had been arrested and beaten by the police for staging a peaceful demonstration.

Peter Okeno Ong'are (2007-08) is close to completing his PhD at Durham on the role of music in processes of reconciliation and healing after conflict in Rwanda. He has continued to lead the African vocal and drumming group Ngoma Vuma Uropa, and has helped Durham students to set up a project supporting a school in Nairobi.

Mthoko Ntuli (2004-05) has been promoted four times by his employer, Mangosuthu University of Technology, and is now responsible for managing Student Governance and Leadership Development.

Owen Manda (2003-04) worked as a researcher in the Centre for Sociological Research at the University of Johannesburg, and since October 2012 has been HR Manager/Project Consultant for the market research firm KLA. He is part of a growing movement of black professionals aiming to transform areas of the private sector still dominated by white South Africans.

Information about all former Ruth First Scholars can be found on the RFET website: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/former.htm>.

Events

In October 2012, the Ruth First Lecture was given by Gillian Slovo to an audience of about 85 people. The event took the form of a conversation about her work, her parents, South Africa and issues of human rights and freedom of expression with three interlocutors from Durham: Dr Diana Collecott, Baroness Maeve Sherlock and Professor Justin Willis.

The annual banquet organized jointly with the Durham Palestine Educational Trust was held in February 2013. 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 solo harpist during the meal and African songs and drumming by Ngoma Vuma Uropa. The event was a great success, raising over £1800 for the Trust.

Ngoma Vuma Uropa also gave a concert in the Music School in March in aid of the RFET and several other causes, including Peter Ong'are's Korogocho School project.

In June, the University's alumni magazine *Durham First* published an article about the Ruth First Scholarship, which led to several alumni pledging long-term support for the Trust. Also in June, Mike Thompson, Helen Charnley, Pearson Nkhoma, Agnes Wizi and friends took part in an enjoyable sponsored walk around Teesdale in June organized by the DPET, raising a record sum of over £2600. Soon after that, Helen, Pearson and Agnes had a meeting with Joyce Banda, the President of Malawi, who has expressed an interest in coming to Durham to give the next Ruth First Lecture.

Bill Bryson, Chris Higgins, Sir Thomas Allen and Gillian Slovo continue to be supportive Patrons of the Trust.

Finance

The accounts for 2012-13 will be tabled at the AGM by the Treasurer. A reduction in costs and a rise in income have corrected the deficit suffered last year, but further efforts will continue to be needed to secure the future of the Scholarship.

Annual grants are received from Durham County Council (£2000 per year) and the Durham Mineworkers' Association (£500 per year). The Trust has a new corporate sponsor: QStudent, the owners of Ruth First House on Claypath, which used to house Durham City Council offices but now contains student accommodation. QStudent have promised to renovate the Ruth First plaque on the side of the building. We are very grateful to all three organizations for this continuing support.

We are also grateful to Councillors Grenville Holland and Mac Williams for their advice; 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 especially to Helen Charnley, who has provided inspirational supervision to the last two RF Scholars); to the members of Ngoma Vuma Uropa for their contributions to fundraising events; to the Durham Palestine Educational Trust for its collaboration in fundraising; and to St Chad's College for its valuable commitment to supporting Ruth First Scholars and integrating them into the college community.

19 November 2013

Mike Thompson

Chairman of the Board of Trustees