

RUTH FIRST EDUCATIONAL TRUST

UK 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 (former Vice-Chancellor of Durham University), Gillian Slovo (writer, President of English PEN, daughter of Ruth First)

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ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

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 2014 in pursuit of these aims.

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2013-14

The Ruth First Scholar this year was Barbara Mutedzi, who is from Zimbabwe. She took an MSc in Medical Anthropology. Her dissertation, which was awarded a Distinction, investigated the provision of support and treatment for adolescents affected by HIV/AIDS.. She was a member of St Chad's College, which supports the Scholarship by providing subsidized accommodation. Within the Anthropology Department, Barbara was the Postgraduate Consultative Committee representative for Medical Anthropology, and part of the Anthropology postgraduate conference organizers team. She was also Trinity Hall's representative to the St Chad's College Committee and Middle Common Room. She wrote an article about herself for the College magazine, in which she said: 'The social and intellectual stimulation that I received in this academic environment is an amazing and unquantifiable experience, whose rewards I can already feel – as I grow with confidence, retaining skills that will help me and my future employees contribute to the local and global community at large.'

Barbara has returned home to Zimbabwe. She would like to do a PhD in the UK in a field similar to the topic of her MSc dissertation, and is applying for funding. She is also applying for jobs with NGOs in Zimbabwe and has resumed her voluntary work for a charity supporting young people living with HIV. Barbara's Ruth First webpage is at:

community.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/mutedzi.htm

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2014-15

There were 29 applications, 15 men and 14 women. The largest numbers of applications were from Zimbabwe (11) and Malawi (6). The most popular subject area was Business, Finance, Management and Economics (13). After consultation with all the members of the

Executive Committee (including Bongani Ndimba in Cape Town), the Scholarship was awarded to Dave Namusanya from Malawi. Dave is taking an MA in Community and Youth Work. He arrived in Durham at the end of September 2014 and moved into St Chad's College accommodation at Trinity Hall. Further details about Dave can be found on the Trust's website: community.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/thisyear.htm

Past Ruth First Scholars

The 2012-13 Scholar, Agnes Wizi, remained in the UK for eleven months after completing her course. She wrote in September 2014 as she returned to Malawi: 'I am going home with confidence that the experience that I have attained here will be used to make positive and lasting differences in the lives of many underprivileged Malawians who are trapped in the pangs of social injustice.'

Pearson Nkhoma (2011-12) is doing a PhD in social work studies at Durham, investigating the problem of child prostitution in southern Africa. He has spent time over the past year carrying out fieldwork in Malawi.

Simplicio Bhebhe (2009-10) is a partner in the law firm Kantor and Immerman and part-time tutor at the University of Zimbabwe Business School. He is still active in Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights.

Peter Okeno Ong'are (2007-08) has completed his PhD at Durham on the role of music in processes of reconciliation and healing after conflict in Rwanda and is seeking academic work in Kenya or South Africa. The student African singing and drumming group continues to flourish, and some of its members are still supporting a school near Nairobi.

Owen Manda (2003-04) is listed in the online directory *Who's Who Southern Africa*: whoswho.co.za/owen-manda-393570

Abbey Kgaile (1997-98) is Head of General Training at the Free State Training and Development Institute (part of the Department of the Premier of Free State).

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

Events

In April 2014, the Ruth First Lecture was given by Professor Ahmed Bawa to an audience of about 70 people, with the title 'We were wrong: the struggle was not a prophet of our future'. Ahmed is a Durham alumnus, a former anti-apartheid activist and current Vice-Chancellor of Durban University of Technology. Thanks to Bruno Van Dyk (Director of Development & Alumni Relations) for introducing the speaker and agreeing, together with Sharne Proctor (Director of the International Office), to cover the cost of accommodation and hospitality. Details of past Ruth First Lectures are now archived on the website: community.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/rf-lectures.htm

A magnificent new RFET banner created by Lotte Shankland was unveiled for the first time at the Ruth First Lecture. The image has also been printed onto greetings cards.

The annual banquet organized jointly with the Durham Palestine Educational Trust was held in February 2014. Delicious food was prepared by 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 African songs and drumming by Ngoma Vuma Uropa. The event was a great success, raising over £1700 for the Trust.

In June, Mike Thompson, Helen Charnley and Sarah Banks took part in an enjoyable sponsored walk around Richmond organized by the DPET. Pearson Nkhoma and Barbara Mutedzi were carrying out fieldwork in Malawi and Zimbabwe at the time, but organized their own walks there with friends. Over £1300 was raised.

Lastly, St Chad's College MCR held a dinner in aid of the RFET in July and raised £93.

Finance

The accounts for 2013-14 will be tabled at the AGM by the Treasurer. There was an increase in income compared with the previous year, largely due to delayed payment of the County Council's grant, though the amount raised from fundraising events was significantly lower. There was a slight increase in costs. The resulting modest surplus has allowed the Trust to increase its reserves. There is continuing concern, however, over whether the County Council will be able to continue to support the Scholarship.

The Trust now has a Virgin Money Giving page for collecting online donations and sponsorship:

uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1009191

Annual grants are received from Durham County Council (£2000 per year), the Durham Mineworkers' Association (£500 per year plus a contribution to books for the Scholar) and QStudent, the owners of Ruth First House on Claypath (£2600 per year). We are very grateful to all three organizations for their continuing support.

We are also grateful to Councillors Grenville Holland and Mac Williams for their advice; to Durham University for its commitment to awarding tuition fee scholarships to Ruth First Scholars; to the Departments that provide teaching and supervision; to Peter Ong'are and the members of Ngoma Vuma Uropa for their contributions to fundraising events; to the Durham Palestine Educational Trust for its collaboration in fundraising; to the Shanklands for their banner-making skills; and to St Chad's College for its valuable commitment to supporting Ruth First Scholars and integrating them into the College community.

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

10 November 2014

Mike Thompson

Chairman of the Board of Trustees