

RUTH FIRST EDUCATIONAL TRUST

UK Charity No. 1019975

Trustees: Cheryl McEwan (Secretary), Francis Pritchard (Treasurer), 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, former President of English PEN, daughter of Ruth First)

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

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

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 2019 in pursuit of these aims.

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2018-19

The Scholarship was awarded to Faith Chipuriro from Zimbabwe, who took an MSc in Internet Systems and E-Business. She lived in St Chad's College accommodation at Trinity Hall. She completed her course successfully and was awarded a Distinction. She gave a fascinating Ruth First Scholar Seminar entitled 'Transforming education and survival skills in rural Zimbabwe through mobile learning', which focused on Faith's ambition to develop a sustainable mobile e-learning system to support education in remote rural areas. She has stayed in Durham for a few months in order to undertake an internship with an IT company. Faith's Ruth First webpage is at: community.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/chipuriro.htm

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2019-20

There were 95 applications. The largest number of applications was from Zimbabwe 34 The most popular subject area was Business, Accounting, Finance, Management, Economics (26 applications). We presented a ranked shortlist to the University's scholarships panel, which approved our selection. The Scholarship was awarded to Debra Sithole from Zimbabwe. Debra is taking an MSc in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding. She arrived in Durham at the beginning of October 2019 and moved into St Chad's College accommodation at Trinity Hall. Further details about Debra can be found on the Trust's website: community.dur.ac.uk/ruthfirst.trust/thisyear.htm

Updates on past Ruth First Scholars

The 2017-18 Scholar, Paul Chiwaya, is working as a project coordinator and part-time lecturer in Science Education at Chancellor College, Malawi. He has also worked as a consultant for Itad (a UK-based firm that monitors international development projects).

The 2016-17 Scholar, Chipo Sana, who was working for Norfolk County Council as a social worker, has moved to South Wales.

The 2014-15 Scholar, Dave Namusanya, is working with the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust as a social scientist, leading a study investigating child mortality in Malawi. He is also on the board of the NGO Education Support Initiative, and is still an active blogger and journalist.

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

Events

2018-19 turned out to be a quiet year with very few events.

In June, Faith Chipuriro gave the 2019 Ruth First Scholar Seminar at St Aidan's College, which was attended by about 20 people.

Also in June, Mike Thompson, Helen Charnley and Faith Chipuriro took part in an enjoyable sponsored walk around Craster organized in collaboration with the DPET. A record amount of £3150 was raised.

Finance

The accounts for 2018-19 will be tabled at the AGM by the Treasurer. Costs were similar to those of previous years but regular income has fallen. The loss of Banquet revenue and donations from QStudent was compensated for in this year by a very generous grant from a local charitable foundation (which requested that the donation remain anonymous).

Annual grants are received from Durham County Council (£2000 per year) and the Durham Mineworkers' Association (£600 per year). We are very grateful to both organizations for their support.

We are also grateful to Durham University for its commitment to awarding tuition fee scholarships to Ruth First Scholars; to the Departments that provide teaching and supervision; to the Durham Palestine Educational Trust for its collaboration in fundraising events; to St Aidan's College and its Principal, Dr Susan Frenk, for hosting Ruth First Scholar Seminars; and to St Chad's College and its Principal, Dr Margaret Masson, for their 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.

13 January 2020

Mike Thompson

Chair of the Board of Trustees