

# Ruth First Educational Trust

UK Charity No. 1019975

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

### 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 2021 in pursuit of these aims.

### The Ruth First Scholarship in 2020-21

In view of the restrictions on travel, teaching and social contact resulting from the Covid pandemic, it was decided that it would not be feasible to award the Scholarship in the 2020-21 academic year. This decision was justified by events: a Ruth First Scholar studying in Durham in that year would have had a very limited experience, confined to their accommodation for long periods and studying mostly online (many international students remained in their home countries and studied entirely online for the whole year). The selection process was still completed in 2020 and an offer made to the successful candidate for 2021-22.

### The Ruth First Scholarship in 2021-22

There were 69 applications. The largest number of applications was, as usual, from Zimbabwe (39 applications). The most popular subject area was Business, Accounting, Finance, Management, Economics (17). We presented a ranked shortlist to the University's scholarships panel, which approved our selection. The Scholarship was awarded to Shamiso Zamba, a pharmacist from Zimbabwe. Shamiso is taking an MSc in Management (Supply Chain Logistics). She arrived in Durham in late September 2021 after completing 10 days of quarantine in a hotel in London and moved into St Chad's College. Further details about Shamiso can be found on the Trust's website:

[ruthfirsttrust.webspace.durham.ac.uk/this-years-ruth-first-scholar](http://ruthfirsttrust.webspace.durham.ac.uk/this-years-ruth-first-scholar)

## Updates on past Ruth First Scholars

The 2019-20 Scholar, Debra Sithole, took up an internship with the St Giles Trust in Coventry (a charity providing support to young people). Since January 2022 she has worked as a Project Support Officer for Voluntary Action Coventry, a charity supporting voluntary and community groups. She is aiming to do further postgraduate study in the UK.

The 2018-19 Scholar, Faith Chipuriro, is also still in the UK, working for a web design company.

The 2017-18 Scholar, Paul Chiwaya, was appointed as Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Malawi in February 2022.

In 2021, the 2015-16 Scholar, Tendai Makamure, took up an International Volunteer position with WHO in Nairobi as an Infection Prevention Specialist.

Mthoko Ntuli, the 2004-05 Scholar, still works for Mangosuthu University of Technology near Durban, now as Manager of Student Governance, Life and Development, managing 'the role of students in university governance and learning that takes place outside the lecture hall, as well as the development of student leadership and soft skills programmes to produce holistically developed graduates'.

Information about all former Ruth First Scholars can be found on the RFET website: [ruthfirsttrust.webspace.durham.ac.uk/former-scholars](http://ruthfirsttrust.webspace.durham.ac.uk/former-scholars)

## Events

With no Scholar in residence, there was minimal activity. However, a slight easing of Covid rules in September 2020 allowed us to hold a very successful sponsored walk around Durham. There was a record number of walkers (10), we raised a record amount of money (over £4000), and we were treated to a splendid afternoon tea in Tony and Barbara Ewin's garden at Old Durham.

## Finance

The accounts for 2020-21 will be presented at the AGM by the Treasurer. As there was no Scholar, costs were zero. Income continued to be received, leaving a useful surplus to go towards future years' commitments.

An annual grant is received from Durham County Council (£2000 per year). We are very grateful to the Council for its support (which has continued following the change of control in May 2021 from Labour to a Lib Dem-Conservative-Independent coalition).

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.

10 June 2022

*Mike Thompson*

Chair of the Board of Trustees