

Ruth First Educational Trust

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), Gillian Slovo (writer, former President of English PEN, daughter of Ruth First)

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ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

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 2022 in pursuit of these aims.

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2021-22

Although the scholarship could not be awarded in 2020-21, the selection process was still completed in 2020 and an early offer was made for 2021-22. The successful candidate was Shamiso Zamba, a pharmacist from Zimbabwe. Shamiso completed the MSc in Management (Supply Chain Logistics), passing with Distinction in November 2022.

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2022-23

There were 14 eligible applications – fewer than usual, perhaps as a result of Covid-related disruptions. The largest number of applications was, as usual, from Zimbabwe (6 applications). The most popular subject area was Politics and International Relations (6). We presented a ranked shortlist to the University's scholarships panel, which approved our selection. The Scholarship was awarded to Sicelo Ngwenya, a lawyer from Zimbabwe. Sicelo is taking the LLM (International Law & Governance). He arrived in Durham in mid-October 2022 (2 weeks late as a result of English language test and visa delays) and moved into St Chad's College. Further details about Sicelo can be found on the Trust's website:

ruthfirsttrust.webspace.durham.ac.uk/this-years-ruth-first-scholar

Updates on past Ruth First Scholars

The 2016-17 Scholar, Chipo Sana, is working as a social worker in Swansea.

After working as a researcher in Malawi, the 2014-15 Scholar, Dave Namusanya, is doing a PhD at Abertay University. His research focuses on the impact of climate change on water use in Malawian communities.

Pearson Nkhoma (2011-12) took up a lectureship in Community Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London in March 2022. He came to Durham in June to take part in the Ruth First Scholar Seminar alongside Shamiso Zamba.

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

Events

Despite the continuing effects of the Covid pandemic, some activities resumed, supported by a very welcome partnership with the *Celebrating Ruth First* research project based in the University's Centre for Humanities Engaging Science and Society (CHESS), led by Professor Nancy Cartwright. Mike Thompson and Shamiso Zamba participated in the CHESS conference held in St Chad's College in October 2021 to celebrate Ruth First's life and work.

In March 2022, the mural on the side of Ruth First House in Durham, restored by the original artist Lotte Shankland with funding from City of Durham Parish Council, was unveiled by Lotte with Hilary Wainwright (a colleague of Ruth First in Sociology at Durham) and Shamiso. The unveiling was followed by a reception in Durham Town Hall hosted by the Parish Council.

The Ruth First Scholar Seminar, held at St Aidan's College in June, featured two speakers. Shamiso Zamba spoke about her experience of the challenges of pharmaceutical logistics in rural Zimbabwe and Pearson Nkhoma about gender equality and child protection in Malawi.

Also in June, Mike Thompson and Nancy Cartwright gave a talk to students at St Mary's College about Ruth First.

It was not possible to do a sponsored walk at the usual time of year (June) but this was successfully completed in September.

Finance

The accounts for 2021-22 will be presented at the AGM by the Treasurer. There was little fundraising activity, but the large surplus produced in 2020-21 meant that costs in 2021-22 could easily be covered.

An annual grant is received from Durham County Council (£2000 per year). We are very grateful to the County Council for its continuing support, and to the City of Durham Parish Council for its enthusiastic support for the mural unveiling event.

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; 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; to the CHESS Celebrating Ruth First team for their brilliantly effective collaboration, and in particular to Nancy Cartwright for her generosity.

3 January 2023

Mike Thompson

Chair of the Board of Trustees