

Ruth First Educational Trust

Trustees: Helen Charnley (Secretary), Cheryl McEwan, Francis Pritchard (Treasurer), Lotte Shankland, John Tierney, Michael Thompson (Chair)

Patrons: Sir Thomas Allen (opera singer, former 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 2023-24

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, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

This report gives details of activities undertaken by the Trust in the year ending 31 July 2024 in pursuit of these aims.

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2023-24

The scholarship was awarded to Scholastic Mpofu, a civil engineer from Zimbabwe. He passed the MSc in Civil Engineering with Merit and in October 2024 took up a graduate internship with the marine engineering company Becket Rankine in Bristol.

The Ruth First Scholarship in 2024-25

There were 54 eligible applications, with the largest number from Zimbabwe (29) and South Africa (15). Following discussion at the 2023 AGM, the application form was revised to include a question about links to the values represented by Ruth First's legacy. A ranked shortlist was presented to the University's scholarships panel, which approved our selection. The Scholarship was awarded to Nafisa Ayman Roza from Lesotho, a graduate in Psychology & Criminology from the University of Pretoria. Roza is taking the MSc in Developmental Psychopathology. She arrived in Durham on 27 September 2024 and moved into St Chad's College. Further details about Roza 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 2012-13 Scholar, Agnes Wizi, lecturer in Social Work at the University of Malawi, is doing a PhD in Social Work at the University of Dundee.

Pearson Nkhoma (2011-12), lecturer in Community Studies at Goldsmiths University of London, has recently given conference papers in the USA and Sweden on misconceptions about anti-vaxxers within Black communities, and the exploitation of unaccompanied minors migrating from sub-Saharan Africa.

Dave Namusanya (2014-15) has completed his PhD on climate resilience in rural Malawi. In October 2024 he took up a postdoctoral research fellowship at the University of Gothenburg (gld.gu.se/en/about-gld/network-of-scholars/researchers/dave-namusanya).

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

Events

It was agreed in March that the Senior Regional Manager in the Durham University International Office with responsibility for Middle East and Africa (currently Kola Mudashiru) be co-opted as a member of the RFET Committee.

A small exhibition on the life and work of Ruth First developed by Nancy Cartwright, Diana Collecott and Byron Hyde has been on display in St Mary's and St Chad's Colleges.

The Sociology Department has established a Ruth First Prize for the best postgraduate dissertation from any of the PGT programmes in the Department.

The Ruth First Scholar Seminar was given by Scholastic Mpofu at St Aidan's College in June 2024 with the title 'Developments in sustainable water and sanitation management in Zimbabwe'. The Hatfield Lioness Scholar, Ruua Osman, also gave a presentation on 'Patient-centred approaches in humanitarian medicine'.

The annual sponsored walk took place on 29 June 2024, involving 5 walkers including Scholastic, with support from Helen Charnley. It raised £4013.

The Trust co-sponsored with the Durham Miners' Association a talk by Sean Figg about miners' struggles in South Africa at the People's Bookshop (Durham) on 9 July 2024.

Finance

The accounts for 2023-24 will be presented at the AGM by the Treasurer. While expenditure has been exceeding income and more fundraising is always required, the scholarship can be supported in 2025-26.

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 concert.

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 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; and to Nancy Cartwright and the *Celebrating Ruth First* team for their energy and initiative.

26 November 2024

Mike Thompson

Chair of the Board of Trustees