

Hatfield Lioness Scholarship Celebrating five years





A Message from the Master

In 2018, 30 years since the first women students joined Hatfield College, we set out to enable further women from parts of the world where their access to university education was still limited, to join us. Through the extraordinary generosity of our alumni, we created the Hatfield Lioness Scholarship, providing full funding for one woman a year from a developing country to come to Durham University to study for a masters course. The journeys of the five Lioness Scholars to date are testament to the success of this scheme. It has been an enormous pleasure to welcome such talented and determined women to Hatfield to further their studies. They have added so much to the richness of our community, by participating in many Hatfield activities, making friends with students from the UK and around the world, and acting as positive ambassadors for their home countries.

Since 1988, we have seen so many astounding women from near and far become part of our wonderful Hatfield community. Born out of our anniversary reflections on the struggle to first open our gates to women, we instil our ethos #AllOneHatfield into everything we do to ensure that our College is a welcoming community for students from all backgrounds and all parts of the world. We want everyone to feel that they belong here and that they become proud Hatfielders for life. The Lioness Scholarships help us put this vision into practice. It is an honour and a great pleasure to host our Lionesses in Hatfield College. They each bring a great deal to our community. Our diversity enriches and enlightens all our lives.

That the Lioness programme is funded and supported by our alumni and friends makes it especially meaningful, as it reflects the generosity and warmth of the Hatfield community. Our sixth Lioness will join us in Autumn 2024, and we hope very

much to be able to continue the scheme for many years to come.

Professor Ann MacLarnon
Master of Hatfield College



Ipshita (2nd Lioness), the Master and Ifeoma (3rd Lioness), in the Hatfield SCR Sitting Room before International Formal

"Not a day goes by when I do not think to myself, 'I hope I get an opportunity to pay this forward'."

Ifeoma Olisaeloka, 3rd Lioness

The Scholarship

Each year, we receive hundreds of applications for the Lioness Scholarship, from multiple countries across the developing world. The Lioness selection panel, comprising Durham staff from across the University with experience of working in developing countries, undertakes the task of allocating each year's scholarship. From so many very deserving applicants, we select each Lioness for their aspiration to pursue their studies in Durham and to develop enhanced knowledge skills to enable them to use their experience to make a positive impact in their home country.

Each Lioness scholarship is worth between £35,000 - £50,000 per year. This includes:

- A stipend at UK Research and Innovation postgraduate rate (c. £20,000), to cover living costs and College accommodation.
- Full payment of tuition fees (discounted to Home rates by the University).
- Return airfare and associated travel costs.
- Additional costs such as visas, warm clothing allowance, UK Medical Surcharge and TB tests .

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



Impact

The Scholarship directly works towards Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

To date we have been joined by five Lionesses, who work together to welcome and support each new Scholar as they journey to Hatfield. Five years on we can truly see the impact our pride of Lionesses have had, and continue to have, across the world. The skills and qualifications they gain through this programme equip them with the tools to work towards other ambitions upon completion of their studies. They return to their home country and forge high-impact careers in their chosen field.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



"As a student from a remote, poverty-stricken region with limited opportunities, studying at an esteemed institution like Durham University had been a lifelong aspiration that seemed financially unattainable" **Shanila Zafar, 4th Lioness**

Our Lioness Scholars spend an unforgettable year developing skills, knowledge and new friendships in a world-class academic and collegiate environment.

1st Lioness – Nahiya Mahmood, 2019

MSc Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Bangladesh



Nahiya (1st Lioness) and the Master in Dunham Court, Hatfield

Nahiya had studied for her first degree in Dhaka, Bangladesh and done voluntary work with Rohingya refugees from Myanmar in her country when she applied for the Lioness Scholarship.

Determined to work towards greater inter-community peace, she came to Durham to study for the MSc Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, a renowned interdisciplinary programme examining conflict analysis, prevention, resolution and transformation, community-driven reconstruction, and peace processes in the context of contemporary conflicts and broader humanitarian interventions.

Since returning home, Nahiya has worked for The Asia Foundation's PEACE project, and now for the United Nations' International Fund for Agricultural Development, putting into practice skills she learnt from her masters course.

"I want to express again how grateful I am for the unique opportunity that enabled me to experience a new culture, gain knowledge about my surroundings and above all myself. Thanks to the carefully planned scholarship, I got to meet inspiring leaders from different sectors, be friends with people from countries I had only seen in TV, start to learn a new language and above all, realistically ponder about the possibilities of the future. Not everyone believed that this transformation for a married Bangladeshi woman was possible, but my college and the generous donors did, and I will be eternally thankful for that because it has given a new meaning, clarity to my purpose. Initiatives like the Hatfield Lioness scholarship allow women like me to dream and believe in that dream and it does not end there as I am more self-aware than ever and more dedicated to my cause because I want to give back to the same people who motivated me, helped me and believed in me by following my promise towards international development.

Following my passion would not have been possible without my college - Hatfield. From the day I arrived, I was made to feel like I belong here and that was so important to me.

In 2021 I landed a role with The Asia Foundation in their PEACE project, where I led the police and community training and analysis part of their counter terrorism, religious intolerance and peace building related activities in three districts of Bangladesh. I was beyond thrilled to join this programme and use my learnt skills from my time at Durham.

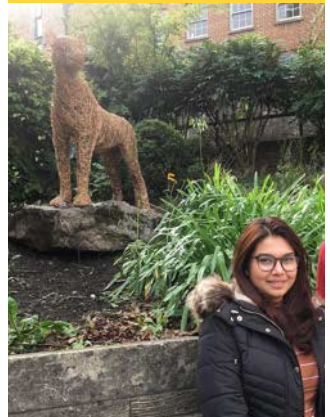
Following my time at PEACE I moved to an even more impactful role with the UN, this time at International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as National Professional Officer.

Most recently I took a break from work to be with my baby. I am always available to help any way I can to keep the Hatfield Lioness program going - this indeed transformed me personally and professionally to a deeper extent."

Nahiya Mahmood



"This chapter in the UK has, so far, been one of the most challenging and rewarding in my life."
Nahiya Mahmood, 1st Lioness



Nahiya (1st Lioness) in front of the Hatfield Lioness sculpture, Dunham Court

2nd Lioness – Ipshita Upoma, 2021

MSc Particles, Strings and Cosmology Bangladesh

Ipshita had already demonstrated her ability to stand out by pursuing a career in computer science, challenging gender stereotypes in her home country of Bangladesh. At Hatfield, she relished opportunities to contribute to our community through becoming MCR Chair, offering Bangladeshi recipes and music for our International Formal, and getting involved backstage in our 175th anniversary production *Lions on the Bailey*.

During her time in the College, which was delayed by a year due to Covid, she crowd-funded to enable the Bangladeshi Women's Maths Olympiad team to attend the international finals in Oslo.

Following completion of the MSc Particles, Strings and Cosmology, Ipshita has returned to teaching university computer science in Dhaka, and is furthering her passion, supporting and mentoring other women in her country to pursue STEM subjects.



Ipshita (2nd Lioness), in front of B Stairs, Hatfield



Ipshita (2nd Lioness), at the College Supper planning *Lions on the Bailey* in Hatfield SCR Dining Room

"The Hatfield Lioness Scholarship has opened a pathway to fulfil my dream of studying the universe and at the same time to prepare myself to contribute to the STEM education of my country. I am eternally grateful for this wonderful opportunity.

Since graduating, I have resumed my role as a lecturer in the Computer Science Department teaching two courses Artificial Intelligence, and Simulation & Modelling. I am also working on a writing a review on Blackhole Thermodynamics with two other colleagues. I am going to start applying for PhD positions.

I initiated Bangladesh's participation in the European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad in 2021, and since then, despite several obstacles we have consistently participated, earning silver and bronze medals. Building on this success, I founded Gonitkonya - Bangladesh Girls' Mathematics Foundation last year. Our foundation is committed to creating a nurturing and intellectually stimulating environment for girls passionate about mathematics. In September 2023, we celebrated a significant milestone by hosting the first ever National Math Olympiad for Girls, in Bangladesh, which drew around 400 participants from across the country. From these, 30 talented individuals were selected for further training, culminating in the formation of our team for 2024 after rigorous preparation and tests. This is a prestigious event, one of the most significant international competitions for pre-university girls, with 212 outstanding young women from 55 countries attending this year. This initiative has significantly boosted interest in mathematics among students and parents, encouraging more girls to embrace mathematical challenges.

As a Hatfield Lioness Scholar, my MSc degree in Particles, Strings, and Cosmology from Durham University has not only enhanced my credibility but also boosted my confidence and competence, further empowering me to lead and also inspire in the field of mathematics education."

Ipshita Upoma



Ipshita (2nd Lioness) speaking to the panel at the awards ceremony for the Bangladeshi National Maths Olympiad event 2024



Four members of the Bangladeshi Girls' Maths Olympiad Team 2024 with their mentor and deputy team leader, Ipshita (2nd Lioness)

3rd Lioness – Ifeoma Olisaeloka, 2021

LLM International Trade and Commercial Law Nigeria



Ifeoma (3rd Lioness, second row end right) and other cast members for '*Lions on the Bailey*'

Through determination, hard work and family encouragement, Ifeoma had succeeded in qualifying as a barrister in Nigeria. She was committed to contributing to sound and ethical economic development in her country, where the first competition law had recently been enacted. At a family supper, she remembers shrieking with joy when an email awarding her the Lioness Scholarship arrived, giving her an otherwise unattainable opportunity.

Along the way to achieving the LLM in International Trade and Commercial Law in Durham, Ifeoma contributed Nigerian recipes and music to our International Formal. She sang *Amazing Grace* solo, walking through the audience seated on deckchairs on the Hatfield tennis court for *Lions on the Bailey*, our 175th anniversary production.



Ifeoma (3rd Lioness) in her department, the Durham Law School

Prior to returning to Nigeria next year, Ifeoma took up an internship at the London Chamber of Commerce, working on international trade projects, and a solicitor's training contract at London law firm, Hogan Lovells, specialising in African trade issues. She has sought out every opportunity to gain experience to be able to make a positive impact at home.



Ifeoma (3rd Lioness), portrait accompanying her article on Policy Performance Bonds to incentivise sustainable development policies for the London Chamber of Commerce



Ifeoma (3rd Lioness) at the London Chamber of Commerce

"Without the support of initiatives such as the Hatfield Lioness Scholarship, dreamers like me may never get the opportunity to study and acquire globally relevant skills and knowledge at an institution like Durham University.

I understand how carefully researched policies and a deep understanding of international trade and financial law can empower a lawyer to provide good steer and holistic counsel to entities who need proper policy directions. Nigeria is in dire need of highly experienced and intellectually sound policy advisors. My goal is to become one of such trade policy specialists advising governments.

Following my studies at Durham, I transitioned to a role at the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), where I had the privilege of advising on international trade policy. At LCCI, I worked extensively on international trade advisory projects spanning various jurisdictions, including Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and India. These experiences deepened my understanding of global trade dynamics and policy implications, particularly in emerging markets in Africa.

During my tenure at LCCI, I leveraged my research background from Durham University to contribute to policy discussions and initiatives. While at Durham, I conducted research at the intersection of artificial intelligence and antitrust regulation, focusing on algorithmic pricing practices and their impact on competition regulation and firms in digital markets.

Currently, I am embarking on a freelance research and advisory role focusing on antitrust policies in Nigeria, leveraging the expertise gained from my academic and professional experiences. Looking ahead, I am excited to further develop my skills through a training contract at Hogan Lovells, where I will have the opportunity to gain specialized knowledge in African-specific advisory and international market operations.

My ultimate goal is to return to Nigeria by the end of 2025, aligning with my aim of achieving two years of post-graduation experience in international trade advisory. This timeline allows me to make the most of my experiences abroad while contributing to the growth and development of international trade policies and practices in Nigeria.

The Lioness Scholarship has been instrumental in shaping my professional journey, providing me with the resources and support to pursue my passion for international trade and policy advocacy.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunities it has afforded me and remain committed to making a meaningful impact in the field of international trade and antitrust regulation, particularly in Nigeria."

Ifeoma Olisaeloka

4th Lioness – Shanila Zafar, 2022

MSc Global and Planetary Health Pakistan

Shanila is from Chitral, in the northwest extreme of Pakistan, where steep-sided mountains, and climate change-increased glacial melt and summer rains had caused heavy flooding and infrastructural loss just before her journey to Durham. As a volunteer among the isolated local communities, she had witnessed gender-based violence and disempowerment of many women.

The MSc Global & Planetary Health, delivered by the world-class medical anthropology group in Durham, provided her with the opportunity to explore the basis for effective, socially and culturally appropriate interventions to improve health and life chances. Shanila was elected MCR Events Officer and she also introduced hand henna-painting into Hatfield, first at our College Eid Supper, and then to a long queue of eager students on Hatfield Day.

Shanila is now a Project Assistant with CARE International Pakistan working on a project providing empowerment opportunities for women in different regions in Pakistan to improve their living conditions and access to health and educational services.



Shanila (4th Lioness) at work in the CARE International offices in Islamabad, Pakistan



Henna hand designs by Shanila and friend at Hatfield Eid Supper

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunities that have been presented to me, allowing me to pursue my dreams of higher education and contribute to the betterment of my community. The Hatfield Lioness Scholarship was a turning point in my life, and I express my sincere gratitude to the generous donors who made this scholarship possible. Their support has enabled me to access world-class education and empowered me to make a meaningful impact in promoting gender equality, sustainable development, and economic empowerment for women in Pakistan. It was a turning point that will positively influence my personal and professional path and enable me to bring positive change to my community.

I gained a lot of skills and knowledge as a postgraduate student that I have taken back home to contribute to the well-being of my community and other vulnerable communities suffering from issues like climate change and violence worldwide.

I am profoundly grateful for the transformative impact of this scholarship on my academic journey. The Hatfield Lioness Scholarship not only provided me with the financial means to access world-class education but also instilled in me a sense of responsibility to make a positive impact in my community and beyond. My Durham journey's most significant academic achievement was successfully attaining a distinction on my dissertation. My dissertation project allowed me to explore a profoundly concerning issue affecting women in my home region - the phenomenon of "*duri janja*", a local term referring to chaos and violence permeating domestic spaces in my study locale in Northern Pakistan.

I currently work as a program assistant with CARE Pakistan on a Unilever-funded project. CARE International is an INGO that works towards poverty eradication and social justice by implementing development and humanitarian aid projects in 111 countries. Through advocacy and replication efforts, CARE International directly reaches 174 million people and indirectly impacts 157 million more through development and humanitarian aid projects.

I remain committed to utilising the knowledge and skills I have acquired to create positive change and uplift marginalised communities. Through my work with CARE Pakistan and the United People Global Foundation, I am determined to address the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and provide them with the tools and resources they need to thrive."

Shanila Zafar



Shanila (4th Lioness) at work in the CARE International offices in Islamabad, Pakistan

5th Lioness – Ruaa Osman, 2023

MSc Global and Planetary Health Sudan



Professor Karen O'Brien (Vice-Chancellor), Ruaa (5th Lioness) and Dr Fiona Hill (Chancellor) at the Chancellor's Circle Dinner in the Conservatory at the Barbican Centre, London, where Ruaa spoke to all guests about her previous experiences and her journey to Durham

Ruaa trained as a medic in Khartoum, Sudan, and developed her career in public health. During time spent working in refugee camps for Tigrayan refugees fleeing ethnic war in Ethiopia, she saw how provision of western-style medical care, while efficiently delivered in urgent response to need, was often of limited impact due to lack of understanding of cultural norms, beliefs and healthcare practices.

Working with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Ruaa experienced a patient-centred approach and was determined to learn more. Her masters studies were cut short by the outbreak of civil war in Sudan, so she applied for the Lioness Scholarship, learning of her success as a refugee in Ethiopia.

In Durham, Ruaa is studying for the MSc Global and Planetary Health while joining in wherever she can, including a Sudanese soup recipe for our Black History Month Formal in Hatfield within a month of her arrival. She also gave a presentation alongside the University's Ruth First Scholar at a joint seminar, and she is exploring the Sudan archive held in Palace Green Library.



Ruaa (5th Lioness) with Janet Ousley, Research Advisor for Médecins Sans Frontières, at the London MSF conference, to discuss Ruaa's dissertation research interviews with MSF doctors in the field

"Before commencing my studies in October, I was working with Doctors Without Borders in Khartoum and various international and non-governmental organisations across the country. Despite being on the verge of completing my master's degree in Public Health, the outbreak of war disrupted both my academic pursuits and professional endeavours. Forced to flee the country with my grandmother, this Lioness Scholarship emerged as a beacon of hope, offering an exceptional path for me to pursue higher education.

My diverse work experience in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and numerous NGOs, both in emergency settings and refugee camps, influenced my initial choice of the current degree. It constantly provoked questions about the determinants of health, development, and their sociological connections. My ongoing studies involve a thorough exploration of these aspects, enriching my understanding and ensuring a wealth of knowledge for the future. Delving into Epidemiology and Health Policy to leverage the gained knowledge, hoping to empower me to return to Sudan and contribute significantly to the healthcare system."

Ruaa Osman

"My heartfelt gratitude for providing this invaluable opportunity, which I consider truly life-changing." Ruaa Osman, 5th Lioness



Ruaa (5th Lioness) and Liadi Mudashiru, Hatfield SCR member, meeting at Black History Month Formal

As we reflect on the impressive global impact the Lioness Scholarship has had, we are ambitious about its future.

We know there is great demand for this programme, demonstrated by the hundreds of applications received; there were 573 applications for our 6th Lioness. The number of countries represented has increased year on year as news of the scholarship spreads across the world. We are delighted that post-Covid, the numbers of applications returned quickly to pre-pandemic levels and beyond, and the quality of applicants has remained high.

We are so grateful to the community of donors who have made this scholarship programme a reality. Hatfield Alumni and Friends have contributed so generously, totalling over £250,000 to date, to transform these women's lives.

We want to continue the Lioness programme beyond our 6th Lioness Scholarship, and we hope our community will once again join us to turn our ambition into a reality.



Ifeoma (3rd Lioness), the Master and Ipshita (2nd Lioness) in front of Melville Building, Hatfield

Contact

Development and Alumni Relations Office
The Palatine Centre
Stockton Road
Durham
DH1 3LE

E: alumni.office@durham.ac.uk

Thank you

With thanks to all of our donors. We are deeply indebted to you all for your incredible support.

Want to support the Lioness Scholarship Programme? Get in touch with Jessica Smith at jessica.smith@durham.ac.uk.

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