

ROBERTSON OUTDOOR BURSARY (ROB)

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Registered Charity Number 1156739

1. INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

The Trustees present their Annual Report for the Robertson Outdoor Bursary (ROB) for the year ended 31 December 2024.

In our eleventh year of operations ROB continued to deliver its programme of work and build its partnerships to transform the lives of the people in Tanzania, training another 12 awardees to become guides.

Thanks to our partnership with the Exodus Travels Foundation via the Mountain Lioness Project to empower women to become qualified guides on Kilimanjaro, we have now awarded all 30 female scholarships.

2024 was an especially exciting and busy year for us, as we returned to Tanzania to run our second 'Guide Summit' at the College of African Wildlife Management and delivered our advanced guide training programme 'Becoming Even Better', with the aim of giving ROB awardees additional skills to give them a competitive advantage in the employee market. This is all made possible by our partner Exodus Travels Foundation.

We are looking forward to 2025 with the exciting news that we will be once again partnering with Exodus Travels Foundation to offer another 15 female scholarships over the next 3 years. In addition to this we will also be commissioning another 'Becoming Even Better Programme' to run in autumn 2026 which will be offered to previous ROB awardees who are now starting their careers as guides.

We were also delighted to secure funding at the end of 2024 to commission an English language programme specifically for mountain guides in collaboration with Exodus Travels Foundation and a new partner, the International Mountain Explorers Collaborative (IMEC).

Once again our annual Christmas fundraising event at Namaste Sport in Chamonix, France was a great success, and this has now become somewhat of a Chamonix tradition. We also received several individual donations and again thank our regular donors for their continued support. Their constant commitment to what we do really makes a big difference to our awardees in Tanzania.

Our new partnership with Easyfundraising, which provides a UK based free fundraising platform, enabled us to gain donations from supporters when they shop online. We have seen the number of people helping us through this platform grow steadily.

Our journey continues and we promise to continue to grow and adapt to obtain the maximum benefit from every penny our supporters donate to us.

We thank all who are walking this journey with us.

Yvonne Robertson
Chair and founder of Robertson Outdoor Bursary

'As long as there is a purpose there is no failure' (Swahili proverb)

2. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2024 we have continued grow and adapt our work. Our key activities have been:

- 1) The continuation of our partnership with the Exodus Travels Foundation and completing our Mountain Lioness Project Phase 1 by training the final 2 women in November 2024.
- 2) Training a total of 12 awardees (6 of these being men funded by individual donations, ROB's regular donors and other fundraising activities).
- 3) Delivering our second 'Guide Summit' in Tanzania with our partners, employers and awardees, with over 70 attendees.
- 4) Running the 'Becoming Even Better' advanced guide training programme for 11 previous ROB awardees and training 4 existing experienced guides in Tanzania to deliver this programme in the future.
- 5) Strengthening our partnership with Exodus Travels Foundation and agreeing to work together in the future to extend the Mountain Lioness Project awarding a further 15 places between 2025-2028.
- 6) Holding the annual Christmas fundraising event hosted by Namaste Sport in Argentière Chamonix, France.
- 7) Growing supporters to shop with Easyfundraising, a UK based free fundraising shopping platform. We now have 36 people helping us as they shop online.
- 8) Announcing the new partnership with IMEC in collaboration with Exodus Travels Foundation to commission an English Language Programme for Mountain guides with 90 places available to run in 2025 -2026.

2.1 Key Milestones

This year of operation was marked by the following key milestones:

January – March

- Continuation of our partnership working with the Exodus Travels Foundation
- Joining the Easyfundraising platform

April – September

- Preparing for our Conference and the BEB training programme
- Recruitment of a further 12 awardees for training in 2024
- Securing funding to commission the development of an English Language programme for 90 mountain guides
- 5 awardees commenced guide training at the College of African Wildlife Management in August 2024 (3 women and 2 men)

October – December

- Seven awardees (two female, five male) commenced guide training at the College of African Wildlife Management in November, 2024
- Running our 2nd Guide summit at the College of African Wildlife Management in November

- Delivering the ‘Becoming Even Better’ advanced guiding programme in November for 10 ROB awardees and supporting 4 guides to become trainers of this and improve their teaching skills.
- Christmas fundraiser in partnership with Namaste Sport, Argentière, France

2.2 Kit Collections

We held a special kit collection which we transported to Tanzania during our November visit. This was put out for sale for a token fee per item to guide attendees at the conference from which the proceeds (\$98) were given back to ROB to invest in future scholarships.

2.3 Fund Raising

This year we were delighted to host our annual fundraising event in partnership with Namaste Sport, Argentière and continued to receive income generated by Easyfundraising which amounted to a total of £876.

3. AWARDS & AWARDEES

Guide Training Scholarships

In 2024 we funded a further 12 places on guide training (5 women and 7 men) at the College of African Wildlife Management, all of whom successfully completed their training and were awarded their guide licence. We worked in partnership with employers and the college to recruit and select the awardees. We have been tracking the progress of all our awardees through their training and as they commence their careers guiding on Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Meru.

Becoming Even Better

From 13th to 18th November 2024, 11 previous ROB awardees were invited to participate in the ‘Becoming Even Better’ (BEB) programme. This four-day training course covers four elements / skill areas that are required whilst guiding clients on Mount Kilimanjaro. This builds on the basic skills received during the three-week national guide training programme and further develops the knowledge and skills of participants to an advanced level. It is hoped that this additional training gives ROB awardees a competitive advantage in the workplace. This programme was funded by our partner Exodus Travels Foundation and individual donations.

4. CORPORATE AND OTHER PARTNERS

Our partnership with the Exodus Travels Foundation has been our key focus and we were delighted to extend our collaboration with their help to fund our second guide summit in November 2024 and the above mentioned ‘Becoming Even Better’ advanced guide training programme.

Guide Summit 2024

On 13th November 2024 the ROB team in partnership with the Exodus Travels Foundation and the College of African Wildlife Management held our 2nd Guide Summit in Tanzania. We

welcomed over 70 delegates including our partners, awardees, employers and other stakeholders. We were delighted to welcome Gladys N’gumbi (Acting Chief Park Warden of the Kilimanjaro National Park) as our guest of honour. Working together we discussed the challenges faced by guides and employers and how we can support each other and our future work.

English Language Programme for Mountain Guides

We were delighted to start working with a non-profit organisation based in the United States of America with a long history of working in Tanzania: the ‘International Mountain Explorers Collaborative’ (IMEC). Together we are to commission a new English Language Programme for mountain guides that will be delivered in 2025 - 2026.

In this, our eleventh year of operations, our relationships with our Tanzanian partners, The College of African Wildlife Management, the Kilimanjaro Responsible Trekking Organisation and local employers, managers and guides, are well established and they continue to be an indispensable source of support and advice for us on how our donors’ money can be most wisely spent. We have made several new contacts through the Guide Training Conference in 2024 which is broadening our relationship with employers, especially with the aim of receiving their nominations for our scholarships.

5. FINANCES

During the year our total fundraising contributions and donations totalled £7190 (inclusive of Gift Aid) and Easyfundraising. We awarded grants totalling £3324 to fund places on Guide Licence Training scholarships at the College of African Wildlife Management. The guide summit and BEB training programme cost a further £7467 which was partly offset by a grant from Exodus Travel of £4010. Our other expenditure was on website and email hosting which cost £236.

We have a net deficit for the year’s expenditure of £170 which will be carried forward into our 2025 budget.

6. LOOKING FORWARD

The key challenge for us continues to be how to adapt our operations to develop our fundraising opportunities enabling us to offer new scholarships and support our existing awardees as they start their new careers. This will be a key focus for us in 2025 which will be highlighted by the development of the English Language programme for Mountain Guides and planning and preparation for our return to Tanzania in 2026 to deliver a further ‘Becoming Even Better’ Programme to our awardees.

Our core team’s commitment is our strongest asset and we thank them for the time and energy they devote to volunteering to work with us. We will continue to review our ways of working and seek new volunteers to support us with their unique strengths and find ways to support our volunteers who so generously gift their time to us.

Maintaining our profile via our website, social media presence and our newsletters will help us to continue build on new partnerships and keep our donors, supporters and awardees up to date with the impact of our work.

We hope to be able to continue to grow and will review how we fundraise to finance our work in the future and remain responsive to the needs of the people we seek to help in Tanzania.

Maintaining our relationships with our Tanzanian partners will be critical to ensure that we spend the money our donors have so generously given most effectively. We will continue to strengthen these partnerships and build new ones.

In the year ahead we will:

- Recruit our next 2 cohorts of awardees to our Guide Licence Training and Phase 2 Mountain Lioness Scholarships
- Track the progress of awardees completing their Guide Licence Training, sending reports to our partner the Exodus Travels Foundation on the progress of the 'Lionesses'
- Commission and start delivering an English Language programme for mountain guides
- Maintain our web and social media presence
- Continue with the Easyfundraising platform and grow the number of people who support us by shopping with this platform

We look forward to a successful 12th year of operations for the Robertson Outdoor Bursary.

7. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Income & Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31st December 2024

	2024	2023
£	£	£
Incoming Resources		
Regular & Single Donations received	2153	2386
Gift Aid	256	253
Other Fundraising activities	700	657
Money Collection fees	-95	-75
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3 014	3 221
Deferred Income - Grant from Exodus Travel	4 000	0
Easyfundraising Receipts	176	78
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Total Funds Raised	7 190	3 299
Resources Expended		
Grants & Scholarships paid for training	-3 324	-2 452
Cost of Guides Conference in Tanzania:		
Tanzania:	4 105	
Grant from Exodus Travel	-4 010	0
Sale of Second hand Kit	-98	0
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	3	0
Cost of BEB Training in Tanzania	-3 462	0
T-Shirts for Team & Attendees	-341	0
Cost of Web Hosting, Email account & Mailbox	-236	-264
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Total Costs	-7 360	-2 716
Net Deficit/Income For the Year	<hr/> -£170	<hr/> £583

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
Assets		
Cash at Bank	12 029	16 231
Debtors - Gift Aid	14	20
Pre-payment	227	189
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	£12 270	£16 440
Less: Pre-paid Donation	-4 000	-8 000
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Total Assets	£ 8,270	£ 8,440
Represented by:		
Accumulated Funds:		
Balance Brought Forward	8 440	7 857
Net Income for the Year	-170	583
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Accumulated Funds carried forward	£8,270	£8,440

The Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet were approved by the trustees on 06th October 2025

Yvonne Robertson (Chair & Founding Trustee)

Steve Smith (Treasurer & Trustee)

Sally Batley (Trustee)