



Our December 2022 UDSM Alumna

This is a “light corner” on the UDSM portal intended to feature for one month in turns two among many of the University’s graduates—alumni—since its foundation in 1961. The corner is designed to inform the public and the University itself, without prejudice in terms of historical precedence but guided only by professional information search, on the past graduates of the University, their whereabouts, their current position or engagement, what is remembered of them as past ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ of their time and, finally, on what is reckoned about their contribution to their Alma Mater, their nation, the Africa region and/or the wider world.

Ruth MEENA



Year of matriculation: 1968

Year of graduation: 1971

Award: B.A (Pol. Science) (Hons), 1971

More info:

- **M.A (International Relations), University of Dar es Salaam, 1979**
- **PhD (Political Science), University of Dar es Salaam, 1995**

One of Tanzania’s well-known female scholars and a dedicated female activist of all time from as early as the 1970/80s, retired Professor Ruth Meena is an alumna of the University of Dar es Salaam of the graduating class of 1971. She was born on 23 April 1946 in the village of Mbokomu in Moshi district, Kilimanjaro region. She had her basic primary education at Natiro and Kilawalaa Primary schools from 1955 to 1957, after which she proceeded with four years of upper primary [known then as ‘middle’ school] education at Ashira Middle School from 1958 to 1961. She entered secondary school at Ashira Girls School in 1962, completing her ‘O-level’ education there in 1965. She then went to H.H. Aga Khan High School in Dar es Salaam in 1966, where she successfully completed advanced secondary (‘A-level’) education in 1967. Her examination performance passes qualified her for entry into the University of East Africa at University College Dar es Salaam in 1968.

At university, she registered with the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, taking courses in Political Science as a major subject and History as a second subject. She completed the three-year degree programme in 1971 with B.A. (honours), after which she was offered a tutorial assistant position within the Department of Political Science and Public Administration. Unfortunately, she could not take it up at that time for family reasons, but would join the Department at a later time as conditions would permit. Thus, for six years between 1971 and 1977, Ruth taught in various secondary schools and in teacher training colleges in the country before she returned to the University to enrol in a two-year postgraduate (master’s) programme in political science, a programme that she completed on time in 1979. She was then formally engaged by the Department as an assistant lecturer. She grew through the academic ranks from that assistant lecturer to lecturer, to senior lecturer (1980-1996) and finally to associate professor (1997-2006). She formally retired from University service in April 2006. From that time, she was engaged by the Centre for Foreign Relations (CFR) in Kurasini, Dar es Salaam, on contract terms as a Professor. Her teaching at CFR continued well until September 2014, when she decided to be on her own as a freelance consultant.

It may well be noted that, earlier in her university teaching career at UDSM, Ruth had valiantly introduced a first-ever university course on ‘Gender and politics’ at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration and she subsequently teamed up with various groups within the University to initiate and steer a ‘transformative approach’ within the University’s institutional transformation programme for change in its academic programmes. Between 1991 and 1992, Ruth had strong support by her Department in spending a year with the Zimbabwe chapter of the Southern African Political Economy Trust (SAPET) in advising on gender issues to be mainstreamed in the wider southern African region. This opportunity in Harare, Zimbabwe, was the beginning of the wider and highly beneficial international exposure and exchange, particularly in connection with professional activities within the African Association of Political Science (AAPS) and the Southern Africa Political Economy (SAPE). Professor Meena was equally active in the mid-1990s, in joining forces with various community-development causes such as the University of Dar es Salaam’s Gender-Dimension Task Force (GDTF) in 1992, the Tanzania Media Women’s Association (TAMWA), the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA), the Environmental, Human Rights Care and Gender Organization (Envirocare) in 1993 and the Coalition of Women and the Constitution Tanzania (CWCT) or, simply, Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFT). During her active University career, Ruth

herself witnessed the high level UDSM had attained in internationalisation processes demonstrated, among others, by the many international exchange programmes, including her own visiting fellowships and professorships—at various times—at Christian Michelson Institute (in Bergen, Norway), Stanford University (California, USA), the University of Toronto (Canada), the State University of Florida (USA) and at Belloit, a liberal arts college in Wisconsin in the U.S. Later, in 2013, she received awards from both the Ford Foundation (USA) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada, in recognition of her outstanding achievement in gender issues and education for women.

Professor Meena has written a number of works, alone or with others, a number of which were an outcome of public-service and public-trust assignments. Suffice it to mention here only a few in which she was either team leader or key participant: ‘Gender Assessment of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar’ (a World Bank assignment, 2000); ‘Gender Analysis of the FYDPII’ (as UN Women task assignee, 2016); ‘Developing of a Feminist Training Manual’ (as Team leader on a WFT-Trust and Women’s Rights Coalition project, 2020); ‘Research on Sexual Corruption in Institutions of Higher Learning in Tanzania’ (as Team adviser on a WFT-Trust project in partnership with PCCB Tanzania, 2021); ‘Trainer of Trainers (ToT) Manual on Sextortion’ (as Team leader on a WFT-Trust project, 2021); and ‘Participatory Gender Audit’ (as Team leader on a UN-commissioned UN/UNDP project, n.d.). A publication authored by Ruth Meena, Mary Rusimbi and Caroline Israel, on ‘Women and Political Leadership: Facilitating Factors in Tanzania’, is a latest, well-researched recounting story on women empowerment in the long journey by selected women to leadership positions. The University of Dar es Salaam congratulates Professor Ruth Meena on her work and achievements.



October 23, 2012. At the Women Fund Tanzania Trust. Prof. Ruth Meena making a contribution to the theme “Basic rights of women [that must be] considered in the Constitution”

Source: https://web.facebook.com/WomenFundTanzania/photos/prof-ruth-meena-akichangia-madahaki-za-msingiza-mwanamke-kuzingatia-katika-kati/366263316794627/?_rdc=1



Prof. Meena’s talk on the occasion of “Empowering Local Women Heroes” sponsored by the Women Fund Tanzania Trust

**Ruth MEENAA is Our December 2022 Alumna,
and her great stories begin here!**

Get in touch with us through

Directorate of Internationalization,
Convocation and Advancement.
P.O BOX 35091 DSM – Tanzania

Mobile:
0739-959545

Mail: alumni@udsm.ac.tz
www.udsm.ac.tz

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