



In partnership with



2023 Fellows

Mastercard Foundation – EARTH University Foundation
Fellowship Program



In partnership with



Eric Murwanashyaka



- **Country:** Rwanda
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2022
- **Track:** Agriculture Innovation through Science and Research
- **Host organization:** Rwanda Institute of Conservation Agriculture

Bio:

Eric Murwanashyaka is a 2023 graduate of EARTH University where he developed a passion for soil science and sustainability. In 2020, he researched how to convert food waste, agricultural waste, and cow dung to organic and affordable fertilizer that can help Rwandan farmers improve their crop yields. This project was awarded 3rd place in the Wege Prize competition due to its focus on sustainable solutions to agricultural problems. Eric further developed his research skills on soil fertility through completing an internship at McGill University in Canada where he learned important research techniques and laboratory skills. As a fourth-year student, he has continued to research soil sciences and soil fertility for his graduation project. Eric's extensive research expertise and interest in soil sciences make him a great fit for the Agricultural Innovation, Science, and Research Track. He will return to his home country of Rwanda as a Fellow working for the Rwanda Institute of Conservation Agriculture (RICA).

Eric hopes that his research in soil sciences will help farmers identify sustainable agricultural practices such as improving nutrient-use efficiency by crops, increasing soil carbon pools, reducing N and P leaching from the soils, and decreasing NO₂ emissions. He is looking forward to applying the knowledge and skills he gained through studying at EARTH in his new role at RICA while gaining valuable professional experience. In the future, Eric hopes that his research will increase soil fertility in his community in Rwanda, helping farmers increase their yield and thus addressing food insecurity.



In partnership with



Grace Aguti



- **Country:** Uganda
- **University:** EARTH University
Class of 2020
- **Track:** Agriculture Innovation through Science and Research
- **Host organization:** International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) - Uganda

Bio:

Grace Aguti is a 2020 graduate of EARTH University who recently completed her master's degree in plant science from the American University of Beirut. As an undergraduate at EARTH University, Grace first discovered her interest in plant science. While completing her master's degree, she gained important research experience at the biotechnology lab through analyzing the integrated physiological, biological, genomic, and transcriptomic approaches for improving drought tolerance in grapevine rootstocks. Grace completed a master's thesis titled "Postharvest Physiochemical Characteristics of Various Grape Varieties" to determine the effect of geographical locations and agricultural practices on fruit maturity and quality. Grace's impressive resume and background in agricultural science and research makes her an excellent candidate for the Fellowship on the Agricultural Innovation, Science, and Research Track.

Grace has a passion for agricultural biotechnology and rural development that she is looking forward to exploring further through her fellowship at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Uganda. She is excited to return to her home country and work with a local research institution while growing her professional network. In the future, Grace looks forward to continuing her career in research and innovation to help solve biological problems within agriculture.



In partnership with



Mohamed Sugule Jama



- **Country:** Somalia
- **University:** EARTH University
Class of 2021
- **Track:** Agricultural
Entrepreneurship
- **Host organization:** Harhub
Business Incubation

Bio:

Since graduating from EARTH University in 2021, Mohamed Sugule Jama has worked with Clear Sky Power, a renewable solar energy company in Somaliland. His work experience and educational background focusing on sustainable agriculture at EARTH University has helped him to start his own business as a Fellow on the Entrepreneurship Track. Mohamed's company, Agridesert, is a demonstrative farm that promotes sustainable dry land farming through educating the agricultural community by demonstrating sustainable agricultural practices. Growing up in Somalia, he has witnessed first-hand how droughts can negatively impact agriculture, crop yields, and food security. Agridesert aims to address these issues through supporting farmers in adapting to droughts. His business currently has two different demonstration sites in Burco and Arabsiyo villages, both centers offer farmer extension program activities and grow vegetables.

Mohamed will complete his Fellowship with Harhub Business Incubation in Somaliland. Through the Fellowship, Mohamed hopes that his business will continue to grow and address food insecurity in his home country through increasing crop productivity. Mohamed is passionate about the potential for entrepreneurship to create social change, and he looks forward to positively impacting his community through this venture by helping farmers better respond to drought.



In partnership with



Nancy Musa



- **Country:** Zimbabwe
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2021
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) - Zimbabwe

Bio:

Nancy Musa graduated from EARTH University in 2021 where she further explored her passions for community development, sustainability, and agribusiness. For her graduation project at EARTH, she evaluated the efficiency of cow dung and pig waste to produce quality biogas and designed a biodigester that can be adopted in rural Zimbabwe. During her third year at EARTH, Nancy completed an internship at Farai the Farmer in Zimbabwe which focuses on the production and sale of horticultural crops such as cauliflower, broccoli, and sweet potatoes. She gained important experience in sustainable agricultural practices, business startups and development, and business administration. These experiences prepared Nancy well to complete her Fellowship with the International Livestock Research Institute in her home country of Zimbabwe.

Nancy is looking forward to gaining professional and practical experience through her Fellowship. She is excited to access the many opportunities available through the Program, grow her professional network, find mentors, and improve her networking skills. Looking ahead, Nancy hopes that this experience will prepare her well for a career in the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe. She hopes to use her education and professional experiences to contribute to sustainable development in her community.



In partnership with



Naomi Kfu Fiemyah



- **Country:** Cameroon
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2021
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) - Cameroon

Bio:

Since graduating from EARTH University in 2021, Naomi Kfu Fiemyah has volunteered in her community with Voice of Nature, a local NGO in Cameroon, as a sustainable agriculture assistant. She coordinated the Sustainable Agriculture and Community Development Program, assisted with grant proposals, and provided training to local farmers on climate smart agriculture and organic farming through this role. Naomi's experience working with farmers through Voice of Nature combined with her academic training in agricultural sciences and sustainability at EARTH University makes her an excellent candidate for the Agricultural Employment track within the Fellowship. She will complete her fellowship at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in her home country of Cameroon.

The Fellowship Program is an invaluable opportunity for Naomi to start her career in her home country while gaining valuable experience and skills. Naomi is excited to have the opportunity to apply the skills that she has learned throughout her studies at EARTH in the real world. She is looking forward to growing as a professional, benefiting from mentorship, and building a network through this experience. Naomi is passionate about rural development and hopes to support sustainable agriculture and food security throughout her career.



In partnership with



Neserian Erasto Long'idu



- **Country:** Tanzania
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2021
- **Track:** Agricultural Entrepreneurship
- **Host organization:** Starhub Africa - Tanzania

Bio:

Neserian Erasto Long'idu is a recent graduate of EARTH University where she first gained a passion for entrepreneurship. She has already launched several successful businesses in the past, and these experiences prepared her well to join the Fellowship Program on the Entrepreneurship Track. Starhub Africa – Tanzania, an incubation hub in Neserian's home country, will support her and her business, Tanzaiti Farm. Neserian's farm will grow chickens and harvest vegetables while employing integrated agricultural practices. She has already harvested and sold corn and hopes to cultivate red and yellow sweet peppers using a drip irrigation system in a greenhouse. Neserian plans to sell her products in Arusha, Tanzania to hotels and supermarkets. Tanzaiti Farm also prioritizes sustainable agricultural practices as organic waste from the poultry farm is converted into compost for crops.

Neserian is looking forward to scaling her business through receiving support from the Fellowship Program. She is also excited to take advantage of mentorship opportunities to receive additional guidance for her business and her career. Neserian is passionate about the potential to create sustainable change within agriculture through entrepreneurship and is grateful to the Fellowship Program for giving her the opportunity to scale her business.



In partnership with



Peter Oketch Onyango



- **Country:** Uganda
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2020
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** Community Empowerment for Education and Development (CEED Concordia)

Bio:

Peter Oketch Onyango graduated from EARTH University in 2020 and has worked as an assistant production manager with the Diers Cooperation since graduation. Through this role, he has assisted with overall farm operations, crop management, and cattle production. While studying at EARTH University, he focused on sustainable management practices and conducted research on export potential of the Ugandan bamboo industry for his graduation project. Peter has also gained valuable work experience working on farms in Uganda, Costa Rica, and the United States, giving him important insights into farm operations and management. Peter's work experience and academic background make him an excellent candidate for the Agricultural Employment Track. He will complete his Fellowship with Community Empowerment for Education and Development (CEED Concordia) in his home country of Uganda.

Peter is interested in environmental sustainability, waste management, and natural resource management. He is excited to learn more about these topics through his Fellowship. Peter is also looking forward to growing his professional network, taking advantage of networking opportunities, and gaining professional experience in Uganda that will guide his career.



In partnership with



Salome Henrico Samson



- **Country:** Tanzania
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2022
- **Track:** Agricultural Innovation, Science, and Research
- **Host organization:** International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)- Tanzania

Bio:

Growing up in Tanzania, Salome was enthusiastic about conserving forests and worked with local communities to promote planting trees and reduce deforestation. At EARTH, she further developed her passion for forest conservation and agroforestry cultivation. She worked in the forestry site and on the integrated organic farm, the livestock farm, and the botanic garden. Salome completed an internship in the Netherlands on a poultry farm as a student where she learned more about poultry farming and visited other companies and farms, and she graduated from EARTH in 2022. These experiences make Salome an excellent candidate for the Agricultural Innovation, Science, and Research Track as she will complete her fellowship at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Tanzania.

Through the Fellowship Program, Salome hopes to give back to her country through sharing and practicing what she has learned at EARTH. She is looking forward to learning about the agriculture industry in her home country and better understanding the challenges that farmers face in Tanzania so she can become an agent of change and contribute to sustainable development. Salome is also excited to build a professional network and take advantage of professional development opportunities.



In partnership with



Stella Ruber



- **Country:** Ghana
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2022
- **Track:** Agricultural Innovation, Science, and Research
- **Host organization:** International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) - Ghana

Bio:

Stella Ruber graduated from EARTH University in 2022 where she focused her studies on entomology and agribusiness. Throughout her time in university, Stella gained important experience in community training, field demonstration, data collection, record keeping, laboratory research, and integrated pest management. For her graduation project, she studied pest control methods used by farmers in the Sakoya community in northern Ghana to develop a pest control manual for the farmers. Stella's background and interests make her a great fit for a Fellowship on the Agricultural Innovation, Science, and Research Track, and she will complete her fellowship at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in her home country of Ghana.

Stella is looking forward to applying the knowledge and experiences that she has acquired through studying agronomy in a professional environment. She hopes that she can share some of her ideas with farmers as well to help them address pest management challenges. Stella is excited to participate in field work and perform research on integrated pest management, crop production, and agribusiness. She hopes to ground her work and research in interactions with farmers to ensure that her research can help them address agricultural issues and promote sustainable agricultural practices.



In partnership with



Yamikani Funsani



- **Country:** Malawi
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2022
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) - Malawi

Bio:

Yamikani Funsani recently graduated from EARTH University in 2022 where he gained valuable technical skills in agriculture. While studying at EARTH, Yamikani completed an internship at Agri Lab Africa, a company that offers farming and engineering services. He ran soil, fertilizer, and leaf analyses for customers to help them make agricultural decisions. He also worked in the soil science laboratory and the entomology laboratory at EARTH where he created an online database to register all the insects for easy access and identification by students. Yamikani is passionate about helping smallholder farmers and contributing to rural development, which motivated him to apply to the Fellowship. His interests and background make him an excellent fit for the Agricultural Employment track, and Yamikani will complete his Fellowship at the German Corporation for International Cooperation in his home country of Malawi.

Yamikani is excited to put his academic knowledge into practice through participating in the Fellowship Program. He is looking forward to developing as a professional, improving his leadership skills, and growing a professional network in Malawi through this opportunity. In his career, Yamikani hopes to support farmers through educating them about the importance of soil analysis and sustainability, thus helping them to increase crop yields and support their communities while respecting the environment.