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# 2021 Fellows

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Mastercard Foundation – EARTH University Foundation  
Fellowship Program



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## Alex Kyeyune



- **Country:** Uganda
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2018
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** Conversion Feeds Uganda LTD

### **Bio:**

Alex Kyeyune graduated from EARTH University in 2018. While Alex was studying at EARTH University, he obtained practical agronomic skills and focused his studies within livestock rearing and vegetable production. Since graduation, he has worked for Phillips Career School International in his home country of Uganda. As principal of the school, he has coordinated and supervised all day-to-day activities of the school, supervised teachers and employees, coordinated and implemented agricultural projects, and trained teachers on a new practical education system. His interests and background have prepared him well for the Employment Track of the Fellowship Program, and he will complete his fellowship with Conversion Feeds Uganda LTD.

Alex is looking forward to sharing his knowledge from EARTH with his host organization and local communities in Uganda while putting his ideas into practice. He is excited to use his skills and background to contribute to sustainable development in his home country. Personally, Alex is excited to grow professionally and personally through this experience as well. He will learn more about the agricultural sector within his country of origin while growing his professional network in Uganda, preparing Alex for an impactful career developing his country's agricultural sector.



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## Bleck Tabeh Tita



- **Country:** Cameroon
- **University:** EARTH University  
Class of 2020
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** Agripool  
Ghana

### **Bio:**

Bleck Tabeh Tita graduated from EARTH University in 2020. While studying at EARTH, he gained an important background in scientific research within agriculture through taking courses such as entomology, soil sciences, chemistry, and genetics. These academic experiences taught Bleck how to coordinate and implement methodologies used for experimental design. He also completed an internship at the University of Florida's Indian River Research and Education Center (IRREC) where he provided methodology development, data processing, and analytics support to PhD students conducting their dissertation. Bleck ensured that scientific findings were relevant and accessible to farmers through the projects that he worked on, thus making sure that farmers could adopt sustainable agriculture practices proven by scientific research. Bleck's background makes him an excellent candidate for the Fellowship Program, and he will complete his Fellowship with Agripool Ghana.

Bleck is looking forward to growing his professional network and jumpstarting his career in Africa through participating in the Fellowship Program. He hopes to find mentors where he can receive additional career guidance and direction. Bleck is also excited about becoming an agent of change and giving back to smallholder farmers on the continent.



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## Godwell Manda



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

### **Bio:**

Godwell Manda graduated from EARTH University in 2020. While studying at EARTH, Godwell developed a passion for precision agriculture, lab work, and fertilization techniques. He is well-versed with technology and has learned about fertilizer production processes and digital soil nutrient maps. Godwell also has experience using laboratory testing equipment for chemical and physical tests while preparing laboratory reports. He is hardworking, competent, efficient, a fast learner, and a great team player. These experiences, interests, and traits make him an excellent candidate for the Agricultural Innovation Through Science and Research Track within the Fellowship Program. Godwell will complete his Fellowship with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in his home country of Malawi.

Godwell looks forward to joining the Fellowship program and contributing to the research goals and objectives of his host organization. He is also excited to contribute to sustainable development through the agricultural sector in his home country and support smallholder farmers with accurate scientific information. Godwell also hopes to build important skills, grow his professional network, and gain important career guidance and direction through this opportunity.



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## Harriet Cheelo



- **Country:** Zambia
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2020
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) - Zambia

### **Bio:**

Harriet Cheelo recently graduated from EARTH University in 2020 where she discovered a passion for sustainable agriculture and community development. She had the opportunity to work with the surrounding communities in Costa Rica while studying at EARTH and loved working with smallholder farmers. Harriet educated these farmers on the importance of sustainable agriculture and natural resource conservation. These experiences taught her important lessons in working with different types of people, developing agricultural projects, training communities on waste management, how to start an agribusiness, and how to motivate young people to be responsible and sustainable citizens. While studying at EARTH, Harriet also completed an internship in her home country of Zambia with the Zambia Agricultural Research Institute, where she learned more about how government institutions operate in her country. Harriet's interests and background make her an excellent candidate for the Agricultural Employment Track of the Fellowship Program, and she will complete her Fellowship at Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) - Zambia.

Through the Fellowship Program, Harriet is looking forward to putting her knowledge into practice and learning from CAMFED Zambia. She is also excited to grow personally and professionally through gaining new skills and expanding her professional network in Zambia. Lastly, Harriet hopes to continue working with smallholder farmers and follow her passions while uplifting her community.





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## Jean Claude Nsengiyumva



- **Country:** Rwanda
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2019
- **Track:** Agriculture Innovation Through Science and Research
- **Host organization:** One Acre Fund – Rwanda

### **Bio:**

Jean Claude Nsengiyumva graduated from EARTH University in 2019. Since graduating, he has completed an internship at One Acre Fund in his home country of Rwanda. In this position, he works in the monitoring, evaluation, and learning department where he collaborates in data collection, analysis, and survey reporting to measure the impact of the organization. While studying at EARTH, Jean Claude conducted research to make organic fertilizer using leftover food from the cafeteria and identified fungus that attacks cassava leaves through analyzing their morphology. For his graduation project, he conducted research titled “Evaluating the Effects of Different Bioinoculants on the Growth of Beans in the Tropics.” Jean Claude is especially interested in research related to plant diseases, soil science, plant genetics, and entomology. Due to his background and research experience, Jean Claude was accepted to the Fellowship Program on the Agricultural Innovation Through Science and Research Track, and he will return to One Acre Fund to complete his Fellowship.

Jean Claude believes that research is a core element in supporting the development of the agricultural sector on the African continent, and he looks forward to supporting these efforts through the Program. He also hopes to gain professional mentors, career guidance, and new skills through working with his host organization.



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## Jireh Mwamukonda



- **Country:** Malawi
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2019
- **Track:** Agricultural Entrepreneurship
- **Host organization:** M-hub Incubator – Malawi

### **Bio:**

Jireh Mwamukonda graduated from EARTH University in 2019 and has worked as an intern for Meadow Creek Dairy since graduation. While she was studying at EARTH, Jireh conducted several research studies in the field and in the lab. For her graduation project, she completed research titled “Evaluation of a Push-pull Strategy using Pennisetum purpureum and Brachiaria brizantha cv Mulato II (trap crops), and Melinis minutiflora (repellent crop) to manage Spodoptera frugiperda in Maize in the Humid Tropics of Central America.” During this research, Jireh improved her research and writing skills while interpreting data and working under minimum supervision. Jireh was accepted to the Fellowship Program on the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Track. She will complete her Fellowship at M-hub Incubator in her home country of Malawi.

Jireh is passionate about developing the agricultural sector in her home country of Malawi and is looking forward to supporting these efforts through the fellowship Program. She is excited to enhance her skillset and strategically position herself for her long-term career plan within the agricultural sector. Jireh also hopes to grow professionally and personally through gaining a better understanding of her knowledge and skills.



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## Khaalid Ahmed Awali



- **Country:** Somalia
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2018
- **Track:** Agricultural Entrepreneurship
- **Host organization:** Harhub Business Incubation – Somaliland

### **Bio:**

Khaalid Ahmed Awali graduated from EARTH University in 2019. While Khaalid was studying at EARTH, he was first exposed to agricultural entrepreneurship through founding Vitaeearth S.A. Since graduation, he has worked for the startup Clearsky Power in his home country of Somalia as a solar engineer. In his most recent role at Clearsky power, he performed feasibility assessments for potential projects; installed, commissioned, serviced, and maintained solar energy systems; and designed the ON-OFF grid solar energy systems using HOMER PRO and Helioscope. Khaalid's background and interest in entrepreneurship make him an excellent candidate for the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Track. He will complete his Fellowship with Harhub Business Incubation where he will continue to scale his business, AquaCalaf.

AquaCalaf produces animal feed to be stored for drought crises, which helps farmers adapt to droughts and mitigate the effects of climate change. The climate in Somalia is very dry, thus there are many pastoral communities that migrate to wherever they can find feed and water for their livestock. Through participating in the Fellowship Program, Khaalid is looking forward to connecting with other young entrepreneurs and growing his business.



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## Norman Mugisha



- **Country:** Rwanda
- **University:** EARTH University  
Class of 2018
- **Track:** Agricultural  
Entrepreneurship
- **Host organization:** LEAPR Labs  
Incubation Hub

### **Bio:**

Since graduating from EARTH University in 2018, Norman Mugisha has worked on his venture, Young African Business Booster, in his home country of Rwanda. Norman is passionate about agricultural entrepreneurship and believes that it can be a vehicle for sustainable development on the continent. Norman's interest in entrepreneurship and experience running his own business makes him an excellent fit for the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Track of the Fellowship Program. Norman will complete his Fellowship with LEAPR Labs Incubation Hub in Rwanda where he will continue to grow his business.

Young African Business Booster aims to help millions of young people across the continent to overcome poverty, unemployment, and hunger through supporting them in starting their own agribusinesses. His venture helps them learn important skills, write business plans, find financial support, and access markets. Currently, 700 young people in Rwanda are enrolled in the project. In 5 years, Norman envisions that YABB will have helped over 10,000 young people across Africa and have created millions of job opportunities while also improving food security. Norman is looking forward to receiving additional support from the Fellowship Program to increase his venture's impact on the continent.



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## Nyasha Fidelis Shumbayarerwa



- **Country:** Zimbabwe
- **University:** EARTH University  
Class of 2018
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** Climate Neutral Group (CNG) South Africa

### **Bio:**

Nyasha Fidelis Shumbayarerwa graduated from EARTH University in 2018. At EARTH, Nyasha gained valuable work experience in sustainability, community development, and scientific research while maintaining a passion for sustainable development in Africa. Since graduation, he has worked as a technical assistant with the Siyakhana Initiative for Ecological Health and Food Security at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. In this role, he assured that the vegetable garden nutrient needs are met using organic fertilizers, designed irrigation schedules, and led social media marketing campaigns. Currently, Nyasha is working as a research assistant at Delaware State University. His commitment to community service, work ethic, and problem-solving skills make him an excellent candidate for the Agricultural Employment Track of the Fellowship Program.

Nyasha will complete his Fellowship with the Climate Neutral Group (CNG) in South Africa. He is hoping to develop and nurture corporate skills, gain important professional experience, and become more versatile through this opportunity. Nyasha also wants to better understand which career paths suit him and his interests. Lastly, Nyasha is excited to contribute to sustainable development through improving agricultural practices on the continent.



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## Precious Akampurira



- **Country:** Uganda
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2019
- **Track:** Agricultural Entrepreneurship
- **Host organization:** Makerere University Department of Food and Nutrition Hub

### **Bio:**

Precious Akampurira graduated from EARTH University in 2019. While studying at EARTH, Precious was motivated by her desire to improve the livelihoods of farmers in her home country, Uganda. After graduation, Precious returned to Uganda where she was employed as a Consultant and Agricultural Program Analyst with Agape Community Transformation. In this role, Precious evaluated the current agricultural program of the organization, guided plan development, and implemented new community farming projects to improve nutrition. Precious believes that entrepreneurship is an important vehicle for job creation and agricultural development, which makes her an excellent candidate for the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Track of the Fellowship Program.

Through participating in the Fellowship Program, Precious hopes to scale her business, VASCAPE. VASCAPE is a social enterprise that promotes socio-economic development and improves health and nutrition through sustainable agriculture, food processing, and value addition to agricultural products. Her business produces food products and partners with farmers to buy products while supporting sustainable agricultural practices. Through the Fellowship Program, Precious is looking forward to taking advantage of gaining mentorship and networking opportunities that will help her grow her business.



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## Precious Nemutenzi



- **Country:** Zimbabwe
- **University:** EARTH University  
Class of 2020
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:**  
Welthungerhilfe (WHH) Zimbabwe

### **Bio:**

Precious Nemutenzi recently graduated from EARTH University in 2020. While studying at EARTH, Precious completed an internship at Grasslands Research Institute in her home country of Zimbabwe. This experience exposed her to the reality of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe and taught her about challenges faced by smallholder farmers. Precious continued to follow her passion for helping smallholder farmers by working with farmers in the communities surrounding EARTH and by co-founding an organization that empowers smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe and Costa Rica. Precious's background, skillset, and interests make her a great candidate for the Agricultural Employment Track of the Fellowship Program. She will complete her Fellowship with Welthungerhilfe in Zimbabwe.

Through participating in the Fellowship Program, Precious is looking forward to creating positive impact within agricultural and rural development in Zimbabwe. She is very passionate about uplifting farmers and contributing to the development of Africa, and Precious hopes that the Fellowship Program will set her up for success professionally through helping her make this impact. Precious is also excited to take advantage of professional networking opportunities and grow her network in Zimbabwe through the Program.



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## Respect Rungano Musiyiwa



- **Country:** Zimbabwe
- **University:** EARTH University  
Class of 2020
- **Track:** Agricultural  
Entrepreneurship
- **Host organization:** Udugu  
Institute Incubation Hub

### **Bio:**

Respect Rungano Musiyiwa graduated from EARTH University in 2020. Before arriving at EARTH, Respect knew that he wanted to help his community in Zimbabwe adopt sustainable agricultural practices. While he was studying at EARTH, he implemented several projects in his community and shared his knowledge with smallholder farmers to help them improve their yields. For his graduation project, Respect created an online platform with agricultural training resources that help smallholder farmers implement sustainable practices and learn about starting an agribusiness venture. Continuing to follow his passion of helping smallholder farmers, Respect established the Agribusiness Incubation and Innovation Hub. This Hub provides agricultural skills training to smallholder farmers and helps them create agribusinesses that ensure food and income security. Given his background and passions, Respect is an excellent candidate for the Agricultural Entrepreneurship track of the Fellowship Program. He will complete his Fellowship with Udugu Institute Incubation Hub where he will continue to scale his business.

Respect is looking forward to participating in the Fellowship Program and receiving support that will allow him to give back to his community and support sustainable development. He hopes to impart his knowledge from EARTH to smallholder farmers while benefitting from professional networking opportunities.



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## Rufaro Chokera



- **Country:** Zimbabwe
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2020
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) - Zimbabwe

### **Bio:**

Rufaro Chokera graduated from EARTH University in 2020 where she gained important experience in horticulture production, animal rearing, and project leadership. Rufaro grew up in a rural area and thus has first-hand knowledge of life in rural areas and challenges faced by farmers. During her third year at EARTH, Rufaro completed an internship at the University of Florida where she learned about the production and commercialization of oranges. As a fourth-year student leader in community work experience, Rufaro has gained important experience working directly with smallholder farmers that produce cassava in Guácimo, Costa Rica. Through this experience, she has gathered information about their production methods and obstacles, clients, technologies, and other opportunities for their businesses. Rufaro's background and interests make her a great candidate for the Agricultural Employment Track of the Fellowship Program, and she will complete her Fellowship with Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) in her home country of Zimbabwe.

Rufaro is looking forward to growing her professional network and learning as much as she can while positively contributing to the development of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe.



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## Talent Vharachumu



- **Country:** Zimbabwe
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2020
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) - Zimbabwe

### **Bio:**

Talent Vharachumu graduated from EARTH University in 2020. While studying at EARTH, she gained important experience in entrepreneurship through her coursework. She also worked as the Financial Manager with Gran Pez, a small company that farmed tilapia on campus. This business also taught students important skills in entrepreneurship and business management, demonstrating Talent's commitment to giving back. Through this role, she gained important skills in problem solving, project coordination, time management, and leadership. During her third year, Talent worked as a Plant Physiology Research Intern at the University of Florida, which gave her additional important skills within research, data collection, and plant nutrition. Talent's passion for sustainable agriculture makes her a great candidate for the Agricultural Employment Track. She will complete her fellowship with Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) in her home country of Zimbabwe.

Talent is looking forward to giving back to her community and contributing to the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices through participating in the Fellowship Program. She is also excited to grow as a professional and increase her professional network in Zimbabwe.



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## Umuraza Noella Rutayisire



- **Country:** Rwanda
- **University:** EARTH University  
Class of 2020
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** Rwanda  
Agricultural Board (RAB)

### **Bio:**

Umuraza Noella Rutayisire graduated from EARTH University in 2020 where she developed her leadership skills to become an agent of change. As a third-year student, Umuraza completed an internship at Share the Harvest Farm in New York where she evaluated and planned everyday activities on the cultivation of cover crops, pest control, and soil analysis. During her final year at EARTH, she was a student leader in the ornamental plant nursery. She guided students on the importance of flowers in agriculture and how they should be maintained. Umuraza coordinated all field activities that take place in plant nurseries such as transplanting seedlings and collecting new varieties of ornamental plants. For her graduation project, she is evaluating organic agro-industry residues that can be used as a substrate to sustainably produce mushrooms. These experiences have given Umuraza valuable experience in crop production and sustainable agriculture, thus she is a great candidate for the Agricultural Employment Track.

Umuraza will complete her Fellowship in her home country of Rwanda with the Rwanda Agricultural Board (RAB). She is looking forward to returning home to start her career and hopes to grow her professional network while learning more about agriculture in Rwanda through this experience. Umuraza also hopes to share her knowledge from EARTH to promote sustainable agricultural practices and contribute to rural development.



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## Yamikani Maya Ng'ona



- **Country:** Malawi
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2019
- **Track:** Agricultural Entrepreneurship
- **Host organization:** M-hub Incubator – Malawi

### **Bio:**

Yamikani Maya Ng'ona graduated from EARTH University in 2019. While studying at EARTH, she completed an internship in her home country of Malawi with Project Concern International. This nonprofit focuses on increasing food security in Malawi, and Yamikani worked with farmers to help them improve their agricultural practices to increase yields and promote food security. For her graduation project, Yamikani focused on push-and-pull technology in agriculture. Her investigation involved the intercropping of a repellent plant and an attractant to control fall armyworm in Costa Rica. Since graduation, she has completed an internship through the Ohio Program with Meadow Creek Dairy. Yamikani's experiences and extensive knowledge in agriculture make her a great candidate for the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Track of the Fellowship. She will complete her Fellowship with M-hub Incubator in Malawi.

Yamikani is looking forward to participating in the Fellowship Program to learn from experienced professionals that will help her develop interpersonal and professional abilities necessary to contribute to sustainable development. She is excited to gain experience working in Malawi and empower smallholder farmers through this opportunity.



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## Yusuf Yasin Abdirahman



- **Country:** Somalia
- **University:** EARTH University Class of 2019
- **Track:** Agricultural Employment
- **Host organization:** Devreg Consulting – Somalia

### **Bio:**

Yusuf Yasin Abdirahman graduated from EARTH University in 2019. While Yusuf was studying at EARTH, he gained important work experience through working in the laboratory and understanding the importance of biotechnology in agriculture. Since graduating, he has worked on the GEEL Somalia Project, funded by USAID and implemented by Research Triangle Institute, as a banana specialist. In this role, Yusuf facilitates banana competitiveness platforms by preparing technical presentations, identifying participants, and coordinating trainings. He also organizes commercial farmers training sessions, provides technical facilitation and support to farmers on good agricultural practices, and introduces new technologies such as improved irrigation systems. Yusuf has also learned about the banana value chain and has assisted farmers to export bananas to Saudi Arabia and Turkey. These experiences have strengthened Yusuf's agricultural knowledge and gave him an important background in agricultural consulting. Yusuf will complete his Fellowship with Devreg Consulting in his home country of Somalia on the Agricultural Employment Track.

Yusuf is excited to continue to work in his country and discover additional job opportunities within the agricultural sector. He is grateful to the Program for supporting his professional development and helping him give back to his community while supporting sustainable agricultural practices in his country of origin.