

African Graduate Mentorship and Coaching Programme (2024) Memorabilia

By

Jean Bosco Ngarukiyimana (Mentee)



1. Introduction

As a mentee in the **African Graduate Mentorship and Coaching Programme (2024)**, this transformative experience marked a pivotal chapter in my academic and professional journey. It was a year of inspiration, growth, and the forging of invaluable connections.

2. Guidance and Support from Exceptional Mentor

- I had the privilege of being mentored by accomplished professional Dr Ayal Desalegn who shared his insights, experiences, and advice tailored to my unique academic path and career aspirations.
- The mentorship I received empowered me to refine my focus on **agroecology, environmental sustainability, and soil science**, aligning my skills and expertise with impactful solutions for Sub-Saharan Africa.

3. Leadership and Personal Development

- Through the program, I gained confidence in my leadership abilities and enhanced my communication, decision making, and problem solving skills.
- I learnt strategies for managing challenges in academia and practical solutions for translating research into real world impact.

4. Career Advancement Opportunities

- The program exposed me to various career pathways in research, policy, and sustainable development. I received actionable advice on networking, job applications, and career transitions.
- As part of this journey, I expanded my understanding of how to apply my research to address pressing challenges such as **climate change mitigation and soil fertility management**.

5. Building a Lifelong Network

- I connected with a diverse cohort of graduate mentees across Africa who share a passion for advancing the continent through innovative research and leadership.
- These relationships formed a foundation for future collaborations in agroecology and environmental protection initiatives.

6. Bridging Academia and Impact

- I also increased my ability to integrate **theoretical knowledge** with practical applications to foster **sustainable development in agriculture and environmental management**.
- The mentorship and coaching deepened my understanding of **effective scientific communication (Figure 1)**.



Figure 1. Certificate of participating in 5th Circularity Africa Conference

7. Reflections and Achievements

Being part of the **African Graduate Mentorship and Coaching Programme** was an extraordinary opportunity that helped shape my vision for the future. It strengthened my capacity to:

- Advance environmental sustainability through research and practical solutions.
- Mentor and inspire upcoming researchers, replicating the guidance I received.
- Contribute to Africa's progress through innovations in **soil science, agroecology, and sustainable agriculture.**

This program was not merely a stepping stone; it was a cornerstone for realizing my potential and preparing for greater responsibilities in academia, environmental advocacy, and leadership.

8. Challenges

- i. **Time management:** Balancing the demanding workload of my PhD with the additional time commitments required for the mentorship and coaching program.

9. Appreciation

I am deeply grateful to the program organizers, mentors, and fellow mentees for creating a collaborative and enriching environment. The lessons I learnt and the relationships I built will remain a source of strength and inspiration throughout my career.

“Through mentorship, I discovered not only my strengths but also my responsibility to contribute to a sustainable future for Africa.”

10. Contact information

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