



## RUFORUM 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

### CONCEPT NOTE

**Leading from Where You Are: Building Leadership  
and Mentoring Skills for Graduate Success**



## THEME

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### **Positioning Africa's Universities and the Higher Education Sector to effectively impact development processes on the continent**

#### **Hosts:**

The Government of Botswana and  
RUFORUM member Universities in Botswana led by Botswana University of  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

#### **Venue:**

Gaborone International Conference Center, Moremi 1, Gaborone, Botswana

**Date:** 29th - 30th November, 2025

**Time:** 08.00-17:00 Central African Time (CAT)

**Contact:** Professor Prof. Agnes W. Mwang'ombe



## Background

Sub-Saharan Africa's unprecedented youth bulge - projected to exceed 400 million by 2050 - presents a dual challenge and opportunity: transforming this dynamic demographic into a driving force for sustainable development, particularly in the core sector of agriculture. Despite this potential, widespread youth unemployment and underemployment persist, largely due to weak leadership pipelines and inadequate mentoring systems within academic and research institutions. The RUFORUM network is actively addressing these gaps by fostering transformational leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurship in agricultural education and research. This two-day leadership and Mentoring session is designed to empower graduate students (MSc and PhD), especially in STEM-related agricultural disciplines, with the essential leadership mindsets, communication skills, and mentoring capacities.

Ultimately, this pre-AGM event seeks to strengthen leadership and mentoring capacities to enhance participants' academic excellence, personal growth, and societal impact, directly contributing to Africa's agricultural transformation agenda and key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) like food security, youth employment, and quality education.

## Objectives

The session aims to achieve the following:

1. Build participants' self-awareness and core leadership competencies.
2. Strengthen communication, collaboration, and networking skills across disciplines.
3. Promote mentoring culture through practical tools and peer-learning.
4. Inspire participants to design and implement personal leadership and career development plans aligned with the RUFORUM vision of transforming African agriculture.

## Approach

The workshop will employ a blended participatory approach, integrating:

- Short expert talks from experienced academic and industry leaders.
- Practical exercises and small-group discussions.
- Storytelling and reflection sessions ("My Leadership Journey").
- Peer mentoring circles to foster continuity beyond the event

## Expected Outcomes

By the end of the two days, participants will have:

1. A clear understanding of different leadership styles and self-awareness of their own strengths.
2. Improved emotional intelligence and ethical decision-making capacity.
3. Practical mentoring frameworks and peer-to-peer support networks.
4. A Personal Leadership and Mentoring Plan with actionable steps for academic and professional growth.
5. Strengthened sense of purpose and contribution to Africa's innovation and food systems transformation.

## Participants

1. MSc and PhD students in agricultural and related STEM disciplines within the RUFORUM network.
2. Early-career researchers aspiring to leadership and mentoring roles.
3. Gender-balanced participation will be prioritized.

Venue: BUAN Block 311/1  
 Session Chair: Dr. Rukarwa Jolyn  
 Rapporteurs: Selma Ndapewa & Artur

Time	Activity	Responsible person
08:00-08:30	Arrival and settling	
08:30-08:35	Opening remarks	
08:35-09:30	Understanding Leadership: Influence, not position. Leadership vs Management Leadership Styles and Situational Leadership	Prof. Agnes W. Mwang'ombe
09:30-10:30	Leadership in STEM and Agricultural Contexts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leading interdisciplinary research teams</li> <li>Communicating complex ideas to diverse audiences</li> <li>Managing uncertainty and ethical decision-making</li> </ul>	Prof. Agnes W. Mwang'ombe
10:30-11:00	Tea/Coffee/Health Break	
11:00-1:00	Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Inclusive Leadership	Prof. Agnes W. Mwang'ombe
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00-16:20	Reflection Workshop: "My Leadership Identity" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity: Write a one-paragraph "Leadership Statement."</li> <li>Small group discussion and peer feedback</li> </ul>	Prof. Agnes W. Mwang'ombe
16:20-16:30	Way forward and closing.	

#### SUNDAY 30TH NOVEMBER 2025

08:00-08:30	Arrival and settling	
08:30-08:40	Recap of Day 1	
08:40-09:40	Understanding Mentoring: Roles, Responsibilities, and Stages. Qualities of Effective Mentors and Mentees	Prof. Achille E. Assogbadjo
09:40 – 0:30	Managing Mentoring Challenges: Feedback, Difficult Conversations, and Time Management	Prof. Achille E. Assogbadjo
10:30-11:00	Tea/Coffee/Health Break	
11:00 - 12:00	Building Effective Research and Professional Networks	Prof. Achille E. Assogbadjo
12:00 -13:00	Peer Mentoring for Career Development	Prof. Achille E. Assogbadjo
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00-15:30	Action Planning Workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Personal Leadership and Mentoring Plan</li> <li>Align career goals with leadership aspirations and RUFORUM values.</li> </ul>	Prof. Achille E. Assogbadjo
15:30 -16:30	Reflection and Wrap-Up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing personal commitments and next steps.</li> <li>Presentation of selected leadership/mentoring plans.</li> <li>Evaluation and feedback session.</li> </ul>	Prof. Achille E. Assogbadjo
	Closing remarks	

