



# *Biographies of speakers*



## **Regional Erasmus+ Cluster Meeting and Contact-Making Seminar 2025 for Sub-Saharan Africa**

20-21 May 2025 | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



**Erasmus+**  
Enriching lives, opening minds





### **Prof Berhanu Nega**

*Minister, FDRE Ministry of Education*

Prof Berhanu Nega is the Minister of Education for Ethiopia. He is a founding chairman of the Rainbow Ethiopia: Movement for Democracy and Social Justice, and a Deputy Chairman of Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), for whom he served as chief election campaign strategist. He attended Addis Ababa University, and obtained his undergraduate degree in economics from the State University of New York, and his PhD in economics from the New School for Social Research in New York city.

After completing his studies, he became a lecturer at Bucknell University. Later he found Imbilita, a bi-monthly monthly magazine focusing on economic, political, social and current affairs in Ethiopia, and he was the founding chairman of the Ethiopian Economic Association.

After returning to Ethiopia, he lectured at Addis Ababa University and was involved with several commercial organisations. He had a tumultuous political career in opposition, before taking up the position of Minister of Education in 2021.



### **Muferihat Kamil**

*Minister, FDRE Ministry of Labour and Skills*

Muferihat Kamil Ahmed is the Minister of Labour and Skills Development for Ethiopia. She was previously the Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives (the first female to hold that position) and served as the first Minister of Peace from October 2018 to 6 October 2021. She was the Chair of the SEPDM (Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement), one of the four parties that make up the former ruling coalition in Ethiopia.

Muferihat was appointed Public Relations Advisor to the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) President in 2007. She was named as Minister of Women's Affairs of Ethiopia in 2008.

She attended Haramaya University, obtaining her BSc in Agriculture in 2000.



### **Dr Samuel Kifle (PhD)**

*Interim President of Addis Ababa University*

Dr. Samuel Kifle (PhD) assumed the position of interim president of Addis Ababa University (AAU) in August 2023.

Prior to becoming president of AAU, Dr. Samuel was the State Minister for higher education and development for nearly five years, leading policy, curricular, organisational and management reform processes in Ethiopian higher education. He was one of the key persons involved in the assessment and recommendations leading to AU's position as the first autonomous public university in Ethiopia. Dr. Samuel was also the State Minister for Science and Higher Education between 2018 and 2021, helping set a new vision for higher educational institutions during a period of great political reform. In earlier years, Dr. Samuel served as General Manager of Higher Education Expansion Program (MoE) in 2015-2016 after another leadership role as General Director for Higher Education Administration Affairs between 2013-16.

Dr. Samuel received a PhD in Commerce and Management Studies from Andhra University, India, in 2010. He earned an MSc degree in Accounting and Finance and a BA degree in Accounting from Addis Ababa University in 2006 and 2001 respectively. He won the 'Best PhD Thesis Medal Award of Hindu' in 2014. He was also a visiting professor at the International University College of Leuven, Belgium, in 2012-2013.

In 2006-2007, he participated in international collaborations on research and training at the Center for International Cooperation of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the University of Hull, United Kingdom and was a member of the Fulbright Senior Scholar Program. Dr. Samuel was a Lecturer at Jimma University's Department of Accounting and Finance in 2002-2007, and then Assistant Professor at its College of Business and Economics in 2010-2012.



## H.E. Sofie From-Emmesberger

*European Union Ambassador to Ethiopia*

Prior to her current post as EU Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Sofie From-Emmesberger was a career diplomat at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. She was Director General for Africa and Middle East in October 2021 after having served as the permanent Chair of the European Union's Political and Security Committee, PSC, from 2018 to 2021. Prior to that she held the position as Ambassador of Finland to PSC (2015-2018) and has served as Ambassador of Finland to Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Eritrea and the Seychelles as well as Permanent Representative to the UN in Nairobi (2011-2015). She has also worked at the Finnish missions in Tel Aviv and Strasbourg as well as in the fields of civilian crisis management and human rights. She holds a Master's degree in law from the University of Helsinki and conducted post-graduate studies at the Institute for European Law, University of Saarland, Germany.



## Adrian Veale

*Policy Officer for International Cooperation in Education, European Commission, Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture*

Adrian Veale works in the International Cooperation unit within the Directorate General (DG) of the European Commission that covers the European Union's policies and programmes for Education (as well as Youth, Culture and Sport).

The primary focus of his work is the international dimension of the Erasmus+ programme, particularly Capacity Building for Higher Education. From a regional point of view, he pays particular attention to this cooperation with Africa. He has also worked on Erasmus Mundus and has previously focused on cooperation with Asia.

Prior to EAC he has worked for the European Executive Agency for Education and Culture, and for Commission DGs dealing with Development Cooperation and Employment.



## Claire Herrmann

*Policy Officer for International Cooperation in Education, European Commission, Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture*

Claire Herrmann works in the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, as a policy officer in the unit responsible for International Cooperation (beyond Europe). She works mainly on the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme in Sub-Saharan Africa and cooperation mechanisms in the Vocational Education and Training sector.

From her previous positions in the European Commission, she has experience in international cooperation and programmes in education and youth, employment and social inclusion (European Social Fund), and anti-discrimination issues.



## Elena Palavrova

*Project Adviser, European, Education and Culture Executive Agency*

Elena Palavrova is a Project Adviser for the International Capacity Building unit within the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Commission.

She is part of the team managing the Capacity Building in Higher Education action of the Erasmus+ programme, with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. Among her other assignments, she is also responsible for the support structure of the network of Erasmus+ National Focal Points.

Elena Palavrova has more than 14 years of experience working with Africa. Prior to her current position, she was part of the EACEA team managing the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme and its predecessor Intra-ACP Academic Mobility Scheme, as well as Erasmus Mundus Partnerships.

Her background is in International Economic Relations and Public Administration. Before joining the EU institutions in 2010, she gained extensive experience in international business cooperation and project management.





### Danila Conte

*Project Advisor, European Education and Culture Executive Agency*

Danila Conte is an experienced European civil servant with a distinguished career in the European Commission, specialising in programme management, policy development, and financial oversight across a range of sectors. She is currently a Programme Officer at the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), where she coordinates call preparation, evaluation processes, and policy analysis within the DG for Skills and Innovation.

Previously, Danila served in various roles at DG REA and DG NEAR, including as Financial and Audit Adviser at the EU Delegation to Lebanon and Project Adviser for the Horizon 2020 programme.

Danila holds a degree in economics from Bocconi University, Milan, with a specialisation in Public Administration and International Institutions, and an Executive Master in Finance from Solvay Business School in Brussels. Multilingual and internationally experienced, she has lived and worked in Latin America and the Middle East, bringing a global perspective to her work.



### Caterina Valitutti

*Project Adviser, European Education and Culture Executive Agency*

Caterina Valitutti is an international development professional, currently working on Erasmus+ as Project Adviser at the European Education and Culture Executive Agency. With over two decades of global experience, she worked in humanitarian and development programs across Europe, Africa and Latin America. Before moving to Brussels, she worked for several years with United Nations agencies in Chad, South Sudan and Niger, where she facilitated the preparation of the UN multi-annual frameworks for crisis response and development aid. She also coordinated the activities of emergency centres for unaccompanied minors in Italy and worked with microfinance institutions in Mexico. Passionate about empowering communities and advancing human rights, she holds a strong commitment to sustainable development and international cooperation.



### Jenny Elmaco

*Academic Expert, Centralised Support to the network of Erasmus+ National Focal Points, PRACSIS srl*

Dr. Jenny Lind Elmaco is the Academic Expert for the Centralised Support for the global network of Erasmus+ National Focal Points. She has been recognised with the Double Gold in Education and the Global Diamond Award in Innovation from the Global Women Inventors and Innovators Network (UK) and the Marie Curie Social Impact Award. As part of her passion project, she serves as the United Nations Vienna and UNESCO Representative as well as United Nations Administrator for the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, and the Chair of the Genders, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group of the Marie Curie Alumni Association. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts (UK).

A scholar of EU universities including an Erasmus scholarship and Marie Curie fellowship, she holds a PhD in Peace and International Development, a master's degree in Global Studies, Peace and Security, and an MBA in Big Data and Business Intelligence. She also completed the Executive Program in Law, Policy and AI at IE Law School, Madrid, and the Executive Program in the Circular Economy and Sustainability Strategies at the University of Cambridge. Prior to her current engagement, she worked with international organisations and diplomatic missions in the areas of international relations, science diplomacy, development and governance.



### Wafa M'Sallem

*Regional Manager for Sub-Saharan Africa, Centralised Support to the network of Erasmus+ National Focal Points, PRACSIS srl*

Dr. Wafa M'Sallem is the Regional Manager for Sub-Saharan Africa within the Centralised Support to the network of Erasmus+ National Focal Points (ENFP), collaborating closely with the European Commission to support ENFPs in the region. An expert in communication and marketing strategy, Dr. M'Sallem works with 42 ENFPs across Sub-Saharan Africa to enhance the visibility and uptake of the Erasmus+ programme.

She is a distinguished scholar who obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Tunis in 2014 and her HdR in 2023. She previously served as an Associate Professor of Marketing at the University of Sousse. Her dedication to academic excellence and social impact is evident through her diverse roles in education, research, and activism.



### Sophia Ashipala

*Head of the Education Division, African Union Commission*

Sophia Ashipala is a distinguished education leader dedicated to advancing quality and inclusive education across Africa. As the Head of Education at the African Union Commission (AUC), she plays a pivotal role in shaping policies, strategies, and programs that drive educational transformation on the continent.

With a wealth of experience in education policy development, higher education, and skills training from more than two decades in the organisation, Sophia has been instrumental in advocating for policy implementation on the Continent and fostering collaboration between governments and development partners.

Her leadership focuses on promoting innovative education systems, youth empowerment, and capacity building, ensuring that Africa's education sector aligns with the AU's Agenda 2063 vision for sustainable development.

Her commitment to lifelong learning and skills development continues to inspire initiatives that equip African youth with the knowledge and competencies needed for the future.



### Rui Baloi

*Partnership Officer, ADPP Moçambique (VECRA-MOZ project)*

Rui Luís Baloi is a teacher with a degree in Pedagogical Sciences from ISET – One World in Mozambique. Since 2019, he has been serving as a Partnerships Officer in the education sector at ADPP Mozambique. He has extensive experience in the fields of education, vocational training, and youth empowerment, having worked in both Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau since 2009, where he leads several initiatives focused on youth skills development and the inclusion of vulnerable groups through vocational training programs, socio-economic integration, and the implementation of micro-projects aimed at enhancing employability and access to the labour market. He has worked with both national and international organisations on project implementation, particularly in challenging contexts such as natural disasters, conflict situations, and internal displacement peoples (IDPs).



### Beatrice Bellet

*Director, Asociación Mundus (SHINE project)*

Beatrice Bellet has been working on European projects since 2003, primarily in various programs of the European Commission related to lifelong learning and capacity building for groups at risk of exclusion. She has written and managed over 200 strategic long-term projects, which have brought together more than 350 entities throughout Europe. She started to develop her expertise in the African continent when she wrote the SAAM pilot project, which gathered over 36 partner organisations in Europe and Africa. Currently she leads the organisation and a team of 8 project managers, and coordinates the strategy. She is an interpreter translator in French, English and Spanish, with a Masters in Interpretation with a specialty in Geo-Politics.



### Emmanuel Bestman

*Biodiversity Officer, ArcelorMittal Liberia, MESPOM Alumnus*

Emmanuel Bestman serves as a Biodiversity Officer at ArcelorMittal Liberia, where he is dedicated to ensuring that the company's operations align with national and international standards. With a strong background in biodiversity conservation and ecological monitoring, he plays a vital role in protecting Liberia's rich natural heritage. Emmanuel collaborates with local communities, government agencies, and global partners to implement sustainable practices that promote harmonious development and environmental stewardship. His focus areas encompass habitat protection, species conservation, and the integration of biodiversity considerations into industrial planning. As a passionate advocate for responsible environmental management, he frequently contributes to biodiversity discussions in Liberia.



### Laurent Bochereau

*Minister-Counsellor, European Union Delegation to the African Union*

Since September 2023, Laurent Bochereau has worked as the research and innovation counsellor at the EU Delegation to the African Union, where he contributes to strengthen EU-AU cooperation in the areas of higher education, research and innovation.

He gained a Laureate from the Ecole Polytechnique, a Master's degree from the University of California and a PhD from the University of Paris Sorbonne. After several years working as a research project leader at INRAE, he served two years in the French Ministry for Research. He joined the European Commission in 1995 where he occupied several middle management positions and had several postings in the EU Delegations in Washington, Beijing and Moscow.



### Luisa Bunescu

*International Cooperation Officer, Education Sector, European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships*

Luisa Bunescu works in the youth, education and research, culture unit within the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) of the European Commission. Her portfolio covers higher education cooperation with the EU's partner countries, as well as work on the international dimension of the Erasmus+ programme.

Prior to joining DG INTPA, she worked for the European University Association (EUA) in Brussels and for the Higher Education Initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).



### Elena Castrillo

*International projects coordinator, IES la Merced (V2SDF project)*

Elena Castrillo is the international projects coordinator at IES la Merced vocational education and training school. She has two degrees, one in Physic Sciences and other in Social and Cultural Anthropology, and obtained the post of Vocational Training Teacher of Electrotechnical and Automatic Systems in 1998.

She participated in the creation of the Renewable Energy Cooperative 'Energética' and was part of its first management team.

She has been coordinator of Gender Equality and Human Rights at her school, and in 2015 won the Spanish national prize "Vicente Ferrer for Education for Development" with the project 'Camino al Insti'.

In 2019 she launched the Internationalisation Plan of IES La Merced, and since then she has implemented and coordinated multiple Erasmus+ VET and HE projects, having collaborated with institutions in Europe, America and Africa, highlighting, for its importance, the CB VET E+ project 'VET To Stop Deforestation'.



### Aleh Cherp

*Coordinator Erasmus Mundus, Central European University (MESPOM project)*

Aleh Cherp is a professor at Central European University (CEU, Austria) and Lund University (Sweden). Since 2005, Prof. Cherp has been the coordinator for MESPOM, Erasmus Mundus Masters course in Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management, which CEU and Lund University operate with the University of Manchester (UK), and the University of the Aegean (Greece).

Prof. Cherp is also an active researcher of energy transitions and climate policies; he is among the world's top 2% scientists according to Stanford/Elsevier's Top 2% Scientist Rankings, a member of the Scoping group for the Seventh Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and led the Energy and Security chapter of the Global Energy Assessment. Prof. Cherp also served as a chair of two Panels in the European Research Council, and undertook assignments for the European Environment Agency, UNDP and the World Bank.





### Solomon Derese

*Researcher and lecturer, University of Nairobi (UnaVEx project)*

Solomon Derese is a distinguished researcher and lecturer at the Department of Chemistry, University of Nairobi, with extensive expertise in natural products chemistry. He has authored over 70 peer-reviewed journal articles and has supervised postgraduate students from across East and Central Africa, including Cameroon, DR Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.

Prof. Derese previously served as Programme Officer for the Natural Products Research Network for Eastern and Central Africa (NAPRECA) from 2009 to 2014. He is an active member of both the Kenya Chemical Society and the Royal Society of Chemistry. Currently, he serves as the Executive Secretary of the Kenyan node of the Pan African Chemistry Network. A committed trainer and mentor, he has conducted numerous NMR training sessions at NAPRECA summer schools and pre-symposium workshops in Sudan, Tanzania, and DR Congo. In addition, he contributes to international collaborative initiatives, including the UnaEuropa's UnaVEx project, aimed at cultivating Global Sustainability Advocates from universities in Africa and Europe.



### Nigus Gabbiye Habtu

*Professor and Executive Director for Community Engagement and Industry Linkage, Bahir Dar University*

Professor Nigus Gabbiye Habtu is Executive Director for Community Engagement and Industry Linkage at Bahir Dar University, and has over 20 years of teaching and research experience in process intensification, renewable energy, and environmental engineering. He earned his BSc in Chemical Engineering from Bahir Dar University (2001), MSc in Process Engineering from Addis Ababa University (2004), and PhD in Chemical, Environmental, and Process Engineering from Rovira i Virgili University, Spain (2011).

He has also conducted short visit research at Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands. Prof. Nigus has supervised over 30 PhD, 110 MSc, and 12 visiting scholars. He has authored/co-authored for more than 110 peer-reviewed journal articles.

His research spans process optimization, productive use of energy, and waste-to-energy conversion, with a focus on bioenergy from lignocellulosic biomass through advanced pretreatment and anaerobic digestion technologies. He also conducts interdisciplinary research at the nexus of sustainable energy (solar and biogas) and entrepreneurship.



### Abdulkadir Aman Hassen (UNET project)

*Interim Head of the School of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Addis Ababa University (UNET project)*

Dr. Abdulkadir Aman Hassen is an Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Interim Head of the School of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering at Addis Ababa University. He has been actively involved in international research collaborations with partners across Africa and Europe. As part of the Erasmus+ program, he served as a project coordinator and work package leader, leading the joint development of 17 PhD courses in Energy Technology with African and European universities. He has also participated in Erasmus+ staff mobility for teaching and training, promoting academic exchange and collaboration. His research focuses on Renewable Energy Technologies, Energy Audit and Management, and CFD. Dr. Hassen has significantly contributed to the internationalization of PhD programs, enhancement of laboratory facilities, and capacity development of local staff. He is also deeply engaged in consultancy services, offering practical, research-based solutions to support local industry needs.

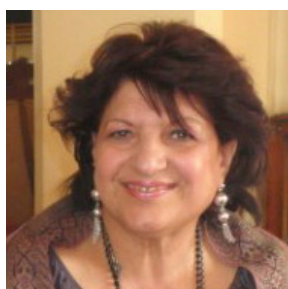


### Aboubacarr Jallow

*Principal of The Gambia College (G.R.E.E.N. Gambia project)*

Dr. Aboubacarr Jallow is career educationist with over three decades of experience. He is currently the Principal of The Gambia College, an Institution that has been responsible for the training of teachers, nurses, public health officers and agricultural extension workers.

Dr Jallow holds a PhD in Agronomy from The University of The Gambia, a Master of Art degree in Education Policy and Practice from Sheffield University in the UK, a Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural education from Njala University College in Sierra Leone, a Higher Teachers Certificate from Gambia College among others. He has an extensive experience in curriculum design and development, project management, educational administration and management, research and networking. Currently he is managing the Erasmus+ GREEN Gambia project at the Gambia College that focuses on empowering youths in Horticulture/Agro food processing, entrepreneurship and eco-tourism for self-employment.



### Maria Loizidou

*Professor, National Technical University of Athens (SWARM project)*

Maria Loizidou obtained her BSc, MSc, PhD in chemical engineering from the University of London, focusing on the field of environmental protection. She followed an academic career being a Professor at the School of Chemical Engineering the National Technical University of Athens, and Head of Unit of Environmental Science & Technology [www.uest.gr](http://www.uest.gr). Her research focuses on the management of solid waste and wastewater in a circular way, as well as actions for climate change. She has been the lead scientist in more than 200 international, European and national environmental/renewable energy projects, with an emphasis on solid waste management including the circular economy, bio-refineries and bioeconomy, as well management of wastewater, water resources & brine.

Prof. Loizidou is the Head of WtERT-Greece (Waste to Energy Research and Technology) and the chairperson of the annual international conference on Sustainable Solid Waste Management.



### Ahmed Maalel

*Associate Professor, University of Sousse and Regional Representative for EURAXESS Africa*

Dr. Ahmed Maalel is an Associate Professor at the University of Sousse (Tunisia), IEEE Senior Member, and President & Co-founder of ARSII. He holds a PhD in Computer Science (2015) and Habilitation to Direct Research (2022). He has served as Head of the Project Management Office since 2019 and is a member of the university's strategic think tank. From 2017 to 2021, he was National Contact Point (NCP) for Horizon 2020 ICT and Horizon Europe Digital Cluster. He also contributed to the Tunisia EURAXESS Network and Ideal-ist. Currently, he serves as Regional Representative for EURAXESS Africa, where he leads outreach activities, supports African engagement in Horizon Europe, and fosters EU-Africa research collaboration. He has carried out missions across Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Cameroon, and South Africa, playing a central role in bridging research communities across the continent.



### Eba Mijena Negero

*Erasmus+ National Focal Point for Ethiopia, Academic Affairs CEO, FDRE Ministry of Education*

Eba Mijena is the Chief Executive Office for Academic Affairs at the Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and also the Erasmus+ National Focal Point for Ethiopia.





### Lala Harivelo Ravaomanarivo

*Vice President for Human Resources and Academic Affairs, University of Antananarivo (AFRIDI project)*

Prof Lala Harivelo Ravaomanarivo has over 30 years of experience in higher education, and has been heavily involved with university teaching, both through lecturing and mentoring. She is currently Vice President for Human Resources and Academic Affairs at the University of Antananarivo, where she was previously the Head of the Department of Entomology and then Director of Research.

Prof Ravaomanarivo has established partnerships with a wide range of international institutions, including CIRAD, University of Tunis El Manar, Joseph Ki Zerbo, University of Gdansk and the University of Alanya. She has facilitated capacity building through the establishment of research programs and by seeking funding for student internships. Her main areas of expertise are in the fields of crop protection, control of vector-borne diseases, beekeeping and entomophagy, and she is a member of several scientific communities: DP SPAD, DP Biocontrol, DF Forest and biodiversity, ARGEMA, Za Bibikely.



### Piotr Sadowski

*Secretary General, Volonteurope*

Piotr Sadowski's leadership is defined by an unwavering commitment to European values. He has over 15 years of experience advocating for social justice on behalf of organised civil society in critical dialogues with political institutions, social partners and business in Europe. He is the Secretary General of Volonteurope, as well as Vice President of Lifelong Learning Platform, Board Member of Civil Society Europe, and Vice President of the Conference of INGOs in the Council of Europe, with a particular remit on safeguarding social rights. He is also former President of Social Platform, and stood as a candidate from PSOE in Spain in the 2024 European Parliament Elections.

An ardent advocate for the intersection of human rights and social justice, Piotr has consistently mobilised citizens to shape policies that matter. He currently plays a central role in organising the European Citizens' Initiative for a Water-Smart and Resilient Europe, an endeavour that vividly illustrates the power of grassroots engagement in driving sustainable, people-centred change.



### Yedilfana Setarge

*Associate Professor, Addis Ababa University, EURAXESS Coordinator for Ethiopia*

Dr. Yedilfana Setarge Mekonnen is one of two regional representatives for EURAXESS Africa, fostering scientific collaborations and mobility between Africa and Europe through Horizon Europe. He is also an Associate Professor at Addis Ababa University's Centre for Environmental Science.

He holds MSc in Chemistry from Addis Ababa University and a PhD from the Technical University of Denmark (DTU). He is the founding President of the Computational Science and Engineering Society of Ethiopia and Vice President of the Chemical Society of Ethiopia.

His research focuses on energy storage and conversion technologies, utilizing computational methods and securing grants from organizations like ISPF, ACTS, CFN-BNL, and TWAS/UNESCO. With over 40 publications and numerous supervised graduate students, Dr. Yedilfana is a junior associate member of the Abdu Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (Italy) and represents Ethiopia and Africa in international professional networks such as JUAMI, US-Afri, FASC, and African-MRS.



### Dr. Bedilu Teka Geleto

*Vice President for Academic and Research Affairs, Mattu University (COPAFEU project)*

Bedilu Teka Geleto is an assistant Professor in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at Mattu University. He obtained his PhD, MA and BEd from Addis Ababa University, which is among the most prestigious universities in Ethiopia. Currently he is serving as vice president for Academic, Research, Technology Transfer and Community Engagement of Mattu University (2022-until now). Prior to assuming the vice president position, Dr. Bedilu Teka Geleto served as the director for Research Publication and Dissemination (from 2020 to 2022) and Quality Assurance Director of Mattu University (from 2012 to 2014/15). He has also carried out several studies pertinent to quality education in general and English language education in particular. Dr. Bedilu is currently working as coordinator of three external research grants, out of which one is the COPAFEU project which is funded by the EU.



### Retselisitsoe Thamae

*Associate Professor, Energy Research Centre, National University of Lesotho (LETSEMA project)*

Retselisitsoe Thamae is an Associate Professor in Economics and a member of the Energy Research Centre at the National University of Lesotho. Additionally, he serves as a non-executive member of the Board of Directors at the Central Bank of Lesotho, where he is also a member of the Risk & Information Technology Governance Committee and the Monetary Policy Committee. His research interests encompass energy economics, macroeconomic policy and financial regulation. His work has been published in journals such as Utilities Policy, Economic Analysis & Policy and the Journal of Banking Regulation, and can be found on Google Scholar and Scopus profiles.



### Dr. Girum Ayalneh Tiruye

*Associate Professor, Addis Ababa University, (ISIMSAD project)*

Dr. Girum Ayalneh Tiruye is an Associate Professor at Addis Ababa University and serves as the Head of the Centre for Materials Science and Engineering within the College of Natural and Computational Sciences. He is an energy and advanced materials expert with extensive experience leading research teams, managing projects and securing competitive grant funding. His expertise covers sustainable energy solutions, advanced materials for energy storage and conversion—including supercapacitors, batteries, and microbial fuel cells, environmental science and technology, energy and climate change. He was awarded the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP) (2010–2012) and later became a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow (2013–2016).



### Tesfaye Muluye Workie

*Erasmus+ Alumnus, Ph.D. candidate, University of Addis Ababa*

Tesfaye Muluye Workie embarked on his academic journey with a Bachelor of Education in Biology from Jimma University, Ethiopia (2006–2009). He then earned a Master of Science in Limnology, Fisheries, and Aquatic Ecotoxicology from Hawassa University (2009–2012). Tesfaye has been serving as a lecturer at Haramaya University since 2012, instructing courses related to aquatic science, fisheries, and aquaculture. He conducts research focused on the ecological assessment of rivers and lakes. Currently, Tesfaye is a Ph.D. candidate at the Africa Centre of Excellence for Water Management, Addis Ababa University, specialising in Aquatic Ecosystems Management. Tesfaye participated in the Erasmus Mundus Plus Exchange Mobility Program at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) in Vienna, Austria, in 2021 and 2024 during his Ph.D. study.



### Gezahegn Berecha Yadessa

*Director of the International Institute of Coffee Research, Jimma University (IMPACT-HE project)*

Prof. Dr. Gezahegn Berecha Yadessa is an Ethiopian scholar with extensive experience in teaching, research, community service, project coordination and management, and consultancy within the agricultural sector. He earned his BSc from Jimma University (Ethiopia), his MSc from Wageningen University and Research (The Netherlands), and his PhD from KU Leuven (Belgium). He currently serves as Director of the International Institute of Coffee Research at Jimma University, Senior Technical Advisor for Regenerative Agriculture at SWR-Ethiopia (an international NGO), President of the Ethiopian Coffee Science Society, and a member of the Board of Governance of Walkite University in Ethiopia. With over 95 peer-reviewed scientific publications and more than 2,054 citations, he has supervised 50 MSc and 8 PhD students. Prof. Gezahegn has coordinated over 20 national and international projects and serves as the project focal person for IMPACT-HE at Jimma University.

