


**Summer Field School [Online] on
 MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
 Ivano-Frankivsk Region, Ukraine :: 19-28 September, 2021**

DELEGATE PARTICIPANT'S PROFILE

	<p>Mr. Mthokozisi Sandile Mungwe Jr.</p> <p>170 Flanders Drive, Mount Edgecombe 4300 Durban, South Africa 4300 Tel: +27 732927166 Email: msiziliza@webmail.co.za</p>
Highest Education	Master's degree in Zoology
Personal Statement	<p>I started my studies at the University of the Free State with a degree in Zoology and Life sciences and I still have a great passion for science and the people. It was during my time as science student that I was involved as group leader in the third year Zoology class on an ecological excursion to De Hoop Nature Reserve and fully fell in love with science and the people. I have always been a firm believer that a multidimensional approach to my own education and field experience would be instrumental to someday being a good researcher and mentor for others. This was and has always been the motivation behind my decisions.</p> <p>I hope that this this program (FSc MER) will ensure that I can turn my focus more on scientific research, and give more opportunities to my home country by teaching local students skills, knowledge and experience gained from the workshop. Students will study within their own environment, and not having to go to other countries for further studies of mountain areas. Furthermore, this program will help us to establish better understanding within mountain areas across the globe.</p>

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This is very much needed and an area of great concern worldwide. The dream is to put the knowledge gained from the program to a great use to establish my research as one of the global front runners in the sustainable development and improving the world for all.

I would love to collaborate with social scientists and mountain ecologists. My intention is to diverge from the traditional way of doing research. I want to work with people from different spheres of research to enhance my creativity and solve real time challenges. I have passion for and commitment to interdisciplinary learning and this is the right time for me to answer pressing questions I have regarding relationships people have with the land through their life's work. This will hone my environmental advocacy. I was inspired by the work of Prof C. Flint when she was presenting her work on working together with other people at an Afromontane Research Unit workshop. I am expecting to improve my communication, writing skills and overall knowledge of mountain regions.

Working with other people gives me a great pleasure because it enables me to learn from them. I have taught myself to leverage our commonality rather than our differences. This came in handy during my time in Qwaqwa campus because we were given tasks to work individually and as a group. I had to overcome language barriers since my native language is Zulu and they speak Sotho. I was the one of few Zulu speaking people who work with Sotho people successfully and I can speak Sotho well. Therefore, I am willing to work and contribute to the body of knowledge of mountain areas. I was fortunate enough to be exposed to a set-up and field experience in the most remote areas in Golden Gate Highland National Park, South Africa. I have practical experience working with people from a base of the scenic sandstone mountains of Phuthaditjhaba in the Eastern Free State. I am willing to share my experience of the mountains with the participants, teachers and my mentor.

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	At the end of the day there are many other attributes, qualifications and experiences I could list, but the bottom line is this...I enjoy my time working with biodiversity research and teaching students. I am very dedicated to my work and if there is one thing I can promise it is that I will always give my best towards the sustainable development of ecology and biodiversity conservation. I am innovative, honest, hardworking and just a generally positive person. I enjoyed working with my colleagues at the Qwaqwa campus and I am looking forward to participate in the program.
Paper/Presentation Title	<i>Earthworms and Soil Organic Matter</i>
Keywords	Taxonomy; Organic Matter; Farming
Abstract	Earthworms are an essential part of soil communities. These soil engineers are capable of improving soil fertility, regulating organic matter and nutrient availability in the soil. Earthworm farming is growing in South Africa. However, earthworm farmers tend to misidentify the earthworm species they deal with. To preliminarily address this problem, earthworm species used in vermiculture in the Western Cape and North West were identified using DNA barcoding. Twenty-five earthworms from six populations (three from each province) were collected or purchased from selected study sites. A total of 146 sequences were generated. Out of these sequences 10 COI haplotypes were discovered, revealing extremely low genetic diversity. Neighbour-joining trees were created to and phylogenetic relationships indicated that all sequences compared to those previously published by Pérez-Losada et al. (2005) and Voua Otomo et al. (2013) are closely related to <i>Eisenia andrei</i> . All results taken together indicate that <i>E. andrei</i> is the dominant vermicomposting earthworm used in South Africa. These findings support the previous DNA research done in South Africa where only one species was found in ten farms.
More Information (weblinks)	