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*Building relationships with
effective grassroots African organizations.*



Above: Sharing Ideas at the Africa Rising Annual Meeting

Coming Together

One of the highlights of the year for Africa Rising is our annual meeting. We bring together people from each of the 14 organizations we work with, to learn from and teach each other and to gain fresh perspectives on the importance of the work of the Africa Rising organizations.

Our theme this year was “Seeing your place in a bigger picture.” One of the pictures we talked about was the New Creation, in which God inaugurated the redemption of his creation with the resurrection of Jesus. That redemption happens through the work of those who are following Jesus. The Africa Rising organizations, then – as they heal and advance African communities – are part of the New Creation.

Another “bigger picture” we talked about was the East African Community of nations. With Kenya’s new constitution, there is renewed energy in the East African Community, where Africa Rising is located.

We encouraged the Africa Rising organizations to have a vision that goes beyond their local community or village to the greater East Africa community – to see themselves as teachers, creators, and leaders of entire African societies.

These big ambitions are achieved when organizations learn from each other and work together. That is what Africa Rising does year ‘round by bringing together two or more organizations to address a variety of shared needs. But we had the pleasure of watching it happen in mass at the annual meeting. The photo you see above is of one of the several groups sharing ideas at the meeting.

Thank you for your part in helping this meeting to happen. Without your support, these organizations would be working in isolation. Some of them might have even ceased to exist without your help, because in these meetings, the organization leaders find encouragement and courage to carry on against daunting challenges.



Above: The Tents of Shalom City

Visit to Shalom Village

Our annual meeting was held near Lake Naivasha, in Kenya’s Rift Valley. About an hour away from the city of Naivasha is a hillside covered with thousands of make-shift shelters called “Shalom City,” one of the

organizations that is part of the Africa Rising network. The 12,000+ residents (called internally displaced people, or IDPs) are families displaced from their land in the post-election violence of 2007-2008. On the last day of our meeting, we all visited Shalom City and learned from Peter Kariuki, their leader, the challenges of freeing an oppressed people.

Although the people of Shalom City are not enslaved as the people of Israel were in Egypt, they are living in extreme poverty and have been nearly forgotten, now four years after losing their homes. And though without a plague of frogs, Peter is experiencing challenges like those that Moses dealt with when negotiating with the government.

The members of the other Africa Rising organizations were shocked by the plight of Shalom City and committed themselves to find a way to be part of the solution. For a start, they have developed a stronger connection between Shalom City and the Concerned Parents Association (CPA), an Africa Rising organization from northern Uganda. CPA was formed to get the Ugandan government to play an active role in gaining the release of children captured by the Lord's Resistance Army – a goal that they eventually achieved. CPA is now talking with Peter about the approaches that worked for CPA, and analyzing the challenges, opportunities, and options for Shalom City.

Since Peter has also been named as a representative for IDPs throughout Kenya, and he is getting advice from a Ugandan organization, we see the immediate realization of an Africa Rising role in shaping the East African Community (see "Coming Together," above).

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