

- > Family and personal visits with the KR & RNI teams
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- > Rungano Day with over 200 participants!
- > Visits with the co-ops and personal businesses in Ruhango
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## Kibera Rising & Rungano - Ndota

**“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness...”**

Mark Twain made the above observation in 1895. It's as relevant today as ever. Recently, Diane and I had the good fortune to visit two of SEC's partner organizations, [Kibera Rising](#) (Kenya) and [Rungano-Ndota](#) (Rwanda). Twain was dead on about the expanded perspective and sense of compassion one experiences on a long journey. While we had been to Africa before, this experience was different and life changing on so many levels.

I'm often asked, "Why Africa when there's so much need right here?" It's a fair question and there's no doubt, we could spend all of our time and money addressing local challenges. SEC started working with

non-profits in Africa over 5 years ago, persuaded by the formidable challenges of climate change, poverty, inconsistent educational resources, lack of opportunity for youth, etc. But, as we expanded our scope in Africa, we came to understand that we gained so much more than we gave. The communal feeling, shared caring for youth, appreciation for culture, love of music and dance, hope for the future, collaboration, and above all, the smiles. All of this inspires and informs our work here in the US and globally. This is an invaluable gift from our partners & friends in Africa.

*"If I have ever seen magic, it has been in Africa."  
John Hemingway*



In visiting both [Kibera](#) and the Rwandan [District of Ruhango](#), our hosts arranged for us to visit with some of the families of the youth their programs serve. What a privilege and honor to be able to do that. It certainly provided insight and cultural context but more important, allowed us to simply sit and talk. We were so struck by the graciousness and complete openness of these families.

In the top left photo are Stella, her brother, and Brian of Kibera Rising's break dance program at Victor's home in Kibera. Bottom left is the RNI team and delegates at Felicien's family home in the Ruhango District of Rwanda.

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*"Africa changes you forever, like nowhere on earth. Once you have been there, you will never be the same..." Brian Jackman*

## Kibera Rising & Rungano - Ndota

### Music, Dance & Empowerment



Five years ago, our daughter, Jenn, who was working in Kenya, introduced us to Salim Rollins, an American living in Nairobi. Salim had an idea to introduce [Capoeira](#), a Brazilian martial art that combines dance, lifestyle, and music, to the youth of Kibera. The art form originated in Angola and was brought to Brazil by people enslaved by the Portuguese. Salim, along with his partner Victor Onyango, created Kibera Rising which serves nearly

100 youth and encompasses three distinct areas: Slum Dance Africa (break dancing); an empowerment program for young women; and Capoeira Kibera.

While the program took some time to gain momentum and like everything else, was stalled by Covid; it is now flourishing. Kibera Rising recently transitioned to a new studio at St. George Orthodox Church which has brought a greater energy and life to the program.

### An Olympic Caliber Dance Program



Victor Onyango has been a key leader in the [Slum Dance Africa](#) movement for several years. It is now a meaningful part of Kibera Rising. In addition to providing the youth of Kibera with a foundation in break dancing, the program aims to inspire and promote a positive lifestyle through dance as an art for young people living in Kibera. It also provides a caring community to support the partici-

pants. Maintaining a 50%-50% ratio of girls to boys, the program has grown meaningfully over the years. With breakdancing as a new Olympic sport for Paris in 2024, Slum Dance hopes to have several athletes represent Kenya, including Brian Ouma (pictured here) who came home with the championship in the under 18 division of the Rotation Dance Competition. What a ringing validation of the Kibera Rising program!

### A Community Like No Other...

This [video](#) provides a stark, realistic, yet hopeful presentation of Kibera and it certainly reflects our experience there. Contrary to the dire comments about the dismal living conditions, Kibera is a tight, resourceful community teeming with life and creative energy. We were honored to attend Kibera Rising's showcase. The event

brought together almost 200 youth, their parents, and community supporters. Performing to a packed house, the program participants confidently presented their significant skills. The bright smiles and communal feeling were palpable. This is a true village that cares deeply for its children and teens. The magic of this community resonates with us to this day...



*"The laughter of a child lights up the house." Swahili Proverb*





## Redefining & Energizing the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

With the support of its American partner, [Rwanda Youth Partnership](#) (RYP), the [Rungano-Ndota](#) (RNI) organization is comprised of a dedicated & talented group of mentors and leaders that are focused on the next generation of Rwandan business owners. This community of young people has helped establish 8 cooperatives and 161 personal businesses.

Rungano-Ndota means "Dream Generation" in the Rwandan language. In the wake of the long recovery from a devastating genocide, the government of Rwanda is quite supportive of business, particularly for the next generation of entrepreneurs.

We were introduced to Todd Fry during the pandemic. Todd lives in Boston and is the Executive Director of RYP. He is incredibly dedicated to the RNI team and the Rwandan youth they serve. Their mission of nurturing young business owners fits squarely into SEC's economic justice focus.

Along with Darnell Adams, Alejandro Amezcua, and Christian North, we were fortunate to experience the impact of this amazing program in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, and in the Ruhango District.



## A Tour of Kigali From a Most Unique Perspective



On our first full day in Rwanda, the RNI staff had the brilliant idea of taking a tour of Kigali from the perspective of the youth they serve in the program. Issiac shared his experience teaching in a Kigali mosque. Felicien spoke movingly about his difficult days on the streets of Kigali and his

new pig farm business. Odette talked of the challenging time working for a not-so-nice family. Finally, Gloriose spoke on our bus ride of starting her personal traditional crafts business. What an innovative way to get a sense of a new place! These moving personal stories personalized Kigali in a unique, memorable way.

## Another Community Like No Other...

On June 19th, in Ruhango, over 200 young people celebrated the Rungano-Ndota (RNI) organization/initiative for the first time in over two years. What is normally a monthly day-long event to learn about entrepreneurship, collaboration, and building communi-

ty was sidetracked by Covid. The sheer joy and shared energy of this gathering were intense and moving on so many levels. Utilizing an engaging combination of music, dance, idea exchange, group projects, collective action, and mentoring, they are energizing the next gener-

ation of Rwandan entrepreneurs. This enterprising group of business owners are creating and nurturing a community of youth who care deeply about each other and represent a bright future for Rwanda. Another resonating experience. We left Rwanda humbled and grateful.



*"No matter where you are from, your dreams are valid." Kenyan Proverb*





Someone Else's Child

"Kids-Helping-Kids"

**SOMEONE  
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- Caroline Gumizamu
- Constantin Habineza
- Lisette Nyiraneza
- Sandrine Ishimwe Mukamurenzi
- Vincent Pallotti Gatera
- Christine Dixon
- Diane Christian

*"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." African*