

This is an invitation for you and/or others from your organization to engage in our "community conversations" around the *Women of Africa as agents of social transformation*. The inquiry was inspired by Wahu Kaara, this year's Project Concern International Humanitarian Award winner. Wahu will be with us in November to accept the award and participate in a Women of Africa Forum, sponsored by the Gem Foundation, for those who participate in the inquiry.

The purpose of the inquiry is to:

- Discover people in the San Diego region who are working with and through the women of Africa (in Africa and/or in this community) to effect positive change,
- Explore times when their work has been most vital and impactful, and
- Develop an understanding of the role of women of Africa as change agents.

At a launch sessions on February 5th and 21st, more than 30 participants shared their best experiences and began to identify conditions that made them possible. A group of travelers is also gathering stories in Africa, and we are confident that a deeper understanding of what works will spark more effective, collective action at the Women of Africa Forum in November. The conversations are also a wonderful opportunity for people to connect around their shared purpose and passions.

We will be meeting on Wednesday, May 20th in the Community Room at the Joe and Vi Jacobs Center at Market Creek Plaza. The address is 404 Euclid, and the entrance is off Market Street. There's plenty of parking and the community room is to the right of the main entrance.

Please plan to arrive at 12:30 for cheese and fruit and a prompt start at 1:00 PM and ending by 4:00.

Feel free to forward this invitation to others whose experience will enrich and inform our exploration and who may wish to join us – either for the May 20th session or for a one-on-one conversation at another date.

I appreciate your RSVP to this email, letting me know whom to expect. I can also be reached at 858-720-0723 if you have any questions.

Thank you all for your willingness to embark on this journey.

Thanks and all the best,

Karen Mercaldo
Director, Gem Foundation