

Quarterly Newsletter 1-2014

Imagine, you graduate from kanthari with a dream to change the life of inmates of the Harare womens-prison, to provide them with new goals in their life. But suddenly all of them are released from prison and you become redundant. What would you do?

Dear friends and supporters of kanthari,

The year is only 3 months young and 19 out of 21 graduates of the 2013 kanthari generation already started their social initiatives. Chipo Chikomo from Zimbabwe has not given up realizing her dream. She now needed problem-solving skills and a method to transform her concept. She brought these important tools from Kerala. She didn't hesitate long and found the women who were released. She found them hungry, excluded, and several of them didn't even know about the whereabouts of their children who were taken away from them when they entered prison. All of them found it unbelievable that Chipo would care about their fate.

Immediately upon arrival home in Nigeria, Tosin plunged into action. In her inspiring Dream Speech we learned about her moving story. "Ever since I was small, my mother always preached: you just need good education and you have to be economically independent, only then you will not become a victim of domestic violence."

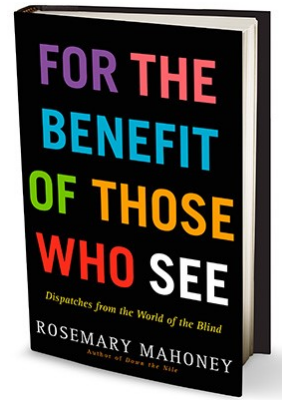
Following her mums advice, Tosin did study, got a good job and got married. At one point, her newborn child was only 28 days old, she asked her husband to hold it for a moment. Her husband snapped and beat her up, actually nearly killing her.

"What does education and economic independence mean, if we cannot stand up against such violence?" One morning in kanthari she talked about one day she walked through the slums in Lagos: "Everywhere is trash, simply carelessly thrown out." She takes a piece Styrofoam in her hand and says to herself: "That's me! I am treated the same like this piece of trash! Then I had an idea.. I wanted to turn this piece of trash into a treasure. This is how the idea was born to turn Styrofoam and used clothes into valuable cooking bags. Today, about three months after the 2013 course has ended, Tosin is realizing her dream; A healing center for women who have been affected by domestic violence. For her work Tosin was already recognized with a national award.

			
	<p>Woman to Woman Prison Project</p> <p>ZIMBABWE</p>		<p>Trash To Treasure (TTT)</p> <p>NIGERIA</p>
<p>COUNTRY FACTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to males, female inmates face stigmatization in and out of prison. Female ex-inmates suffer unemployment due to lack of proper rehabilitation. • There are only 3 female prisons which receive low budget allocation for the upkeep of inmates. • Women constitute more than half the population, yet sanitary ware is imported. A pack of disposable pads is 3x the price of a loaf of bread. 		<p>COUNTRY FACTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population of Nigerian females is 86,927,860. • 66% of the women in Nigeria are abused, mostly by their husbands or partners. • According to a demographic health survey released in Nov 2009, 43% of women in Nigeria believe that the husband or partner has the right to beat them. 	

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO SEE

Rosemary Mahoney, an American journalist and Best seller author, was sent to Tibet in 2005 by Oprah Winfrey to learn more about "The German Blind Women" who started a school for the blind. Rosemary started the journey with hesitation. The topic "blindness" was not exactly her favorite one. On the contrary, after an accident which affected her eyes she had a terrible fear of becoming blind. In addition, she was not sure how to speak to a blind person, would it be okay to make a joke? Do blind people have a sense of humor? And how could she bypass the many everyday "visual sayings" such as "see you later", or "look at this or that" or "Watch out!"?



With wobbly knees she found herself on the doorsteps of the BWB school in Tibet. When the gate was opened by one of the blind students who greeted her with "Nice to see you" Rosemary was drawn into a world that she would not leave for the next couple of years. In 2009, during the first kanthari-course, Rose became a catalyst for creative writing and English. About her work with mainly blind participants, she published a book with the title: "For the benefit of those who see". I read her book on our flight to the USA where we went to speak about kanthari in several cities and organisations. Rose has an amazing talent for the preciseness in which she describes her observation and portrays the different characters. I was sitting, wedged between Paul and a stranger at 12000 metres altitude and I couldn't stop laughing. The book is written with a lot of fun, empathy, and with a large portion of humor. By reading it you learn a lot about our participants of the first generation, about their dreams and backgrounds. And I learned a whole lot from a sighted person's perspective about the beauty of blindness. More at: [For the benefit of those who see](#)

Selection of new participants

The selection process for the new kanthari course is going on in full swing. We never had so many good applications coming in. Several came from new countries such as Egypt, Kyrgistan Serbia / Monte Negro, Bangladesh, Yemen and Myanmar. Many of them heard about kanthari through media reports or from graduates. One selected participant is a former student of the initiative "Start Now!", a training centre for blind people that was founded by 2011 kanthari graduate Alieu Jaiteh from the Gambia.

Kanthari plus

2013 kanthari graduate, Tomasz Kozakiewicz, is interested in the question why some of the graduates are able to start immediately while others struggle for many years. For his project "kanthari plus" he visits kanthari graduates and creates short documentaries about the life and the progress of their work. He also learns about challenges, failures and success stories. On the following link you can find short videos that are made by Tomasz about Raja (kanthari

Step Higher!
Start now Preparatory
Center for Higher Education
THE GAMBIA

COUNTRY FACTS:

- The population of The Gambia is 1,726,464 (July 2008 est.)
- There is an estimated population of 2000 incurably-blind and partially-sighted children and adolescents (Survey 2000)
- Lack of special educators and equipment, the Braille Kits and voice-enabled laptops
- Lack of mobility and daily living skills training

kanthari+
WORLD

kanthari facts:

- By the end of 2013, 99 visionaries coming from over 24 countries worldwide will have graduated from the kanthari leadership course.
- Approx. 55% of graduates implement their dream projects
- Many projects struggle with building capacity, sustainability, promotions and conservative mindsets in the region they want to start their projects.

2011) and his project with prison inmates, David (2010) and Battihun (2012) about their project in a remote area of Megalaya, and report on Pynhoi Tang, a participant from 2009; www.kanthari.org/videos

Visiting kantharis

During the first three weeks of April, Paul and I will visit Kenya, Uganda and Ruanda. We will visit several kanthari graduates to learn about their projects and to collect important information for the further development of the kanthari course. Tomasz, together with a Dutch Film-maker will join this trip to make films about the work of the graduates in these countries and about "kanthari goes Africa". More about this in the next quarterly report.

Media:

Over the past few months, the work of kanthari was covered in the media: here a few links:

Interview in [Wharton University](#)

Article in the [Christian Science Monitor](#) newspaper

Interview on [51%](#)



Dear friends and supporters of kanthari,

On behalf of all those involved we want to say thank you for your interest and for your support. We appreciate it if you can share this newsletter with your families, friends and anyone who would be interested.

With very best regards,

Sabriye and Paul

www.facebook.com/kantharis - www.kanthari.org

