

# Quarterly News 2 - 2013

*Dear Friends and Supporters of kanthari and Braille Without Borders (BWB),  
We have reached the half year point of 2013, time surely flies, so it is time for the second quarterly newsletter.*

## Kanthari

### New kanthari participants

The 7 months lasting 2013 kanthari leadership started on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May with 22 participants coming from 11 different countries. The kanthari Curriculum, “a journey in five acts”, started with an up-beat; the intercultural dialogue. This workshop was lead by Gita Niketh, an expert in this field who lectures usually for corporates in Holland, Germany, USA and India. Her specialty: smooth communication and peaceful cooperation in international settings by preventing intercultural misunderstandings. While she normally deals with two, maybe three cultures at once, in kanthari she found participants from 11 different countries and more than 15 different cultures. Everyone ended this workshop with expressing their “aha!”-moment, and with the feeling that we, despite all differences, can create a mutual kanthari culture which serves as a foundation for an international network of social visionaries

### Chichuhlonga

The first act of the kanthari Curriculum takes place in a fictitious country named Chichuhlonga. The participants have to set up their own social projects and real businesses in this country. They are confronted with real life settings and learn about all the challenges they will face when they return to their own places. The work they do in Chichuhlonga will provide a blueprint for all the challenges they will face in real life such as:

How to fully understand what the target group of their social venture needs.

How to transform the concept of their social ventures so that it fits with the needs.

How to write proposals and do efficient fundraising and last but not least, how to overcome a crisis situation.

### Europe Visit

In May 2013, we visited Europe where a full program awaited us; a meeting with the board members of the Swiss BWB Foundation, a presentation at PWC Zurich, an interview with Philius,



an organization that promotes Corporate Social Responsibility of companies, several meetings with donors in Switzerland, Germany and Holland, a book reading in Leipzig, a BLINDSIGHT film screening at Imaginata in Jena and several radio interviews and presentations in Holland. Here a few more details:

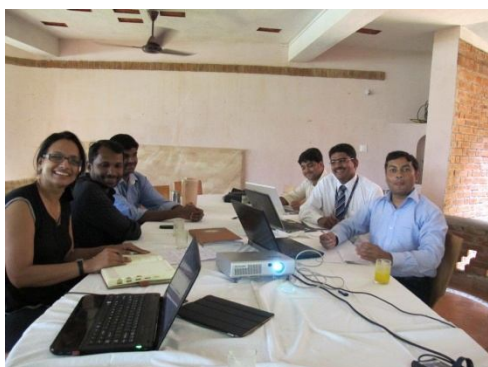
### Imaginata:

We spoke at Imaginata in Jena. Imaginata is a special project that inspires anyone to use their imagination. During the screening of the documentary BLINDSIGHT, we explored the experiments that are shattered across the Imaginata Campus. One of the experiments included what it means to be very small! After the film ended, we gave a talk about our experiences with BWB and kanthari and the importance of daring to dream. The main topic was that “a small chili can make HUGE difference!”



### Library Leipzig

It has been several years since we have done a book presentation. We were invited by the German Central Library for the Blind and the presentation took place at the newly renovated library in Leipzig. It was a combination of a book-reading about Sabriye's books "My path leads to Tibet", "The seventh year" and a presentation about the work of Braille Without Borders and kanthari. More info on the book can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/lctokly>



### Making a difference!

UST Global, an international IT-firm, situated in Techno Park in Trivandrum, has been a supporter to kanthari for many years. Interactions varied from financial support, offering internships to our participants and providing visiting catalysts who taught in the fields of management, PR, HR and communication. In order to handle data professionally, professional support is required. Therefore kanthari is very grateful for UST's support towards the development of the kanthari website and a database.

## Braille Without Borders, India

Braille Without Borders Charitable Trust in India conducted empowerment seminars for the blind as part of the kanthari lite programs;

### Training of blind students

Chakshumathi's Eyes-Free-Sciencecamp was held on the BWB-kanthari in April. During this camp, app 30 blind and partially sighted adolescents who are excluded from Math and Science classes in regular schools are tutored in these skills. This will help them to pursue higher studies in technical professions.

### Training of blind teachers

Also in April, the Empowerment Center for the Blind (ECB) conducted a month long computer course for visually challenged teachers who work in different schools all across Kerala. To ensure a high level training with sufficient attention per trainee, four groups of 6 teachers each received one week training. The course content include soft- and hardware, text processing, use of internet and email, Burning CD's, scanning and most important use of screen readers like Orca, NVDA and Jaws





## Braille Without Borders, Tibet

### Vocational training farm, Shigatse



#### Marketing

One of the main challenges over the past few years was to build up a regular sales network of the items that are produced in the farm. As you know we produce cheese, bread, vegetables, knitted wear and carpets. This year a group of volunteers from Beijing have offered help. Randy Yu, who worked with Siemens for 15 years is a marketing specialist and she has taken the initiative to support our staff. Besides learning the skills to make products, the students also need to learn how to sell these products so it will help them making a living after graduation.

#### Music Hall

In the spring of this year the construction activities of a new music hall started. Sunrain, a company who produces hot solar water systems, sponsors the music department at the BWB vocational training centre in Shigatse. The multifunctional hall will be used as a music classroom, a concert hall and for other functions. The hall is planned to be ready in August 2013.

#### Vice Governor visit

In the beginning of June, the farm received a visit of the vice governor of Tibet. He learned about the different training units and understood that for the cheese factory the main challenge was to have sufficient milk. On the spot he decided to donate 20 cows to the animal husbandry unit of the farm.

#### Preparatory school Lhasa

##### BWB students write history

At the end of May, four of BWB graduates attended the university entry exam together with their sighted peers. This was the first time in the history of China. After the doors of the regular elementary, middle and high school opened for blind students, now the final door is also opened. We hope that this will inspire many young blind students. On the picture you see Sonam Bungso and Nyima Chokpa 11 years ago. Last month they wrote their university Entrance exam and soon they will go to university.



#### Support from Jade Buddha Temple

Shanghai Jade Buddha temple supported BWB again this year. In June they brought an eye-doctor who checked up all the students and provided medicine for different eye conditions.



#### TEDxFactory798

In May, five students of Braille Without Borders were invited to perform Tibetan songs during the TEDxFactory798 event in Beijing. The students performed several inspiring Tibetan songs and played their Dramyins (Tibetan traditional guitar) which moved the audience a lot. At the same event, Nyima gave a speech about his life and Braille Without Borders; see. <http://tinyurl.com/l3lkuq7>

#### Children's day

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, children's day, many people were invited to attend a celebration held at the

BWB preparatory school. The students and some of the teachers performed many songs in Chinese, English and Tibetan. It was not just a celebration; the visitors also were introduced to the different skills that blind people can learn.

## Big Step for Braille Book Production

From April onward, Tennom and Gyendsen of the BWB lhasa team started to work on the development of a Tibetan Braille translator with the help of David Holladay, a programmer from Duxbury company. This program which converts digital Tibetan texts into Braille makes life a lot easier for those working at the Braille book production workshop. Before, all books had to be typed in by hand. The final revision was made on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2013. Now the program runs free of errors.

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*Dear Friends and Supporters,*

*As you can read, many things have happened during the past few months. The new group of participants are all working hard at the kanthari course and we are very happy that finally blind students in Tibet will have a possibility to study in University. All of this would not have been possible without your support! On behalf of all our students, participants and colleagues, we want to say thank you very much for your continuous support and we wish all of you a wonderful summer, With warm regards from Kerala and from Tibet,*

*Sabriye , Paul and the entire BWB – kanthari team*

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[www.facebook.com/kantharis](http://www.facebook.com/kantharis) - [www.braillewithoutborders.org](http://www.braillewithoutborders.org) - [www.kanthari.org](http://www.kanthari.org)

# MISSING:

## CHANGEMAKER

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Kanthari course starting in May 2014

Apply at [www.kanthari.org](http://www.kanthari.org)

