

Quarterly newsletter 4-2016

"Most of us are afraid of major changes in life. We love our comfort zone and we tend to avoid obstacles. But the first speaker of kanthari TALKS 2016 embraces the change. Open the stage for Amrita Gyawali!" Amrita rolls in her wheelchair to the front of the stage, turns around and smiles mischievously at the audience: "And now? Should I not be up there?" She points at the platform that is more than a meter high. The audience is tensed. Some look down, obviously feeling a bit uncomfortable. Two men jump up and lift her on the stage. She smiles as if she loved these challenges. And now everyone in the hall understands that a world without stairs would be the elevator to heaven.

The year 2016 has come to its end so it is time for the 4th quarterly kanthari newsletter. Please find below the highlights of the past three months as well as updates on kanthari graduates' projects.

Saving Lake Vellayani campaign

the kanthari curriculum, a "Journey in five acts" offers experiences and practical tools to start one's own social venture. During the third act the participants were in charge of organizing the 'Saving Lake Vellayani' campaign. Our nineteen participants from six countries interacted with fishermen, farmers, women entrepreneurs, students, and residents' associations for nearly a month-and-a-half as part of the campaign to involve the local community. They also took part in the Save Vellayani Lake signature campaign held by the Vellayani Lake Protection Forum on October 3. Minister for Electricity, Kadakampally Surendran, exhorted the people residing in the vicinity of the lake to protect the freshwater body, which provides 35 per cent of the drinking water requirement of the district. The Save Lake Vellayani FB campaign reached more than 25000 people.

kanthari TALKS

During the fourth act, the participants focused on fundraising and on the presentation of their Dream Speeches. Every year, all participants share their ideas for social change in a 10 minutes lasting speech. The speech is followed by a 20 minutes Q&A session with a panel of experts. This year, thanks to the support of Mr Narayana Murthy and the Infosys Foundation, the "kanthari TALKS" event was held at the Multipurpose hall at the Infosys campus in Trivandrum. For two days, 13th and 14th of December, all participants kept up to 300 listeners at the edge of their seats with touching, partly shocking but stories full of hope.





Amrita from Nepal at kanthari TALKS



Save Lake Vellayani

On the 16th of December the final day of act four was celebrated. All participants received their completion certificates out of the hand of the Chief Guest, economist Dr M.A. Oommen. In his key-note address he said:” Development is not the rate of growth or expansion of commodities but building the capabilities and widening the choices of the people. Development is freedom, equality, solidarity and enhancing the quality of lives of people. This is what kanthari stands for”. All participants have now returned home to start act 5, the start-up of their social ventures.

kanthari graduates

In order to learn more about the impact of kanthari graduates we wish to share some updates about already established initiatives;

Zimbabwe: Impala Breeze. For empowering the girl child especially school dropout girls (poverty) and nurturing them to be successful entrepreneurs & assisting them with tuition fees so that they continue with their education, 2013 kanthari Nyasha Edlight Mugwagwa, founder of [Impala Breeze Youth Project](#) was awarded with the Grassroots Impact Award! The African Women Association recognized Nyasha as an agent of social change in marginalized communities.

India: George Thomas is a 2013 kanthari graduate and founder of “Freedom on Wheels”. He works for the creation of wheelchair friendly public places in Kerala. George is also a talented archer. He qualified to participate in the Indoor [Para Archery World Cup](#) in Bangkok.

Kenya: In Swahili language 'Taka' means waste and 'kazi' means employment! Takkazi is a local Kenyan initiative started by 2015 #kanthari Emmanuel Mbaji to create employment through waste management and recycling. Three tonnes of plastic waste have been taken out for recycling last month. Learn more about the process in this [video](#)

India: kanthari catalyst Santhosh George supported [Ananya Child Development Network](#) by providing a theatre workshop. Ananya Child Development Network was started by Gouri Shankar Mishra to promote the education of orphan children in Orissa. The workshop focused on issues of child laborers in Khandamal district.

India/Pakistan: kanthari graduates Mahjabeen Baloch and Gouri Shankar Mishra are about to organize an interfaith and intercultural exchange platform between youths of India and Pakistan. One of the ideas is a visit of Pakistani youth in India to promote peace between the two nations.

Uganda: rhythm of life's strategic partnership milestone achieved in Uganda! An MOU was signed with KCCA hospital which creates a health support system for sex workers. They will receive referral cards which grant them easy access to the hospital and all it has to offer! Learn more about Harriet Kamanyashu's [Rhythm of Life](#)

India/Uganda: Education in a different way! 2015 kanthari Abhijit Sinha shared his insights with motivated young refugees to create a self-organized university in Ugandan Nakivale Refugee Settlement. Design Education For Yourself (DEFY) creates maker spaces called NOOKS where children can learn. Check out DEFY's latest [video](#)

Nigeria: Olutosin Adebawale, 2013 kanthari from Nigeria, Tosin Turns Trash to Treasure 5T is now organizing a mobile internet cafe for rural women who had never used computer before. The women are learning for example how to use Facebook for their development or peer



support. More [here](#).

Kenya: "[For people with albinism living in Africa, Kenya offers a haven of hope](#)" is an article that was published in The Star in Kenya. The article tells the story of 2009 kanthari Jayne Waithera and her work towards ending the stigmatizations of persons with Albinism in East Africa.

India: Yurt on wheels provides education to children of nomadic, Narikuravar community in Pondicherry, India. The organisation is looking to hire a young and dynamic person who believes in social change to carry out its activities! For more info contact John Peter at yurtonwheels@gmail.com

China, Tibet: Nyima Wangdu, 2010 kanthari graduate traveled alone to the USA where he gave several speeches at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, at Harvard at the Department Disability Justice Caucus, the Carroll Center for the Blind, Overbrook and Perkins.

Nigeria: "It's not enough to have skills, knowledge or talent, but its crucial today that you have an education that can help you transform all these into social solutions. Prikkle Academy inspires young community builders in Nigeria to translate their education into new projects, enterprises and solutions. Participants came up with nice ideas, for example an executive chair made from 'wasted' tyres." - Damilola Fasoranti. Read more [here](#)

kanthari in the media:

- In October, The Hindu featured an article about [Saving Lake Vellayani](#)
- A longer feature with the title "[Dream Factory](#)" was published in The Week.
- In December, The Hindu published an article about kanthari with the title "[The Change Agents](#)"
- An article about kanthari will be published in the French Magazine "INDES magazine"
- kanthari Talks and the certification ceremony were covered in The Deccan Chronicle, [The Hindu](#), in the Times of India as well as the Mathrubhumi News TV-Channel.
- An article with the title "kanthari — The Fire from the Margins" was published in Austria in the Blinden- Und Sehbehindertenverband Magazine Braille Report.
- Swiss Philosopher Ludwig Hasler wrote a [Column](#) about kanthari (Article is in German)

kanthari campus

Over the past quarter a few maintenance activities took place at the campus.

- Several stone benches were places around the campus creating ideal places to hold a 'brainstorm'.
- The 2016 kanthari project posters were installed on the 16th of December.
- The 10 KVA PV solar system that is located on the roof of the auditorium was finally activated and now every day the produce of electricity is fed into the grid.
- To learn more about the background of the way our campus was built, the participants visited Costford where joint director Mr. P B Sajan explained the features of different environment

friendly constructions. Costford is a non-profit organisation in kerala who is known for its eco-friendly and low-cost architecture.

Visitors:

- On the 26th of November 60 women of the Trivandrum Social Service Society visited kanthari "It was a very enriching experience visiting kanthari and getting to know about kanthari's social reformers. Learning in the company of nature and sharing inspiration fired life in our souls!", said Sr. Deepa George who led the group of women who mainly came from the fishermen's community.
- Also many groups of architect students from around India and beyond visited the kanthari campus over the past few months to learn more about the eco-friendly technologies.
- Sonam Wangchuk, founder of the award winning [Ice-stupa project](#) and of [Secmol](#), visited kanthari where he inspired our participants when he introduced his next big project, the [Himalayan Institute of Alternatives](#)

Intake 2017

The next kanthari leadership training course will start in May 2017. We have already started the intake process. We are grateful if you can help by spreading the intake [flyer](#) within your network so it can reach potential social change makers who are looking for a course that will empower them to start their own social initiatives and programs.

Dear Friends/supporters,

our work would not be possible without your help. On behalf of all our participants, we therefore say thank you very much for your ongoing support. Thank you also for helping us by sharing this newsletter. We wish everyone a spicy, happy, healthy but most of all peaceful 2017!
With very best regards,

the entire kanthari team, paul and sabriye

[support kanthari here](#) - www.facebook.com/kantharis - www.kanthari.org