

Quarterly newsletter 4-2017

The sun has just set over the Vellayani lake in Kerala, South India. Despite the sun is no more visible, the heat remains. The difference with yesterday's sunset is that today this scene is only witnessed by us and no-one else. The kanthari campus is completely empty. This year we had a special group of 23 participants from 11 countries. Now, all participants have returned home to start their own social ventures and initiatives.

Dear readers, supporters, and friends of kanthari, it is time for the fourth quarterly newsletter of 2017. As usual, please find below the highlights of the past three months as well as updates on kanthari graduates' projects.

2017 kanthari course

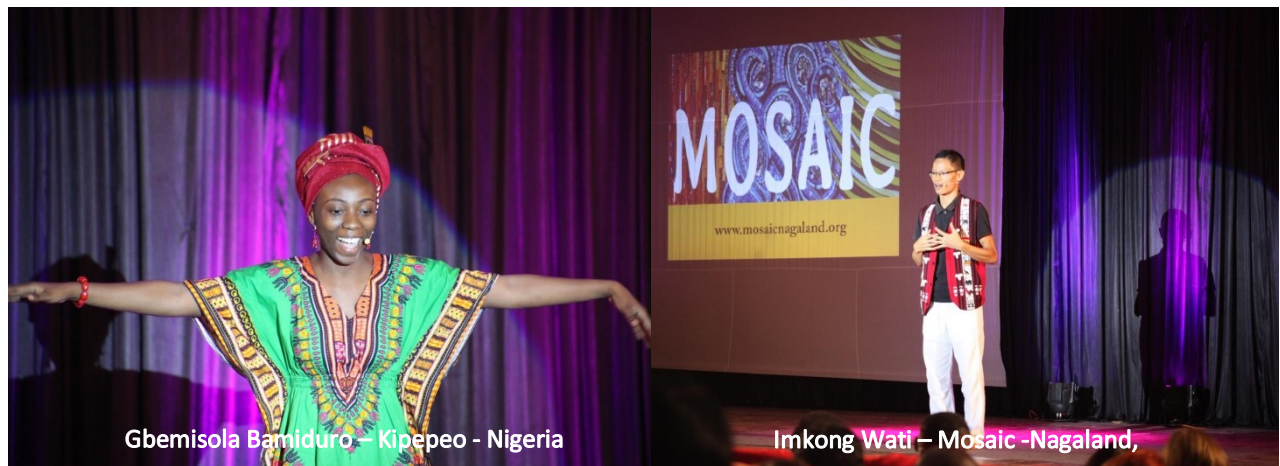
over the past few months two acts of the kanthari 'A Journey in Five Acts' curriculum took place. During Act three, the participants were in charge of the Save Vellayani Lake Campaign which included 3 major activities: 1. A fundraising Diner. 2. A twelve 12 hour long radio marathon and 3. The Save Vellayani Lake festival. The fundraising dinner was attended by about 140 guests who enjoyed a mixed variety of spicy entertainment in the form of songs, poetry, dance and speeches. The funds raised were used to finance a paddle-boat that was donated to Neerthadakam, an NGO who works on the preservation of the lake. The Festival was attended by students of 5 different schools. They participated in several art competitions.

During act four, the participants visited several organisations and schools. The Asian School of Business in Trivandrum was one of them. There they got to pitch their projects, attend a lecture on business related topics and had a chance to connect with students and staff. They received several insights on business aspects that can be used when running their own ventures.

Pre-event University College in Palayam, Trivandrum. The highlight of act four is the annual kanthari TALKS event. For the first time, kanthari TALKS was to be held in the heart of the city of Trivandrum. In order to reach out to society and to create awareness, a special Pre-event was organized at the University College in Palayam. Around 140 students from the National Service Scheme (NSS) wing of Kerala University college met with the participants at the kanthari campus. There the concept of the exhibition was planned. The Pre-event was held on the 17th of November 2017 during which many students were reached.



2017 Certification ceremony



kanthari TALKS 2017

In the days leading up to this event, participants were found all around the campus where they practiced their Dream Speech. They trained the right amount of voice projection talking to an empty Amphi Theatre, to some trees, the lake or some other participants. On the 12th and 13th of December 2017 the 23 participants presented their plans for social change in fiery and spicy Dream Speeches followed by a brief Q&A session with a panel of experts. The speeches can be heard via the audio files that are available at www.kanthari.org/talks

Certification 2017

On the 15th of December the participants looked back on the past 7 months. It was a special day with many mixed emotions. Sadness because everyone knew they soon had to say their goodbyes, but at the same time happiness, because of what was accomplished during the course and the fact that now the ideas will be turned to reality: creating a better tomorrow within their own communities. During a festive ceremony, chief guest Irom Sharmila handed over the completion certificates.

kanthari award 2017

Ms. Irom Sharmila was honored with the kanthari Award 2017. Irom Chanu Sharmila (born 14 March 1972), also known as the "Iron Lady" or "Mengoubi" ("the fair one") is a civil rights activist, political activist, and poet from the Indian state of Manipur. With her primary demand to the Indian government being the repeal of the Armed Forces Act, she fasted for 16 years. Having refused food and water for more than 500 weeks, she has been called "the world's longest hunger striker". During a special session at kanthari Irom Sharmila shared her cause with the kanthari participants who in their turn shared their causes with her. All of them have similar goals and that is to realize mindset shifts that lead to social improvements within their communities.

Updates of kanthari Graduates:

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

Blind ROCKS! - Sristi KC, Nepal

Sristi KC did not let her disability be a decision maker in her life after she lost her sight at 16. Sristi is the founder of Blind Rocks! The following article was published by [DNA India](#) in which it is explained how Sristi, a 2012 [#kanthari](#) graduate, deals with blindness. Take a few minutes to read [article](#) and get inspired!

Aravans – Parthasarathy, Pondicherry

'Voice of voiceless'; ARAVANS, an organisation founded by 2016 kanthari graduate Parthasarathy, organized a petition campaign for the LGBT community in Virudhunagar. More than 150 LGBT community members participated. Last year a petition that pleaded for rights on shelter, Transgender ID card, pension, other government schemes, Etc. was handed in, but unfortunately without any results. Therefore a new petition was signed and handed to the district collector. More info on [Aravan](#)

Takkazi - Emmanuel Mruu, Kenya

Emmanuel, a 2015 kanthari graduate from Kenya, is not a talker, he is a walker! He doesn't just talk



about waste, he is doing something about it. Learn more about his work to create a cleaner and less polluted Mombasa at: <http://takkazi.org/>

Snehan – Anumuthu Chinnaraj, Pondicherry

Anumuthu Chinnaraj from Pondicherry is the founder of the organisation [Snehan](#) and a 2017 kanthari participant. Snehan supports homeless and destitute people in Pondicherry. During the weekend that cyclone Okchi hit the South of India, Anumuthu took to the streets to experience what it is like to be a homeless person. He learned that homeless people are literally invisible. Read about his self-test in the [Deccan Chronicle](#)

Akshar Aramba – Lila Nath Pahadi, Nepal

Lila (2016 kanthari graduate) advocates for the rights of disabled people and for inclusive education. On the occasion of children's day in Nepal, Lila organized a speech competition at Kanti Bhairab HS School. Such activities form steps forward to a more inclusive society. Lila's vision is to see all children with disabilities going to school hand-in-hand with non-disabled children and singing a song of education for all. More information [here](#)

Thumbs Up Uganda – Samuel Odwar, Uganda

Samuel Odwar and his [Thumbs Up Uganda](#) team are creating a conducive inclusive community for persons with disabilities. From 15th October to 11th November 2017, a kanthari springboard training was conducted to improve the capacity of social activists working or intend to work in the field of disability.

Gothrathalam, Mini MR, Trivandrum, India

Tribal students in India face many challenges. Many of them drop out of school. Gothrathalam, an organisation that was started by Mini MR, a 2014 kanthari graduate, offers support. Find out more [here](#)

Hive Uganda – Ojok Simon, Uganda

Beekeeping and Blindness! Learn how this combination forms a solution to fight both poverty and negative stigmatisation! [Ojok Simon](#), a 2012 [kanthari](#) graduate from Uganda started HIVE UGANDA, an organisation that offers training in Beekeeping for the blind. Take a few minutes to read this [article](#) and you learn how Beekeeping and Blindness form an unusual but wonderful combination to address both poverty and stigma!!

Recognition

Sabriye Tenberken, co-founder of Braille Without Borders was honored with the Else Mayer Award. Else Mayer (1891–1962) was a German nun and women's liberation activist during the period of first-wave feminism. She was also one of the pioneers of the German Women's Liberation Movement. Ms Malgorzata Matuszewska, one of the board members of the Else Mayer Foundation, handed the award to Sabriye during a festive gathering in Bonn.

Art Braille kanthari

kanthari seen through the eyes of an artist. Artist and photographer, Joseph Pisani visited kanthari as well as several kanthari graduates in India to document their work via pictures, videos and



Save Vellayani Lake Fundraising Diner



Art Braille kanthari at Kulturpark Zurich

paintings. On the 7th of November "art braille kanthari", a charity art auction and exhibition with Sotheby's Zurich Director Stefan Puttaert & Media Personality Christine Maier took place at the Kulturpark in Zurich. Special thanks to Joseph Pisani, Tanja Lauper and Martin Seiz who were the driving forces behind this event! More details about this special event can be found [here](#)

kanthari in the media:

The Hindu; [kanthari-helps-people-become-agents-of-change](#)

Times of India ; [once-the-world-understands-the-power-of-imperfection-discrimination-will-vanish](#)

Rediff.com: [the-blind-woman-who-creates-entrepreneurs](#)

Intake 2018

The next kanthari leadership training course will start in May 2018. The intake process is coming along well. 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,

the kanthari leadership course would not be possible without your help.

Therefore, on behalf of all our participants, we say thank you very much for your ongoing support.

Thank you also for helping us by sharing this newsletter.

With warmest regards,

the entire kanthari team, paul and sabriye

If you wish to support the work of kanthari,
you can do this [here](#) – THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
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