



The certification ceremony on December 13, 2025

# kanthari Quarterly Newsletter 4-2025

"When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace." — Jimi Hendrix —

It was a Saturday in December, a rare rain-free day, when Moris and Justus, two participants from Uganda, raised their hoes and cut through the rope of woven grass. With this symbolic act, they inaugurated the new Jumo Channel - a small "water wonder world" that had been brought to life in just three months.

The channel zigzags through open grassland, winds around tiny islands, and finally flows back into the lake. Measuring about 150 meters long and an average of 2.5 meters in width, it's designed for a paddle boat to easily pass through. This new habitat has already begun to attract a variety of birds resembling jacanas (swamp hens) - elegant, long-toed creatures that appear to walk on water as they step lightly over lotus leaves and wa-

ter lilies. Inspired by these birds, Justus named his organization "Jacana". He comes from a picturesque region of Uganda near the Rwandan border, famed for its mountain gorillas and one of Africa's deepest lakes. Yet behind this natural splendor lie serious social challenges, especially the high rate of youth unemployment. Justus addresses this problem with a simple but powerful idea: reviving traditional boatbuilding skills and making this craft appealing to young people once more. Justus and his team dream of creating a "Water-walker Village", a sustainable community of houseboats with floating vegetable gardens, workshops, and a lakeside café on Lake Bunyonyi.

Haunted by hunger since childhood, Moris envisions a self-sustaining model



**Above:** Mr. Narambunathan, who was recognized with the 2025 kanthari award.



**Left:** Part of the JuMo Channel, created by Justus and Moris at sunset. Amidst a floating grassland they created a meandering canal. Mangroves and other trees here to create a unique water wonderland.



village where teachers, parents, and children grow vegetables, fruits, and herbs wherever soil and sunlight allow. By promoting backyard and school gardening, he transforms unused land into nourishment and learning, striving to banish hunger, the silent bully that once stole his childhood smile.

Anyone who witnessed the opening of the canal knows one thing: for Justus and Moris, no dream is too big. Day after day, after their regular training sessions, we saw them heading out across the grasslands, armed with nothing but two hoes. Some of the other participants teased them about their eagerness, yet it didn't stop them. They weren't seeking recognition or reward; they simply wanted to create a place where insects, reptiles, birds, rare water plants, and people could thrive together. Today, that vision has become a reality. Now we can start to plant a new generation of freshwater mangroves.

*Dear friends and supporters, if you'd like to get to know Justus, Moris, and the other participants of the 2025 class, here's the link to the [kanthari TALKS](#).*

*Twenty changemakers from twelve countries have now returned home to put their plans into action. Saying goodbye was hard, especially knowing that some were returning to areas marked by war or crisis. But their ideas are strong, important, and full of hope. With courage and determination, they're stepping forward unafraid of the challenges ahead.*

#### kanthari Award 2025

Each year, kanthari participants nominate exceptional changemakers for the **kanthari Award**. Among the sev-

en nominees, **Mr. Narambunathan**, fondly known as "*Narambu Anna*," received the 2025 award for his four decades of tireless work to protect the **Thamirabarani River** in Tamil Nadu. As a child, he rescued orphaned water birds; today, through reforestation and community protection, he fights against poaching, pollution, and illegal sand mining. His dedication led even the Supreme Court to take action, turning **Thirupudaimaruthur** into a model for sustainable river conservation. We wish him continued success in his vital mission!

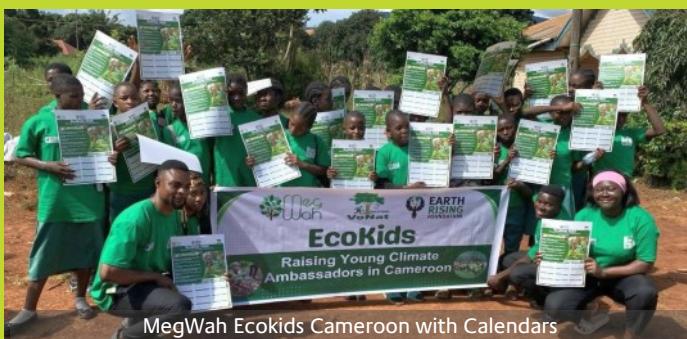
#### Updates from kanthari Alumni

**Ako Peter – [MegWah](#) – Cameroon (2016 kanthari)**

"Over 120 children and youth from the 2025 EcoKids Project, launched by MegWah, organized a lively climate campaign in Bangourain, western Cameroon. Carrying the newly launched *EcoKids 2026 calendar* filled with their own environmental messages, they went door-to-door, speaking directly to residents and sharing simple, practical solutions for daily life. Slogans like "Plant a tree today, give shade to a child tomorrow" and "Say NO to deforestation, YES to regeneration!" sparked genuine enthusiasm and inspired collective action to protect local ecosystems."

**Myat Tun – [Twinleaf Arakan](#) – Myanmar (2023 kanthari)**

Myat and his team work on Youth-led Sustainable Farming & Climate Action. Recently they started the construction of a permaculture demonstration farm and training center. Despite being in a conflict area, this platform equips rural farmers and youth with sustainable practices for soil restoration and community resilience amid all the challenges. Addi-



tionally, Twinleaf supported stationery for 1,420 students in 16 schools across Rathedaung and Maungdaw. And in two schools, they renovated infrastructure with newly made bamboo walls and four latrines, easing parental burdens and enhancing safe learning spaces.

#### Olubodun Akinyele – [AYITI](#) – Nigeria (2019 kanthari)

Olubodun shared: “We recently completed the 52-week *Digital Impact Program* through AYITI, focusing on youth, creative design, and teamwork. Children from the slums of Lagos learned CSS, JavaScript, web design with Figma, digital marketing, SEO, and scriptwriting for advocacy videos. At the same time, I published ‘Yago! The Box of Joy for Children’, a storybook that uses familiar characters and everyday situations to introduce programming concepts in a playful way. The book is becoming a powerful gateway into the digital world, connecting learning with the joy of reading.”

#### Mutongi Kawara – [Mukundi](#) – Zimbabwe (2023 kanthari)

In Murewa, a rural region in Mashonaland East Province, where the organization Mukundi brings hope to orphans affected by HIV/AIDS, water is a scarce resource. Yet during the fifth *Overcoming Barriers Camp*, the topic of water conservation came to life. For seven days, the young people were immersed in a world of discovery: they crafted, experimented, reflected, and experienced just how precious every drop is. Raindrops turned into learning moments, curiosity into knowledge, drip irrigation, greywater recycling, zero-waste solutions. One child shyly admitted, “We waste water when we bathe,” and then promised to change. Now, as

they reach Phase 3, Discovery, it is no longer just about technology or knowledge. It is about mindset. About responsibility. About choosing to live change, drop by drop.

#### kanthari in the Media

A mini documentary has been released in which kanthari Alumni take viewers on a journey through the unique kanthari curriculum: ‘A Journey in Five Acts’. See the film [here](#). You can re-watch the kanthari TALKS via [www.kantharitalks.org](http://www.kantharitalks.org) or on the kanthariTV youtube channel

*Dear Friends,*

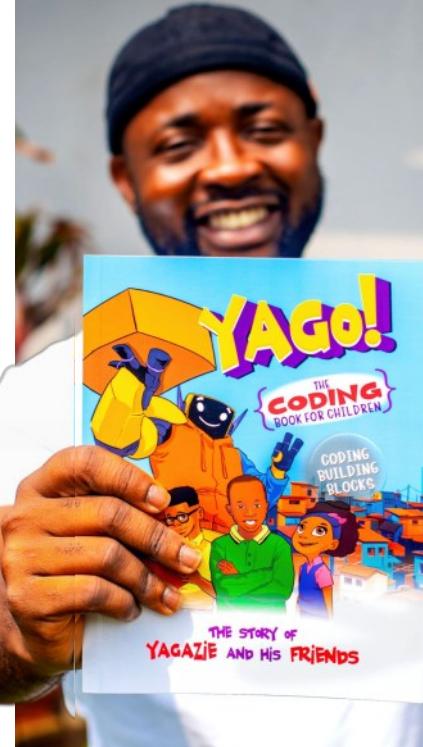
*After seven months of intensive learning, working together and witnessing transformation on our campus, saying farewell to the participants is always bittersweet. While we are sad to see them leave, it is time for them to start creating positive change in their communities. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who made the 2025 course possible.*

*Your support has turned bold dreams into meaningful impact across the world. As our graduates now return home to drive change, we have already working on the selection process for the next generation of changemakers, who will begin their journey in April 2026.*

*Your continued encouragement and support are vital to help us identify, train, and empower these new visionaries to carry forward the kanthari spirit and build a better tomorrow. With heartfelt THANKS and very best wishes for the new year, on behalf of the kanthari team, sabriye and paul*



To make a donation, please scan the QR code, or [click here](#). Thank you



Olubodun's story book Yago! To empower children in the slums of Lagos



“Mendaya—Kids on fire” performance during Emmanuel’s kanthari TALK

With your donation, you support the training of marginalized persons that enables them to run their own impact making organisations. Your donation has an impact over many years and reaches countless people in need around the world.

Donate [here](#) today.

Thank you!