

feature documentary outline

KANTHARI: change from within

2015, Kenya / Uganda / Tibet / India

Length: 52 minutes
Language: English
Filmed and directed by : Marijn Poels , Netherlands
Produced by: SolidarityFilmDoc, Poland



Marijn Poels: An independent cinematographer & activist , 2011 Dodie Spittal Award (Canada), The Voice of Peace Award (Pakistan), NL Documentary Award 2015

Challenge the old notion of aid to developing countries and marginalized communities! Get on an exciting road trip to meet courageous visionaries, affected by adversity in their lives who prove that social change has to come from within.

The film follows blind Nobel Peace Prize nominee Sabriye Tenberken and Paul Kronenberg, as they travel across East Africa to reconnect with graduates of **kanthari**, an institute which they founded that trains grass-root activists from the margins of society who use new approaches to solve social problems.

Central characters include:



Monicah Kaguthia from Kenya, repeatedly escaped from female genital mutilation, a tradition of the Masai community. Now she is an advocate who has initiated 43 girls into womanhood without circumcision so far. Location: Rift Valley, Kenya



Ojok Simon from Uganda was 9 when a rebel soldier hit his head with a rifle which made him lose most of his sight. He now runs a bee keeping cooperative for 30 blind persons in the rural areas. Location: Gulu, Northern Uganda.



Stephen Onyang from Kenya. After the death of his brother due to HIV AIDS Stephen was left with two small orphans. He now runs "Hope Restoration Centre" - a life transformational springboard which addresses the stigma of 30 HIV orphans in a region with 30% infection rate.



Jane Waithera from Kenya, partially sighted, is a person with albinism, living in a country where albinos may still be hunted for their body parts. She advocates for their rights and offers guidance to albinos including their caregivers. Location: Nairobi, Kenya

Lead roles:



Sabriye Tenberken (blind) & **Paul Kronenberg**, co-founders of kanthari international, Braille Without Borders and part of award winning film 'BLINDSIGHT'. Sabriye is a 2005 Nobel peace prize nominee, author of "My path leads to Tibet." Paul, an Albert Schweitzer and Mother Theresa awardee.

KANTHARI: change from within sharpens the understanding of the potential of people from the margins of society by a raw, observational style of cinematography and vivid storytelling.

Trailer: Watch the 2min [trailer](#) on official [film website](#) or [FB page](#). Distribution enquiries - [email](#)



International film festivals where the film has been screened so far:

20.09.2015 Chicago International Social Change Festival, USA - Official Selection - Pre-premiere
22.10.2015 All About Freedom Film Festival, Gdansk, Poland - Official Selection - World Premiere
21.11.2015 HumanDoc International Film Festival, Warsaw, Poland – **Audience Award**
4-6.03.2016 Peace on Earth Film Festival, Illinois, USA - Official Selection
16-19.03.2016 Picture This Film Festival, Calgary, Canada - **Dodie Spittal Award & Honourable Mention**
09.04.2016 VIBGYOR Film Festival, India - Official Selection
10.04.2016 World Film Festival, Venlo, Netherlands - Official Selection
22.02 - 04.05.2016 We Care Film Festival, India (New Delhi + other cities) – **Honourable Mention**
1-2.06.2016 Bosifest Film Festival, Serbia (Belgrade) – **Special Mention**
18.12.2016 Inclus Film Fest, Spain (Barcelona) – **Best Of Festival: Feature Documentary**



Awards: Best Feature Doc, Audience Award, Honourable Mentions and Dodie Spittal Award
Jury's verdict: "Powerful and emotional, beautiful cinematography and dynamic editing"



"Interesting and a must see!"

- Lech Wałęsa, president of Poland, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Leader of Solidarność



„Struck by people's motivation to fight against adversity”

- Łukasz Maciejewski, film critic, TVP Kultura



„With 6 festival nominations in Europe, America, Asia we hope to reach a wider audience soon!”

- Tomek Kozakiewicz, Producer

More info:

send e-mail to tomek@solidarityfilmdoc.org for details...

Media about the film (in Polish):

Duży Format, Gazeta Wyborcza

Interview with producer Tomek Kozakiewicz

<http://wyborcza.pl/duzyformat/1,127290,19207678,ostre-papryczki-zmienia-swiat-polecamy-dokument.html>

Full synopsis on next page:

SOLIDARITY
FILMDOC

UL. SŁOWACKIEGO 28/18 / SOPOT 81-872 / TEL.: 58 5514978 /
FUNDACJA@SOLIDARITYFILMDOC.ORG / WWW.SOLIDARITYFILMDOC.ORG

ZAREJESTROWANA W SĄDZIE REJONOWYM GDAŃSK - PÓŁNOC / VII WYDZIAŁ GOSPODARCZY /
KRS POD NR: 0000504428 / REGON: 222071778 / NIP: 5851468622 / NR KONTA (PLN):
80 1240 1242 1111 0010 5756 3951 / NR KONTA (EUR): 47 1240 1242 1978 0010 5772 8680 /
NR KONTA (USD): 08 1240 1242 1787 0010 5772 8941

Full synopsis

The film follows blind Nobel Peace Prize nominee Sabriye Tenberken and Paul Kronenberg, as they travel from Tibet, India across East Africa to reconnect with graduates of an institute which they founded that trains grass-root activists from the margins of society who use new approaches to solve social problems. This vision arose through their 15 years' experience in Tibet where they pioneered self-integration of blind children into mainstream education.

'kanthari' institute, based in Kerala (South India), runs a unique 7 month programme for about 20 participants from around the world annually. Its name was inspired by a chilli which grows wild in the countries of the Southern hemisphere. It is very small, extremely spicy and possesses many medicinal qualities. Just like the participants of the course - who have the fire in the belly to stimulate positive social change in their communities.

The film visits four "kantharis", social change makers, each with a very powerful personal story, big dreams and a ground-breaking social project:

Monicah Kaguithia from Kenya, daughter of a Masaai was married at the age of 16. She got the responsibility to herd the family's cattle. When delivering her first baby she was to become circumcised for the first time. Since then, she has repeatedly escaped from female genital mutilation, a tradition of the Masaai community in the Rift Valley. Now she is an advocate who is working with the community, the elders and a group of traditional dancers to create an alternative ritual through which she has initiated 43 girls into womanhood without circumcision so far.

Jayne Waitera from Kenya, partially sighted, is a person with albinism, who like many of her friends have faced the danger of abduction and being killed. Some witchdoctors in East Africa believe that mutilated body parts of persons with albinism bring good luck. Jayne advocates for their rights, offers guidance to albinos including their caregivers and fights for a more effective law enforcement protection system. Jayne's aims to change the harmful perceptions against albinos through her NGO – Positive Exposure Kenya.

Stephen Onyang from Kenya. After the death of most of his brother's family due to HIV AIDS, Stephen was left with two small orphans to take care of. He now runs "Hope Restoration Centre" – a life transformational springboard for 30 orphans which uses counselling and artistic/theatre activities to change the mindset of the community towards victims of HIV/AIDS. The project is carried out in a rural village next to Lake Victoria with 30% infection rate.

Ojok Simon from Uganda was 9 years old when a rebel soldier hit his head with a rifle which made him lose most of his sight. It hindered Ojok to join his friends in climbing the trees in search for wild honey. "But that did not stop me from looking for honey!" says Ojok after finding an abandoned clay pot, which to his surprise attracted bees. He mastered the art of beekeeping using local, hollow trees. He now runs a beekeeping cooperative for 38 blind persons in the rural areas of Northern Uganda.

Travel by boat, bus, car and foot through breathtaking landscapes, in order to meet these extraordinary yet stigmatized people fighting for their cause under the most extreme conditions.

"KANTHARI: change from within" challenges the old notion of aid to developing countries and vulnerable social groups! It sharpens the understanding of the potential of people from the margins of society by a raw, observational style of cinematography and vivid storytelling.