

Sangeeta Isvaran



Profile

First recipient of the national award '**Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar**'
Creator of the Katradi Method - Empathy Based Social Transformation
Founder and Managing Trustee of Wind Dancers Trust
Fellow of the International Institute of Conciliation, Boston, USA
Honorary Associate, Nature Conservation Foundation, India
Empaneled with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations
Creator of Lorry Lolakku - mobile theatre for marginalized communities
Public speaker: People Dancing (UK), Itau Cultural (Brazil), Universidad Veracruzana (Mexico)
TEDex speaker - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr4iBABzwcg>
Recipient of the Rotary Peace Builder Award for COVID relief work
Born in 1975, living in Chennai, India



Sangeeta has inherited a Bharatanatyam [classical dance/theatre form from Tamilnadu, India] practice from the pioneering maestra, Padmabhushan Kalanidhi Narayanan and Smt.Savithri Jagannatha Rao. She has researched many performing and visual art traditions across the world, creating her unique Katradi Method of Empathy Based Social Transformation. For this she was honoured with the highest national award for young dancers, the Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar. She is an empanelled dancer of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations with a mandate for cultural diplomacy. She has also received several other national and international fellowships – International Leaders Program, Australia Council for the Arts Network Asia, Asia Europe Foundation, Asian Scholarship Foundation, Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst [German Academic Exchange Programme] – and awards – Kala Rathna, Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival; Prix de la Creation, Centre Culturel d'Enghien-les-bains, France; Vasantalakshmi Young Dancer award, India. A highly skilled performer, she has performed in more than 40 countries over Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America, where she has also collaborated with several governmental and non-governmental organisations using the arts in education, empowerment and conflict resolution. She has studied various different dance forms from South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe and West Africa, creating her own unique style of choreography in many international collaborations.

Studied and trained in over 50 dance forms covering classical, ethnic and contemporary styles from across the world

Taught in over 20 universities and international organizations

Performed in over 40 countries across 5 continents

Speaks 8 international languages

Katradi - Empathy based social transformation

A passionate advocate for using art to create social change, Sangeeta has worked with the arts in education, empowerment and conflict resolution with many marginalized communities across the world, such as sex workers, street children, indigenous communities, landmine victims, people with disabilities, refugees, victims of caste and religious conflict and so on. 25 years of work in the field has led to the creation of the 'Katradi Method'. It is a dynamic technique working on a grid of five levels of communication and understanding: physical, emotional, sensory, intellectual and intuitive. This is not just a theoretical construct; each module of Katradi design is a blend of activities that work through these five levels of understanding. Many forms of visual and performing art have powerful techniques to generate empathy and understanding embedded in them. Tapping into several of these forms, the Katradi method has evolved to create powerful and joyous spaces of transformation. The strength of Katradi lies in the creation of empathy as a transformative tool. Society today places emphasis on the intellectual approach: it is privileged to the exclusion of all other types of understanding. But, the root of conflict, abuse and discrimination is not a logical or rational one. It is usually emotional, sensory and intuitive factors that trigger violence. Combining empathy and high levels of positivity Katradi creates sustainable, deep-rooted transformation. Sangeeta has founded the Wind Dancers Trust to develop the Katradi initiative. Since our inception in 2014, our programs on taboo and toxic issues of gender, sexual abuse, menstruation, religious/caste conflict, environmental conservation, refugee dialogues have reached over 1,000,000 people via workshops, teacher trainings, curriculum design, and performances. We have created seminal programs like Bridging the Gaps Youth Camps, Lorry Lolakku (social justice and awareness through mobile performances), Volunteer for India with the US Consulate Grants and more. www.katradi.org

Katradi has been at the fore-front of COVID relief work. Working across several collectives, we have helped 11,000+ migrants reach home, distributed over 5,683 ration kits, 30,400 food kits on Shramik trains, 1,02,580 meals, 77,000 litres of water, opened our houses to shelter women fleeing domestic/sexual abuse, started a free kitchen, initiated education relief programs for children of government schools, created powerful modules to destigmatize COVID-19 and Vaccine Awareness programs.

The Katradi Method has been used across the world, in more than 30 countries, with organisations such as UNESCO, World Vision, Emmaus Solidarité, Handicap International, Angkor Association for the Disabled, Arunodhaya Centre for Street and Working Children, Deepam Educational Society for Health, Aseema Trust, Snow Leopard Trust, and Oxfam.



Teaching Experience

Sangeeta Isvaran is invited as visiting professor to teach courses, conduct seminars and lead workshops in Universities, NGOs, public and private institutions around the world – **Museu de Arte Moderna**, Department of Education, Sao Paulo, Brazil; **Fabricas Culturales**, Govt. Sao Paulo, Brazil; **Ecole international de Danse Irène Tassebédou**, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; **Hochschule für Musik und Tanz**, Köln, Germany; **Escuela Superior de Artes de Yucatán**, Mexico; **Centre National de Recherches Scientifiques**, Paris, France; **Institute Seni Indonesia**, Yogyakarta, Indonesia; **Royal University of Fine Arts**, Phnom Penh, Cambodia; **Chulalongkorn University**, Bangkok, Thailand.

2020, 2021 Creation of Chennai Migrant Taskforce, **Katradi COVID-19 relief across India**

2019, 2020 B-Motion Festival, Bassano del Grappa, Italy; **Compassion Quotient in Education**, ServiceSpace, Surat, India

2018, 2019 Migrant Bodies, Moving Borders - Paris, France, Bassano del Grappa, Italy; **Gender and Reproductive Health**, CHUM Refugee camps, Emmaus Solidarité, Paris, France.

2018 Nyolo Tuki - performance for hornbill conservation with the Nishi tribe, Pakke Paga Festival, India

2017 The Tipping Point of Transformation, VI Coloquio Internacional sobre las Artes Escénicas, Universidad Veracruzana, Mexico; **Teatro en Cárcel - Theatre in prison**, Xalapa, Mexico; Crear, Quemar, Cambiar: The Tipping Point of Transformation - International Teaching Artists Conference ITAC4, Carnegie Hall, New York, USA; **Opening Keynote Speaker, Workshop on Katradi Method**, Foundation for Community Dance, UK

2016-17 **'Abhaya - Be Without Fear'**, Indian Centre, Moscow, Russia; Villa Cinque, Torino, Italy

2016 Using the arts in environment - education, Snow Leopard Trust, Kyrgyzstan; **Community Dance, Kalakshetra, India**; Living Gender, Nature Conservation Foundation, India

2015 Cyber Rikshaw, Les Poussieres, France; **Empathy Based Transformation - the Mundane and Divine**, Compagnia Nad, Italy; Lorry Lolakku - Stories of Madras Kuppams, Madras Day, Arunodhaya Centre for Street and Working Children

2014 Wind Dancers - Creating Change', Foundation of Community Dance, UK; **'Wind Dancers'**, Universidad Veracruzana, Xalapa, Mexico; 'Dust and Ashes', Antananarivo, Madagascar, Ouaga dougou, Burkina Faso, Torino, Italy

2012 'Dead Space, Living Space' - Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, Brazil

2010 'When the body is all eyes' - Hibridaciones trans-escénicas, Universidad Veracruzana, Xalapa, Mexico; **'Body signs and Semiotics' - International Seminar on Art, Politics and Education**, Bienal do Brasil, São Paulo, Brazil; 'Social stigma - Negative perception of the female body on stage'; University Of Hyderabad, India; **'Art Attack - Creative Approaches to Community Change'** - Pakistan and India: Shifting identities in culture, history and justice; Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan

2009 'Peace-Building through the Arts' - South Asia - China Cultural Forum, New Delhi; **International Seminar on Cultural Languages: Challenges of Non-formal Education**, Instituto Itau Culturau, Sao Paulo, Brasil

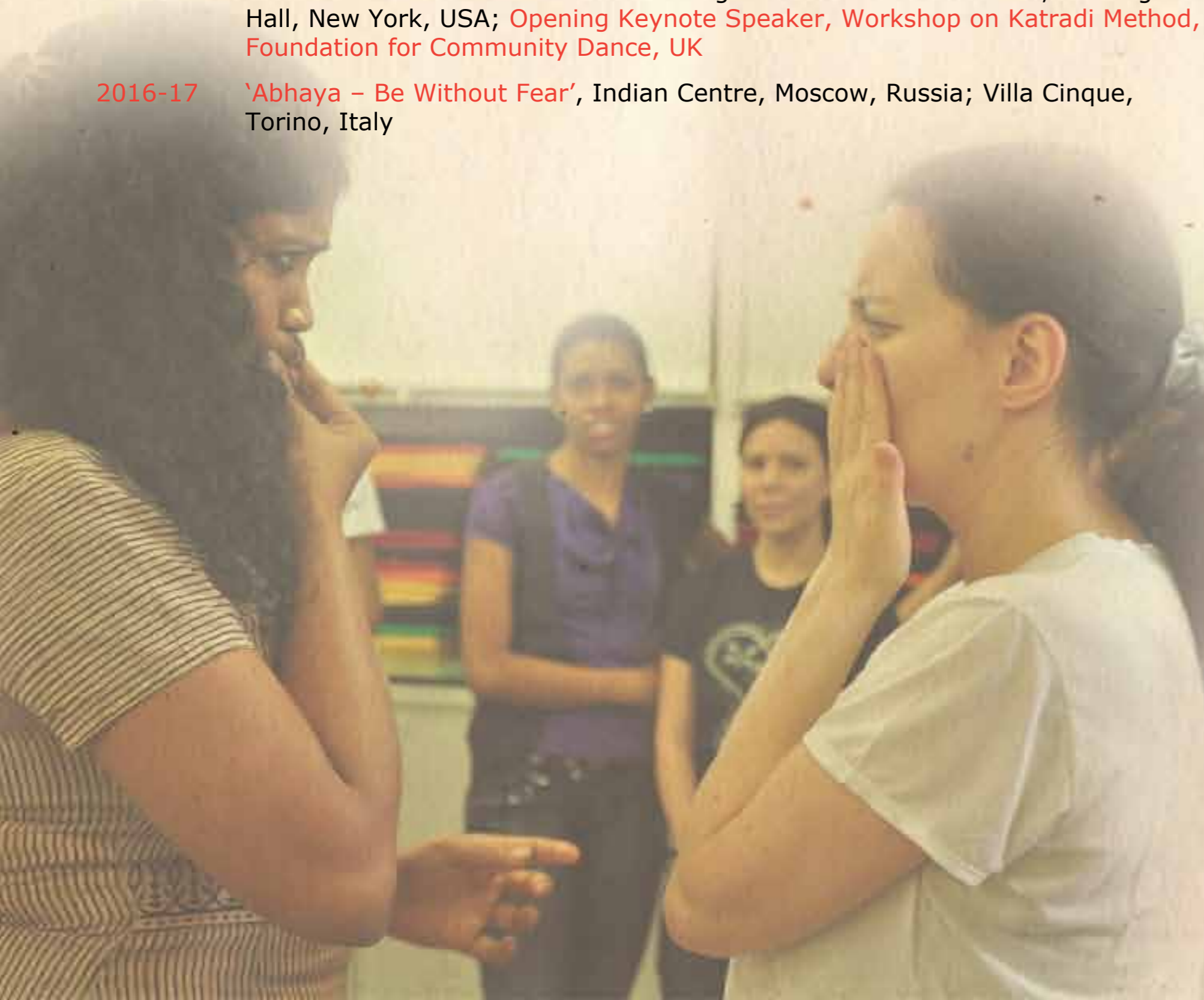
2008 Creative Movement in Education, Hochschule für Musik, Cologne, Germany

2007 Using Art to heal for Mediation History, Making Peace: The Henry Everett Workshop for Professionals working with issues of Conflict, Peace and Justice, The International Institute of Conciliation, Boston, USA; **Migration of Peoples, Cultural Flows and the Surrounding Political Debate for Open Dialogue XI: Global Connections to Cultural Democracy**, The Association of American Cultures [TAAC], Denver, Colorado, USA; Physical Theatre, Escuela Superior de Artes de Yucatán, Merida, Mexico

2004 Rasa - a Lifeskill, 10th Annual Conference of Performance Studies International 'Perform - State - Interrogate', Singapore; **Creative ways of justifying creativity in the regular school curriculum**, UNESCO conference on Art and Education, Hongkong; The aesthetics of Rasa across Southeast Asia and its varied implications in the contemporary social context, 3rd International Convention of Asia Scholars, Bangkok, Thailand

2003 Art in Education, European Arts in Education Congress, UNESCO, IDEA et FIDEA, Helsinki, Finland

2001 Development of techniques from traditional art forms to combat contemporary social problems, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre d'études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud, Paris, France; **Indian and Southeast Asian Dance-theatre traditions**, Institute Seni Indonesia [Indonesian National Institute of the Arts], Yogyakarta, Indonesia; Bharatanatyam and Cambodian Classical dance, Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh, Cambodia



Contact

1A, Windchime Apartments,
75, Beach Road, Kalakshetra Colony,
Chennai - 600090, INDIA
Mobile: +91-9444918692
Email: sangeeta.katradi@gmail.com

