

## KIRAN SINGH SIRAH

### President of the International Storytelling Center (ISC)

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**320 word bio:** KIRAN SINGH SIRAH is President of the International Storytelling Center (ISC), an educational and cultural institution dedicated to enriching the lives of people around the world through storytelling. ISC organizes the world's premiere storytelling event, the National Storytelling Festival, and supports applied storytelling initiatives across a wide variety of creative industries. Prior to his appointment at ISC, Kiran developed a number of award-winning arts, cultural and human rights initiatives in cultural centers across the UK and Ireland. These programs have received recognition from UNESCO, Her Majesty the Queen's Authority in Education, and the European Commission. He has spoken at the Library of Congress and the Kennedy Center, led stories for peace-based discussions with the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led workshops for the US State Department, the US Department of Defense's force directorate, and led trainings for US commanders at Fort Benning military base in Georgia. He is widely recognized for advancing storytelling as a tool for building social empathy and intercultural understanding. In 2015, he was invited to the White House in support of storytelling efforts for national grassroots peace building efforts. An advisory member to UNESCO Scotland and a Rotary Peace Fellow, he has developed articles, talks and conference papers about interdisciplinary approaches to relationship building in communities around the globe. Kiran emphasizes his interest in "the power of human creativity, arts, storytelling and social justice, and the notion of a truly global multicultural society." In 2017, he was awarded the "Champion of Peace" recognition at the Rotary International ceremony at the United Nations Peace Week in Geneva. His *Telling Stories that Matter* toolkit aims to raise storytelling from a form of entertainment to an ethical art tool for social justice and empathy building, and as a global force for peace. Kiran firmly believes storytelling not only has the power to enrich lives, but it also holds the key to building a conflict free society.

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