

1

Many young people don't have easy lives. They don't have parents who can support them. Some of them are homeless and live on the streets. Others get into trouble with the police. But in London, there is a special place where young people can go for help, care and love. *Kids Company* is a charitable organisation that provides practical, emotional and educational support to 13,000 children and teenagers each year. Every Christmas Day, they offer a special lunch to 2,000 children with nowhere else to go. All of this is possible thanks to an exceptional Iranian woman named Camila Batmanghelidjh.



2

Camila started *Kids Company* in 1996. At first, Camila and other volunteers worked in six converted railway arches. Now the organisation has a sports centre, a canteen, an art studio, a library, a beauty room and a youth club. Young people can drop in for a hot meal, have therapy, go to dance classes or just talk! The centre encourages activities that promote tolerance, teamwork and youth leadership. Kids can do anything, from playing basketball to learning circus skills!



3

Kie and Peter are two of Camila's many happy stories. Kie is now 21, but she was only 10 when she started going to *Kids Company*. She had problems at home, especially with her father. She says, 'The children I met, and the people and parents I had to guide me, have had a great influence on me. I understand the world better and myself, too. This has helped me to think about what to do with my life.' Kie is now studying film and TV production, and in the future wants to make documentaries. Peter was homeless and in trouble with the police when he first arrived. His life at home was terrible. But now he is a happy 20-year-old, planning to go to university!

4

Camila is like a mum to the young people in *Kids Company*. She says, 'If you really think about it, if you don't have a parent there is no food in the house, no one washes your clothes, organises socialising for you, takes you to the doctor, the dentist or the optician. You live in chaos.' *Kids Company* gives a structure to children's lives, and also offers the love and care we all need.

1 1.28 Read and listen to the story.

2 Choose the best heading for each paragraph.

1. Paragraph 1

- a) A charity for children
- b) The best place to go for Christmas

2. Paragraph 2

- a) A place to have fun
- b) A place to learn, laugh and grow

3. Paragraph 3

- a) Two difficult lives
- b) Two changed lives

4. Paragraph 4

- a) Kids Company: A loving home
- b) Kids Company and children's health

Meet Camila!

Who is Camila Batmanghelidjh? And why did she start *Kids Company*? Let's find out.

If you ever meet Camila Batmanghelidjh, the first thing you will notice is her appearance. Camila always wears a brightly coloured turban and exotic ethnic clothes. She calls these her *entertainment*. On Mother's Day, children at *Kids Company* give her presents of pieces of cloth, and Camila sews them together to make her clothes. Not only does she look amazing, but she has had an exceptional life, too.

'You couldn't have a more privileged life than mine,' laughs Camila. In fact, she spent the first ten years of her life in Tehran, Iran. She was the child of a rich Iranian family. Her grandfather was a multimillionaire and her father owned a sports centre with an ice rink and swimming pool.

Although she came from a rich family, Camila wanted to work with poor children. She was only 9 when she told her parents that she wanted to run an orphanage. When she was 11, she was sent to a private school for girls in the UK. Many of the girls missed their families and were very unhappy. Camila organised a self-help group so they could give each other support. When she was 14, she decided what she wanted to do in the future – to open a centre to give love, kindness and care to children who didn't have those things. With *Kids Company*, that's exactly what she did!

However, not everything has been easy for Camila. As a child she suffered learning difficulties because she had dyslexia. 'Reading was hard, instructions, too,' she says. 'Even now I can't use a keyboard at all.' She doesn't use a computer, she doesn't drive, and she never cooks – she eats the food served in the

canteen. She rarely watches TV or goes to the cinema. Unlike the children, who go away on adventure holidays in the summer, she hasn't taken a holiday in years. She is too busy helping children!

Kids Company is Camila's life. The real satisfaction for her is when she sees so many of the young people from *Kids Company* go on to university or to work, and make happy lives at home.



LOVE



1 1.29 Read and listen to the story.

2 Complete the sentences.

1. Camila looks amazing because _____
2. She had a privileged childhood in Iran because _____
3. The girls were depressed at school, so _____
4. Camila wanted to open a centre, so _____
5. Camila doesn't use a computer because _____
6. She hasn't had a holiday because _____

Unit 3

Lesson 7

1 Read, brainstorm advice and complete the chart.

Dear Dr. Stress Buster,

I'm really worried about my exams. I feel that I have to pass no matter what. I work hard at school and I always do my homework. But I get really nervous and then I forget everything! I can't concentrate and I can't sleep at night. I just can't stop thinking! Then the next day I feel tired, and the whole problem gets worse. I tried to explain my problem to my teacher, but she just said I shouldn't be silly. I'm worried about disappointing my parents. What should I do?

Holly

2 Read and answer the questions.

Dear Holly,

Nobody likes taking exams. They always cause a lot of stress and make students feel nervous and unhappy. However, you are clearly a serious student. You must start feeling positive and stop worrying!

If I were you, I wouldn't think about failing. Imagine that you are going to be a success and keep that picture in your mind at all times! If you study in the evening, you shouldn't go to bed straight away. Your mind won't stop working! You should do exercise, listen to some relaxing music or read a book.

Dr. Stress Buster

1. Do you agree with Dr. Stress Buster's advice?
2. Would you say anything different?

3 Read and write a reply.

Dear Dr. Stress Buster,

I have a terrible problem. I love junk food. I know it isn't good for me, but I can't help it. When I feel unhappy, I want to eat more and more! After I've eaten junk food, I feel guilty. I've thought about exercising, but I don't have any energy. Also, I'm not very good at sports. Can you help me?

Michael

