



KIDS COMPANY

VOLUNTEERING

Kids Company needs your support as a volunteer so we can radically change the lives of children at risk.

The abuse and neglect of children by adults can ruin a child's capacity to form loving relationships and manage their behaviour effectively. The basis of Kids Company's work with children and young people relies on volunteers. Volunteers are crucial in the work we do. Read on to see how you can volunteer for us.





KIDS COMPANY VOLUNTEERS



ABOUT KIDS COMPANY

Kids Company was founded by **Camila Batmanghelidjh** in 1996. We provide practical, emotional and educational support to vulnerable inner-city children and young people.

Our services reach 14,000 children across London and the vital role that volunteers play in the provision of these services has long been a central core of Kids Company.

Many of the children who seek Kids Company's help have experienced severe and multiple trauma. Often they are 'lone children' at risk, living in chronic deprivation with little or no support from the adults in their family. Their sense of self-worth has been destroyed by abuse and neglect. For some of these children the violence and rejection is so deep that the care services and police are unable to rescue them from the spiral that leads them to lifelong substance abuse, criminality and the propagation of their internalised violence.

They live in areas where social work departments are at breaking point, schools are not able to meet their complex needs and mental health clinics do not have the capacity to accommodate them.

Kids Company offers a safe, caring, 'family' environment. The support we provide is tailored to the needs of each individual. No matter how disturbed a child is, he or she will never be turned away. They are supported with love.

Kids Company works pro-actively with these children, supporting and re-parenting them, providing safety, care and an intensive programme based on psycho-therapeutic principles to re-integrate the child to the world of education, creativity and work.

Kids Company operates through two street level centres, in north and south London, an accredited education and life skills centre and a therapy house, as well as offering therapeutic and social work services in 40 London schools.

Each year we work with thousands of volunteers, all with their own unique combination of skills and experience. Whatever they have to offer, we can always find a way of drawing on their talents to make amazing things possible for vulnerable children.

The Kids Company community of volunteers ranges from teachers to TV presenters. Volunteers make a huge impact on the lives of thousands of children and young people. We are enormously dependent on their contributions and are very grateful for their dedication.

Volunteering at Kids Company produces a tangible return for society, not only in terms of reduced crime and violence but also in terms of permitting children to flourish.

If you would like to volunteer in any way with Kids Company, we would love to hear from you. You don't need to be qualified to volunteer with us and we will provide you with full training and support.

Read on to find out about the many different options available.



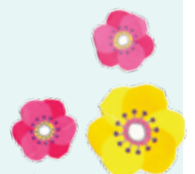
'This is the only place I come where adults are nice to me. I get to do loads of different activities and eat nice dinners'

Dannyella aged 9

FACTS:

More than **95%** of the children and young people we support come to us seeking help or are referred by their peers.

97% of these say that Kids Company works for them.





THE DIFFERENT SORTS OF VOLUNTEERS

There are many sorts of volunteer opportunities across Kids Company services. These include:

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Volunteers in the Centres

Volunteers in the Centres help Kids Company to provide a full team of skills. Those such as youth workers and sports leaders can fill voluntary positions at the street level centres, The Arches II and The Tree House and at the education and life skills centre, The Urban Academy.

Among the skills which these centres can use are: one-to-one youth work, running workshops and clubs, kitchen help and other general support.

Office and Professional Volunteers

Office and Professional Volunteers are also a valuable resource for Kids Company. Office volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and can include anyone from a sixteen-year-old on a work experience placement to an experienced, professional skilled volunteer. We appreciate any skills volunteers have to offer and our office team welcomes those with expertise in: fundraising, business, finance, legal work, PR, writing, research, administration, IT support, the creation of powerpoint and video presentations for use at events and web design. Volunteers can offer a day or two as a one-off contribution or make an ongoing commitment over a longer period or on a regular basis.

Student Volunteers

Student Volunteers from all disciplines and over eighteen years of age, in general higher education and in further education, can apply for general volunteer placements or internships. Students have the opportunity to use both their own interests as well as their course of study to benefit the children. In addition, they can gain meaningful experience in working for a recognised charity.



WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE AN OFFICE VOLUNTEER

"I wanted to give something back to society and as I knew about the work of Kids Company I decided to offer to volunteer. I think it is important to use your talents so it seemed to make sense to volunteer in an area with which I was familiar. It was suggested that Kids Company could use my writing and editing skills. For the past few months I have been working on volunteer and corporate recruitment literature, the newsletter and other pieces of writing for Kids Company.

What has been really rewarding is that people come from all over the building holding sheets of paper, asking me to help put their piece of work into good English. Professionals who are expert in their fields often find difficulty in writing for a variety of audiences so it is good to be able to help them do this. Kids Company needs to be as effective as possible in all its communication – be it with their children and young people or the head of a really big corporate enterprise – in order to thrive and continue with its unique work.

The interesting thing about Kids Company is that everything I see and everyone I encounter are most impressive. I have worked in many offices in my career and this one seems to run exceptionally well without any pressure. The Kids Company work ethic is truly admirable."

Pam White, Writer and Editor

Retired and Senior Volunteers

Retired and Senior Volunteers are a valued resource for all Kids Company's activities, particularly those with experience of teaching or working with children. They can bring increased understanding and the exchange of experience, skills and knowledge between older and younger people. The roles in which retired volunteers can be involved cover all those available to general and office volunteers.

The Volunteer Pool

Kids Company runs a Volunteer Pool for volunteers who are able to offer to volunteer on an occasional basis and would like to be contacted when ad hoc opportunities become available.

The type of activity for which volunteers may be needed includes: corporate events (helping to set them up, taking money on the door, operating a cloakroom), children's events (helping out at workshops, picnics, parties etc), producing and distributing fliers, wrapping Christmas gifts, setting up promotional exhibitions or travelling as the doctor on a fundraising expedition.

School Volunteers

We offer services to children and young people across 40 schools in some of London's most deprived areas, in the boroughs of Croydon, Hackney, Haringey, Harrow, Islington, Lambeth and Southwark.

Often the children we support experience challenges in their daily lives which make it difficult to focus on learning. Many lack a secure home life and face chronic neglect and abuse. Within a large school it can be difficult for children to vocalise their problems and needs to teachers who are often too under-resourced to help.

Our teams of psychotherapists, social workers, arts facilitators, in-class support workers and volunteers provide a programme of one-to-one and group therapy, drop-in counselling, lunchtime and after school clubs, arts workshops and day trips. These can be based on the following activities: art, drama, dance, sport, music, fashion, gardening, cookery and playground games as well as helping with literacy, maths, behaviour, SEN and teacher support in classes.

These services support children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and help prevent many from being excluded from school or dropping out. Volunteers from the above professional backgrounds and skills combine to provide an extremely useful resource for Kids Company's schools programme.



WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A CENTRE VOLUNTEER

"My first experience of Kids Company was through the mentor scheme - the perfect introduction to working with children. It was both challenging and so much fun. I was continually learning new skills while, at the same time, getting back in touch with my imagination and playfulness.

Following my mentoring experience, I was very keen to get more involved. My eyes had been opened to the depth of the issues that Kids Co are tackling. It also showed me how brave and special the children are and how every single one deserves attention, love and positive experiences.

I volunteer at the After-School Club at the Tree House three days a week. They are an incredible team and their positivity is infectious. Every staff member has been available to pass on advice, encouragement and lessons learnt from their experiences. This is hugely supportive when dealing with some of the more difficult behavioural issues.

I generally rotate around different activities, from art to playing in the park, from swimming to cooking. There have been so many special memories. My favourite ones are getting a big hug as an excited little girl ran out of class, hunting snails and building their new home in the garden and making a giant mega-fist out of clay in the 3D room. I love spending time with individual kids, really getting to know their personalities and understanding their needs. More than anything, it is a happy place and we laugh all the time. The Kids Company philosophy is so powerful in practice and has a huge impact on these children's lives."

Ronald Black, Volunteer Children's Worker

Individual Mentors

One-to-one mentor support is extremely valuable for Kids Company children and young people, many of whom don't have a reliable adult in their lives. Mentors work with a young person to help them feel less alone, achieve goals, build confidence and self-esteem and, most importantly, just have fun.

Mentoring is ideal for everyone, including those who work full-time, as it is a flexible form of volunteering and can take place at weekends. As a mentor, you will meet your mentee once a week and decide together when to meet and where to go. The activities can vary from a visit to the aquarium or an art gallery, ice-skating and go-karting to giving advice on keeping their flat clean, showing them how to boil an egg or sorting out their CV.

It can be an incredibly rewarding experience for both sides: young people are often just looking for an adult to talk to, someone who is committed to providing them with support, whilst the mentor has the opportunity to contribute to a young person's development and understand life from a whole new perspective.

Academic Mentors

Academic mentors serve as role models and responsible adults for students in further and higher education. An academic mentor provides a positive example to the student and ensures the student takes advantage of all resources that are available to help with the learning process and beyond. Students are matched with an academic mentor with knowledge of their subject area.

Kids Company provides full training and support. Academic mentors need to commit to a young person for a minimum of a year and be contactable for at least an hour each week.



WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A KIDS COMPANY MENTOR:

"It has been over 20 months since I met Carlton, my mentee, for the first time. I used to be a volunteer in Poland working with children and disabled people. When I first heard about mentoring it seemed like a completely new and unique experience that I had not tried before.

We met at Carlton's school with his social worker and his teacher to make the meeting more comfortable. We played football chatting about all sorts of stuff. It was a great way of getting to know each other before our first true one-to-one meeting.

His favourite activity is going to the cinema. But during our meetings we have tried a variety of things: swimming, football, billiards, bowling, badminton, capoeira, ice skating, as well as visiting exhibitions, festivals, museums, most London attractions and even a cave and a farm.

I would say our relationship has not really changed, rather that it has developed. We understand each other better every meeting. I know which activities we can really enjoy together; Carlton knows that mentoring is not about spending money. Like in any relationship, it is all about the small things. Learn how to say no without losing his respect.

In the beginning, to say no to expensive and unhealthy food, then to say no to buying him presents, which he thought was a way of showing that I care. Also I have learnt to react to behaviour that is inappropriate.

We have not had any groundbreaking moments, just many great moments. For me the most memorable are when he trusts me enough to talk about things he would not even share with his best friend. But I am sure the best moment is still ahead of us."

Grzegorz Junka, Mentor





Complementary Health Volunteers

Kids Company offers an increasingly wide range of complementary therapies. We are always looking for qualified therapists and complementary health practitioners to contribute to this expanding programme on a voluntary basis, to work in schools, street-level drop-in centres and The Heart Yard, the dedicated one-to-one therapy house. Therapist volunteers have the opportunity to share their skills in Kids Company's unique environment of support work.

The specialist skills which these therapists bring to Kids Company are very much in demand from the children and young people, teachers and parents as well as Kids Company staff.

Specialists in the following therapies are needed: massage, reflexology, physiotherapy, osteopathy, aromatherapy, yoga, beauty treatments, Reiki, Indian head massage, cranial osteopathy, acupuncture, EFT and other treatments.

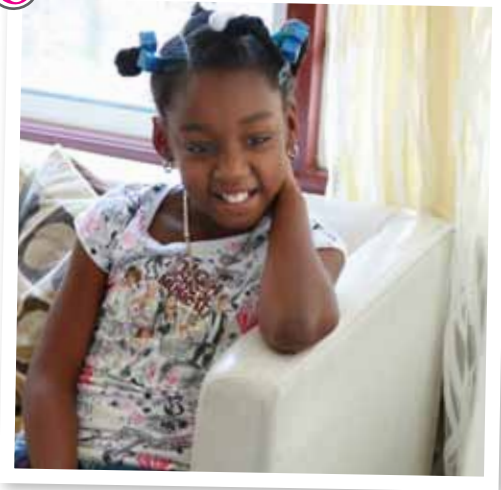
Volunteers in therapies other than those above are welcome. Volunteers can offer all sorts of contribution, from a few hours a month to a few days a week. In order to volunteer with us, practitioners need to be registered with a registered regulatory association and have full insurance cover.

Corporate Volunteers and Clinical Placement Students

Corporate Volunteers and Clinical Placement Students are also welcome. For further information on these types of volunteering, please email corporatevolunteer@kidsco.org.uk or placements@kidsco.org.uk to ask to be sent the relevant brochure.

Work Experience and Internships

We also welcome work experience students and interns. Please apply as General Volunteer.



WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH VOLUNTEER

"I started working as a volunteer therapist offering facial reflexology at Kids Company over a year ago. From my work, I have been deeply moved by quite extraordinary experiences of working with children. Firstly, they had great curiosity about exactly what I do?"

In one instance a young boy tried the treatment whilst his friends looked on to observe his reaction. Their initial reaction was to ridicule him but they were soon surprised that he fell asleep! The result was that the boys were moved to ask for treatment sessions themselves. My work with children started during the After School Club at Sir Thomas Abney primary school. I observed the innocence and honesty of children, who know nothing of facial reflexology but were interested when a team of facial reflexologists were working on their classmate! After treatment the children were surprised that they Felt Good! Their feelings were soon passed to their friends. News travels fast and indeed, upon arriving in the classroom, I would soon be accosted by a crowd of children, demanding that they should be first for treatment!

Over a period of time, I have built a growing relationship with the children. This has developed from discussing individual problems, which might even be gossip or small talk and, from experience, inevitably leads to important facts.

The experience of a crowd of smiling faces greeting me when I meet up with them is a valuable experience and a precious moment each week."

Tomoyo Nozaki, Facial Reflexologist



WHERE YOU CAN VOLUNTEER

THE OFFICE

Kids Company is based at an office in Southwark and needs volunteers to help fulfil all normal office activities.

THE TWO STREET LEVEL CENTRES

Kenbury Street

is a street level crisis centre in south London providing a welcoming, substitute family environment where each individual is given a comprehensive package of care designed to meet their specific needs. It also houses an under-16 education centre for children who are unable to attend mainstream schools, where we support them and help to re-integrate them into mainstream education.

The Tree House

is a new centre in north London providing afternoon activities with an evening meal for young, primary-age profoundly depleted children. They have been identified by local schools as unable to thrive due to parental distress. Some of their parents have asked for help to alleviate their own depression and they have joined The Tree House community. In the mornings we also provide substitute education and lunch for severely disturbed secondary-age pupils.



THE ACCREDITED EDUCATION AND LIFE SKILLS CENTRE

The Urban Academy

is in south London where we help over 220 young adults between 16 and 23 years old to move successfully into further education, training or employment. They reject or have been rejected from other educational facilities due to their complex emotional and behavioural needs. The centre also provides nutritious meals, a gym and complementary therapies to address physiological distress.

THE THERAPY HOUSE

The Heart Yard

is a therapeutic sanctuary in south London where the most vulnerable children receive intensive emotional and psychological support. As well as providing a range of therapeutic interventions, there is a garden, family kitchen, nursery playroom, an art room and study space. The family-type space enables us to offer vulnerable and traumatised children and their carers a healing process with social activities in a warm and intimate setting.



The 41 Schools

in which Kids Company works are in the boroughs of Croydon, Hackney, Haringey, Harrow, Islington, Lambeth and Southwark, some of London's most deprived areas. The school programmes are led by a team leader based in a dedicated Kids Company space in each school where our professional volunteers give their support.



HOW TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

You can join the Volunteer Pool straight away without an interview by emailing volunteer.pool@kidsco.org.uk, but if you would like to get involved with opportunities directly involving children you will need to follow the general volunteer route by completing an application form and attending an interview.

To apply to become a General Volunteer, a School or Centre Volunteer, a Mentor, an Academic Mentor or a Complementary Health Volunteer, please complete the **Volunteer Application Form** and the **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form**, both of which are on the Kids Company website www.kidsco.org.uk, and return the forms as follows:

General, School and Centre Volunteers: volunteer@kidsco.org.uk

Mentors and Academic Mentors: mentoring@kidsco.org.uk

Complementary Health Volunteers: complementarytherapy@kidsco.org.uk

If you would prefer to post the forms, please send them to:
Volunteer Application, Kids Company, 1 Kenbury Street, London SE5 9BS.

We will then be in touch to invite you to an interview and let you know the next steps in the application process. We will complete a CRB application with you at the interview (please note that you will need a Kids Company CRB



V INSPIRED AWARDS

Please note that if you are under 25 and volunteering for Kids Company you could be eligible for a V Inspired award, recognised by universities, colleges and employers. For more information about this, please visit vinspired.com or contact gabriella.brent@kidsco.org.uk.

