



Communication Works 2025

Keynote speech by Khamani Edwards, Multi-Award-Wining Entrepreneur & Founder of KJ's Craft Time introduced by Kathryn Stowell, Head of CENMAC

Introduction by Kathryn Stowell, Head of CENMAC

I'd like to introduce you to Khamani Edwards who is also a real inspiration. An award-winning entrepreneur, a passionate advocate for assistive technology. Khamani has been supported by CENMAC throughout his education and I first met him during COVID when he made us an absolutely brilliant film.

His talents and abilities are endless and he continues to use media to raise awareness and inspire others. He has a wonderful personality. He has the ability to get on with everybody and he really does light up a room with his presence. So it's with lots of pleasure I hand over to you Khamani.

Khamani Edwards

Thank you Kathryn and Good Morning everyone. It's a pleasure to be back again this year at Communication Works. My name is Khamani. I'm an 18-year-old multi-award-winning entrepreneur, creative, and proud CENMAC ambassador.

I'm the founder of KJ's Craft Time, a creative business that brings joy, creativity, and fun and learning to children through themed boxes, especially those with additional needs.

I live with a neurological condition called Dystonia, which affects my mobility and causes random tremors. It's brought challenges but it's given me something powerful perspective. It's shaped how I view the world, and what I want to build in it.

I also serve on the Unloc Youth Board, which helps young changemakers to grow.

Today, I want to share my journey and show you how assistive technology has unlocked opportunities for me.

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Yeh, that's me as a baby.

I was born four weeks early, which led to complications at birth and brain damage to the basal ganglia that later led to my Dystonia diagnosis. Everyday tasks like walking, tying shoelaces, and writing took more energy than anyone realised.

But I've always loved to create things. Drawing, building, making things, it gave me a sense of control and confidence when sometimes my body felt unpredictable.

Then, years later, something happened that changed my life.

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At the age of 8, I underwent Deep Brain Stimulation which is also known as DBS. A procedure where a neurostimulator sends electrical signals to the brain through electrodes which sends signals to my battery in my stomach to help manage movement disorders. While it didn't remove all my challenges, it helped improve my mobility and gave me the confidence to taken on new opportunities, including my first venture, in primary school.

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After surgery, I returned to school—and a close friend of mine was considering leaving due to seeing how other SEN schools had better facilities to support SEN learners and felt our school didn't have the right spaces for children with additional needs to play together.

So, at just at the age of 8, a group of us—with support from our amazing SENCO, Jo Sines who members of my school would refer to her as my PA! co-founded the Soft Play Crew.

We pitched our idea to local business leaders over breakfast meetings, held fundraising events, and secured the funds to build a soft play shed complete with a ball pit and foam mats. Even though I only got to enjoy it for my last year of school it was an amazing space. It became where all children could play together breaking down barriers.

We went on to win an Oasis National Award for our effort making inclusive play accessible.

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That same year, I organised a fundraiser for Evelina Children's Hospital, where I received care. I sold donated books and toys to support other children with complex medical needs. Giving back has always been a part of my journey.

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Then, fast forward to the second lockdown in 2021, I launched KML Craft Boxes with two of friends at my Youth Club. Everyone was locked inside and we saw a rise in time children were spending on their electronic devices and we wanted to offer something

different, craft boxes that inspired creativity, helped to spark creativity, help to keep kids engaged at home.

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However, a couple of months after my friends decided to step away from the business. I had a decision to make, let the business go or continue alone.

Even with my mobility challenges, I was passionate about arts and crafts, which pushed me forward.

2022 was all about learning, adapting, and growing, I completed, I expanded the business by creating educational craft boxes that connected with the school curriculum, making learning fun and hands-on. As well as showcasing my business by popping-up across London from Wembley Stadium to Westfield Stratford.

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However, after making the difficult decision to step back and focus on my GCSEs, which was an incredibly stressful and demanding time. I'm proud to say that I passed.

Thank you.

Which that support wouldn't have been possible without the continued support of CENMAC. From accessible equipment, software to adapted equipment they gave me the tools to study on my own terms, in a way that worked for me.

With exams behind me, I wanted to come back stronger and more focused. In 2024, I officially rebranded my business as KJ's Craft Time with a renewed mission to make themed craft boxes that combine fun, storytelling, and education.

But it wasn't just about crafts, it was about access.

As someone who understands the daily challenges of fine motor tasks, I knew that not every child experiences creativity in the same way. That's why I developed what has become my proudest product line.

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Inclusivity has always been at the heart of my journey. Living with a disability, I understand first-hand the challenges of accessing tools that work for different needs. I wanted to ensure every child can enjoy arts and crafts without barriers.

Our Special Educational Needs Range includes adapted brushes, easy-grip scissors and non-spill paint pots because creativity should never be limited by physical barriers.

It's not just a product line it's personal. It's a way for me to give children what I didn't always have: the right tools to take part fully. Every child should be able to create, explore, and enjoy crafts, regardless of ability.

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From Reception Class in primary school, CENMAC has supported me.

I started with a big key keyboard and joystick. Today, I use a Surface laptop with specialist software that lets me work independently and efficiently.

Assistive technology hasn't just supported me in class, it has unlocked opportunities, It's helped me chase my dreams, finish my education, and build a business.

And speaking of opportunities I hit a huge milestone last week. I completed my two-year Film and TV course at college. For my final major project, I wanted to do something that connected everything I care about creativity, inclusion, and storytelling.

Thanks to CENMAC, they provided me with a lightweight camera and tripod that helped me go through my full two years to film and edit despite my mobility challenges. For my final ever project I created an advertising campaign for my special educational needs range.

The advert shares the story of why inclusive tools matter, using visuals and storytelling that reflect real challenges and triumphs which I'd love to share with you now.

Creativity should be for everyone but for some children standard tools make crafting a challenge. At KJ's Craft Time we've designed our special educational needs range to break those barriers non spill paint pots, grips, adapted scissors and easy grip brushes empower every child to create independently. I know the challenges first hand living with dystonia I faced the struggle of limited fine motor skills. That's why I created this range to make sure every child can craft with confidence. Just like I wish I had growing up. The Tools we've been using in the classroom have really helped our students massively. Really helping them to be fully engaged in the activity and creating independence. It's amazing to see the confidence these adaptive tools bring to our students. Crafting should be for everyone. Explore the SEN range at KJ's craft time and help every child create without limits. KJ's Craft Time!

Thank you and KJ's Craft Time is more than a business. It's a mission. It's a reminder that with the right tools and support, anything is possible.

Whether it's Deep Brain Stimulation, a Surface laptop, or adaptive scissors, inclusion starts with access.

And today, I'm excited to share something new. After running my first successful creative arts workshop earlier this week, I'm officially launching KJ's Craft Time: Creative Arts Workshops for Schools.

These sessions are hands-on, inclusive, and designed to spark creativity in every child, whether they're neurodivergent, physically disabled, or simply looking for a new way to express themselves.

If you're an educator looking to bring creativity, accessible experiences into your classroom I'd love to speak with you today. Because every child deserves a chance to create. So my final message is this:

Don't let your disability define you. Let it fuel you, shape your perspective, and most of all let it empower others.

Thank you so much for listening and a big thank you to CENMAC for supporting not just my journey, but the journeys of many other young people across London. Thank you.

Kathryn Stowell

Thank you so much Khamani and Khamani never misses an opportunity. Good advertising there Khamani! Thank you. Such an inspiration and it's been wonderful watching your journey and you are going to be doing big things. I can see with your media qualifications and things I think watch this space. So well done Khamani.