



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

LIA VAN KEMPEN from Belgium is the proud mother of three daughters, Kim, Kelly and Laura. The middle one, Kelly, died on February 28, 2000. She died aged 8 after falling down the stairs at her home. She was playing with her sisters, fell and went unconscious.

Van Kempen: "At the hospital, the neurosurgeon was not hopeful and warned my husband and I to prepare for the worst. The next day, he told us that only machines were keeping Kelly alive and there was no hope. We were then asked if we would agree to Kelly being an organ donor. Maybe you think it's strange, but I had already thought about it because in my heart I felt I had to let her go.

We now know that Kelly's organs helped three little children in Germany, one in Austria and one man in Belgium who was 42 years old at the time. We haven't regretted our decision for one single moment.

During the time at the hospital the staff had explained many things to us, but at the time you're so full of grief you can't register everything. It is only

afterwards that you realise there are still a lot of questions you want to ask.

We asked our transplantation coordinator if there was an organization for people who shared our experience. There wasn't. So I asked him if we were the only people asking this question. The answer was no, a lot of donor families asked him the same thing. We then knew that there was a need for support so we founded NAVADO, a support group for the relatives of donors.

Talking to people who share the same experience is so much easier. At the first meeting 80 people attended. Last year, we had 250 people! We do seem to have quite a unique organisation, as I have not yet met any other such groups from other countries which have been set up to specifically to help donor families. We now have more than 600 families on our list, which tells us what we do is really appreciated and that it helps people deal with their grief. I truly believe that together we are stronger and that we can make a real difference." [↑](#)