

# BOSNIA

by Eve Menezes Cunningham

Last year, I got the opportunity to go to Bosnia to do some voluntary work with an organisation called Phoenix Aid.

Sarah Greenwood and Karen Tinker run this registered charity from their Yorkshire base. Karen says, "Sarah started Phoenix [Aid] in response to the need she saw here when she was working with another charity which only delivered treatments. She felt that if Bosnian nationals were trained in therapies, they could carry on the work that this other charity did for six months of the year, all year round and also eventually reach the number of people needing help. So Sarah began a 5-6 year plan of training and expansion into other areas of Bosnia. I joined in 2004, just after Phoenix was inaugurated and we have worked together to achieve this goal."

For Karen, there have been many highlights. She says, "The first was when we completed the first massage therapy training, which I taught. The feeling of satisfaction to be well on the road to what we wanted was fantastic. The students, ranging from homeopaths, doctors, unemployed people and ex-soldiers were so enthusiastic and immediately wanted more. That put us on a great 'high'."

She also remembers, "doing metamorphic technique on a young boy, about 7 years old. He had been diagnosed as autistic and was not willing/able to communicate with anyone. He really was in a world of his own, even to the point of not coming near us for treatment. We used another therapist as a surrogate and I worked metamorphic on him, along with another MT technician. The result from that first treatment was astounding. He became pleasantly 'hyperactive' playing with toys in the centre we worked in. He also answered me when I spoke to him. He then began to communicate with his father. He would do as his parents asked, but without communication. He began to play

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and interact with other children at the centre and also began to talk with the staff there. All this from one surrogated treatment."

Karen is delighted by "the improvements we have seen in the ex-services people and concentration camp victims we have treated." They've had reports that symptoms such as nightmares, flashbacks, tremors and depression have "drastically reduced and stopped. 7 people, particularly, all found their conditions much improved. Those who had felt suicidal were less so or not at all. This was all from aromatherapy work. The women in particular had suffered some of the worst forms of abuse and some have seen their children killed and raped. The men often suffered from survivor guilt as well as the depression from the simple fact of having had to kill to survive, having seen family members die before them and seeing best friends die."

Other volunteers visited orphanages and hospitals to offer complementary therapies. I was there for just under a week and ran two courses for students who wanted to learn how to use crystals for meditation and self healing. While I wasn't teaching anyone about NLP, I use it with all my work and it was invaluable for me.

Funding is an ongoing concern for Phoenix

Aid, their students and their clients. Karen says, "I have taken paying clients whilst here just to pay for food when we haven't raised enough money." She is also keen to encourage other organisations and individuals to help.

She says, "From the first teaching, the work has developed into our bringing other UK therapists to deliver treatments. We have expanded into working with homes for the congenitally disabled/challenged as well as with war victims, whom we treat

in the flat. And we work at day care centres for mentally and physically challenged people. We are still teaching and we bring other teachers over for therapies I don't teach.

"This year, we are going north of Sarajevo (Banja Vrucica and Tesanj) to teach massage and metamorphic technique to more people, following a successful teaching trip last October in massage techniques.

"Sarah has also instigated and implemented the opening of the first Riding for the Disabled scheme at Kakrinje. The opening was attended by several foreign diplomats and government officials. It is a very well attended scheme and the staff were given some instruction by Liz Ellis, a top UK trainer for riding for the disabled. Sarah has instigated an equine facilitated learning scheme, too." This has been very popular and effective.

Karen hopes to "set up a formal school of excellence in training of bodywork/holistic therapies/energy healing and energy psychology therapies with international qualifications as well as local Bosnian qualifications."●

## Would you like to help?

Phoenix Aid are especially keen to involve teachers and therapists who offer treatments such as reflexology and massage as language is much less of a barrier. But the translators are amazing and even though I knew no Bosnian, I was amazed by the amount I understood through body language and tone – NLP in action.

If you want to volunteer or donate money, find out more and contact Karen or Sarah through [www.phoenix-aid.org](http://www.phoenix-aid.org)