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Dear editor

The First National Conference of the EMDR Association of Bosnia Herzegovina in Sarajevo on 3rd & 4th November 2017 was a landmark event. It was the culmination of eight years of collaboration between Trauma Aid UK (formerly known as HAP UK & Ireland) and Professor Mevludin Hasanović from The Clinical Centre, Tuzla, to create in Bosnia a self-sufficient and self-administered EMDR national association which was active in promoting EMDR and where Bosnian clinicians trained in EMDR could showcase their learning and skills in EMDR at national level.

The project in Bosnia began in 2009 when Professor Hasanović and Dr Nermina Kravić were invited to London to train in EMDR. In 2010, the first Trauma Aid UK training took place in Tuzla for 24 clinicians. Following this, there were two more cohorts were trained at the Clinical Centre, the University Sarajevo and in 2015 another cohort completed their training at the International University, Sarajevo. The number of clinicians trained in EMDR by Trauma Aid UK reached over 120 when a fifth cohort was trained in Tuzla in 2016.

During this time 8 clinicians have achieved EMDR Europe Accredited Practitioner status and we now aim to continue their training to become Consultants. Professor Hasanović became a Consultant in 2016 and is currently in training to be a trainer. From the beginning of the project, trainees have been offered supervision of their work in English and Bosnian via Skype from volunteer EMDR Accredited Consultants in the UK. Several of them attended the conference in Sarajevo and it is gratifying for them to see their continued support of their Bosnian colleagues bearing fruition.

As President of UK & Ireland, I have been involved in the project from its inception in 2009 and have worked closely with Professor Hasanović to make the establishment of EMDR in Bosnia a reality. In an article titled "When the War is Over" written in 2013 (Morgan,

Therapy Today), I outlined the vision for the future of such projects based on the "teach a man to fish" principle to make nations involved self-sufficient in providing education in EMDR. There is now a well established EMDR community in Bosnia and by way of their commitment to providing their patients with EMDR treatment based on their own knowledge and skills was evident at the conference.

The first day of the conference saw some 15 Bosnian clinicians presenting on their EMDR work with illustrations of cases they had successfully treated with EMDR. Professor Hasanović introduced the day accompanied by Sanja Oakley who has been the Trauma Aid UK coordinator for the Bosnian project. Without these two people, this conference would not have been possible.

The program for the second day was provided by colleagues from the UK. Sandi Richman who has provided training for three cohorts gave the keynote presentation of EMDR & Attachment and there were also presentations from Dr Jane Ware and Debra May on their work with EMDR & children.

Addressing the conference, I spoke about the amazing fact this therapy, EMDR, discovered only thirty years ago by Dr Francine Shapiro, has become known as one of the most effective and progressive psychotherapies in the world today, best known for treating trauma. For the Bosnian population who suffered mass trauma on such an horrific scale, my greatest hope is that through the work of Trauma Aid UK and our colleagues in the EMDR Association of Bosnia Herzegovina together we can continue to heal some of the wounds of trauma from the past and together bring alleviation of suffering through EMDR to as many of those who suffered as possible.

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Correspondence:

Sian Morgan, President
Trauma Aid UK
PO Box 5301, Hove BN52 9RS, United Kingdom
E-mail: sianmorgan55@gmail.com