

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA SERVE AS INSPIRATION TO THE MIDDLE EAST ARAB COUNTRIES IN BUILDING PEACE OF MIND AFTER YEARS OF WAR

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Bosnia & Herzegovina with the help of Trauma Aid UK (TAUK) has managed to build up a significant trauma treatment capacity by training around 120 psychotherapists over more than 10 years out of these, 10 have achieved Accredited EMDR Europe Practitioners status and 2 with consultants/Supervisors status. The Association of EMDR therapists in Bosnia & Herzegovina was founded in 2014 currently headed by the elected president Professor Mevludin Hasanović. The Association has managed to organize two EMDR Conferences, the first scientist conference on the 3 and 4 of November 2017 in Sarajevo. The second Conference was organized in Sarajevo between 24 to 25 of November 2018 (Hasanović et al. 2018, 2021).

In both conferences, the two days had different themes and in different languages first day in the first Conference was in Bosnian by mainly Bosnian therapists while the second day of the conference was devoted to presentations in English by mainly experts from UK who helped in the training in Bosnia & Herzegovina over the years plus presentations by members of the Association on their clinical and research experience. In the first conference, traumas of the 1990s war in Bosnia resonated in the case presentations of soldiers and civilians that they suffered as a result of that war. At the Second Conference in 2018, there was more focus on the future to achieve the ultimate aim of the Association of EMDR therapists in Bosnia & Herzegovina becoming self-sustaining and setting its own rules and criteria of EMDR training and accreditation.

I had the honor of attending both conferences and the CME event in June 2019 on treating complex trauma cases. It was my friend and colleague Professor Mevludin Hasanović who has invited me to attend these events in his wisdom to help the Arab Middle East benefit from the successful shining example of Bosnia & Herzegovina in building trauma capacity. I am both British and Iraqi and I am involved in the efforts to create an EMDR Association for the Arab countries in the Middle east. This made the experience of Bosnia & Herzegovina in building such a successful association very interesting and useful to me and to the Middle East.

Trauma Aid has been active in both Bosnia & Herzegovina and the Middle East. I have contributed and presented also at both two Sarajevo's conferences

on the experience of trauma in the Middle East as recorded by mental health professionals who attended TAUK EMDR training since 2013 and in which over 150 mental health professionals who many of them work with Syrian refugees in the region. A colleague of mine where I worked in the UK as a Nepalese's psychiatrist interested in trauma. When the earth quake happened in Nepal in 2015, he went to help and managed with the help of EMDR India to start an EMDR training in Kathmandu. It was very tempting to compare the man-made trauma victims seen by Syrian mental health professionals in the Middle East EMDR trainings with those seen by the professionals in Nepal following a natural disaster. This subject was my presentation on the first day of the second conference of the Association of EMDR therapists in B&H, submitted to this issue.

We in the Middle East are following the sister Bosnian experience with great interest hoping to achieve similar success. I personally met Prof. Mevludin during my basic EMDR training in London and meeting him was a great motivator for me to take the training back to the Middle East where I come from. We both worked independently after that with Sian Morgan, the President of Trauma Aid UK to take the training back to our home countries. It was fortunate for me also to meet Prof. Mevludin again at the EMDR consultant training in London and after few years of that at Worcester for the EMDR trainers training there. So, I feel greatly honored to be repeatedly and generously invited by him to the EMDR Conferences and CME events in beautiful Sarajevo which has enabled me to not only to talk about my work in the Middle East and get feedback from frontline workers, but also to learn a great deal from the successful experience of Bosnia & Herzegovina.

The morning part of the first day presentations of the Second Conference, was undertaken by EMDR trainers and consultants from the UK who contributed to the EMDR training in Bosnia. Sian Morgan the president of Trauma Aid UK gave a very forward-looking talk under the title 'Past, Present and Future for EMDR in B&H: The Way forward' while Sandi Richman who did many of the EMDR trainings in Bosnia presented 'Developing EMDR Professionals: Moving towards Accreditation and Consultancy Status' with translation to the Bosnian language by Šemsa Šabanović and Sanja Oakley who is

the Trauma Aid UK Trustee and coordinator for the B&H EMDR trainings over the years. This was followed by presentations on 'Innovations in EMDR' by Sian Morgan. This was followed after lunch by presentations by EMDR Europe Accredited Consultants: Cornelia de la Fosse, Sanja Oakley, Mevludin Hasanović, and Walid Abdul-Hamid. This was followed by presentations by local EMDR therapists; Lejla Hasan-dedić, Vildana Aziraj Smajić and Alma Kovačić. The first day of the conference was followed by an evening in a wonderful local restaurant with local musicians playing local Bosnian music and folk songs.

The second day was mainly for presentations by members of the Association in the Bosnian language on their clinical and research experience that ranged between case report, case series to case analysis and surveys. Some examples of these presentations, like Zenita Hrvic from Tuzla talking about 'EMDR therapy - Own Self-experience'. Merima Pašalić from Sarajevo presented 'EMDR Treatment of Conduct Problems in Adolescent: A Case Report'. Šemsa Šabanović from Sarajevo presented 'Problems in Treatment of Complex, and Difficult Patient provided with EMDR Psychotherapy Services. Selvira Draganović who is also from

Sarajevo presented 'Barriers to Psychological Treatment of Depression' while Ivana Kokanović from Brčko presented on the 'Efficacy of EMDR: Case Study of a Child with Choking Phobia. Children are the future and we saw a clear trend to look forward into the future in the second Conference of the Association of EMDR therapists in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

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