

HEALING THROUGH REMEMBERING

International Study Visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina & Serbia

March 2014

Newsletter

MARCH 2014

International Study Visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina & Serbia March 2014



Saturday 15th March

Meet at Airport. Flights to Bosnia.

SUNDAY 16th March

Sarajevo: History lessons with Nicolas and Nedim - early history of conquests, the former Yugoslavia, the world wars and the conflict in the 1990s: the Siege of Sarajevo (April 1992 - Feb 1996).

Historic walking tour of Sarajevo covering various periods of history - the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand memorial sites relating to the siege

Visit to the National Museum of Sarajevo - exhibition of everyday items from the siege, many of them clever improvisation of items of rubbish into useful artefacts.

Tour of various memorials sites and memorials at Vraca and Pale in the Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina to the Republica Serbska (all still within Bosnia and Herzegovina).

MONDAY 17th March

Tuzla: Travelled from Sarajevo through the hills to Tuzla Meeting with the International Centre for Missing Persons - talks on the work finding and identifying remains. ICMP offices, laboratories and morgue.

Walking round town visiting the locations of the public demonstrations and unrest from February in protest to unemployment and politics failing the people. Evening in the bar reflecting on what had been a tough day.

TUESDAY 18th March

Potočari: Travelled on to the memorial and cemetery at Potočari remembering the massacre of over 8,000 men and boys from Srebrenica Meeting with Hassan - who shared his personal experiences of the events of those days. Quiet time visiting the memorial, the graveyard and a small exhibition. Afterwards we stopped for lunch in the small town of Srebrenica itself before leaving Bosnia by road east crossing the Drina river into Serbia

WEDNESDAY 19th March

Belgrade: Visit to Serbia was all within the City of Belgrade. A tour of the site of a World War II concentration camp by Nicola. It was hidden in plain view near the centre of the city and then an impromptu seminar on how World War II was experienced, and how it is remembered in Serbia. Visit to the Tito Museum and mausoleum - filled with artefacts recalling much happier times in the region.

THURSDAY 20th March

Belgrade: Meeting with Ivana and Katarina from the Centre for non-violence - their detailed programme work, especially with ex-combatants. Spent time with Maja and our Serbia hosts Fund B52 in their community hub the Rex centre, learning about their work. They took us on a newly devised historic tour of sites of demonstration against the war in the 1990s. The group then spent time together reflecting on the experience of the visit and what we had learned from the places we had been, the people we had met and from each other.

FRIDAY 21st March

Said our goodbyes.
Flights home.



Introduction

This was the second of two international study visits funded by PEACE III as part of the HTR Voyager project with the aim of stimulating learning and mutual support through studying experiences of conflict in other areas.



Over the years HTR has organised a number of visits to museums, memorials and projects across Northern Ireland, Britain and Ireland. HTR members reported that they had learned not just from the places they visited and people they met but also from what they had seen and understood from other HTR members on the visit. As part of the planning and development of the HTR exhibition *Everyday Objects Transformed by Conflict* a visit had been organised to the city of Berlin. Following the success of this visit HTR decided to organise more international study visits to projects with which there were existing connections. The first visit was held in May 2013 to the Basque region in Northern Spain.

This, the second visit, was held in March 2014. As with the previous International Study Visit participants were recruited through an application process and competition for the limited number of places had been high. Applications were assessed by members of the HTR Board and participants were chosen based on how they met the criteria for selection, which included their reach to local groups with whom they would share their learning from the visit.

The International Study Visit had originally been planned for Israel/Palestine and a full itinerary was prepared and applications had been invited for that destination. However, it transpired that this visit could not be carried out in a way that met the requirements of the funder and so the trip was hastily rescheduled to visit Bosnia and Serbia on the same dates.

The host organisations were Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) in Sarajevo and Fund B92 in Belgrade. They both had existing links with HTR as members of the European element of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and they also have an existing good working relationship with each other. Alma Masic of the YIHR Sarajevo and Maja Cecen of Fund B92 in Belgrade helped, despite the short notice, to plan a comprehensive itinerary for the visit to include projects, memorials and historic sites in Bosnia and Serbia.

We are extremely grateful for all the help and guidance, and insights from our friends new and old without whom the visit would have been a mere tourist experience - Nicholas Moll, Nedim Jahic in Sarajevo, Nicola Radic Lukati, Katarina Milicevic, Ivana Franovic, and all the Fund B92 team in Belgrade. But most especially thanks are due to Maja and Alma who made it all happen!

This newsletter gives a brief outline of the activities on the visit but concentrates on the reflections of the participants. It is primarily intended as an aid for the participants in sharing their learning from the visit with wider audiences.

Kate Turner

HTR Director



Thoughts of participants on the experience of, and the learning from, the Study Visit

I had, of course, heard about the conflict associated with the break-up of the former Yugoslavia.

I knew many former British Military colleagues who had served there and indeed some police officers including a detachment from the RUC who had gone as a group of 50/60 as the only routinely armed UK police force.

I was also sure that, rather like home, the reality on the ground would be different to the information and analysis that I had been aware of prior to visiting.

The whole visit was fascinating and inspiring. The group HTR had assembled was also excellent – very different but all people of real quality and depth.

There was, however, one event that was so overwhelmingly shocking that it has caused me to completely reconsider my views about the conflict in and around Northern Ireland. The massacre at Srebrenica. This happened in July 1995. 8,371 Muslim and 1 Christian man were killed after having been separated from their women and children. A total group of over 20,000 refugees had fled to the main Dutchbat base at Potocari – just outside Srebrenica. There they thought they were under the protection of the UN – indeed some 5,000 were inside the Dutch UN base. However on 13th July 1995 the Dutch peacekeepers exchanged them for the release of 14 Dutch peacekeepers held by Bosnian Serbs.

Meanwhile in Northern Ireland we were focussed on what has come to be known as Drumcree I, the first of 8 years of renewed trouble about and around the annual Drumcree parade at Portadown. This was Northern Ireland's most high profile parade and the trouble associated with it led to many people changing their annual holiday plans to avoid being at home for Drumcree Sunday. Policing Drumcree was an annual task for me, and for 3 years I was the police commander responsible for its policing. Drumcree was a worldwide news story and the focus of much attention and a huge amount of money.

I always had a sense, intellectually, that our 'little family row' should not be the centre of so much first world attention and money. However, sitting in the sun in a graveyard surrounded by thousands of grave stones and looking across at the (now abandoned) Dutch military base I had to realise how much worse life was here, and how little first world attention and money people here had received. I could no longer accept our selfish, self-obsessed, and often irrational view of the 'War' back home.

Travel certainly brings a sense of perspective, and while every single life is priceless in theory, it clearly does not apply in practice in the part of Europe that saw UN troops allow 8372 men to be killed in a single event.

Irwin Turbitt

My current work is both political and social. Presently I concentrate on helping people within my community who have problems, both physical and mental. I/we try to do this by bringing individuals into an environment that is both informal and encourages self-expression and creativity. How does our Bosnia trip help/relate to this. The barbarity I heard of while in Bosnia was nothing new. It seems to be a constant in human history. Either for religious, political or economic reasons human beings will do the most barbaric acts on other human beings through fear, ignorance or the desire to dominate. So the trip emphasised the importance of the work I do within my community – both political and social. My social work is directed at individuals in

an effort to encourage self-development and self-expression which leads to individual independence of spirit and mind. Therefore the individual cannot be duped or brainwashed – hopefully. This is important for divided communities as ignorance of different communities can lead to conflict.

My political work is also important as it is directed towards getting a proper balance of political thought established that will allow progress into a new era of political thought that bring us out of the past – while not forgetting our past. Our past, in our case, unfortunately should remind us of where we went wrong.

Because of the make-up of the personnel on the trip also



encouraged me to believe that when people do get to know each other as people and not 'labels' we do have a lot in common. Unfortunately this only seems possible when we are taken out of our 'natural environment'. If our 'natural

environment' is part of the problem, which I believe it is, then we all must look at this and see how best to change it – for the better of all.

Paul Norney

Lessons from Bosnia and Serbia.

When you have seen the graveyards and realised the enormity of the slaughter, witnessed the results of the bombardment of Sarajevo, looked on horrified at the photographs and film taken at the time; it is nigh on impossible not to be moved off the fence and take sides. Once having taken a side it is difficult not to demonise all of the Serbians for the slaughter they unleashed.

I was in a state of deep emotional distress as I walked out of the cemetery at Potocari. I wanted to be alone with my sense of sorrow, anger and grief. Phil came up to me and said, "I wonder just how close we came to doing that to each other". It pulled me up sharply and a cold shiver ran through my body. How close indeed!

An hour later, at lunch, I considered that I did not want to continue the study visit into Serbia. There were a number of us who shared the same opinion and it was discussed animatedly. But, in the end, I am glad that I did continue the visit to Belgrade.

After the destruction seen in Sarajevo, Belgrade looked a bustling and thriving city; albeit for a few isolated examples of the NATO bombing. The first impression did nothing to abate my antipathy for Serbia.

However, meeting with the courageous women of B92 and the

Women in Black changed my attitude dramatically. Not all Serbians were the same and not all Serbians were to blame!

To have appreciated the scale of the anti-war protests in Belgrade was a revelation. To hear the stories of those who protected and assisted those young Serbian men who would rather desert than fight an unjustifiable war in Bosnia was truly heartening. That was a story successfully hidden by the Milosovic government and it remained untold in the rest of Europe.

The impact those few brave women made was far in excess of their few numbers. A tribute to their people and a shining example to all of us.

A few good people really can make a huge difference. They remind us that all we have to do is stand up and say, "Not in my name." "Love not hate - peace not war!"

The running sores of Palestine, Ukraine, Congo and many, many other places need us to be committed to the cause of peace. To end the suffering of the children who will die blamelessly in their innocence. They may live far away but it is still our responsibility to learn the lessons from the women of Belgrade. And not just learn them - but act upon them!

Peter Moloney

PALE

by P B Moloney (April 2014)

I WAS IN PALE BEFORE
BUT IT WAS NOT NEAR SARAJEVO.
I'D FELT THAT HATE BEFORE
THE KIND THAT LEAVES YOU FULL OF WOE.

I KNEW THAT COLDNESS BEFORE
A BLAST THAT LEAVES YOU NUMB.
I'D HEARD THAT BITTERNESS BEFORE
A CANCER THAT STRIKES YOU DUMB.

I KNEW THAT HATE BEFORE
AND WAS BURNT BY IT'S SEARING PAIN.
I'D SEEN YOUR BOMBS BEFORE,
FALLING LIKE A STEADY RAIN.

I KNEW OF GENOCIDE BEFORE,
OF TUTSIS, ARMENIANS AND JEWS.
I'D SUFFERED THAT RACISM BEFORE,
THE SLAUGHTER YOU LET LOOSE.

I KNEW YOUR GUNS BEFORE,
SHINING LIKE A NEW PIN.
BUT WE WILL STAND UP TO YOU,
AND I KNOW YOU'LL NEVER WIN.



My key motivations for going on the ISV were firstly, a genuine interest in Balkan history, politics and society and secondly, to compare and contrast this experience with how I view history and politics in Northern Ireland. In this regard, the ISV for me did increase my knowledge of the Balkans, as well as presenting differing perspectives on the Yugoslav wars which had previously been most influenced by my visit to Kosovo in 2013.

The journey helped in reinforcing the understanding that in the study of conflict it is not the states and the borders which matter, but the people around them and their relationships with each other. This was clear from the start, as it was in talking to the other ISV participants that I was able to take from their own experiences in Northern Ireland.

When the people who we visited were not talking about their personal experience in BiH and Serbia, there were memorials to express collective memory. At official memorials history fits into the national histories of each state (or part of state), and changes to fit the feeling of the day. This is exemplified in the changing words on the plaque remembering where Franz Ferdinand was shot. Even the popularity of the statue of the medieval King Tvrtko of Bosnia and Serbia in Tuzla is contested for what it symbolises.



Beyond formal and official monuments, there are places or objects that have been transformed from their original purpose which now represent conflict: the bridge in Sarajevo now remembered for the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, the battery factory in Potocari now symbolising UN failure, the promising buildings of the Belgrade trade fair now remembered as a German concentration camp, the sites of rubble around the city which now indicate NATO airstrikes and any of the many bullet or bomb marks in buildings around Sarajevo.

While the many memorials, formal or inadvertent, are there to help people remember their past, they lead people to commemorate it within a particular historical narrative, reinforcing a divided narrative rather than promoting reconciliation, and a way of looking at the past where one side is winner and the other loser, a victimised hero or a heroic victim.

The journey to the Balkans will certainly impact on my work as I start an MSc in Conflict Resolution and Governance in September 2014 in the University of Amsterdam. The role the Dutch UN peacekeepers played in Srebrenica is of great importance in the Netherlands, especially with the legal developments in this year. The ISV will undoubtedly prove an inspiration and a motivation during my studies.

Dermot Nicholas

I am so grateful to have gone to Bosnia and Serbia with the amazing group from HTR. I have gained immensely in many ways. I remember at the beginning feeling scared and trepidation as to how I would manage being with a group of people I did not know. Yet from the first conversations I felt supported and cared for. It was an extraordinary journey as we met people who shared their stories, their experience and opened their hearts to us.

We spent some time learning and seeing how the DNA is extracted from bones and the process which family members help with the identification of the bones. I found it hard to hear but made me realise how lucky I am to have had a whole body to bury with my dad. I will never forget the survivor of Srebrenica who sat and shared his story of the siege and running away over the hills, the reality of what he and the others endured was very emotional and challenging to hear and yet important to know

for now I can tell the world. The support we gave each other at this moment after our time at Srebrenica was special, we were experiencing it together. I could sense the inhumanity we had been hearing about brought out our humanity and compassion, all our hearts were touched.



There were so many moments of deep sharing, laughter, kindness, being challenged and most of all transformation. I have come back with a new group of friends, all have touched me in some way, increased my understanding of the present and past situation in Northern Ireland, helped me let go of prejudices and be more empathic. To be a participant was utter privilege.

I have given many talks since I came back and talked about the experiences we had and the people we met. I think of all the resources we have in Northern Ireland for healing and transformation and yet there are still so many wounded people.



In the Baltic region there is so much pain which hasn't begun to be addressed, justice they are fighting for and many still waiting for the bodies of their loved ones. It has a humbling effect and shows me how blessed I am.

I never know when my experience in Bosnia and Serbia will have relevance on my work.

I was doing a question and answer on a reddit 'Ask me anything' session, which is a social media platform, and I had hundreds of questions and comments. One of them was from a man who

said forgiveness was something he thought he could never do as most of his family were killed in the war in Bosnia and they had to flee to the States. His father was deeply traumatised and had not spoken much about their difficult days. I then shared with him that I had been to Bosnia, he was amazed that I had been there and knew a little what he was talking about. We talked for some time and at the end he said for the first time now he could begin the process of forgiving and move on. A special moment I will never forget.

Jo Berry

When I returned from Bosnia and Serbia I felt psychologically and emotionally drained. Visiting the Balkans and meeting with victims of conflict, as well as those working in different fields to address the legacy of their troubled past, I found parallels with the work I do at the Pat Finucane Centre (PFC). However, I found learning about the scale of death, destruction, lack of support and ongoing struggles of those affected, deeply disturbing. I was unsure how I would be able to describe my experience and the profound impact it had on me to family, friends, colleagues and importantly, the families I work with who have been bereaved as a result of our conflict.

When I did speak to the families I work with about my experience in Bosnia & Serbia, I was overwhelmed with their empathy and solidarity with those also affected by war. While on the trip I remember thinking "we had it easy when compared to the victims in Sarajevo or Srebrenica." I was surprised when families who may have lost a father, mother, sister, brother or child expressed a similar sentiment. I felt it wasn't my position to say to a widowed wife that "we were lucky" as I haven't lost a loved one, but the ability of people to feel for others and feel thankful for what we have somewhat strengthened my faith in humanity. This was something I was honestly questioning after visiting Srebrenica and being faced with the harsh reality of what man can inflict on man.

I was a barely a teenager when the Balkan war started. It didn't have any impact on my life at the time. I knew from the news it was happening, but it wasn't something I paid attention to because it was something that was happening "over there". Now I am older, I have learned more about our conflict and other conflicts including the events in Bosnia. I have a greater

understanding of the daily struggle of a post-conflict society trying to face their past while dealing with the possibility that things could slip back into conflict.

The ISV has made the current crisis in Gaza seem more real. It isn't something that is happening "over there" that is nothing to do with me. I remember the group meeting with the people of REX in Serbia who weren't afraid to say "NO- this is wrong, we don't agree with what is happening", and doing whatever they could, no matter how small, to show their opposition. I had a conversation with another member of the group who said "How could jumping up and down in the street make a difference? It didn't stop it happening." My view is that it was doing something that wasn't just turning a blind eye and saying "this has nothing to do with me." How can we expect others to

stand up for us and support us in a time of crisis if we don't do the same?

I had a similar conversation recently about the different rallies going on around the country and world in support of Palestine, against the Israeli offensive and/or showing Israelis and Palestinians together advocating for peace. I was asked "What difference does that make? It doesn't stop what's happening... it doesn't make a difference." I now feel very different. I fundamentally think that it does make a difference. It shows we care and disagree with what is happening. It shows the people in the conflict zone that the world hasn't forgotten them. I feel that this has been my real learning from my ISV experience. I feel stronger now and less afraid to speak up when confronted with something that I feel is wrong.

Sara Duddy



Bosnia

I was immediately struck by the fact that, despite how recent their violent history was, it seemed to me that all the people we met appeared to be not thinking too deeply about what was and were focusing on the present and the future.

My memories are of stoic people who were attempting to pick up the pieces following the genocide.

Seeing the headstones and burial plots of over 8,000 Muslims that were killed during the genocide was a very powerful and emotional site.

Hassan told his incredibly heart breaking story in a very detached, emotionless way. His eyes were emotionless and dead. He had told this story many times. I wondered if he had to switch off his feelings to tell the story, and I wondered what would happen when he switched his feelings on. What support would be there for him? Or will have to carry his pain forever?

Following the genocide, Hassan talked about going into his home town of Potocari and seeing Serbs who were formerly his neighbours and wondering if they were involved in the murders. He said he didn't acknowledge them unless they acknowledged him first. How chilling it must be to live and interact with people who may have been involved in the murder of family members.

However I think this avoidance of the past is not real; it's not healing and it's not healthy. What will happen to people who cannot allow themselves the healing gift of remembering?

Knowing that some families had not received the bodies of their loved ones after all this time was shocking. I witnessed very little evidence of bitterness and hatred for the other.

Despite the fact that there is very little financial support in terms

of rebuilding structures and fractured relationships there was very good work going on at a community level to build relationships between communities. Some of this work is very challenging and innovative.

General thoughts

I also think about the hierarchy that's around conflict zones. Because we are part of a western democracy and it can't be seen by the rest of the powerful countries of the world to allow conflict to continue within a well-established democratic country, we got massive financial and personal support by world leaders to get us to where we are now. Our conflict and what happened in Bosnia does not begin to compare, yet we have received more foreign aid during and post conflict than Bosnia & Serbia will ever receive yet the atrocities they suffered were on a far greater scale.

The study trip really brought home to me that here is a global hierarchy relating to victims & survivors.

Serbia

The work that Evana and Katarina had progressed to a stage where individuals were acknowledging and saying sorry for their role in the conflict was very powerful.

We met wonderful community activists whose work and life were intertwined – they were passionate about reconciliation and peace building. They were involved in some challenging work bringing perpetrators from all sides of the conflict together and following a series of meetings they were admitting to their involvement in the conflict.

I was also humbled by the masses of people living in Belgrade were trying to get the rest of the world to see what was happening in their country with a dictator in charge prior to the genocide. Although their warnings were ignored they took huge personal risks for justice and peace.

Anne Deighan

There isn't a day since this trip that I don't think about it at some stage. I think about the war zones, the memorials, the horrors that man is capable of inflicting on each other, the missing persons and the mass graves. I also think about the people I had the honour to meet while there and the touching experience travelling with a diverse group of colleagues from my homeland. When I am asked what this trip gave me, I instantly answer perspective. In Northern Ireland, many talk about living under an occupying force or living under siege. We talk about the war and the victims and the search for justice. I know that all

suffering is relative but in contrast to the former Yugoslavia our conflict was little more than a minor skirmish. It isn't my intention to minimise the real and justified pain and hurt that exists in Northern Ireland, just an attempt to contextualise it in a wider picture.

Standing in Potocari looking at rows and rows of white headstones, realising that there are still hundreds more yet to be identified was a life changing experience. Knowing that in the centre for the disappeared those cold rooms filled with the



bones of unidentified victims would end up in this cemetery made me feel numb. It also made me feel angry - angry at the lack of resources and finances being made available to those who 20 years on are trying to bring closure to many families. And angry at the many hundreds of millions of Euros that has been lavished on Northern Ireland and the border counties.

On our journey towards Serbia, I thought about the stories we had heard and the sites we had seen. I found myself not wanting to meet our Serbian hosts because of those stories. I quickly realised that the Serbian people were also victims of this war. We often forget that Belgrade was bombed by NATO and many lost their lives. The peace movement started in Belgrade spread and they, amongst others, stopped the war.

Bosnia and Serbia changed me as a person, and how I look at conflict and its outcomes. There are no winners but countless losers. Like ourselves, they have yet to find a mechanism to deal with the past to the satisfaction of all. Language, identity, religion and culture are all stumbling blocks to progress. It almost sounds familiar.

I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to travel here and experience the conversations had not only with our hosts

but with my travelling companions.

Finally, a debt of gratitude must go to HTR staff and partners for putting together this visit at such short notice. Our delegation was very well balanced and mixed well. I look forward to working with them all in the future.

Philip Dean

We arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) a short couple of weeks after the first protests were seen on our TV screens depicting people on the streets of Tuzla setting cars alight and storming government buildings. To be honest I was keen to understand how a country supposedly on the path to peace, albeit still ethnically divided, could suddenly, or so it seemed, take to the streets in protest against its own democratically elected government. Walking the streets of Sarajevo it soon became clear. Graffiti on a government building written in red warned 'He who sows hunger reaps anger'. Unemployment rates were high and political corruption rated as the highest in Europe. People were angry and were taking to the streets to demonstrate their opposition to those in power who seemed powerless to resolve the current difficulties.

The colour red was used in symbols to remember the siege of Sarajevo 1992-1996. As our group walked around the streets of the capital I noticed what looked like spillages or splashes of fading red tar. Our host Nadim explained that each 'splash' was called a 'Sarajevo Rose'. These were the sites where mortar shells landed killing and injuring residents during the siege. The craters left by the blast were initially filled with red wax but it didn't last and was

replaced by tar. The largest of the craters was covered by a glass case and was situated in the main market. The shelling had killed many and injured hundreds. The names of those killed were etched on a glass wall beside the crater and it seemed to blend with the market. It was as if they were one and the same – the glass, the metal, the stalls, the people, the names, the crater and the memories. It reminded me of our group really. A mixture of generations, from different backgrounds and different countries and with open minds and open hearts learning about another conflict and how that society were trying to deal with the legacy of the past.

One of the important experiences for me was learning from and about the other members in the group. While our visit brought us a greater understanding of the history of the conflict in the Balkans, the current unrest and the complex difficulties experienced by those pursuing peace and reconciliation, the impact of the reflection and the [re]evaluation of the members of our group on our own beliefs, opinions,

experiences and prejudices was emotional, positive and life-changing. It brought us all back to where we needed to be - humanizing one another.

Dawn Purvis



Healing through

Peter

A few good people really can make a huge difference. They remind us that all we have to do is stand up and say, "Not in my name." "Love not hate - peace not war!"

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Paul

The biggest learning taking away: that people of different backgrounds, political, religious and national often do not see their 'opposites' as people and me. Only when they spend time relate as people and me human race - not ogr underworld

Dermot

It's not necessarily the number of victims that matter when remembering a violent past, but how deep the scar of violence impacts on the society. My experience in the Bosnia and Serbia helped me to understand that though the statistics of war in the Balkans and NI are very different, the impact on the people collectively is very similar.

Sara

Labels are dangerous, and are the cause of so much hurt, pain and injustice in the world. One voice can make a difference, and it is important to speak up when faced with something you disagree with even if it is going against the mass mind set of your peers. How can we expect others to stand up for us and support us in a time of crisis if we don't do the same?

Dawn

I felt privileged to be part of a diverse group of individuals who opened their minds to new experiences and in doing so reflected on their own lives, the work that they do and how they do it as well as making new friends in the process. This experience reminded me why the work of Healing Through Remembering is crucial to building peace and reconciliation across these islands.

Remembering

Irwin

I had to realise how much worse life was in the Balkans, and how little first attention and money people had received. I can no longer see our selfish, self-obsessed, and often irrational view of the 'War' back home.

Anne

Following the study trip and meeting people whose lives had been irreparably damaged by war, I commit to standing up for peace and justice.

Jo

I have come back knowing more than ever it is time to look beyond the conflict in Northern Ireland and work for the healing and transformation of all. The level of suffering and the lack of resources is massive, and I commit to use my voice and experience to do all I can to work for peace.

Philip

Bosnia and Serbia changed me as a person and how I look at conflict and its outcomes. There are no winners but countless losers. Like ourselves, they have yet to find a mechanism to deal with the past to the satisfaction of all. Language, identity, religion and culture are all stumbling blocks to progress. It almost sounds familiar.

Kate

The individuals who took part in this visit were already heavily involved in and committed to working with people from communities other than their own. So I was particularly struck that each of them said how much they felt they had learned and developed personally from the visit. We can all always learn more.





Healing Through Remembering

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European Union
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A project supported by the
PEACE III Programme
managed for the Special EU
Programmes Body by Pobal.