

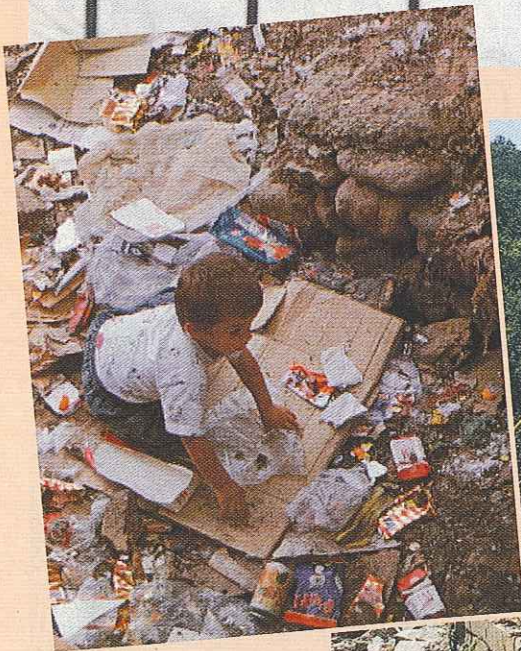
Lions – your Gift goes on into the Millennium!



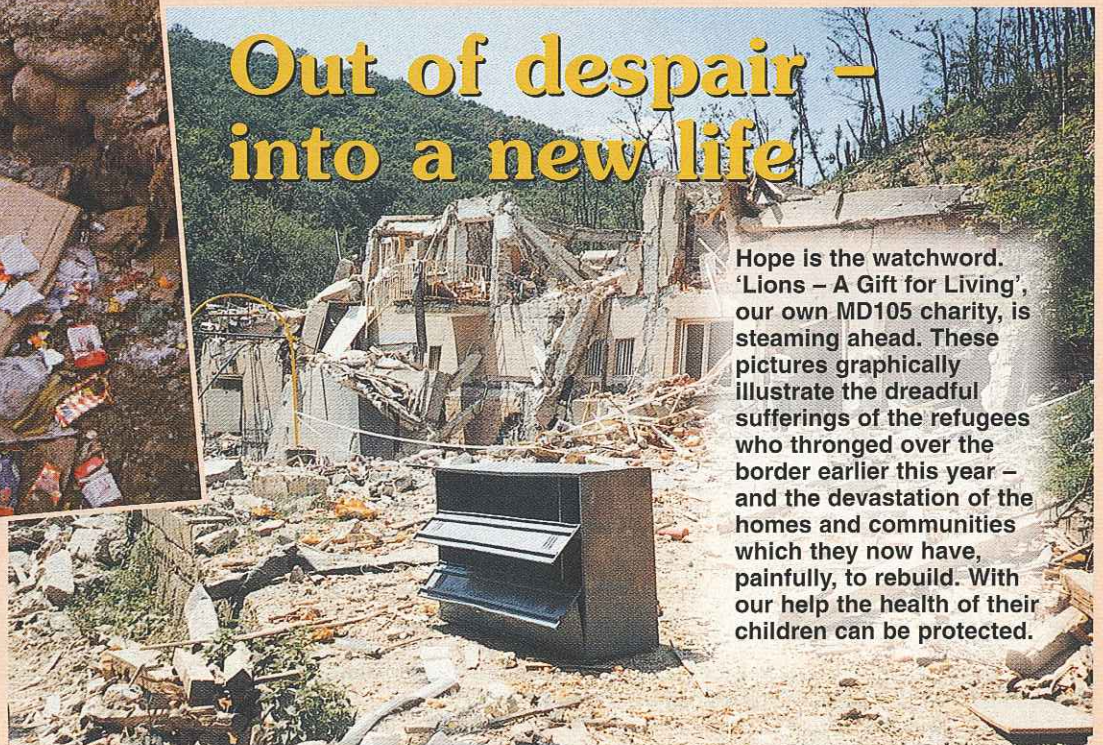
A little boy – a small child peering hopefully throughout the bars of his cot in a land torn by war. These are the small human beings for whose future the Lions of The British Isles and Ireland have been striving since they joined forces with Child Advocacy International in 'A Gift for Living', to bring health and hope into the lives of defenceless children in war-torn Yugoslavia.

In spite of all the problems and setbacks of this sad nation, every penny of your money has been well spent and the progress you have made possible is still flourishing. Every item of equipment, every dressing, every syringe has reached its destination safely and is being used to great effect.

But much remains to be done. We are forging into the new century together, building on these rock solid foundations, teaching doctors, passing on skills and expertise and helping the people of this land to rebuild their lives and protect their children's health.



Out of despair – into a new life



Hope is the watchword. 'Lions – A Gift for Living', our own MD105 charity, is steaming ahead. These pictures graphically illustrate the dreadful sufferings of the refugees who thronged over the border earlier this year – and the devastation of the homes and communities which they now have, painfully, to rebuild. With our help the health of their children can be protected.

The story so far ...

It all started back in 1995 with a few very sick children being flown out of their war-ravaged homeland, the former Yugoslavia, for life-saving treatment in hospitals in Britain and Ireland. The Lions of Multiple District 105 committed themselves wholeheartedly to making 'A Gift for Living', donating many thousands of pounds.

Between the summers of 1995 and 1996, more than 40 critically ill children were evacuated from the war zone for emergency treatment here. All but a very few, too ill to have any realistic chance of survival, were successfully treated, regained their health and returned home with a new chance of life.

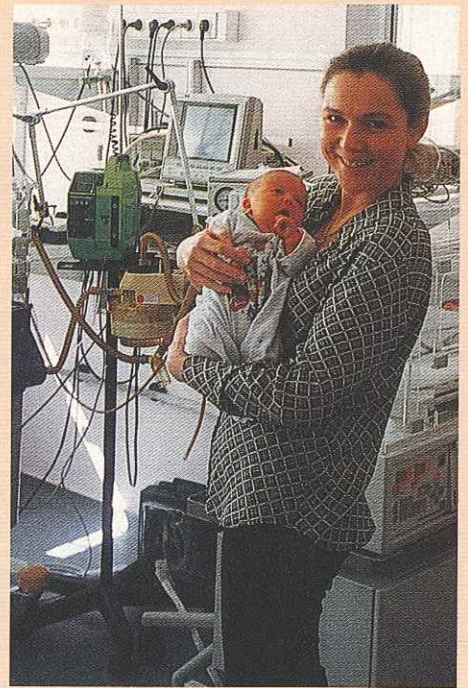
As things eased a little, the charity began a new ambitious phase, sending sophisticated medical equipment – including intensive care beds and high dependency beds for children – to hospitals in the former Yugoslavia, bringing in doctors for specialised paediatric training here, and sending out highly trained doctors and nurses to

work in hospitals and help the local medical professionals.

Times have moved on swiftly and dramatically. Lions Clubs International Foundation, our own mighty charity, has pitched in with massive funds – some of the biggest grants ever. We established a mobile clinic in the remote enclave of Goradze, and supplied masses of

booklets in the local languages giving simple primary healthcare advice.

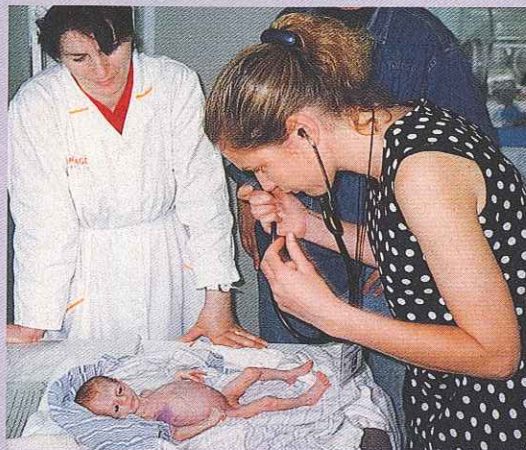
In the meantime came the terrible sufferings of the Kosovan refugees – now we are going into their territory, to Pristina Hospital, to bring fresh hope and professional skills.



Doctor Theresa Curtin, one of the Child Advocacy doctors sent to the former Yugoslavia, with a small charge in the Kosevo Hospital, Sarajevo – and a mass of life saving equipment supplied by Lions Clubs International.

Small miracles

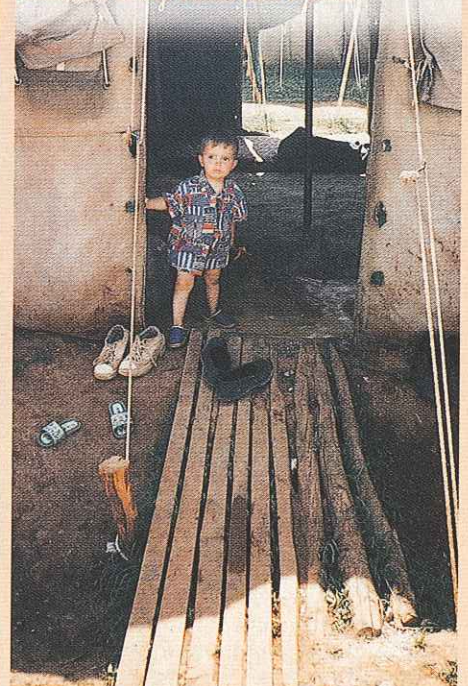
(Right): Doctor Theresa Curtin and medical staff care for a critically malnourished Kosovan refugee in Kukes Hospital. The baby survived thanks to her medical skills.



(Left): This four-year-old child was brought into the Pristina Hospital in Kosovo suffering from extreme malnutrition, weighing just eight kilos – the weight of a small baby. She had been starving with her family, living in the mountains in the bitter winter. She survived and, a triumph for the human spirit, turned into a smiling and reasonably healthy little girl.

What's out there?

This tiny boy, looking out onto a bleak world from the door of a tent in the refugee camp of Kukes in northern Albania, may well ask. He and thousands of others fled their homes. He is now, hopefully, back in his home, but his family and thousands like them are facing crisis – the destruction of their homes, the devastation of their livelihood, the loss of their crops and the onset of another cruel Kosovan winter.



Donations should be sent to:

Project Treasurer PDG Stefan Erentraut (see page 5 of the Yellow Directory) who will advise all District Treasurers of donations received. Cheques should be made out to: 'LCI – A Gift for Living' and endorsed 'Registration Number 1070418' on the reverse.

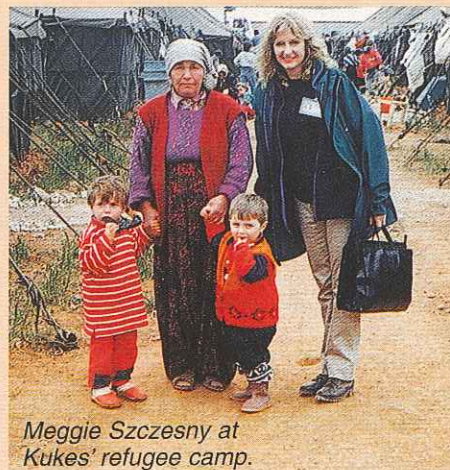
Our team ...



Meggie Szczesny, Dr Theresa Curtin, Dr Leena Mewasingh and colleagues setting off for Kukes with the Medical Aid Landcruiser.

'A Gift for Living', the winning partnership between the Lions of The British Isles and Ireland and Child Advocacy International, can call on the services of dedicated professionals, who spend long periods in difficult conditions bringing help and expertise to medical staff in the former Yugoslavia.

Two such are Doctors Mary and Leena, whose stories are told below. Leena was pictured left, with other medical staff and Meggie Szczesny, Charity Co-ordinator of Child Advocacy International (second from left) when working with Kosovan refugees earlier this year.



Meggie Szczesny at Kukes' refugee camp.

Passing on the message

In a land where the infrastructure of medical care has been severely damaged, where doctors and nurses have been prevented from refining their skills for years due to the war, and where babies die needlessly for lack of basic care, training is the next primary need. Doctors Mary Limebury and Leena Mewasingh each spent some time recently working in the area.

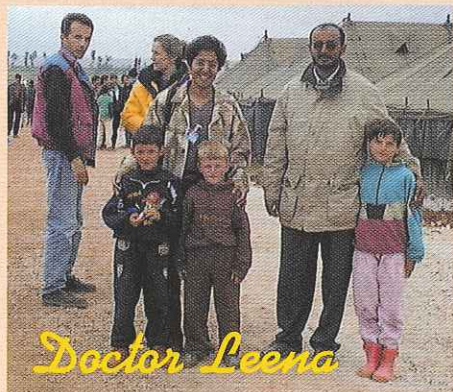
Mary Limebury, now back and working in east London, visited 'our' units in east and west Mostar and reports that both units are doing well. A baby born in east Mostar at just 26 weeks gestation had survived, which would be an achievement in a top ranking British special care baby unit.

In Sarajevo Mary spent time teaching the local doctors and nurses the principles of APLS (Advanced Paediatric Life Support), a simple system for keeping very sick children alive, involving an easy-to-remember step-by-step protocol to be used by doctors and nurses alike. Says Mary, 'APLS helps to dispel the natural reaction to be frightened of very small, very ill, children, and makes coping much easier. It developed very favourably in Sarajevo and contributed a great deal to improving relations between doctors and nurses, who had previously worked rather in isolation from each other. At first the trainees were wary, and came along as 'conscripts' – but very soon they were fighting for places on the course!'

Mary trained over 100 medical staff in APLS, with courses in Mostar, Tuzla, Zenica, Bihac and Sarajevo, and was gratified at the enthusiasm and the 'ripple effect', with doctors and nurses trained by her passing on their training to others.



Doctor Mary



Doctor Leena

Leena's experience started out in the most graphic way, working from a Medical Aid Land Cruiser which she had driven trans-Europe, together with Dr Theresa Curtin and Meggie Szczesny of Child Advocacy International (see top of page) who witnessed their work in refugee camps of 100,000 people in

Kukes near the Kosovo border, 35 people to a tent and often appalling conditions of sanitation and potential disease.

Leena and Theresa worked in the camps and the children's hospital, returning with the Belgian K4 to Kosovo after the Peace Agreement, Doctor Leena speaks movingly of the little girl featured on page ii who survived starvation.

Leena tells of working with 'special' children – youngsters tied down in cots from birth, never learning how to walk, play or communicate – and of helping to retrain doctors and nurses trying to pick up the pieces of their medical careers and re-learn their medical skills.

Like Mary she emphasises the need for training, particularly in Pristina, to bring it up to the standard we have achieved in Sarajevo. Training, paediatric support, teaching APLS and advanced neo-natal support will prevent the needless loss of many infant lives.

Armin and friends ...



His official title is Programme Manager for Child Advocacy International/Gift for Living. But this grand description goes nowhere near doing justice to the work of Armin Alagic.

As 'our man on the spot', Armin looks after the logistics of the project, ensuring that every last detail falls successfully into place, every piece of equipment is where it should be, and the often difficult process of importing and moving equipment into and around a war-torn nation goes swimmingly.

Officially based in Sarajevo, Armin, a restless bundle of energy packaged in a slight frame, spends his time rushing around the country at the wheel of a Land Rover. His untiring work for CAI and Lions earned him the honour of a Melvin Jones Fellowship.

Angela:

Irish Nurse Angela O'Higgins has become a familiar face among doctors, nurses and patients working on projects funded by Lions/Child Advocacy. Donating her own free time, Angela has spent three lengthy periods on the ground. She returned to this country in August after her latest foray, a 6-week spell working in Kosevo Children's Hospital, helping the doctors and nurses in the paediatric intensive care unit.

Paula:

Paula Blurton is another nurse, recently returned from a 9-week period of voluntary work in Sarajevo, where she has been passing on her paediatric nursing skills, reinforcing the training and equipment provided by CAI/Lions. Her regular employment is as an intensive care nurse at North Staffs Hospital, and, like Angela, she has donated her holidays and accrued time-off to work in the former Yugoslavia.

The people ...

They streamed across the border in their thousands, the innocent victims of war, in fear and without hope. Children, young mothers, old people. These pictures, from the edge of human despair, were taken by Meggie Szczesny, Charity Co-ordinator for Child Advocacy International, when she joined Doctor Leena Mewasingh and Doctor Theresa Curtin while she was working among the refugees.

Many have returned to their home territories since these pictures were taken, only to find destruction and rubble where they once had homes. They are now facing the enormous challenge of rebuilding their lives.

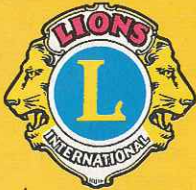


Above: Three generations of despair pictured on the border with Kosovo and Albania. Refugees had walked 36 hours to arrive here, exhausted.

Left: Kosovan refugees in flight.

We serve

The International Association of Lions Clubs is the largest service club organisation in the world, with nearly 1.5 million members in over 44,000 Clubs in 182 countries. Here in The British Isles and Ireland we have more than 1000 Lion, Lioness and Leo Clubs, with a total membership of some 20,000, all dedicated to improving the lives of others less fortunate than themselves, both in their own communities and worldwide.



Child Advocacy International, set up in 1995 by Doctor David Southall, Foundation Professor of Paediatrics at Keele University and

Consultant Paediatrician at North Staffordshire Hospital, Stoke on Trent, is a charity dedicated to protecting the rights of children, in particular their right to freedom from exploitation and the effects of war. Globally some 7,600 children under five years of age, 2,800,000 a year, die every day through neglect, exploitation and failure of simple health measures. In the last few years, resulting from armed conflicts by adults over which they have no power, millions of children have died or been disabled in war, have been orphaned, lived in refugee camps, or, perhaps worst of all, been forced in their powerlessness to serve as child soldiers. The rights of children to live outside zones of armed conflict have been ignored. The Lions of Great Britain and Ireland have been working with CAI in the former Yugoslavia for the last four years.

The future



We have saved the lives of babies by bringing them out for treatment when things were desperate in their homeland.

We have sent life-saving medical equipment to the hospitals of East and West Mostar, and Sarajevo.

We have a mobile clinic in operation in Goradze, bringing primary healthcare to the inhabitants of this cut-off enclave. Now 'Lions – a Gift for Living' is going forward into the vital areas of training and education, ensuring that the local medical professionals are brought up to speed in the use of equipment and in the latest techniques (many doctors and nurses have had their training severely curtailed by the chaos of war).

The next stage of the project will be centred on Kosovo, based on the hospital in Pristina. Current plans are for doctors and nurses there to be re-trained by working in the Hospital as 'apprentices' alongside highly trained British and Irish paediatricians. In conjunction with paediatric life support and neo-natal resuscitation courses, plans are in hand to develop a 'child friendly' hospital unit, with adequate pain control and a high level of palliative care (children in this culture have until now been seen as 'mini-adults', expected to deal with pain and fear stoically).

Says Professor David Southall of Child Advocacy International (above), 'The basic facilities in Pristina are not too bad, but children are suffering unnecessary pain and sometimes dying for lack of basic knowledge and training. With medical education, the training of doctors and nurses in the care of small children and the APLS system, we will be able to achieve a great deal for relatively little.'

'By healing the suffering children of a nation, we may take one small step towards healing the hurts of the nation itself.'



International Director Lion Phil Nathan, Grant Administrator and Chairman of 'Lions Clubs International – Gift for Living'.