

ORAL HISTORY INDEX AND SUMMARY

Interview with: Saranda Bogujevci

Date: 7/10/14

Location: Kosovo

Total duration: 16.36

Interview by Rrezarta Mulloli and summary by Kelly Bücher:

The interview plays as one long recording.

1.	Start time	Finish time	Approximate duration	Brief description
	00.00	16.36	16.36	Saranda describes her childhood in Kosovo. Her recovery, in Manchester, from the massacre of her family, and her subsequent return to Kosovo to work.
<p>Pen sketch</p> <p>Summary of interview content</p>	<p><i>Saranda comes for a close knit family which was living in the bustling town of Podujeva, close to the Serb border. When she was 13 years old eight members of her own family, and a second desperate family her uncle had just offered refuge to, were murdered in a massacre carried out by Serb military. Saranda and her 4 cousins were left for dead. 3 months later during the Liberation of Kosovo the injured children were found by the British army and medically evacuated to Manchester. Saranda and her cousins have recovered well, but it has been a slow process involving many years of healing. The children decided to give evidence against the men who killed their family and many were subsequently convicted in historic trials. Saranda is very creative and after studying in Manchester and working on many arts and peace projects she returned to Kosovo in 2014 and is now Director of Culture, Youth and Sport for the Municipality of Prishtina - the capital.</i></p> <p>(00.00) Saranda introduces herself and describes being born in Podujeva and later studying at Manchester Metropolitan University for a BA Degree in Interactive Arts. She talks about her journey from Kosovo to the UK. Saranda describes a good childhood in a large, happy family in a close knit neighbourhood. She says that things weren't so good in the country around the time.</p> <p>(1:27) When she was 7 or 8 years old her father was forced out of work and her school was closed to non-Serbian children causing her to move to another building.</p> <p>(2:20) She talks about going to the UK for medical treatment as she was badly injured during the war along with four other family members, all young children. Immediately after the Liberation a NATO soldier organised for them to go to their military hospital.</p>			

(03:36) There they met British surgeon Col David Vassallo and help was requested internationally for the children through his pioneering telemedicine system. Saranda and her cousins were taken to Manchester to specialist care.

(04:03) Saranda says that on September 10th, they were sent to Manchester and taken straight to Withington Hospital, when she was 14 years old. The family lived in Trafford, South Manchester. She describes being treated well in the UK and being very well looked after. She says that at first she and Jehona did not have much contact with the outside world as they were surrounded by doctors and nurses.

(06:03) Saranda says that when she started school that the kids really looked after her. She describes never sitting on her own when she went for lunch or in the classrooms. She says that the children really made an effort, even though she and the other Kosovans struggled with the language. They always had friends around them and that was very important to them.

(07:00) She talks more about her experiences in the UK. She talks about being in and out of hospital, dealing with a new language and a new country. She talks about losing part of your family during a war and then moving to a new country, an unfamiliar place. She says that at first she couldn't accept it but slowly she got used to the place and the new people around her.

She says she became more independent and got to know the town and city where she now lived. As time went on, she managed to accept that she had a new life in England.

Saranda talks about why she has moved back to Kosovo to live. She says that everything she has done in England with regards to her career as has been linked to her experiences during the war and with conflict. She talks about going into schools and talking to students discussing war, refugees and asylum seekers.

She talks about how that now she is an adult, she wants to pass on her experiences in England and learn about how everything functions in Kosovo. She describes Kosovo currently changing a lot.

She talks about being surprised that living in Kosovo is not as difficult as she was expecting and how people really need opportunities.

(12.10) Saranda says that she has been to Kosovo a lot since the war and watched its development. She says that it is a large subject. Many good things have happened but there are still things that need to be changed.

Saranda mentions the need for people to experience running their own country and refers to lengthy problems of the past including the struggle to retain your own language and cultural identity. She thinks it's going to take time for people to get used to the idea that now they can work towards making their own decisions and change things the way they want them to change. She says there are a lot of other issues as well.

Saranda talks about various projects she was involved in whilst in the UK. She talks about work in schools and with charity Manchester Aid to Kosovo, who helped them when they first moved to England. She talks about being involved in different projects in her home town in Podujeva. The biggest project, is the Peace Park. She says that when she sees that park it really makes her happy because also it's important to see the young people from the town being involved and changing things themselves.

Saranda talks about her life now and how it is not bad but that there are always struggles. She says that when you have experienced something so terrible in your life as losing family in the war, you tend to see things quite differently. She says many people being kind and trying to help you makes it a lot easier as they both support you and push you to strive to achieve your own goals. Despite the actions of people ruining her life many people lift her and she has found she can move forward.