



## A STUDY GUIDE

# A Compassionate Rage

PATRICIA KELLY AND SHELLEY HILTON



### SYNOPSIS

While many of us talk about what could be done to make the world a better place, Moira Kelly has been doing something. *A Compassionate Rage* documents eighteen months in the extraordinary life of this dedicated and award-winning aid-worker, who describes herself as a professional beggar. Moira works in dangerous war zones around the world, providing ongoing care for children needing reconstructive and/or life-saving surgery, unobtainable in their own impoverished countries. She liaises with many individuals and institutions to arrange surgery, sponsorship, travel, accommodation and ongoing support if needed. Moira estimates that she has probably assisted over two hundred and fifty children to date.

Some time ago, Moira became fed up with the bureaucracy of aid organizations and now prefers to work as a sole agent, relying on family, friends and donations from charities to support her work. She has been called an angel of mercy and a pain in the neck, but she

won't let anything stand in the way of helping children in need. In order to realize her dream of creating a safe place for children recovering from surgery, she began to work with the board of directors of the newly-created Australian charity, the Children First Foundation. Together with Rotary's help, they are setting up the Open Door Farm in rural Victoria.

During the film, we connect with those whose lives she affects, mainly children and their families in rural Albania. Some of the children's injuries are scarcely believable to those living in privileged societies such as Australia. Pigs had attacked two girls when they were babies. Maria's lower face was mutilated and Sally lost an ear and the fingers on one hand. Niki fell into a fire during an epileptic fit and was terribly injured; Lulzim and twenty-year-old Kristina have severe facial scarring from burns; two children have (curable) heart conditions; and two Iraqi brothers have deformed limbs that may be due to their parents' exposure to chemical weapons.

As the producer/researcher, Helen

**Writer/Director:**  
ALAN LINDSAY

**Producers:**  
ALAN LINDSAY & HELEN CLUCAS

**Film Australia Executive Producer:**  
FRANCO DI CHIERA

**Duration:** 55 MINUTES

L: Brought to Australia by Moira Kelly, medivac patient Emmanuel Mustafa is at a Rotary fundraising lunch in Melbourne in aid of the Open Door Farm. R: One of Moira's young medivac patients, Ahmed Mustafa. Photos: Alan Lindsay  
Photos © Vue Pty Ltd





Clucas says, 'The story of one person's determination to make a difference ... also raises questions about the whole nature of aid work and intervention in the lives of kids in faraway places, for the viewer to ponder and question'. Writer/director Alan Lindsay comments that the film shows that Moira 'is not a saint ... but she does a remarkable job for kids who deserve help, kids who others ignore'.

#### CURRICULUM LINKS

*A Compassionate Rage* will be useful to secondary and tertiary students. It is particularly relevant to students studying History, Politics, SOSE, English, Cultural Studies and ESL, and to tertiary students in human services, health-related and teaching courses. It could also be a focal point for awareness raising and fundraising activities among community and service organizations.

Some background knowledge on the extent of the social and political upheaval within the Balkans during the past decade is recommended, so that viewers can better understand the causes of the conflict there. There are some useful web sites to help with this, listed at the end of this guide.

Warning: This is a challenging video, with graphic scenes of children's injuries and their surgery. It would be useful to discuss the issues before you view the video. You may have students from these countries or backgrounds for whom this film and surrounding issues may be painful and controversial. As teachers, we are responsible for establishing safe and respectful environments for discussion and sharing. Students can only present their own views, not those of an entire community. Moreover, all of us bring our complex cultural and social backgrounds with us. Setting the scene is vitally

important before using films like this one as a teaching and learning resource.

#### KEY TERMS

Here are some key terms and words that students need to be familiar with before watching the video.

- ⊙ crack-addicted, ethnic cleansing, impoverished, blood feud, body parts, pyramid finance, resurgence, rampant, sensation, incinerated, restoration, fluctuates, faeces, malnourished, septicaemia, superstitious, undernourished, rudimentary, milestone

#### THEMES, DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

##### POLITICS

- ⊙ Explore and explain these terms and their significance to this film: Communism, Socialism, Democracy, Nationalism, Fascism, Military Dictatorship, Autocracy and Puppet State.
- ⊙ The Dayton Agreement (1995) aimed to bring about the reintegration of Bosnia and to protect human rights, but the agreement has been criticised for not reversing the results of 'ethnic cleansing'.

##### ACTIVITIES

- ⊙ Research the Dayton Agreement. How was it meant to bring about its stated aims? Who are its critics and what are they criticizing? Can you find evidence of a better solution? What are the main arguments of the opposing sides? (See suggested URLs to begin your research.)
- ⊙ During the '90s crisis in the Balkans, a UN peacekeeping force was sent in. What are

ABOVE TOP TO BOTTOM: MOIRA KELLY AND WITH FRIENDS. RIGHT TOP: PRANVERA PRENG IN THE ARMS OF HER GRANDMOTHER AS HER MOTHER AND BROTHER LOOK ON. MOIRA KELLY ARRANGED FOR THE YOUNG ALBANIAN'S HEART CONDITION TO BE TREATED IN AN AUSTRALIAN HOSPITAL. RIGHT BOTTOM: THE PRENG FAMILY IN FRONT OF THEIR HOME IN NORTHERN ALBANIA WITH MOIRA KELLY, HOLDING HEART PATIENT PRANVERA PRENG. FILM-MAKERS HELEN CLUCAS AND ALAN LINDSAY ARE ON MOIRA'S LEFT. PHOTOS: ALAN LINDSAY





the roles of such forces? How does the UN operate alongside governments? What is NATO? What roles did this organization play during the Balkans crisis?

- ⊙ Locate on a world map other places where UN peacekeeping forces are operating or where they have operated recently. Make a brief verbal report on your findings about the roles the forces play and the background to their involvement.
- ⊙ 'Ethnic cleansing' is a euphemism; one of those words used to disguise and reduce the impact of an unpleasant reality. What is the reality behind this term? (See suggested web sites.)

#### FURTHER ACTIVITIES

- ⊙ Research and tell one story from one other community, past and present, that has experienced the horrific reality of 'ethnic cleansing'. For example, Armenians, Cambodians, Jews, gypsies, Kurds, Indigenous people.
- ⊙ Identify the origins and explain the reality of some other political euphemisms of the past century, e.g. 'comfort women', 'the final solution', 'collateral damage', 'year zero'.
- ⊙ Can you find evidence of this kind of language in media coverage of the current 'war against terrorism'? Use radio,

television, newspaper and web-based reports broadcast in one day to analyse what was reported and the ways in which it was presented to the public. What purpose does this language serve? Whose viewpoints are represented? Whose are not? How might this affect public perceptions of these issues?

#### POVERTY AND AID

- ⊙ Moira complains that part of life's unfairness 'depends on what passport you have and whether you have a healthcare system'. Is she right? In researching your answer, explore access to medical treatment in three different countries in different areas of the world. Identify and list the qualities of a good health system.
- ⊙ Explore and explain the difference between a charity and an aid agency.
- ⊙ In the film, Moira describes her previous frustrations working with the bureaucracy of the global aid agencies. Discuss what possible problems lie behind this comment, from her point of view and that of an agency employing someone like Moira.

#### ACTIVITIES

- ⊙ What opportunities exist to work for aid agencies at national and international levels? Check

the web sites of a variety of aid agencies to identify the qualities and skills they need. What volunteer programmes are available if you wanted to work within Australia or overseas? Choose one that appeals to you and make a five minute presentation to encourage others to join you.

- ⊙ Moira set up a school in Tirane for the children of mountain families in Northern Albania. According to the film, these families, who had moved to the capital, were regarded as 'foreigners' and denied an education. What reasons might lie behind this unjust situation? Do all Australian children have equal access to education? Who misses out?
- ⊙ Albania is one of the world's poorest countries, as is obvious from the film. What positive aspects of this culture are also revealed in *A Compassionate Rage*?
- ⊙ For some views on tourism development, go to: <http://www.rec.org/REC/Bulletin/Bull54/ecotourism.html>. This site offers an interesting perspective on eco-tourism as an alternative to uncontrolled 'development'. However, according to this site, 'a recent report indicates that in some areas, environmental pollution is already so severe it is "incompatible" with tourism development. The report identifies

ABOVE RIGHT: The Preng family in front of their home in northern Albania. Photo: Alan Lindsay. RIGHT TOP: Albanian translator Dila Kurteza (centre) with medivac patients Pranvera Preng (left) and Rozeta Dorni (right). Photo: Helen Clucas. RIGHT BOTTOM: Moira Kelly (back row, fourth from right) with head teacher Pjeter Mataj and pupils of the Children First Foundation School that Moira established in Tirane, Albania. Photo: Helen Clucas





the key pollution sources as agricultural run-off, domestic sewage outputs and industrial effluent'.

- ⊙ How do countries deal with problems like these? How does Australia deal with similar problems as they affect the Great Barrier Reef? Can citizens help?
- ⊙ What personal sacrifices has Moira Kelly made for her work? What does she gain from this work? What do those associated with her gain from their involvement?

In an effort to formalise fundraising, Moira's friends and family have opened a bank account and created a board of directors for the Children's First Foundation. As a result of Rotary's fundraising and donations, we witness the moment when one of Moira's life-long dreams is realized. The nephew of a governor of the Royal Children's Hospital, Noel Baker, generously donated land, in accordance with his late uncle's wishes, 'to look after the children'. With local Rotarians' help and support, a house will be built to accommodate up to a dozen children recuperating from surgery.

- ⊙ What benefits and/or disadvantages can you foresee for Moira and her work as a result of this change?

- ⊙ Not everyone has land to donate, but everyone can do something to help others in need locally. Discuss the possibilities and implications of doing something for someone else. What sort of activity would be suitable for students in the short term or long term? What problems do you see in taking action of some kind? What are the benefits?

- ⊙ Discuss and investigate the concept of a 'civil society'. What qualities do you think are essential in a good citizen? What factors encourage these qualities? What factors work against them? What happens when civil societies break down?

- ⊙ Create an action list of things you can do as part of your personal commitment to a civil society. It may be as simple as joining a service club, or a political party, or committing an hour of your time to help someone else. Incorporate a time commitment so that you can revisit your agreement in a month or two and compare actions with intentions.

- ⊙ Large corporate sponsors and donors often want something in return for their generosity. Make a list of the major corporate sponsors whose logos appear in advertising associated with Sport, the Arts, Health, Science, Travel.

- ⊙ How do corporations benefit from donating money?

- ⊙ Are there hidden dangers for small organizations accepting donations and in-kind support?

- ⊙ Prepare a portrait gallery of humanitarians, past and present. Research and find other individuals within Australia and internationally who are or have devoted their lives to assisting people for humanitarian reasons.

- ⊙ Research recent events in the Balkans, after 1999, including disarmament and the war trials in the Hague. What are the advantages of trying war criminals in an international court, rather than leaving them to local justice?

- ⊙ Compare this approach with what is used in South Africa in the Amnesty and Reconciliation trials and the current approach of Xanana Gusmão in Timor towards the militia who committed war crimes against their fellow Timorese.

- ⊙ For a local comparison, consider the media coverage of the Australian and the American captured in Afghanistan while fighting for the Taliban. What are their crimes, according to each country's laws? If they have committed a crime, how might

such publicity make a fair trial difficult?

#### ACTIVITY

- ⊙ In your research, how do you evaluate sources of information, particularly on the World Wide Web? What do you look for to tell you that the information is reliable, well-researched and factual? What might alert you to poor information? Choose two different sources of information on one topic and rate them in terms of content, references, currency and reliability.

#### PEOPLE

##### The Aid Worker

###### Moira Kelly

Moira has worked with a wide variety of aid agencies in Australia and abroad, beginning with fulfilling her dream to help Mother Teresa in India when she was only twenty. Since then, she has worked with crack-addicted babies in New York, children in Africa and India, the intellectually impaired, young criminal offenders, the homeless and disadvantaged, and rape victims. She has also worked with AIDS-infected children in a Romanian orphanage and with children in the Balkans. Official recognition includes the 1992 Paul Harris Rotary International Award for outstanding service (only awarded in exceptional circumstances). In 1995, Queen Elizabeth II honoured Moira for her outstanding humanitarian work in Bosnia and recently she was awarded an OAM as an 'international humanitarian aid worker'.

You might wonder how Moira manages and balances it all, given the extent of the love and affection that she gives the children. She admits that it's not just a job; it is her life and passion. In her own words, 'the act of kindness changes generations', and her motto is to make a difference.

- ⊙ Prepare a reference for Moira based on the evidence in the film. What makes an 'effective' reference? What are the conventions usually followed in preparing a reference?

- ⊙ Prepare a reference for your best friend.

#### The Children

##### Maria

Maria will leave her home and briefly attend the school that Moira opened in Albania's capital, Tirane, before leaving for Australia with Moira. While it is a terrible sacrifice for Maria's mother, she fears for Maria's future if she remains in the village.

Maria will have her first experience in a classroom at the age of nine. The narrator explains that while Maria feels self-conscious about her wounds, it was much worse a year ago. Her disfigured lower face is due to a pig attack when the family pig broke free of the sty. This is not an uncommon story in this poor rural society. But in first-world countries, injured children are automatically rushed to hospital.

#### ACTIVITIES

- ⊙ Watch the scene in which Moira collects Maria from her home. What evidence is there that medical treatment would be difficult for these people to obtain? Describe the house and its surroundings in detail. How is it different from what you expect from a house? What might these differences mean in terms of work for Maria's parents?

- ⊙ Maria is nine. Explain why you think she has not attended school yet. Use the WWW to help you find the statistics on education for girls and women in the world today. The New Internationalist web site has an easy-to-use index to find relevant stories.

- ⊙ What adverse and positive effects do you think there might be for children from Albania, living on the farm in Australia with Moira, and then returning home to Albania or another war-torn area of the world?

- ⊙ What are Maria's mother's fears for her daughter's future if she remains in the village? Would the same fears exist for a child like Maria in Australia?

- ⊙ What do you think of the ethics of Moira's last-minute decision to leave Maria in Albania? She tells Maria, 'I know you'll understand ...' Do you think Maria understands? What effects do you think this might have on Maria? Draw up a list of the positive and negative aspects of this decision from Maria's point of view. What would you do in similar circumstances?

- ⊙ Before leaving Albania, Moira gives Maria's father a section of land in a safer district. The father behaves in a way that Moira finds difficult to deal with. What is happening in this situation?

- ⊙ Choose groups to discuss the two points of view and then present them to the group as that person might have expressed their position. Is there a right and a wrong point of view in this situation? What advice would you give Moira to avoid this happening again?

##### Kristina

She is the only adult in this group; her facial disfigurement is ruining her chances of marriage. In Albanian society, it is an almost unbearable tragedy for a daughter not to marry and have children. After surgery, Kristina has a whole new attitude to life and purchases a wedding dress to take back to Albania.

Kristina expects a warm welcome when she returns home, but it is



obvious that something is terribly wrong. Her family is mourning two young cousins shot dead in a gun battle in which her younger brother received permanent injuries. Moira tries to lighten the situation by giving the family the present of a clock, in the shape of Australia.

⊙ Use this scene as a 'critical incident' for training aid workers, particularly in incidents of cross-cultural sensitivity.

#### ACTIVITY

⊙ In pairs, consider how Kristina, Moira and the family would each have been feeling at this time. Can you suggest a more appropriate response to this situation? In a similar situation, would you and your families have reacted differently? What are the cultural lessons that we can learn from such incidents?

#### Lulzim

This young boy's bandages cover horrific scarring from burns as a result of an accident. He has lived in misery for thirteen years, shunned by a superstitious community who call him evil, ghost and monster. Adults also throw stones at him. After five rounds of surgery, Lulzim returns home ecstatic with a face that is more acceptable to society, together with a job obtained through Moira.

⊙ How do you explain Lulzim's community's reaction to his injuries? How do you bring about fundamental changes in community attitudes to disabilities? How has this happened in Australia? What support systems exist for people with disabilities in our society? Are they equally available to all?

⊙ If you were an aid worker in Albania, how would you go about a publicity campaign or an education campaign designed to raise awareness of the rights of people with disabilities?

⊙ Before leaving Albania, Moira

offers Lulzim a job as assistant to the Aid Agency Director in Albania. Explain how the position would benefit Lulzim, in the short and long term.

#### Sally

This twelve-year-old is another victim of a pig attack, which caused facial scarring, the loss of fingers on one hand and an ear. Although Moira's budget can't extend to surgery for Sally's ear or fingers, she returns to her home with a happier outlook after her facial reconstructive surgery.

⊙ While Sally wants to be a teacher, Moira explains that it is unlikely that she will ever work outside of her own home in Albania. Discuss the expectations that you and your parents have for your life in Australia. Are these different from the expectations you might have for a daughter of yours in the future?

⊙ How different is the possible future for Sally and children like her? Why do you think this is the case? What changes would need to occur in this society for her to have the opportunities she deserves?

#### Denis

Moira's brother Paul rescued Denis from a refugee camp on the Kosova/Albanian border. The seven-year-old is critically malnourished and his stomach is grossly distended as a result of untreated Hershbronc's disease, which blocks the bowel. Unable to rid his body of faeces from birth, eating is torture. As refugees fleeing ethnic cleansing, his parents have not been able to attend to his condition. If Denis had been born in Australia, it would have been cured with a simple operation. Denis' operation is a success, although he dies and is revived twice before making a full recovery.

#### Niki

This boy is an epileptic, with shocking wounds and scarring as

a result of falling into a fire during a fit. Though he lives in one of the remotest areas of Albania's north, he has very successful surgery in the US. On his return, Moira arranges schooling for him in the city, together with an apartment she has donated to be put in his name.

#### ACTIVITY

⊙ Consider the scene in which Moira meets Niki's family to tell them that she has arranged to donate an apartment to him. She has not consulted his parents in this decision. His mother says, 'If I come here, how can I afford to buy things? ...We should have the money'. Moira decides she will not enter into any negotiations on the matter. What do you think of her decision and the reactions of Niki's mother and other family members? What are the issues here on both sides? Organize a roleplay around this issue. You may be able to find a real community mediator willing to act as mediator for you, or who is able to help you prepare. What do community mediators do in our communities?

#### Ahmed and Emmanuel

These Iraqi brothers, Ahmed and Emanuel, are suspected victims of their parents' exposure to chemical weapons. They have been living in an orphanage on the Palestinian/Israeli border. The boys, both born with deformed limbs, are to be fitted with artificial limbs in Melbourne. They have waited for Moira for over a year.

⊙ Investigate the use of chemical weapons in Iraq and elsewhere. How do chemical weapons create such terrible defects? Where else in the world have chemical weapons been used? Who makes and sells chemical weapons? Who benefits? Who loses?

⊙ The film concludes with Moira speaking about her frustration in finding hospitals for children and her wish that there was a world bank for funds and a

central database of hospitals. Why doesn't this already exist? Should anyone have to rely on charity in order to get medical treatment or to survive? What groups mainly rely on charities in Australia? Has this changed in recent years?

#### ACTIVITY

- ⊙ Approach a charity to interview them about this issue. Choose a charity that you think is worthy and investigate how you might support them in their work through a specific activity.

#### AID AND AID AGENCIES

What roles do aid agencies have in Australia and internationally? What makes them necessary? What would have to happen for the world to exist without needing such agencies?

#### ACTIVITY

- ⊙ Research a selection of Aid Agencies and charities. What are their roles. Who do they serve? How are they different from and similar to each other? You might consider St Vincent de Paul, Rotary, The Brotherhood of St Lawrence, The Red Cross, The Smith Family, CARE Australia, or specific ethnic community agencies (This might offer students with language skills in particular languages an opportunity to use and realize the value of these important skills in research and learning.)

#### Useful Web Sites

##### Background to the Balkans Conflict

For some key dates and events of Balkan history, go to: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/map/yugoslavia/>

This web site is a useful and attractive quick reference to the changing borders in this complex area. Each key date is illustrated with a map and easily accessible information. You may wish to set mini-research tasks to expand on some or all of

these events, some of which may be viewed very differently by the different communities involved. There are excellent links from this site to more detailed explanations of recent conflicts, including NATO's role.

<http://www.history.com/topics/bosnian-genocide>

This site offers another beginner's view of the Balkans. It is a basic information site with an attractive timeline of the area, dating back to 7,000 BC. There are many detailed witness accounts of ethnic cleansing, several of which contain disturbing material and photographs of the destruction of whole families and villages.

##### Aid and Aid Agencies

<http://www.care-international.org/>

This is the home page of Care International. Use this site and others like it to research the role of aid agencies and report on their work within Australia and overseas.

<http://www.redcross.org.au/>

This contains information about the role and service of the Red Cross organization in Australia and overseas, including regular updates about humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and other countries.

<http://www.wvi.org/>

World Vision's home page offers an impressive list of how this organization has funded and helped thousands of refugees. For example, it has 'set up an operational base in Herat with a view to implementing a \$3.9m food aid programme to western Afghanistan [and] mobilised a cargo aircraft with thirty-eight tonnes of relief goods donated by the German Government. Supplies included blankets, cooking utensils, water containers and plastic sheeting. The goods were transported into western Afghanistan for those displaced in Herat and Farah, benefitting an estimated 7,000 people'.

<http://www.hrw.org/>

Human Rights Watch is another excellent site for links to a number

of important global issues, including refugees, women, arms and children's rights.

<http://www.amnesty.org/>

Amnesty International's site also offers information about abuses of human rights and simple ways of helping to protect human rights around the world.

<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/>

ABC's *Lateline* has a handy index to programmes on many relevant topics. Transcripts are available online.

##### **A Compassionate Rage**

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