

Moira Kelly AO

Founder of the Children First Foundation

Moira Kelly, the Executive Director of the Children First Foundation, was just eight years old when she watched a documentary at school about the life and work of the late Mother Theresa.

Moira vowed to her mother that, she would work with the Calcutta saint. Many years later, Moira Kelly did indeed work with the celebrated nun and it was then the seeds of her own personal philosophy were sown. 'Wherever there is the greatest evil, the greatest good can be achieved.'

Coupled with her own inner determination, the lessons Moira Kelly learned from the diminutive sister set the foundation for a lifetime of charity work.

After working with crack-addicted babies in the Bronx, with children in remote aboriginal communities, with Romania's heartbreaking AIDS orphans, and in Bosnia and Kosovo during the crisis, Moira Kelly's own path became clear. While working in a Bosnian refugee camp, a mother with a seriously ill child, who could not be assisted with basic medicines available, asked the simple question: 'Wouldn't the doctors and people in your country, Australia, help my child if someone told them what was happening here?'

And there began Moira Kelly's unique mission. She began finding children in third world countries, who are struggling with life threatening physical conditions that would be completely operable in the Western world. She offered them hope, and the chance to access medical attention they would otherwise be deprived of.

Moira Kelly, who doesn't know the meaning of no, slowly developed a wide network of hospitals and doctors in Australia, New York, London, Boston, Toronto and Ireland. She then traveled to countries like Albania and Somalia, collected sick children, and flew them to those western countries where they could undergo life saving medical treatment. For some it's meant heart surgery. Others have been given prosthetic arms and legs, or had plastic surgery to address terrible facial deformities.

For many children it can mean months of recuperation and when they leave hospital, these children are cared for at Moira's 'Children First Rotary Farm' outside Melbourne. When the children are well enough to travel they go home to their own countries and to the mothers and



fathers who have parted with them for so long.

In 2001 Moira was made an Officer (AO) in the General Division of the Order of Australia in recognition of her 'outstanding service to the Australian community through the provision of social support and service for disadvantaged people, and to the international community through the provision of humanitarian relief and assistance and the organisation of medical treatment for those affect by war or insurrection'.

Client testimonials

“ The highlight of the conference was an address by Moira about her work in many war-torn, impoverished areas of the world. Her work focuses on the children; the innocent victims in all this and her marvelous work in giving these young people a good quality of life. Moira is the most inspirational speaker I have ever listened to. Her candid honest approach is both powerful and tender and it is impossible not to feel part of her struggle as she details her moving experiences with us. It is rare and totally refreshing to listen to someone who has dedicated her life to helping others expecting nothing in return. I would highly recommend her as a speaker for any event.

- *Convince Australia*

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