



ROB INTERVIEWING BELINDA SMITH

Rob: I'm in the market of Rostrenen today, at a stall, which doesn't look like all the other stalls. It's a little different. I'm with B?

Belinda: B

Rob: Belinda Smith

Belinda: Yup

Rob: or Belinda Smith

Belinda: Smith, yeah. Or if you're French Smitt, Madame Smitt.

Rob: Tres bien. First of all, Belinda, tell us, B, tell us what's on your stall and what's it all about.

Belinda: OK. Well, my stall is to support Syrians who've been displaced by war and who've stayed in Syria, who are living in camps and villages and who are in need of our help because they're really struggling to survive. When the war started, I was very shocked and horrified and also very disappointed that nobody seemed to react. No demonstrations against all the bombings and everything. But what I felt I could do was try to help these people who had to leave their homes.....bye bye Lucy... so what

Rob: Popular Stall

Belinda: Yeah. Bisous. Merci. Oh la la

Rob: It's a very lively spot

Belinda: Yes, it's a very lively spot. I get lots of kisses and hugs.

Rob: The way you raise money is?

Belinda: By selling tea, coffee and cakes that I make and also my sister imports shawls and clothes from India and she gives 20% to the association.

Rob: OK. The association? The name of which is?

Belinda: The association is called Bara Tan Douar. Bara in Breton means bread, Tan is fire and Douar is earth. So as I like to help people eat and the main food in Syria is their bread and they cook this in earth ovens, obviously the earth and the fire comes together so I like to, the sound of this, Bara Tan Douar.

Rob: And so people come by, have a drink, have a chat.

Belinda: Yeah. Then I get my regulars every week. People are very happy to be able to help in some way, just a small way, to help people who've had a really hard time. To be able to do something positive.



Rob: Have you got a particular link with Syria itself?

Belinda: No. I didn't have a link before, but just by FaceBook in fact I came in touch with somebody who worked for a team that was helping people who had to flee their homes and he had a little room in Idlib and the project at the time he thought of doing was to buy wood burners 'cause it was in the winter, and supply wood, so we would discuss about different ways of heating or toilettes seche, compost toilets and things like that, and anyway then his home got bombed as well so he ended up in a tent and then he went off to another place nearer the border with Turkey, but we stayed in touch over the years and we developed a trust between us, so I collect money, I send it to him and he buys whatever's most needed like food boxes.

Rob: and what's the mechanics of this. You raise money here in Rostrenen, how does that actually arrive in Syria.

Belinda: OK. Well, I send it to this guy in Syria and he takes videos and photos of the distribution of whatever it is he's buying, normally food boxes, or in the winter the wood burners and the wood, so I see exactly that he's doing what we've arranged, buying 45 wood burners and a few tons of wood, you can see the guy's distributing it all, so I know it's happening. I also collect money through FaceBook from other people he knows because we have this trust, so he trusts me, I trust him, and that's how it can work, basically.

Rob: Do you ever get any feedback, from the people themselves?

Belinda: Yeah. Sometimes, like for example, I arrived at the market, there's a call from him, a video call, and he's just about to do a distribution and all children have run over, so I had a direct video call in the moment in the camp in Syria with all these children waving and, so that was lovely. That's really, makes me feel good, to see that. And sometimes he videos a woman, who's, you know, offering prayers for what we do and that's really nice as well. They do what they can which is basically because they're very devout, they like to pray and give thanks, and so that's really nice.

Rob: I notice it smells very nice here, I can see you've got some incense. You also have some dolls here, so tell me about those.

Belinda: Yes. This is the side that my sister is involved in, because she went to India and met people who sells products and shawls and other things and Indian bags. So, these dolls were made by Tibetan refugees who've had to come to India from Tibet. And each doll is unique and it's got the most beautiful clothes, they look Tibetan and so we also sell these dolls and Yaks. This is where you can find your little Yak. We've got bags made from hemp that come from Nepal as well. But the shawls are very, very popular, they're wonderful colours and different designs on them and they go



down really well, it's become the latest fashion in the area. Everyone has their shawl, and they're very reasonably priced. Cashmere shawls and we've recently got some tops, cotton tops, more summery.

Rob: Well B it's been great talking to you. Thanks very much.

Belinda: Thank you. I'd just like to say one thing which is that we're on our 11th project, which I'm quite proud of. Every 2 or 3 months we manage to send enough money to help around 40 to 45 families, something like that. We are on our eleventh project which is to help families who have a handicapped member living in camps. Actually there's 180 families we'd like to help, so this is the first of a series of four project to help families with handicapped people. And we have a FaceBook page, Bara Tan Douar, so that's B A R A. T A N. D O U A R, and you can see all the photos of the Syrian children waving and the videos and all of our eleven projects on the FaceBook page. And if you wish to donate, you can also do that via the FaceBook page as well.

Rob: I think you sell it very well.

Belinda: Great.

Rob: Thanks very much.

Belinda: Thank you very much.