



More being loaded into the lorry

And more on to the lorry

Donations for Bulgaria

Goodies being loaded ready for Bulgaria

All this was taken in the lorry purchased as a result of your help



Unloading the lorry in Novo Selo

Unloading equipment after the 2nd trip to the UK

Equipment unloaded in the empty Chef and Restaurant School

Gifts for the Children's Home in Bulgaria being sorted for distribution

Your help put a smile on the faces of the staff at the Children's Home



Social workers present cert to Phoenix Inspire

Staff at the Kinder Garten receiving gifts



Locals gathering at the reopening of the Kinder Garten

Kinder Garten children in costume

You can read more about the progress of Phoenix Inspire and see what difference we have made in a short space of time by visiting [www.phoenix-inspire.org](http://www.phoenix-inspire.org) I hope that this letter, the attached aims of Phoenix Inspire and further information on the web site, will encourage you to consider supporting us in some way or other. I look forward to hearing from you. Yours faithfully

Mick Cooper  
 Chef and Restaurant School website: [www.essentiallymickcooper.com](http://www.essentiallymickcooper.com)  
 email: [mick@essentiallymickcooper.com](mailto:mick@essentiallymickcooper.com)

Phoenix Inspire  
 website: [www.phoenix-inspire.org](http://www.phoenix-inspire.org)  
 email: [enquires@phoenix-inspire.org](mailto:enquires@phoenix-inspire.org)

Phoenix Inspire UK  
 website: [www.phoenix-inspire.org.uk](http://www.phoenix-inspire.org.uk)  
 email: [enquires@phoenix-inspire.org.uk](mailto:enquires@phoenix-inspire.org.uk)

# Be inspired by Phoenix Inspire



I would like to introduce you to a worthy cause that may inspire you to support. I am Mick Cooper.

I was born in Scunthorpe but now live in Novo Selo, Bulgaria. After visiting the country and Novo Selo in January 2008 and hearing about the plight of the local children, I decided to move here and do something to help if I could. I have spent over 35 years working in the hospitality and catering industry.

Of those 35 years, I spent 22 years working in education creating chances and developing the skills of students who already have great opportunities and chances in the UK. It would be true to say that many of the students in the UK, those who have chances and opportunities, do not realise how lucky they are. Having worked as a lecturer and latterly as a head of department at both the Hotel School, City College Norwich and Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education, I am now creating opportunities and chances for those who do not have any by setting up a Chef and Restaurant School.

The School will train young people to become competent bakers, chefs, butchers, restaurant and bar staff. It will be the first of its kind in Bulgaria. At the end of their training programme, these young people will have the necessary skills, motivation and opportunities to gain meaningful employment and hopefully better lives. Links with the UK and France will enhance the training and learning opportunities which I intend to develop. The Chef and Restaurant School will not only provide training, it will also help the local economy by creating jobs for local residents.

A little bit of information about Novo Selo itself. Novo Selo is poor village located in the region of Vidin in North West Bulgaria bordering Romania and Serbia. Novo Selo once had a population of over 3,500. Now it is just over 1,000 of which 33% of the able population are unemployed. Vidin was once a thriving city of some 80,000 people. It now has a population of just over 45,000. Whilst other areas of Bulgaria have improved due to the growth of tourism and investment Vidin has not been so fortunate. During the decline, many people migrated to more prosperous parts of Bulgaria and Europe.

Employment, education and career opportunities for most of residents of Novo Selo are not good. This is due to a number of factors: lack of money to pay for tuition and transport is certainly one, lack of aspiration and motivation to learn is another as is the lack of encouragement and facilities. Phoenix Inspire hopes to change some of this.

There are two groups of people whom we hope to be able to help. Firstly, Novo Selo has a Children's Home with 49 children. In March 2008 there were only 28 children. The Children's Home appears to be taking in more children month by month. Secondly, there are a number of families in the region who are well below the poverty line and therefore unable to pay for tuition and education. It is hard to believe in this part of Europe that there are families who do not have access to basic needs such as running water in the home. A number of these families find themselves in such circumstances. As the children of the Children's Home and those in poverty do not have the money to pay for education post 16, those who wish to train from these backgrounds will receive their training for free.

Setting out to help local people is not as easy as I thought it would be; my naivety I suppose. Luckily I have met a number of wonderful Bulgarians who have been able to help me. One of these is Valentin Asperohov. Valentin has been a great help guiding me through the amazing amount of red-tape. Another friend is Genko Genkov. Like Valentin, Genko has been extremely supportive and helpful. In order to comply with Bulgarian regulations I have established Phoenix Inspire. Phoenix Inspire is a non-profit Non Government Organisation (NGO) registered in Bulgaria. I have attached the aims of Phoenix Inspire in the hope that they will further enhance your support. Phoenix Inspire is now recognised by Bulgarian Law and is a symbol of hope. Phoenix Inspire's motto is 'Creating Chances, Inspiring Success'. During the past 6 months Phoenix Inspire has started to do more than just set up a Chef and Restaurant School. We are now actively engaged in supporting the Children's Home and Kinder Gartens in Novo Selo and the neighbouring village of Vruv via local social services. We have developed a positive working relationship with members of staff from the social services.

In order to make their lives better we have organised Christmas presents for every child and winter boots. Winter clothing including hats, coats, gloves and scarves are all needed.

**Notable achievements to date include:**

The setting up Phoenix Inspire as a Non Government Organisation in Bulgaria

Registering Phoenix Inspire in the law courts of Vidin and Sofia

Establishing a partnership with the Municipality of Novo Selo, the contract confirms the fact that the Mayor of Novo Selo will work in partnership with Phoenix Inspire to establish the Chef and Restaurant School.

Donated computers, teaching aids and sports equipment to the school in Novo Selo

Donated computers, educational toys and equipment to the Kinder Gartens of Novo Selo and Vruv

Donated clothes, computers and lots of other goodies to the Children's Home in Novo Selo

Phoenix Inspire is now recognised locally as a positive and worthwhile organisation

Since I began this quest I have received a great deal of help and support from many people in the UK. This help has enabled me to collect equipment for the Chef and Restaurant School, clothes and educational toys for the Children's Home and the Kinder Gartens together with computers and sports equipment for the local school.



Ivy, Phoenix Inspire's truck to take goods to Bulgaria whilst saving money at the same time

Help from Russum's of Rotherham

Help from Stoke on Trent College

Help from Middlesbrough College

Help from Loughborough University



The lorry in Baldock collecting fridges and freezers from Hosizaki UK

Valentin with friends at Sylvester Keal in Grimsby

Loaded in Grimsby and ready to go and under 7.5tn!

Loading goodies for Bulgaria

Staff at Grimsby Institute helping Valentin and I load the lorry