

ANNUAL REPORT 2004

This year saw several projects in Brcko, Bosnia, and the start of a couple of UK and International projects; please click on any of the following links for individual project reports, or just read through the whole thing!

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[Camps Report - Summer 2004, Savudrija, Croatia](#)

The summer camps in 2001 were coordinated jointly by Svitac & Firefly International. This was the first time the summer camps project had taken place since 2001. This was due to a number of factors, such as reduction in funding and the issues involved in transferral from an international organisation to a locally run one.

The camp aimed to provide a neutral space for children away from Brcko to have a holiday and an opportunity to spend time with and make friends with other children from different backgrounds in a context where that difference matters less. The children themselves most often expressed their hopes for the camp in terms of a hope to have a good time and to meet new friends. 'I think it was great that we met new friends' (Child participant)

A second aim was to increase the confidence of the older teenagers participating in the camp by giving them the chance to act as volunteers on the camp. A significant outcome of this was that two of these teenage helpers, and one of the younger participants have since gone on to organise youth activities, such as table tennis and arts and crafts workshops in Brcko through Svitac's youth centre and with support from Svitac staff.

As a result of the positive changes in Bosnia, not least in Brcko Distrikt, in the past few years the context in which summer camps now function has been altered. There have been more opportunities for travel for some families in recent years, and more opportunities for multiethnic contact for all children. However going on holiday and being in a new environment without their families provides an opportunity for forging friendships that remains unique. Svitac worked this year on providing an opportunity for children who they have worked with for some years and who have a demonstrated commitment, in addition to trying to include those who are the most difficult to reach. This was achieved through a strong collaboration with 'Kuca Prijateljstva' (House of Friendship), Brodusa, which is a part of the Amica Network. Five participants on the camp came from this group. This was a great success, allowing a greater mixing of ethnic and social groups on the camp and will definitely be continued and expanded

on in 2005. A total number of 30 people partook in the camp, consisting of 23 participants, 2 staff and 5 international volunteers.

The international volunteers who took part in the summer camp project were from Britain, Canada and New Zealand this year and all managed to raise enough funds to pay for the cost of the camp accommodation for the participants. This practise continues to ensure the sustainability of the camp. In addition to this Brcko District government gave 3500KM to cover transport between Brcko and Savudrija, as well as some material and coordination costs.

Pre-camp training:

In response to evaluation from the 2001 camp it was decided that international and local volunteers would meet with each other, Svitac staff and camp participants in Brcko before the beginning of the summer project in order to work on ideas and activities for the camp. This was a great success allowing volunteers to 'have a trial run with planning and get a sense of our own dynamic' (volunteer). It also allowed international volunteers to gain a greater understanding of Brcko and the social and political climate the participants in the camp would be coming from. This is to be continued in 2005.

Camp Activities:

The camp consisted of a Children's camp and a Music & drama camp. Participants of Children's camp were from 8 to 11 years old and in music & drama camp were from 12 to 15 years old and participants were well occupied. Volunteers reported that team building, creative and problem-solving games worked particularly well. Local volunteers coordinated a quiz and a talent show, and these activities were among the most popular for the children.

'I felt that almost all the activities and the combination of activities broke down barriers and built confidence.' (Volunteer)

The camp was structured with several parts to the day in order to best make use of the participants time and to achieve a balance between organised activities and free social time. There were joint activities in the morning, during which participants and volunteers could give feed back about previous day and choose the activity they had enjoyed the most. This was very helpful because volunteers could find out how much participants liked their ideas and activities and improve them for future activities. After this participants and volunteers were split in the two groups and did separate activities until lunch time. After lunch everybody joined together for an activity (this was different everyday and different volunteers were responsible for the organisation). There was then the option of going to the beach or attending different activities organised by 'Veli Joza' campsite coordinators, such as football, volleyball or table-tennis. Following this participants and volunteers had leisure time, during which they could refresh themselves, listen to music, play games, socialise with other groups in 'Veli Joze' and prepare a performance for the evening. After dinner each evening every group at 'Veli Joze' did a performance representing their country and organisation that they belonged to (e.g. Bosnia and Svitac). This usually lasted around two or two and half hours and was a great way for the participants to learn about the different countries present. At the end of the night there was a disco for everybody, which our participants enjoyed as they could spend more time with new friends that

they had met during the day. On the last evening of the summer camp the children and youth who were attending Children's and Music & drama camp as well as the volunteers organised a performance to show what they had learnt during the camp. The other groups from 'Veli Joze' were invited to see the performance. At the end of the camp an evaluation was completed with participants and volunteers by an independent evaluator, Mark Chadwick.

Problems:

One of the major problems in organising this camp lay in the paperwork beforehand. Due to the internal displacement of large amounts of people, many of the children were not born in Brcko and needed to obtain birth certificate from their place of birth. The next problem was that many of them were so-called 'war children' (children born during the war). This meant many of them had double ID numbers and it took some time to coordinate between the different agencies in Federation BiH and Republic of Srpska. This in part was also due to the late application for documentation by some of the participants parents. In order to avoid this in the future it will be clearly explained that it is obligatory to get these documents one month before the beginning of the camp. On the camp itself there were initially some problems with inclusion of all the participants in activities. However camp coordinators over camp these by developing more inclusive arts activities such as kite making, where the entire group was split into pairs, and making partnerships across initial divisions such as age easier to forge.

Conclusion:

The summer camps project 2004 was a great success, and proved the viability of this project after a break of two years. The inclusion of local volunteers as camp-coordinators worked particularly well and this will be developed in the forthcoming years. The fact that some of these volunteers continued to work with Svitac during the year after the camp highlights how well this project worked. In the future it is hoped that a training program for local volunteers will be initiated during the year in order to provide them with skills necessary for camp coordination and management and thus empower them to run their own activities and take more ownership over projects. The cultural exchange aspect of this camp was slightly different to how it had been in previous years, due to the fewer numbers of international volunteers. However this was still obtained through the international participants in the 'Veli Joze' campsite. It is also hoped to bring young people from the RUGaim project in Edinburgh to participate in camp in the future.

Children's Camp Music and Drama Camp Future - 2005

For 2005 Svitac is again planning two camps: a children's camp and music & drama camp. In each camp there will be 15 children and young people (30 in total), 3 youth volunteers from Brcko (6 in total), 2 older and experienced volunteers (4 in total), and 4 international volunteers (7 in total). These participants will be Svitac's and House of Friendship's members but it is hoped that new young people will attend these camps and thus become in more projects in the future. 6 young local volunteers will be involved in this, ideally with a 50/50 gender ratio. These will be chosen through an application process and the coordinators of the project will choose 6 people from these applications. They will work together with coordinators and other older and

experienced volunteers during preparation of the activities and after the camp will attend a tri-annual training course for volunteers in order to provide them with organisational and management skills. This will then enable them to take a much greater role in the organisation and coordination of projects and the summer camp in 2006. As a result of evaluations completed by among participants, volunteers and coordinators it was decided that 'Veli Joze' campsite is the best place that Svitac has held is Summer Camp and as a result the location for the Summer Camps 2005 will not change. As with the previous camps, the summer camp 2005 will be coordinated by Gordana Varcakovic.

Children's Day, Brcko, 20th June, 2004

With Children's Day 2001 Svitac created the opportunity for children from all ethnic and social groups in Brcko to have a day together of games and fun. This project was coordinated by Mirela Ceran and supported by the UNDP. 'Kuca Prijateljstva' (House of Friendship), Amica in Brodusa also took part. The activities started at 11am on the 20th June and many children and young people participated in games and activities ranging from singing to bingo. A dance group from Kuca Prijateljstva also performed and received a very warm reception. Activities lasted until 2pm. At the end of the day the children left with many good memories of the event and many were already asking about Children's Day 2005! This is being planned for Mid-June 2005 with more activities and greater participation from other youth NGO's active in Brcko.

Future Plans: Participation of other youth NGO's in Brcko. Inviting theatre groups to participate, including Moving Theatre, a children's theatre group from Sarajevo, and a circus group from Belgrade.

NEW YEAR 2004

There was a very successful New Years Eve party for 2004/2005. This was organized by Mirela Ceran with help from Chris Avent and Hannah Delzenne. This took place in the youth centre and many children from around Brcko attended. There were performances by the dance groups and Ritam Brckog as well as many different games. Older local volunteers and students with Svitac also got involved by dressing up as rabbits and a giant chicken! At the end of the party there was a visit from Santa Claus with presents for all the children, which was very well received!

Other Project activities:

Language Classes

Language classes continue to be a very popular part of Svitac's activities. As a result of student demands the English language programme was extended to 5 different levels of tuition with 45 people taking part in these through out the year. Students pay 25 KM a month for these classes and this is proving a very effective way to obtain a level of self-sustainability for the project. Spanish classes were not provided this year due to absence of their teacher. However these will begin again in summer 2005.

Information Technology Classes

The information technology classes led by Mirela Ceran continued with great success through-out the year, with many students of different ages and backgrounds taking part. This was partially due to an advertising drive by Svitac using posters and radio advertisements. Students are working on a number of programs including Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Word and Adobe Photoshop. These courses are being used to

gain professional qualifications and extend the employability of participants. Future - looking to buy more up-to-date computers and multi-media equipment.

FUTURE - SPANISH CLASSES AND CONTINUATION OF ENGLISH AND COMPUTERS

English classes will continue in the future as well. The regular school stops at the end of June, so English class will stop too. However, they will start again in September 2005 and finished in June 2006. The price will stay the same. There will be 5 groups and target group will be children and youth from 7 to 15 years old and 50 people are expected to attend those classes. They are going to be coordinated by Gordana Varcakovic. Spanish classes are going to continue as well but they will last three months because the Spanish teacher is going to Chile to do her postgraduate degree.

Sports

A table tennis club was established by Borislav Maric, a local youth volunteer who had volunteered in summer camp project. This continues to be a great success, taking place every Thursday and Sunday. There was also a table tennis competition organised between Svitac and PRONI (another Brcko NGO) and was very well attended with 32 entries. It is planned to make this a regular event in the future.

Dance Classes

Two dance classes have been established by local volunteers. These began by using the office space and moved to the Youth Centre when it opened in September, with each class taking place 5 times a week. The group '4U' (For You) is for older participants and is coordinated by Nikolina Vukicevic. The group 'Vatreni poljubac' (Fiery Kiss)

is coordinated by Elizabet Tanasic and is for younger participants. Both of these groups have been a great success and have culminated in performances at the PRONI FOR A festival in October, at the official opening of new Youth centre in Brcko and at the Svitac New Years Eve party.

Arts and Crafts:

After the Summer Camp in 2004 a number of local youth volunteers asked to coordinate Arts and Crafts workshops, with assistance from Svitac Staff. This began in October 2004 with both Gordana and Mirela sharing the responsibility of assisting them. The classes were coordinated by Marina Tomic, Dragan Tomic and Mladen Molnar. Unfortunately as a result of other commitments Marina and Dragan were not able to continue their work with the Arts and Crafts group, but Mladen continues to work with the project and has demonstrated himself to be a very capable and committed individual. These classes have worked very well, with the volunteers gaining a feeling of responsibility and experience in youth work. The participants also enjoy working with people close to their own age group. The Arts and Crafts group has produced many great works and popular activities and provided decorations for the New Years party as well as resources for other Svitac activities.

Ritam Brckog

A rhythm workshop was established by Hannah Delzenne, and Chris Avent in November 2004. This explored music and encouraged participants to pay more observation to their surroundings and the rhythms there-in. At the same time through use of recycled materials for instruments it heightened knowledge of environmental issues and concerns. This is a topic Svitac has worked on a number of times before, for example in cooperation with CISP and UNDP for the 'Water is important' project; and in cooperation with Counterpart International for the ECO 'What do you think

about it?' project. This workshop took place in the Youth Centre and it is hoped it will continue for the forthcoming year. Dan Gorman is coming to work on it in April 2005 and to encourage local coordination of the workshop.

Studio Project, Edinburgh

Firefly International and The Forest, Edinburgh are starting a new project in the Edinburgh University Settlement Building in Bristo Place. The Forest has provided volunteers, co-ordinated by Robin Schlochtermeyer, who have built a recording studio for local young people and music groups. As a part of the same project, funds were also donated for a project centre (to include the studio - a room for grass-roots cultural and other activities, including community workshops, arts and music activities, and publishing projects. One of the first projects Firefly funded through this grant was RUGaim 2, giving young people the chance to alter their urban space.

Kids International Fundraising Website

Firefly has started a new website, Kids International. This site is aimed at making it possible for small, grass-roots organisations, particularly in post-conflict and developing countries, to raise funds by getting people around the world to click on links to the online shops they use (such as Amazon) before they shop in them. The shops will then give a percentage of the payment for any purchase to the website, which will pass the entire amount on to the organisation named. The site also contains information about ethical living, particularly ethical shopping, and aims primarily to help children's organisations. We have been assisted by 17 UN volunteers, with hundreds of shops listed, and plan to expand into a second, more general ethical shopping site this year.

International Volunteers, Brcko

Firefly and Svitac, Brcko, were assisted by a number of volunteers from around the world this year, whose enthusiasm, energy and generosity made many of our projects possible. They were:

Hannah Delzenne and Chris Avent, Project Co-ordinators, Brcko, November 2004 - March 2005

Amy Tyler-Jones, Anne Long, Danny Nugus, Nick Sankey, and Stephanie Khoury, Summer Camps Volunteers, August 2004

Dan Gorman, Project Co-ordinator, Brcko, March 2004 - Ongoing

We are very grateful to you all!

International Volunteers, Worldwide

This website and the Kids International website were made possible with the help of numerous online volunteers, most of whom we've never met! Thanks to you all, particularly Ben Courtney, Vanessa del Prado, Neha Singh, Melissa Chungfat, Shaun McGlinchey, Robert Fulton, and Paul Magee.

Financial report for year ending 31st March 2005 (in KM)

Expenditure (Brcko youth centre): 23721.18

Expenditure (Summer Camps): 9223.16

Total Expenditure: 32494.34

Total Income: 32127.16

Of the income, 24517.16 KM was donated, and the remaining 7610 KM was earned in Brcko. No income, except for materials for the studio and RUGaim, was spent in the UK - all time, web & office space, and other costs were donated. All expenditure therefore constitutes Direct Charitable Expenditure under UK law.