



Firefly International Trustees
Annual Report and Accounts
2020 - 2021



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What We Do and Why



Our Vision

Our vision is to promote peace, stability and tolerance in communities affected by war.

Our Mission

We support locally led projects working in areas deeply damaged by conflict that provide safe and inclusive spaces for children to learn and thrive.

By focusing on education, the arts, health and well-being, we help to reduce local tensions and promote peaceful dialogue.

Our Values

- We believe that empowering local organisations achieves the best outcomes for their communities.
- We make long term commitments to our partners and this security enables them to best develop their programmes.
- All children should have the right to an education and a safe childhood, enhancing the prospects of young people can help to stabilise communities
- Creative activity breaks down barriers in communities and builds self-esteem
- We offer support and access to all regardless of politics, gender, religion or ethnicity.
- We work with integrity to achieve the highest standards of accountability to our partners, donors and supporters.

Sebastian Chambers - Chair of Trustees



Welcome to our annual report

I am in awe of what our Firefly team has achieved in the past year. I am in awe of our supporters, whose hard work and generosity, have enabled us to overcome the fundraising challenges of Covid-19 and increase both the number of children in all three projects and the quality of what we offer. To all our supporters – we cannot thank you enough. Above all, I am in awe of the children we work with – their cheerfulness, thirst for education and hope for the future is what carries us all.

I re-joined the board of trustees after a two year break and then picked up the baton of chair from Margot Wilson, who stepped down as Chair last autumn. Margot has done an extraordinary amount for Firefly since becoming a trustee in 2014. She has helped us to define our strategic direction, introduced Tor, our manager, and Diana, our director, and used her media skills to transform our communications. Margot – thank you so much for all you have done.

On re-joining the board it was immediately obvious how much Firefly had developed in the past two years and how that has translated into expanding the work we do. What struck me most is how we have become an organisation with a learning mindset; constantly improving all that we do – from safeguarding to fundraising, from engaging teaching methods to monitoring children's outcomes. All thanks to Diana, Fadia, Gordana, Maria and Tor and the dedicated professionals in their teams that are enabling Firefly to flourish. Thank you to our trustees, supporters and patrons. Thank you to grant giving bodies, churches and companies that underpin our work. Thank you all.





Reference and Administration Information

Charity Number

Registered with OSCR the Scottish Charity Register
SC 028744

Charity Address

27a Royal Terrace
Edinburgh
EH7 5AH
www.fireflyinternational.org

Accountants

Thomson Cooper Accountants
22 Stafford St
Edinburgh
EH3 7BD

Banking

Barclays Bank plc

Board of Trustees

Sebastian Chambers – Chair of Trustees
Hugo Page QC
Adrian Beidas
Benedict Constable Maxwell
Charles Phillips
Mark Leishman CVO
Henrietta McMicking

Part-time Freelance Staff and Volunteers

Diana McMicking – Charity Director
Tor Crawley – Charity Manager
Maria Chambers – Projects Coordinator Firefly for Syrians and Gaza project
Fadia Shaker – Project Director (Firefly for Syrians)
Gordana Varcakovic – Project Director (Firefly in Bosnia)
Tamara Curtis Archer - Gaza project manager, Gaza partnership
Pietro Berti – Website
Eva Bersi – Social Media Volunteer Intern

Objectives and Activities



How we support our international partners

From the UK we support locally led organisations to grow and maximise the work they do. We act as an incubator for new projects as well as continuing to develop sustainability for longer term partners.

Support in fundraising

- Researching and submitting grant applications, maintaining and nurturing donor relationships, supporting partners to submit applications, networking and attending sector conferences, encouraging and supporting individual fundraising.

Support in Governance and Administration

- Ensuring good governance and compliance with OSCR requirements, project monitoring and evaluating, accounting and filing annual return, regular reporting and annual report.

Support in Raising Awareness

- Website, social media and digital activity, regular updates through newsletters and blogs, organizing promotional/fundraising events.

Achievements and Performance of Firefly in the UK and our partner organisations

- Report from Firefly International director, Diana McMicking



Firefly in the UK

2020-2021 has been a year like no other with the Covid-19 pandemic adding to the challenges our partners work with every day and to our work in the UK to support them.

Working online has changed Firefly's approach to many things and for an organisation working from 7 different countries new tech has made a very positive difference to us although we do hope to have more face-to-face meetings with trustees and partners very soon.

Fundraising this year has been made more difficult for all charities by the increasing demand for services and the threat of decreased income levels. As a small and adaptable charity Firefly has risen to the challenge and the whole team have worked very hard to find a creative and varied approach to raise money and support our partners (more on this later).

IMET2000 have supported Firefly for Syrians with funding and organisational support.

Over the last year a close relationship has developed with the Hands Up Foundation who support projects for Syrian refugees too. These partnerships are very crucial to small charities like ours for sharing information and expertise

Scotland's International Development Alliance and specifically our mentor Lindsay Graham led a very valuable strategic review as well as excellent staff training. We would like to thank Tania Natscheff, a Canadian filmmaker and social media expert who has voluntarily supported the team and especially Eva Bersi, our intern, with a social media strategy this year.

We have had tremendous support from our trustees and from our loyal supporters to have achieved a record-breaking year of fundraising which has enabled us to increase our support for 2021-22 to our partner projects. Our thanks to you all.



Firefly for Syrians

The Covid-19 pandemic has had different impacts in the locations we work in Turkey and Syria, but the Antakya team have adapted their programmes accordingly and have successfully offered an average of 676 Syrian refugee children high quality educational activity every month with over 8,000 free workshop places, online or in person, available over the year. The team have created a free YouTube channel with 2,000 Arabic, maths and science lessons. We might have expected 50,000 hits on this channel from our participants but we have had 270,000 hits, so our programme is reaching 5 times more children than expected.

Firefly in Bosnia

The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the deep divisions between the nationalities ever present in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the wars of the 1990s. Svitac (Firefly in Bosnia) has successfully continued its work with young people to build tolerance between the nationalities through creative activity. In addition, they have developed safe online space where young people have been able to share their fears, anxieties and depression caused by Covid-19 and isolation. At our 2020 Fundraising Gala, Misha Glenny (former BBC Balkans war correspondent and author of a definitive history of the Balkans as well as the award-winning televised novel MacMafia) endorsed Svitac's work saying:
"Svitac's work is absolutely critical in fashioning the future of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider area.....they need hope and optimism and not to follow the bitter memories of their parents"

Partnership project in Gaza

Our pilot partnership project with IMET2000 and ACT International supporting a CATT counselling project for children, worked remotely and in person with children suffering from PTSD due to the ongoing conflict on the Palestinian-Israeli Border. This year has seen an emphasis on developing the project to be more locally led, in line with Firefly's ethos, and the team have responded extremely well to this. Our thanks go to our three partners who have successfully adapted and developed their work in such difficult circumstances this year.

Firefly for Syrians - *Report from Project Coordinator, Maria Chambers*



In March we celebrated five years of Firefly for Syrians 2016 – 2021. Firefly International has supported this educational project set up by Syrian refugees in Antakya for Syrian refugee children displaced by the war since it started.

This is a brief synopsis of this year's work:

How our courses worked in 2020-2021

- Daily lessons in Arabic language, practical engineering and maths for hundreds of children each month from our own centre in Antakya.
- A primary school offering 145 Syrian refugee children a full- time education in Khirbet Al Jouz camp in Northern Syria. During the year we have danced between face-to-face learning inside Syria and our online learning programme. This has been developed and supported to a high level by our teachers in Antakya.
- An outreach programme in Northern Syria teaching practical engineering activity to refugee children through providing resources and online teacher training.
- The key objective is to provide a safe and productive learning environment and educational activities which will enable Syrian children to develop new skills, helping their chances of further education and future employability.



We have made a difference

- Increased the capacity and skills of our teachers inside Syria through our online training and mentoring programme.
- Provided accelerated online literacy programme for 5–7-year-olds.
- Development and implementation of our two YouTube learning channels providing continuity of learning for our students during sporadic closures and curfews due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- Tailor made resource packs distributed to support our online learning.

During 2020 we have continued to develop our online teaching in Southern Turkey and Northern Syria.

Children in Turkey were confined to their houses for four consecutive months between March 2020 and July 2020.

From September 2020 small groups of children were able to continue to do face to face monthly assessments in our centre in Antakya. We worked closely with caregivers to guide them whilst supporting children's learning from home, providing monthly guidance support and resources. In Syria our primary school has remained open throughout face-to-face classes have been enriched by online home study.



Firefly for Syrians aims to improve the rate of learning, social interaction and overall well-being of young Syrian refugees in view of their reintegration into a formalised educational system. We continue to provide a variety of much needed educational and creative opportunities despite the challenges of Covid-19.

Facing the Challenges

*“The size of the challenge this year has been huge ...
With hard work from our dedicated team, we adapted our methods, so we moved between direct education to distance education, and the challenge turned into an opportunity for our programmes to spread in faraway places and for greater numbers”*

Fadia Shaker Director.



As mentioned in Diana's report, our [You Tube](#) learning channel, set up by our Syrian staff has had over 270,000 views. With two thousand especially designed lessons uploaded (we would expect 50,000 views from the children registered in our programme).

This uptake is evidence of the quality of our online learning programme.

A link to the Firefly Syria You Tube Channel can be found [here](#)



Firefly in Bosnia (Svitac) - *Report from Svitac director, Gordana Varcakovic*



Svitac has prepared a more in depth annual report, which can be found on our [website](#) along with monthly reports - but this is a brief overview of our work and its impact.

- Svitac confronts prejudice and promotes tolerance by providing neutral space for different ethnic groups (Bosniak, Serbs and Croats) who currently live alongside, rather than with each other, in a deeply divided community, heavily influenced by ethnic differences.
- Svitac helps young people in Brčko District (Bosnia) to overcome the ethnic divides still plaguing the region since the Balkan War. It does so through a programme of arts and language classes, workshops and lively community events which provide opportunities otherwise unavailable to young people living in this small town.
- Funding from Firefly enables Svitac to remain politically independent and its work is a lifeline to young people in a region with one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in the world.



Outcomes and Impact in 2020 - 2021

- 30-40 participants attended Svitac's activities on daily basis.
- 140 participants attended activities on monthly basis.
- 600 participants attended summer activities (June-August).
- 900 participants attended Svitac's annual events.
- 1,500 people was impacted by Svitac's work on a yearly basis (this estimate includes participants, parents, relatives and friends).

What was achieved: outcomes

Svitac's participants have developed different skills (according to their needs and current abilities) and reinforced interethnic and intercultural dialogue amongst everyone involved, as Svitac offers activities for young people and children regardless of their ethnic or social background. They learned to respect each other, developed tolerance towards each other's diversities and showed solidarity and hope for better future without hatred and stress.

What difference was made: impact

Svitac's work had a broad impact at the local level by providing neutral space and equal opportunities for all members of the community to develop their skills and become more self-confident. The community benefited by interacting with the international volunteers who came from across the globe. Svitac's participants were drawn from all ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds and through promoting tolerance and reconciliation, Svitac fed into a wider peace-building process.



Svitac's Educational Activities & Events

In 2020/21, **Svitac** continued to organise and provide artistic and musical activities, both [online](#) and in face to face workshops, with the intention of engaging participants in a positive way and help them overcome fear, uncertainty, anxiety and depression caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Since peacebuilding and tolerance is at the core of its work, Svitac continues to use art and music as a universal language with the aim to develop a better understanding between groups and individuals. This includes not only young people and children, but their parents as well.

[Culture and Art Diversity around the World](#) – these are international and local volunteer-led workshops from Monday to Friday

- Language workshops – English, German, Turkish
- Creative Workshops
- [Music Workshops](#)
- Sport Workshops
- Local language lessons for international volunteers
- School homework help



Svitac's Educational Activities & Events

[Summer camps](#) – this annual event [included Creative, Language and Music camps](#). As epidemiological measures prohibited the gathering of larger groups of people in one place were in force, the camps took place separately outdoor (20 participants at each camp). [Children's Day](#) was a closed mini-event because not many participants were allowed; during the day visitors socialized in 4 separate groups. Yet, despite these limitations, we made an effort to spend some time together and enjoy this difficult time for everyone.

[International Day of Nonviolence](#) - Together with a group of young people, we implemented a graffiti workshop and sent motivational messages to the community where we loudly say that we are against violence on humanity.

Events open to the public to promote social cohesion, respect for diversity and tolerance:

- [World Children's Day](#)
- [World Refugee Day](#)
- [Anti-Fascism Day](#)
- [World Day of Social Justice](#)
- [Mother Language Day](#)
- [Anti-Racism Day](#)
- [Planet Earth Day](#)





These opportunities allowed Svitac's staff and volunteers to meet counterparts from other European youth agencies to share ideas and broaden their skills.

Svitac's staff and volunteers have been attending a number of online activities.

They participated in :

- Digital Youth Forum - the 3rd European Youth Work Convention (EYWC)
- Panel discussion - Transnational Flows and Global Hierarchies in Education
- Workshops - Development of youth work
- Moving Forward - The new European Youth Programmes and their Relevance for the Western Balkan region

Young international and local volunteers worked together to create a wonderful new mural for the Ellie Maxwell Centre in Brčko.



Firefly in Palestine – *Report from Project Coordinator, Maria Chambers*

Firefly International, IMET 2000 and ACT International partnership - Treatment for children with PTSD

“One in three children in Gaza require mental health and psychosocial support” United Nations Children's fund

Our Work

Through the course of 2020, 37 children have received CATT treatment (Children's Accelerated Trauma Therapy) from our two CATT qualified counsellors Mohammed El Sharef and Haitham Shamia with clinical supervision from Dr Ghalia Al Asha.

Among the 37 children whose referrals have progressed to CATT treatment in 2020, the (pre-treatment) symptoms and presenting issues recorded are similar to those noted in 2019: fears of the dark; hyperactivity, bedwetting and, most prevalent of all: nightmares.

Post treatment these symptoms significantly reduced in all cases, six month follow up testing revealed sustained and ongoing effectiveness of the treatment.



Facing the challenges

While our staff have managed to provide treatment to 4-5 children each month Covid-19 restrictions enforced periodically through 2020 have had an impact on activities. In April, May, September and most of October - the project's practitioners were unable to progress assessment or treatment of children and usual clinical activity was suspended.



Our staff adapted to the circumstances and responded with activities aligned with the service's larger aims of promoting the mental health and wellbeing of the children they have worked with. They did this by:

- Providing psycho-social guidance to caregivers through regular telephone contact: this activity reached out to the caregivers not only of children currently in treatment but also those who had previously received CATT treatment any time since the start of the project in July 2019
- Speaking with children directly via video call, where technology would allow

The time during heightened restrictions was also used to develop plans for the production of a short film about the project. The film was finalised by mid-October and has been uploaded to YouTube where it can be viewed [here](#)

Fundraising overview

We would like to thank all of those who support Firefly's work, whether it is through regular monthly donations or as one of our larger annual supporters. Thanks too to all the volunteers who give their time so generously to support our work. We are proud to say that your money goes directly to those who need it most with minimal amounts going on administration and fundraising in the UK.

Given the enormous challenges of a global pandemic, fundraising in 2020-21 was our most successful year ever - we raised £193,597 over the year.

Reacting immediately to the outbreak of the pandemic the Firefly team launched a £2 COVID appeal on Just Giving which raised £2,634 and a Zoom Fundraising Call in July that raised £2,330.

A virtual zoom fundraising event which replaced our usual November Gala was a hugely successful event raising £34,879 (more information follows on the next page)

We were also successful in gaining grants from trusts and foundations totalling £58,400, nearly double our budgeted total. Thanks to Nat Page for his ongoing support in developing our grant-writing capabilities.

As well as some generous individual single donations which added a further £17,000

Firefly was one of the charities nominated by our own supporters to receive one of the £1,000 Movement for Good awards from Ecclesiastical Giving.

For the second year running we were delighted to be accepted onto the Big Give Christmas Challenge platform. For one week in December they match fund every penny that our supporters give online. We raised £35,292, a fantastic increase on our £19,091 last year. We will be applying for the 2021 challenge.

Our monthly direct debits are growing and at present raise an annual total of £27,600 which is an increase from £22,500 in the previous year. This regular income helps us to plan our expenditure.



Fundraising During a Pandemic

Firefly's Zoom Fundraiser – July 2020

With the pandemic signalling a change in fundraising opportunities, we held a new style fundraiser in July. 60 supporters joined us for our very first Zoom Partners Update. We heard directly from our Project Directors in Syria and Bosnia, who spoke about the impact of Covid-19 on their work. It was a moving and powerful evening - a link to the recording can be found [here](#)



An emergency **Just Giving** 'Covid-19' Campaign in August raised just over £2,600



Firefly's £2 Emergency COVID-19 Appeal

Firefly's November Gala – by zoom!

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we had to cancel our annual November Gala, but in its place we held a virtual gala via Zoom. This was a hugely successful event that included :

- Readings from our patrons - actors Joanna David and Pandora Collin as well as Palestinian poet and film-maker Hind Shoufani.
- A variety of wonderful musical performances from Maya Youssef, Kenza Stamselberg, Rehab Azar and Clara Pople.
- Project updates from Bosnia, Syria and Gaza
- A very successful online auction led by Cat Manson alongside a silent auction.
- Balkans authority and journalist, Misha Glenny, paid tribute to the work of our long term partner, Svitac.

The evening was presented by our trustees Charles Phillips and Henrietta McMicking and with the addition of a middle eastern style suggested menu from Itab Azzam and Dina Mousawi for participants to create at home, this provided the opportunity for a very successful shared experience.

We would like to thank everyone who participated, donated auction prizes and attended via zoom. The evening raised an incredible £34,879.



A Film of the virtual gala can be seen [here](#)

The Big Give Christmas Challenge

For the second year running Firefly applied and was accepted to take part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge. We raised an incredible £35,292 up from our 2019 total of £19,091



Fundraising by Individuals

2020 wasn't the year for our supporters to take on the usual array of outdoor challenges, but we are so grateful to our supporters and individuals who choose to fundraise for us in other ways.

Thank you all so very much.



The Quite Difficult Book Quiz 2020

The Coles family created 'The Quite Difficult Book Quiz 2020' on Just Giving and raised over £1,200

The Grape Gals - Paige and Ida – organized a hugely successful virtual wine tasting event, raising an incredible £3,824.



And thank you to Martha Chambers who chose Firefly for her Facebook birthday fundraiser

Patrons and other supporters



This year we are honored to announce that Pandora Colin and Sir Andrew Cubie CBE have become Patrons of Firefly.

The Rt Hon The Lord Alderdice
Sarah Anderson
Viscountess Bridgeman CBE
Patricia Broke
Rosemary Chambers
Pandora Colin
Virginia Constable Maxwell
Lady Julia Craig Harvey
Sir Andrew Cubie CBE
Joanna David
Charles Fitzherbert

Professor Colin Green
Desiree Hickman
Caroline Hornyold MVO
Lady Zara Jellicoe
Adrienne Kennedy
Sally, Countess of Malmesbury
Roger Mitchell
Neil Stuke
The Rt Hon The Baroness Warsi PC
Dr Jeremy Wildeman

Corporate and other supporters of Firefly include:

Allen and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust
Baillie Gifford International Sponsorship Committee
Churches Together in Winchester
CIL Management Consultants
Ecclesiastical Movement for Good

Lascelles Charitable Trust
The Bert Christian Group
The George Cadbury Trust
The Perivoli Foundation



Accounts

The level of donations and grants from our supporters have enabled us to more than overcome the Covid-19 restrictions on event fundraising. It has enabled us to expand our activities with children at all three of our projects.

We have increased the level of our reserves during the financial year in line with our increased levels of activity. This level of reserves gives us the confidence to continue to support our projects in periods of fluctuating income levels.

We control our administration and fundraising expenditure carefully. We target a combined level of non project costs of 15-20% of revenue; which we consider sufficient to ensure that the charity is run on a sustainable basis.

Firefly International Accounts Year ended 31 March 2021		Actual Year to 31 Mar 21 £	Actual Year to 31 Mar 20 £
Income & expenditure account			
Income	Direct debits, donations and fundraising	135,181	122,182
	Grants	58,403	32,500
	Interest	13	19
	Total income	193,597	154,701
Expenditure	Firefly for Bosnians	50,444	35,769
	Firefly for Palestinians	6,720	3,919
	Firefly for Syrians	88,385	75,080
	Ellie Maxwell Prize	-	1,000
	Fundraising costs	3,853	8,506
	Administration	27,468	19,608
	Total expenditure	176,870	143,882
Net income / (Expenditure)		16,727	10,819
Balance sheet			
Cash at bank		72,666	55,939
General Firefly reserve		72,666	55,939
Firefly for Bosnians reserve		-	-
Firefly for Syrians reserve		-	-
Total reserves		72,666	55,939
Cash flow			
Cash bought forward 1 April		55,939	45,120
Surplus / (deficit) within the year		16,727	10,819
Increase / (use) of Syria & Bosnia reserve		-	-
Cash balance at 31 March		72,666	55,939
Non project costs as a percentage of income			
Admin		14%	13%
Fundraising		2%	5%
Admin & fundraising		16%	18%

Governance and Management

- Firefly is registered in Scotland with OSCR (Scottish Charity Register) and has a board of trustees from all over the UK who meet 3-4 times per year. The board of trustees monitors the work of Firefly in the UK and the partner organisations in Turkey/Syria, Bosnia and Gaza.
- Trustees comply with OSCR's rules and abide by Firefly's constitution. A trustee holds office in three-year terms with a maximum of 9 years.
- Firefly works with both UK based and International partners. We undertake rigorous due diligence on each partner we work with.
- In 2021 we updated our constitution and this is available on our website.





Thank you to everyone who has supported us over the last year and to our private donors who give to us each month or on a one off basis. Huge thanks too to the trusts, foundations and companies who have supported us and to everyone who has attended our zoom events and fundraised for us. Special thanks to those who have remembered us in their wills. Every donation makes a difference to the children we work with.