

Courses offered in "Magic" Maths, Origami, Arabic, Turkish and English language, handcrafts and applied sciences. We also have an annual outing to a local sports village for our children.

Numbers

A total of **312 pupils** attended our courses this year. This exceeded our projected numbers of 240 pupils.

Due to high demand we renovated a store room on the roof, into another classroom, enabling us to offer more places.

(We provided 360 course places, but retained 48 pupils for a second course as this cohort of children needed greater input with basic literacy and psycho social in house support.)

Registration

We are registered with the Turkish Government and have a board of Turkish nationals supporting our project. We employ a Turkish accountant and aim to meet all governmental regulations. Fadia Shaker, Project Leader submits monthly accounts to Firefly International. Maria Chambers, Firefly Project Coordinator, checks all receipts and accounting procedures and has visited the project on a quarterly basis in order to support and assist with future planning and to understand the changing situation on the ground.







Our Staff Project Leader

Project Leader Fadia Shaker is responsible for the recruitment of staff, accounting, staff development, day to day running of the center and pupil welfare. She also teaches Maths and develops the Arabic language curriculum.

Curriculum Development

Mohammed Tarafa is responsible for curriculum development, course evaluation and school liaison.

He also teaches Science.











Science Specialist Teachers

We currently have four-part time Science specialists responsible for delivering the Applied Science programme. They are all from professional engineering backgrounds.

Language Teachers

Our Language teachers are responsible for delivering the language programme and also three dimensional Maths.



First Year Overview

It has been a very positive year. Since opening the centre the project has evolved and developed to meet the changing needs of displaced Syrian refugee children.

Our courses attracted children that had very interrupted schooling, combined with acute psycho social needs, following their war experiences. A caring culture has nurtured these children and the center has developed an excellent reputation locally.

In September 2016 the Turkish government made it a legal requirement that all children attend school. The following six months children were registered in schools, in very overcrowded classes, taught in Turkish. Illiterate children regardless of age were being placed in reception classes. Children were referred to UOSSM (Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations) children's support services and taught in small groups to address these needs.

Situation for Syrian families in Antakya

The border is firmly closed and it is increasingly difficult to cross. This has resulted in a reduction of newly arrived refugees. There was a spike in arrivals post the siege in Aleppo and a few arrivals each month. Some of our staff have wives and children inside Syria, who are unable to join them. This is a common situation. Our children are from broken family groups, bereavement and dispersed families are the norm. Orphaned children are being absorbed into wider family groups. The cost of living and rising inflation, continue to put pressure on all refugees. Employment opportunities are very limited and new rules introduced in March 2017 restricting the movement of Syrians out of Hatay Province, are adding to the pressure. The coming year presents many challenges which we will continue to meet.

Benefits of your donation

For children....

- Stepping stone back into education
- Space for friendships and play in a collaborative learning environment
- Creative project based approach: love of learning, basic literacy, numeracy and love of language.

For staff...

- Much needed regular income
- Further professional development
- Sense of empowerment and normality
- Platform to develop own ideas and respond to changing needs.

For the wider community....

- Value in education
- All funds going directly into the local economy
- Happy children bringing hope for the future.

First Course



Magic Maths, Language Classes, Origami

70 pupils attended this course

50% of these pupils have had no education

50% had interrupted schooling, missing school between 1-3 years

15% had acute psycho social needs and were referred to UOSSM children's services, of these two children required ongoing support.



Reduction in the number of newly arriving refugees, as the border became more impenetrable. We distributed Red Crescent food packages to some of our families. Local fundraising supported 15 pupils incomes, enabling them to stop working and attend our programme.

Outcomes

Fifty percent of our pupils registered in school by the end of the course.

Our pupil tracking system showed that all pupils had advanced one full school year, during the three month course. A benefit of small class numbers, hunger for learning and individual needs being met.





Second Course



Science and 3D Programme

50 pupils attended this course

10% not attending school

5% pupils in part time work

Situation in Turkey during these three months

It has become law for all children to be registered in school, although there are not enough places available. Huge class sizes mean a very chaotic few months for schools. We insist that all pupils wishing to register on our courses are registered in school

Outcomes

Good relationships established with local schools. 60 % of our pupils had exceeded academic expectations and psycho social needs were addressed in house, through small class sizes and nurturing individual needs. Active learning focused on 3D activities, this provided a foundation for a love of learning and dramatic improvements in pupil attainment in their schools. 10% of non-school attenders were placed in schools.





Firefly for Syrians July 2016

Third Course











Science, Maths, Languages and Computer Courses

70 pupils attended weekend courses 50 pupils attended weekday courses

10% of pupils have had no education and were new arrivals

50% had interrupted schooling missing school between 1-3 years

25% had registered in school but were school refusers

Situation in Turkey during these three months

New arrivals had made dangerous border crossings due to worsening situation in Aleppo.

Illiterate pupils were being placed in school classes with five year olds regardless of their age. The curriculum is taught in Turkish, leading to high numbers of pupils not attending school. We have identified especially high numbers of girl school refusers aged 12 and above.

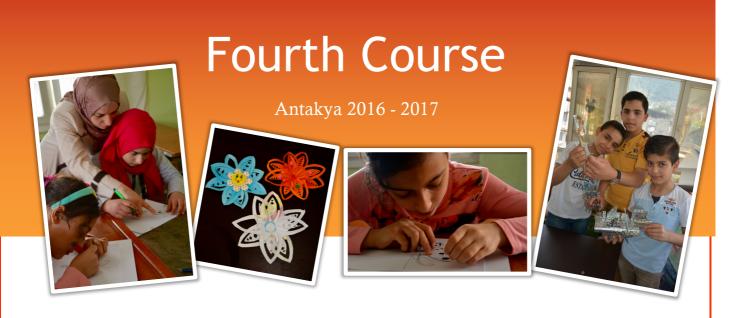
Outcomes

30% Pupils hyperactive, very demanding course for our staff addressing individual needs. Small group sizes, prizes and high expectations resulted in a reduction of psycho social hyperactivity. Literacy levels improved but the three-month course wasn't long enough for 40% of these pupils to achieve a basic level of literacy. For this reason, we retained these pupils for the fourth course.





Firefly for Syrians Oct 2016



Arabic Language, Science, Maths and Computer Classes.

70 pupils attended weekend Science Programme

40% pupils were retained from our previous course, 5 pupils were identified as gifted and talented and placed in an accelerated learning programme

Arabic language classes three different levels identified. Teenage Girls Programme registrations.

3 new pupil arrivals from Idlib area in Syria

Situation in Turkey during these three months

Reduction of newly arriving refugees. High inflation and increased rental costs has put increased pressure on families. Few employment opportunities and new governmental rules have been introduced restricting the movement of Syrians outside Hatay province, resulting in separation of families and fewer employment opportunities.

Outcomes

All pupils achieved basic literacy in our Arabic language programme. A streaming system to cater for high achievers and a project based approach to science developing independent learning skills has helped meet the varying needs of our pupils. 25% of our pupils are now in the top 10% of their classes at school.



Firefly for Syrians Jan 2017



Finances

Firefly Antakya			Actual	Budget
Income and expenditure account	Actual	Actual	14 Months	Year
Year to 31 March	2015-16	2016-17	2016-17	2017-18
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Grant (Perivoli et al)	22,500	20,000	42,500	42,500
Other grant income		2,500	2,500	3,500
Donations	0	10,182	10,182	16,500
Total income	22,500	32,682	55,182	62,500
Expenditure				
Staff costs	920	26,762	27,682	40,000
Property costs	989	5,096	6,085	8,000
Equipment and consumables	2,087	4,812	6,899	8,000
Other costs	281	1,152	1,433	3,500
Bank changes in UK	0	322	322	500
Total expenditure	4,277	38,145	42,422	60,000
Increase (decrease) of cash held in Antakya	1,723	1,915	3,638	0
Net income in the UK	16,500	-7,378	9,122	2,500
Firefly Antakya	31 March	31 March	31 March	31 March
Balance sheet	2016	2017	2017	2018
	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank in Antakya	1,723	3,638	3,638	3,638
Cash at bank in the UK	16,500	9,122	9,122	11,622
Total cash	18,223	12,760	12,760	15,260
Represented by				
Reserve held in Turkey for Antakya project	1,723	3,638	3,638	3,638
Reserve held in the UK for Antakya project	16,500	9,122	9,122	11,622
, ,	18,223	12,760	12,760	15,260

Aims for the coming year

To continue to deliver language, handcrafts, literacy and science programmes.

To address the illiteracy levels in girls and reduce levels of school absenteeism amongst girls over the age of 10. We are targeting girls aged 10-16 developing our accelerated learning programme with them.

Girls summer programme is planned focusing on cooking skills and reinforcing basic literacy numeracy and Turkish language skills with the aim of providing girls with a foundation for supplementing family incomes in the future.

To attract further grant funding in order to replicate similar sized centres in Hatay Province, using our centre and staff as a training base for future centres. Thus capacity building amongst the Syrian refugee community.

To continue to develop links between the local Turkish and Syrian Community.

Premises

We continue to rent the first floor of a building behind the Savon hotel in central Antakya. The space is serviceable, quite run down but in an optimum location for our catchment, close to some of the poorest displaced Syrians. We continue to look for alternative premises in this area.

Staff

All staff recruitment is coordinated by Fadia Shaker, project leader. She has recruited excellent staff throughout the year. She has introduced a weekend specialist science programme employing expert teachers in specific subject areas. She has set up a programme of support for staff and regularly observes and evaluates lessons, ensuring continuing staff development.

Workshops and activities

These have evolved: our initial courses focused on magic maths, language classes in Arabic, English and Turkish. Courses were also offered in creative arts, pottery and origami. There is now a two tiered programme: weekend workshops in three dimensional design using construction materials, biology - understanding of plants, chemistry and Arabic language. Weekday workshops focus on creative approaches to literacy and numeracy.

Firefly International

This project enables us to deliver our core value of incubating a locally run organisation, empowering skilled displaced Syrian staff to develop and deliver their own programme which addresses the rapidly changing needs of their community.

By supporting the Antakya project Firefly has been able to attract further funding from "Covenant for the Poor" and "A village in Syria" for the coming year as well as individual donations. We are ambitious to use the evidence of this programme to try to achieve further funding. Our Antakyian center, although small, is having a significant impact. Our future vision is to attract further grant funding in order to replicate similar sized centres in Hatay Province, where children are taught in small groups, using our centre and staff as a training base for future centres. Thus capacity building amongst the Syrian refugee community.

Personal stories from our children.....

11-year-old boy

"I left Syria when I was seven years old. I am from a small village near Idlib. We didn't have a school but I did a course in Arabic language and Maths for a few months. There was so much fighting there so we left to live in Turkey. I have been in Turkey for 4 years and been at school for one year now. At first it was hard I didn't know people on the street and they didn't know me. I didn't know who I could trust. I prefer being in Turkey because inside Syria you could see the death and killing in people's eyes, I don't see that in Turkey."

What do you like about starting school and coming to our centre?

"I like learning everything especially languages. I enjoy learning about all things in life that I didn't know before. In school we learn many things but not in detail, at the Firefly Centre we understand the detail of the problem. Because we are making things, we learn how to solve the problem and make things work. I have learnt about how electricity works and about alternative powers. I really enjoyed learning about the science of space. Ustaz Walid's lessons are so interesting: he teaches us about motors and mechanical machines. In the past I saw steam motors, but now I know about electricity and magnetic mechanics."

What do you want to do in the future? How can our centre help you with this?

"In the future I want to be an architectural engineer. I will need a high level of Maths and to think in three dimensions. I think if I can keep coming to this centre you can help me get the skills I need. I really enjoy lessons here. I want to improve my Arabic language, reading and writing. I have good friends here, I am very happy."

12-year-old boy

"I left Aleppo when I was six years old. We moved to a town east of Aleppo because it was safer there in the beginning. I didn't go to school in Aleppo but when we moved I went to school for three years, inside Syria. The first year we had books and learnt Arabic and Maths. Then *Daesh* (ISIS) came and they took all our books. Sometimes people would just walk into your house and hit you, we were afraid. We had to study without books, it was so different. We learnt religion, Arabic and simple Maths. After two years we left and came to Antakya, to leave the fighting. The first year here there was no school, then one opened for Syrians in the afternoon, so I come to the centre every morning and I go to school every afternoon."

How is Turkey different to Syria?

"It is safe in Turkey. People don't just walk into your house; it doesn't happen here. We don't see the war here. It was a little hard at first, I couldn't understand Turkish, everything was different we didn't know the people or the city. I can speak in Turkish now and we study at school. I have made many friends since coming here."

What do you like about starting school and coming to our centre?

"I am in the fourth class at school now and we learn so much information, but there isn't enough explanation at school, for example, they talk about kilometers, but I didn't know what that means. At the centre I learnt exactly what a kilometer means - that it is the same thing as one thousand meters and I can see a meter, I can measure it, I can touch it. At the centre the teachers talk in a high level to us, but this is good because they explain things and we make things, so we understand."

What do you want to do in the future? How can our centre help you with this?

"In the future I want to be a civil engineer. I want to get a high level of Arabic reading and writing and be very strong in Maths. I want to help to build Syria again. Maybe I will have a business with Ahmad and my brother."

13-year-old girl:

"I left Syria four years ago, I am from Idlib. I went to a Syrian governmental school for four years. We left our town and stayed inside Syria for 6 months before we came to Reyhanli. I went to school in Reyhanli for one year before coming to Antakya. It was hard to learn Turkish to begin with, but now I can speak it well enough to make good relationships with Turkish people. My parents are both Doctors but they are open minded and are happy for me to follow my dream to be a space scientist. I have been interested in space since the age of ten. I am really happy to come to the centre to use the computers to research about space and to learn more about science. The teachers here really help us and encourage us to understand many things deeply. I must improve my English and I am working hard at this as many articles on the internet are in English. Alhamdulilah (Praise be to God) I am strong at Maths. I want to thank you for opening this centre and giving me the chance to research my dream and support me in this."



14-year-old girl:

"I am from Latakia in Syria. We left Syria four years ago because of the bombing. First we lived in Tripoli in Lebanon and then we travelled to Beirut. Life was hard in Lebanon, so then we moved to Cairo. I went to school there for nine months. The education wasn't good, we didn't have books and it was hard to learn. So then my family moved again, this time to Turkey. I have been studying at a Syrian school here, for three years. One of my friends was talking about how a hydraulic arm worked and I was interested. She told me she came to this centre, so I came and registered for the science programme. I really enjoy learning Physics and Maths here and doing Science Activities. At school we learn theories but at the centre we're taught how to really understand how things work, by making things. I haven't decided yet what I want to do in the future, but I am really interested in both Pharmacy and Engineering."

Firefly for Syrians, Antakya

STAFF VOICES....

Conversations with our science teachers

All our science teachers arrived in Turkey about six months ago. Working in our centre provides them with a much needed regular monthly income. They were from Hama working as factory engineers two in a spinning factory and one in water waste management for the Syrian government. The situation changed for them when the Syrian government demanded that they join the army. They didn't want to be in a situation where they had to kill and had no choice, but to flee. All three made the very dangerous border crossing to Turkey, walking for nine hours leaving, their wives and young children inside Syria. During our often upsetting conversation, they described the pain of having to make this decision, to not be able to see their children for an unknown length of time, with the possibility of never being able to return or see their parents again. They are currently trying to bring their families to join them.

How do you find working in our centre?

"All children in this centre are like my own children, I haven't seen my children for a long time, these are my children now"

"We really enjoy working here we are able to develop our own lessons and we have the materials we need to teach. We have learnt how to teach children the basic principles of engineering through working in three dimensions and we have learnt many things from Ustaz Tarafa such as how to communicate things in different ways to children of different ages, the importance of building on what pupils know and working at their pace. The children here are very bright but they have had very little education.

"We feel very supported by the management here, we are given the freedom to teach what we want and we are encouraged in this. Our opinions are valued and we work as a team trying to give our children the best experience."

How would you like to develop what you have started here?

"We want to make scientists for a new Syria, we want to help the children build their futures, we want to pass our knowledge on to them.

We would also like to be able to teach these children how to use CAD design programmes and up to date ways of learning engineering."

Are there any problems?

"It would be good to have more computers in order to teach up to date ways of engineering design. The building is old, but it is in a good area for reaching some of the poorer Syrian families who have few opportunities and this is important: so many of these children are very intelligent and have had such bad experiences."

STAFF VOICES....

Conversations with our Language teachers

Our Language teachers have developed a scheme of work and interactive resources appropriate for children that have had limited access to education. Our language teachers have arrived in the last two years from Syria. They both expressed joy in being able to teach again and work. As the year progressed, they have focused on delivering an Arabic language programme, as many of the children are illiterate in Arabic and being taught in Turkish in school. The importance of learning the Arabic letters and being able to read and write in Arabic, is really valued amongst this displaced community and is being addressed by our centre. Our teachers have developed a highly accessible programme, enabling children to achieve a basic level of literacy in their mother tongue.

How do you find working in our center?

"It is hard work teaching languages to children who have had such limited learning opportunities. I really enjoy using role play, magnetic letters and internet resources to make the lessons dynamic and appealing to our children. The centre has good equipment and we are able to make our own resources, to bring our lessons alive. We are supported by Fadia with our planning and she really helps us develop our teaching programmes. We are given good guidance but also the freedom to develop our own approaches."

How would you like to develop what you have started here?

"We want our children to be confident in reading and writing in Arabic and Turkish, this is a focus for us. We also want to introduce our children to English in a gentle way. We want our children to enjoy learning through a playful approach."

Are there any problems?

"It is challenging working with children with a wide range of abilities. It can also be confusing for them learning two languages, so in the centre during this course, we are concentrating on teaching Arabic. During the summer programme we will offer a short Turkish language course and an English course.

We have had great success with our courses. All our children in the first level now know their Arabic letters. We have three different levels of classes and we vary the activities in each class to keep the children interested. In this way we are overcoming the problems as they arise."