



Firefly International

"building bridges through education and the arts"

Annual Report 2018 - 2019





Firefly International

“building bridges through education and the arts”

Firefly is a small charity that makes a huge impact changing thousands of children’s lives each year.

Working in areas deeply damaged by conflict we support locally led projects 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.

More often than not, our partners lack the required resources to address their problems with local solutions and to forge and maintain international links for funding.

Firefly International supports their vital endeavours by fundraising, providing management and administrative services, raising awareness of projects and recruiting international volunteers.

- R** Reaching out to young people denied the rights of a child by conflict
- E** Education to enhance future prospects
- A** Arts to nurture creativity and build self-esteem
- C** Core funding and support for partners with project management
- H** Healing divisions and psychological traumas in conflict or post-conflict communities

Welcome and the year at a glance from Director Diana McMicking

- Firefly has had a successful 20th anniversary year with more children and young people than ever benefiting from life changing educational opportunities through our partners in Turkey, Syria and Bosnia.
- I have visited both Bosnia and Antakya over this year. Each place has its own set of unique challenges but our teams work tirelessly to give children and young people opportunities which equip them with confidence and improved life chances.
- We are a very small charity with two part time freelance staff, based in the UK and a very busy team of volunteers who help us to deliver our ambitious programme with our partners.
- We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who support us week in week out with our work, without them it would not be possible. I would also like to thank our trustees for their continued support and to welcome Mark Leishman to the Board of Trustees
- In March we held the [20th anniversary celebrations](#) of Firefly at the University of Edinburgh where it all started with Ellie Maxwell in 1999. The event was organized with a committee of 8 Edinburgh student volunteers, Ella Sandelson, Tim Constable Maxwell, Oly Dobson, Elle Carter, Justine Van Bloeme, Hadeel Abutaleb, Camille Bos and Flora Pringle Patterson. This team has supported us all year with administrative and social media work as well as helping to form the Ellie Maxwell Award and the event. Most of them are continuing to support us next year from wherever they are. We hope to continue to build our relationship with the University and to develop our volunteering opportunities at home and abroad for young people who bring energy, ideas and enthusiasm to our charity.
- In March we launched the [Ellie Maxwell Award](#), which is an annual Edinburgh University prize funded by Ellie's family and friends to support students working on innovative projects to deliver social change. Many thanks to our judges for this year: Amal Azzudin, Adrian Beidas, Mark Chadwick and Ben Constable Maxwell.
- Firefly has joined the [Scottish International Development Alliance](#) and taken part in some of their training and conferences this year. These opportunities have helped us to build our longer-term strategy and supported us with governance and accountability procedures.
- We would like to thank all of those who support Firefly's work, whether it is through regular monthly donations, attending our events, taking on a fundraising challenge or as one of our larger annual supporters. 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.

Firefly International supports:

Firefly for Syrians

2019 has seen Firefly's support for the educational programme for Syrian refugees in Antakya grow. Since 2016 Firefly International has supported an educational project set up by Syrian refugees in Antakya for children displaced by the war. Firefly for Syrians runs a centre in Antakya in south east Turkey for hundreds of children each week. Its 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.



The staff have developed a creative and experiential teaching technique for Arabic language, maths and science which is unique in a traditional learning environment and very appropriate academically and psychosocially to the needs of the children.

In addition the staff teach in other Syrian cultural and education centres throughout Antakya offering hundreds of young refugees weekly the opportunity to close the gap of the lost schooling they have experienced through the impact of the war [Firefly for Syrians educational opportunities](#)

Firefly for Syrians

Antakya staff have created a practical engineering programme which they deliver through model-making – like Meccano.

They produce these kits in the Antakya centre and they are sent in to the refugee camps on the Turkish/Syrian border. To support teachers in the camps the Antakya team have developed online resources to deliver the engineering theory through the model making. [Learning support in refugee camps](#)



The organisation in Antakya is monitored by Firefly's project coordinator, Maria Chambers. She recruited the staff in Antakya and has supported the team out there in setting up and developing the centre. She monitors the project through quarterly visits and constant contact. The project has a local board that includes both Turkish and Syrians nationals who uphold the Turkish government's administrative requirements.

There is a team of eleven at the centre and further part time staff in Northern Syria.

This year our numbers have grown rapidly and our staff are developing further online resources in order to reach the waiting list.



Firefly International supports:

Firefly in Bosnia (Svitac)

Firefly's local partner [Svitac](#) helps young people in [Brčko](#) (Bosnia) to overcome the ethnic divides still plaguing the region since the Balkans War. It does so through a year-round programme of arts and language classes, workshops and lively community events which provide opportunities otherwise unavailable to young people living in this small city.

Svitac has a director, a volunteer manager, a centre manager, a full time teacher and one part time teacher all supported by local and international volunteers.



Svitac brings international volunteers from all over the world to Brčko and they help to develop and deliver the varied programme and to connect the young people of Bosnia to the wider world. Firefly International's support to Svitac reflects its commitment to provide long-term core funding to partners in conflict or post-conflict regions even after these areas stop receiving media attention.

[Film on Svitac](#)

Firefly International's Role

Our contribution to our local 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 grants applications
- maintaining and expanding donor relationships
- supporting partners to submit applications
- networking and attending sector conferences

Support in Management and Administration

- producing project reports for major donors
- ensuring compliance with OSCR requirements
- project monitoring and evaluating
- writing annual reports
- accounting and filing annual return

Support in Raising Awareness

- website, social media and digital activity
- regular updates through newsletters and blogs
- promotional/fundraising events
- building and maintaining supporters databases

Support in Volunteer Recruitment

- recruiting and managing volunteers for FF activity in the UK. The majority of our work in the UK is done voluntarily
- Recruiting volunteers for our international projects

Firefly International Accounts Year ended 31 March 2019		Actual Year to 31 Mar 19 £	Actual Year to 31 Mar 18 £
Income & expenditure account - year to 31 March			
Income	Direct debits, donations and fundraising	126,043	90,958
	Grants	36,000	33,614
	Interest	13	-
	Total income	162,056	124,572
Expenditure	Firefly for Bosnians	40,161	32,613
	Firefly for Palestinians	10,611	7,161
	Firefly for Syrians	59,014	56,488
	Fundraising costs	7,613	3,884
	Administration	22,742	17,793
	Total expenditure	140,141	117,939
Net income / (Expenditure)		21,915	6,633
Balance sheet - at 31 March			
Cash at bank		45,120	23,205
General Firefly reserve		45,120	17,705
Firefly for Bosnians reserve		-	5,500
Firefly for Syrians reserve		-	-
Total reserves		45,120	23,205
Cash flow - year to 31 March			
Cash bought forward 1 April		23,205	16,568
Surplus / (deficit) within the year		26,915	16,633
Increase / (use) of Syria & Bosnia reserve		(5,000)	(10,000)
Cash balance at 31 March		45,120	23,205
Non project costs as a percentage of income			
Admin		14%	14%
Fundraising		5%	3%
Admin & fundraising		19%	17%

FIREFLY FOR SYRIANS IN DETAIL

Bridging the gap – Learning Activities for Syrian Refugee Children

Website: <http://fireflyinternational.org/what-we-do/firefly-for-syrians/>



Description

This project 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 have provided a variety of much needed educational and creative opportunities combined with psychological support.

What was done: our courses

The project has been designed and is being run by Syrian refugees, with support in framing and funding coming from Firefly International. This approach is unusual in a fluid situation like that faced by refugees, where they typically are offered some form of assistance without participating in how it is designed.

Our staff have developed a creative science curriculum supported by resource packs that are made by our engineer teachers. These underpin and engage children in learning complex mathematical and scientific approaches in an environment where educational resources are rare and there are huge gaps in the teaching of the sciences.

2018-2019 has been a year where we have expanded our outreach programme in southern Turkey and northern Syria.

2,063 refugee children have regularly attended our workshops this year.



What was achieved – our programmes this year



The programme introduces the principles and laws of mechanical physics and dynamics of movement for children and students in a simple way through theoretical and practical lessons, enhancing the skills of teamwork, creative solutions, individual creativity.



The workshops revisit basic elementary mathematical principles, strengthen pupils foundational logical skills by teaching them to find appropriate solutions in simple ways. We also ran a ten month accelerated learning program for teenagers in preparation for higher educational opportunities.



Teaching children Arabic reading and writing using play-based interactive educational methods. This program addresses illiteracy in the mother tongue which is widespread amongst Syrian refugee children.



Establishment of a Firefly Primary school in Syria for the first, second and third grades. This is situated in a camp close to the Turkish border providing much needed primary education as well as weekly applied science classes.

The difference we have made

We have increased the capacity and skills of our staff through training and further professional development. We have significantly increased the number of student places in the city of Antakya and Urfa in Turkey and inside Syria (Idlib, west of Aleppo, Latakia countryside).

In April 2018: 301 children attended our workshops

In March 2019: 1,129 children attended our workshops.

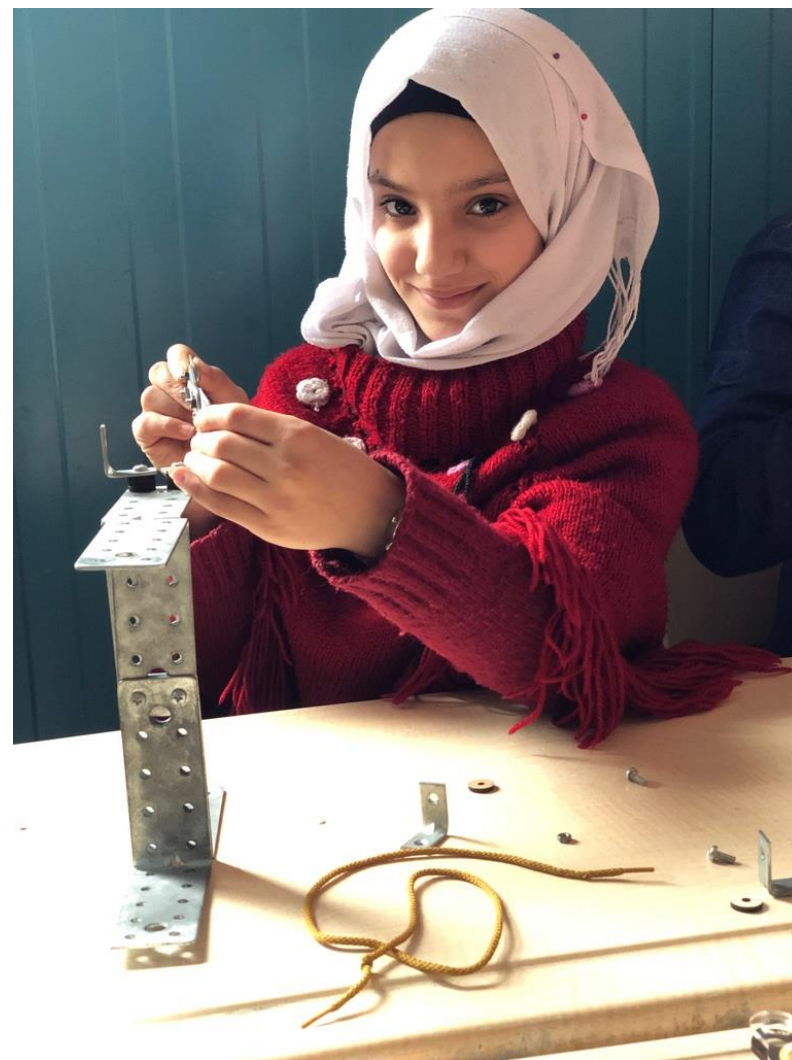
An incredible 400% increase.

Firefly for Syrians

No. of students by location

Year to 31 March 2019

Programme	Syria	Turkey	Total
Applied science – Meccano	488	1,110	1,598
Applied science – entry level	0	187	187
Creative mathematics	0	81	81
Arabic language (creative arts approach)	0	124	124
Primary school	703	0	703
Total	1,191	1,502	2,693



Bridging the gap – Learning Activities for Syrian Refugee Children

The difference Firefly has made...

In addition to the programmes we offer in our centre in Antakya, the number of institutions (schools, institutes, etc.) where we are teaching has reached 22 in a variety of locations in Turkey and Syria.

Increasing literacy, social skills and future opportunities.



“I realise that although we are refugees we have advantages we have continued to develop, we are open to new ideas and hungry to serve our children in the best way we can....”



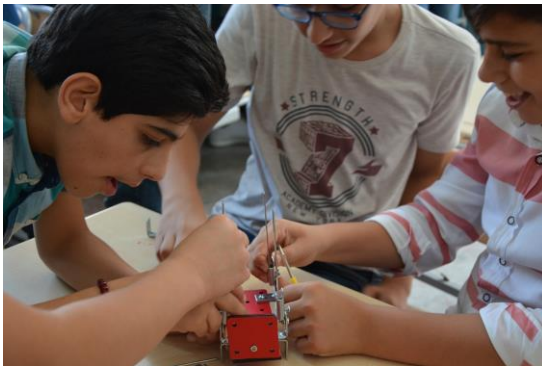
...We have developed a strong team here and our work is progressive and exciting. Our job now is to train and share these skills with our colleagues inside Syria. For this reason, our online teacher training programme is so important.”

Ustaz T, Head of curriculum, Firefly Antakya



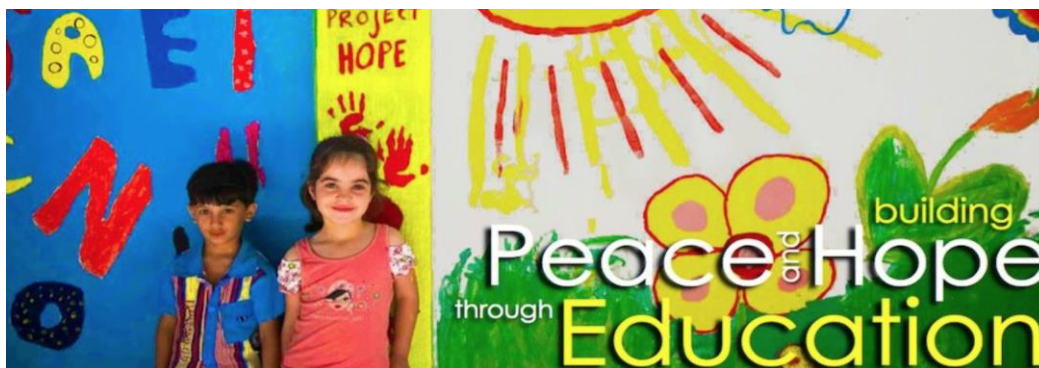


"I make things with my hands: by making models it helps me understand the maths and the way things work. I am more interested when Ustaz teaches us the theory" Syrian child participant



"We are making a significant difference by providing practical and creative ways of learning complex theories, engaging children who have had very interrupted education due to their war experiences."

FIREFLY SUPPORT FOR PROJECT HOPE



[Project Hope](#) is a Palestinian non-profit organisation providing youth development and cultural activities in the West Bank city of Nablus 70 km north of Jerusalem and Ramallah. Nablus as a community was devastated by intense conflict and military confrontations during the Second Intifada in the 2000s. This left prodigious economic, health, education and socio-cultural scars on the community, from which it has never been able to fully recover.

In this context, Project Hope has served thousands of Palestinians and hosted over 1,500 volunteers since inception in 2003. Project Hope had been a partner with Firefly International since 2007, when then CEO-cofounders/founders Dr [Jeremy Wildeman](#) and [Ellie Maxwell](#) established a partnership to send British residents to Nablus through the European Voluntary Service programme, from 2007 to 2010 as well as offering fundraising and organisational support

In 2018 our final year of support we were able to find, oversee and propose an outstanding digital mapping project for women in Nablus. This was designed by former Firefly trustee Dr Sandy Marshall, who ran [similar projects](#) in Sarajevo and Beirut. The grant application was supported by Firefly's long-time grant-manager [Dr Ben Boulton](#) and received funding from the Canada Fund through the work of Dr Wildeman.

We hope this project will not only yield outstanding results for young people in Nablus, but also long-term support for Project Hope from the same funding stream. *We also wish them all the best in the future in their ongoing, important community work!*

FIREFLY BOSNIA (SVITAC) IN DETAIL

**Helping Bosnian children overcome ethnic divides
through arts and education**

Website: <http://fireflybosnia.org/> - **Video:** <https://youtu.be/ef6rUkn1i2I>



Context

Svitac was founded by Ellie Maxwell (UK) as the Firefly Youth Project in 1998 – three years after the end of the Bosnian War (1992-1995).

Brčko, a multi-ethnic enclave in the north-east of Bosnia and Herzegovina is unique in its multiculturalism, as it is the only region of the country where all nationalities co-exist and where no nationality makes up a dominant percentage of the population. After the war, the Dayton Agreement granted this city a special status, leaving it under direct UN control. Brčko District was established in 1998 as a neutral, multi-ethnic, self-governing administrative unit. It is the only multi-ethnic entity in Bosnia and, as such, is a model for a tolerant, inclusive and multi-ethnic Bosnia.

During the conflict, Ellie was an aid worker and through her experiences, came to believe that shared creative activities and contact with the outside world can play an important part in reducing tensions linked to sectarian violence. Because of its past and multi-ethnic population, Ellie chose Brčko for her reconciliatory youth work and was applauded for doing so by the then UN Brčko Supervisor, Robert W. Farrand:

“There is a crying need for creative outlets for the youth of Brčko. Firefly’s programs fill as much of this need as they can, and are limited only by resources...I cannot overemphasise the respect that the local community and NGOs have for the work done by Firefly Youth Project”

Svitac confronts prejudice and promotes tolerance by providing a neutral space for the different ethnic groups (Bosniak, Serbs and Croats) to come together. Currently these 3 ethnic groups live alongside, rather than with each other, in a deeply divided community heavily influenced by ethnic identity.

Firefly International remains committed to support Svitač’s mission to seeding the heart of Brčko youth with love and respect for each other, and ensure them a better future through arts and education. This commitment reflects Firefly International’s aspiration to provide long-term core funding to partners in conflict or post-conflict regions.

FIREFLY BOSNIA - SVITAC

Everyday Activities

In 2018/19, **Svitac's Educational Activities** continued to provide local children and young people with unique opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills, while connecting together, and with the rest of the World:

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

- Language workshops – English, German, Turkish
- Drama Workshops
- Sport Workshops
- Local language lessons for international volunteers
- School homework help

Music Workshops (Samba percussion, guitar, piano)

Participants were exposed to different aspects of music, such as learning to play an instrument, reading sheet music, ear training, composition and team work in a group setting. As listening is the most important part of these activities, participants have come to understand and appreciate music's power as a channel of communication through interacting amongst one another, not just as mere consumers, but as creators of their own ideas.

Cooperation with Brčko District schools – Svitac's International Volunteers helped local schools by providing attendees with a unique opportunity to speak with foreign language native speakers.



FIREFLY BOSNIA - SVITAC

Annual Activities

Spring Festival - Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Svitac's international and local volunteers, the event was a big success. Around 110 participants, including guests from Glossa – Centre for German language (who also participated in the programme), had a great time socialising and enjoying the programme of activities set up by Svitac's staff and volunteers.



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

- [Children Day](#)
- [Anti-Racism Day](#)
- [Anti-Fascism Day](#)
- [Halloween](#) and [New Year's Eve](#)
- [Youth Summer Camps](#)
- [FutureShorts Film festival](#)
- [Tolerance and culture diversity through music, art and sport](#)

FIREFLY BOSNIA - SVITAC

International Outlook

In 2018/19, **Svitac** very much appreciated collaborating with 19 international volunteers from UK, Germany, Turkey, the Netherlands, Italy, Canada and USA who came through European Solidarity Corps (ESC), weltwärts and self-funded volunteering programmes.



Svitac also hosted two [study groups](#) when 30 young people from all over the world had the opportunity to learn about [intercultural youth work](#).

Sending EVS/ESC and 'Weltwärts' (German volunteering programme). Five volunteers from Bosnia were doing their volunteering service in Germany, Spain and Italy (6, 10 and 12 months).



Svitac's staff and volunteers have been attending seminars abroad. Svitac's EVS coordinator took part in 6th Global ECPD Youth Forum in Serbia, [International Peace Academy](#) in Germany and an event 'Key to inclusion: European Solidarity Corps' in Slovenia exploring and supporting inclusive projects in the frame of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme. These opportunities allowed Svitac's staff and volunteers to meet counterparts from other European youth agencies to share ideas and broaden their skills.

Outcomes and Impact



In 2018/19:

- **30-40** participants attended Svitac's activities on a daily basis.
- **135** participants attended activities on a monthly basis.
- **600** participants attended summer activities (June-August);
- **900** participants attended Svitac's annual events.
- **1500** people were 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 a better future without hatred and stress.

What difference was made: impact

Svitac's work had a broad impact at the local level by providing a 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.

FIREFLY INTERNATIONAL

Fundraising events and other initiatives

The Midsummer Supper Club

In June the Firefly Edinburgh team organised this small intimate supper club, held at The Century General Store. It was a friendly relaxed event, with simple Middle Eastern inspired food cooked by volunteers and a presentation from a young student who had just returned from volunteering at our centre in Brčko. The aim of the event was threefold: to raise awareness of the charity in Edinburgh, to introduce our new Director Diana McMicking and to raise funds. The event was a huge success raising almost £20,000

<http://fireflyinternational.org/midsummers-night-thank-you-so-much-for-your-generous-support/>



The 2018 London Gala

A Gala Concert held in November, organised by a volunteer committee. The evening was a celebration of Balkan & Middle Eastern Music & Literature, compered by Chris Mann and featuring readings from actors Neil Stuke and Pandora Colin, with musical performances from Kenza Stamselberg from the Bosnian Supplementary School in London, Rihab Azar on Oud, Patrick Terry from the Royal Opera House, plus Nick Edward Harris and Josh Vivian on Guitar. With filmed readings from Jeremy Irons and Ammar Hajj Ahmed.

The event raised £24,000 towards Firefly's overseas aid projects and partners

<http://fireflyinternational.org/firefly-gala-2018-a-wonderful-and-successful-evening/>



FIREFLY INTERNATIONAL

Fundraising events and other initiatives



Bruce Munro's Fireflies installation photographed by Neil Hanna

Firefly at 20 Celebrations

On 29th March over 250 people filled Edinburgh University's magnificent Playfair Library for this special celebration event, organised by the Edinburgh team and a group of student volunteers. It was an evening of inspirational speakers, artists and Middle Eastern music. The event brought together past and present volunteers and our Bosnian director, Gordana and launched The Ellie Maxwell Prize. Over £8500 was raised for our partners in Syria, Turkey and Bosnia.

For a brief overview of the evening please watch our film, made for free by Gavin Turnbull.

[Firefly at 20 film](#)

FIREFLY INTERNATIONAL

Fundraising by individuals

Thank you to our regular supporters and individuals who choose to fundraise for us by way of taking on personal challenges. Your continued support is hugely appreciated.

The Three Peaks Challenge

On the weekend of 4th May 2018 the Firefly team set off on their quest to to conquer the 3 Peaks raising a fantastic £9200.

<http://fireflyinternational.org/a-huge-thank-you-to-all-those-involved-in-the-firefly-friends-3-peaks-challenge/>



Anju's Trek to Everest Base Camp

In May 2018, Anju Uppal climbed to Everest base camp raising over £700 for Firefly.

<https://fireflyinternational.org/a-fireflyer-on-top-of-the-world/>



Enzo's Weight Loss Challenge

Thank you so much to Enzo Adamo who has undertaken a 6 month weight loss challenge and has so far raised over £400.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/enzo-adamo>





Firefly International

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Hugo Page QC

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Firefly International

PART-TIME FREELANCE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Diana McMicking – Director

Tor Crawley – Administrator

Maria Chambers – Projects Coordinator

Fadia Shaker – Project Director (Firefly for Syrians)

Gordana Varcakovic – Project Director (Firefly in Bosnia)

Ben Boulton – Grants

Pietro Berti – Website

Flora Pringle Paterson – Student Volunteer (Social Media)



Firefly International

“building bridges through education and the arts”

To find out how you can help – perhaps by organising a fundraising event, or making a regular monthly donation please see our contact details below.

Additionally, you could set up a direct debit or make a one off payment using these bank details. Don't forget to *giftaid it* if you can.

Barclays Edinburgh Branch

Sort Code: 20-29-23

Accounts: 80900729

or **JustGiving™**

www.justgiving.com/fireflyinternational

Firefly was incorporated as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) on 1 April 2014 and is governed by its constitution.

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Thank you...

