



Firefly International Trustees
Annual Report and Accounts
2019 - 2020



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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 equal 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.

Margot Coles - Chair of Trustees

Firefly International has proved its strengths and its longevity this year. We have a deep-rooted commitment to our projects in Bosnia, Syria and most recently a new pilot project in Palestine. We meticulously follow their progress and we are keenly aware this new Covid 19 era presents challenges that could not have been predicted. This does not minimize or diminish our resolve. It is exactly the opposite.

Looking to the future, we are determined to explore every avenue to continue our work in the best way we can. Over the last year, the detailed reporting from our project teams and team leaders has been invaluable in making decisions. A huge thank you must also go to our Director, Diana McMicking, Charity Manager, Tor Crawley and Project Co-Ordinator, Maria Chambers. All three have managed their roles with expertise, professionalism and empathy and, most key, have kept all running costs to an absolute minimum.

On a personal note there have been many highlights over the last year. The extraordinary experience of visiting Svitac in Bosnia and seeing the work being done first-hand – thank you to the team for such a generous welcome. I've seen Firefly for Syria develop into a highly professional operation with the excellent management skills of Fadia Shaker, keeping us fully informed. Meeting the winners of the Ellie Maxwell award, Mxogyny and COLOURS of Edinburgh and hearing their stories at the awards ceremony at Edinburgh University. And on a final note, Jeremy Irons reading for us at our supper club in Notting Hill, it was memorable! I've also learnt much from our teams, the trustees and I've very much appreciated the guidance from Scotland's International Development Alliance and Lindsay Graham who has invested a lot of her time advising us on the direction and future of the charity.

When the implications of the coronavirus pandemic hit, we knew we required a new way of thinking. We quickly realised that small charities could be severely hit, especially with their fundraising. All our efforts from this point on will be focused on exploring how we fit and most importantly can thrive in this new era and how we can emerge in good shape and with great optimism for the future of Firefly. **Margot**



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. We are happy to welcome a new trustee this year - [Henrietta McMicking](#)
- Firefly works with both UK based and International partners. We undertake rigorous due diligence on each partner we work with.
- 2019-20 has seen an update of our policies on privacy, GDPR and child safeguarding. All updates are available on our website.



Firefly and Scotland's International Development Alliance

- Firefly is a member of Scotland's International Development Alliance (SIDA) and this year we have undertaken training and mentoring with Lindsay Graham on our new strategic plan and ongoing Board development. This has proved invaluable to us.
- Margot Coles, our Chair of Trustees attended SIDA's child safeguarding course and we have updated our child safeguarding policy in line with their recommendations
- Firefly took part in Scotland's International Development Alliance's [SIDA photo competition](#) at Edinburgh City Art Centre. We entered photos taken by the Firefly for Syrian's team highlighting the educational opportunities they give to girls.
- **An example of one of our entries to the SIDA photographic competition pictured right.**



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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Margot Coles – Chair of Trustees
Hugo Page QC
Adrian Beidas
Benjamin 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)
Pietro Berti – Website
Elle Carter – Edinburgh University 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

Support in Volunteer Recruitment

- Recruiting and managing volunteers for Firefly activity in the UK, recruiting volunteers for our international projects.



Achievements and Performance: Reports from our Partner Organisations

2019-20 has seen enormous growth in the activity and impact of the partner organisations we support in Turkey/Syria, Bosnia and Gaza.

- **Firefly for Syrians** has coped well in the face of the conflict in the Idlib area and with the Covid pandemic. As ever they have been effective and adaptable, working to make a great difference to the lives of displaced families living in terrible circumstances.
- **Firefly in Bosnia** continues with its unique impartial peacebuilding work seeking to unite a divided population still suffering the effects of a war nearly 30 years ago. A new challenge in the form of the Covid pandemic has enabled them to develop their online programme.
- The **pilot project** we are supporting in Gaza, with partners [ACT International](#) and [IMET2000](#) is providing life-changing treatment for children living with post-traumatic stress syndrome due to the ongoing conflict on the Palestinian/Israeli border.

Firefly for Syrians

Since 2016, Firefly International has supported an educational project set up by Syrian refugees in Antakya for Syrian refugee children displaced by the war. A more detailed annual report from Firefly for Syrians follows but this is a brief synopsis of their work:

- Daily lessons in Arabic language, practical engineering and maths for hundreds of children each month from its own centre and in other Syrian community centres in Antakya.
- A primary school offering 80 Syrian refugee children a full-time education in Khirbet Al Jouz camp in Northern Syria
- An outreach programme in Northern Syria teaching practical engineering activities to refugee children, through providing resources and online teacher training.
- Their 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.





Firefly for Syrians: The work on the ground

Bridging the gap – Learning activities for Syrian refugee children

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.

HOW OUR COURSES HAVE WORKED

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.

We have consolidated our outreach programme through 2019 -2020 in southern Turkey and Northern Syria and developed our online teaching programmes. 841 students attended our workshops each month.

WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE

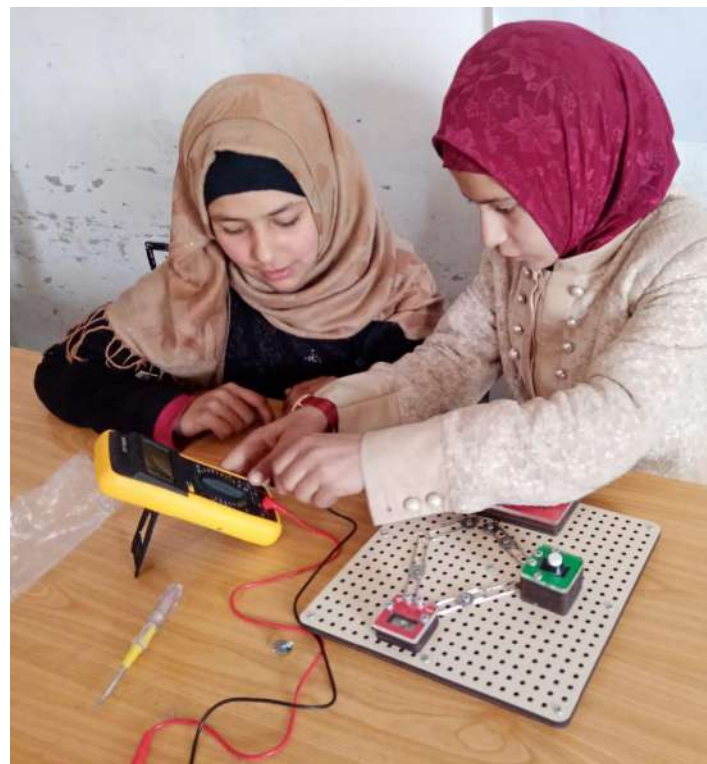
- Increased the capacity and skills of our teachers inside Syria through our mentoring programme.
- Provided accelerated online literacy programme for 5-7 year olds.
- Development and implementation of our two YouTube learning channels providing continuity of learning for our students when our centres have had to close due to ongoing conflict in Northern Syria.
- Launch of two new courses for our applied science programme: studying electricity.
- Tailor made resources for new electricity programme.
- Interior design applied science course introduced targeting teenage girls.

Firefly for Syrians

FACING THE CHALLENGES

It has been a challenging time for our work inside Syria, due to ongoing conflict in the Idlib provinces. We have continued to deliver workshops in these areas and have extended our online learning programme. Our Primary school has not been effected by closures due to conflict. We suspended workshops in Idlib city as it was too unsafe for children and staff to come to the centre. We were able to support our pupils, through WhatsApp learning groups. This has been invaluable as on March 25th when all centres were closed in Turkey and Syria due to Covid 19 we were able to make an instant switch to an established online learning programme.

The investment in staff development, the curriculum and quality of educational resources is giving Syrian children the ability to catch up on lost educational years. We have introduced two new courses this year to stretch our high achievers. **Fadia Shaker, Director**



Firefly Syria No. of Students (footfall) by location Year to 31 March 2020			
Programme	Syria	Turkey	Total
Applied Science –Meccano	1,849	1,499	3,348
Applied Science –Electricity	80	152	232
Applied Science –Meccano Card	676	532	1,208
Applied Science –Interior Design	–	385	385
Creative Mathematics	913	714	1,627
Arabic Language (Creative Arts Approach)	141	1,682	1,823
Primary School	633	–	633
Total	4,292	4,964	9,256

Young scientists learning about electricity using the educational resources made by our team in Antakya.
Khirbet Al Jouz Camp, Syria

Firefly in Bosnia (Svitac)

Svitac has prepared an annual report but this is a brief overview of their work and its impact.

- Firefly's partner [Svitac](#) helps young people in [Brčko](#) (Bosnia) to overcome the ethnic divides still plaguing the region since the Balkan 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.
- 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 2019 - 2020

What was achieved: outcomes

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 difference was made: impact

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.

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 from 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 2019/20, [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. With help of international and local volunteers we led creative, language, music, drama and sport workshops from Monday to Friday.

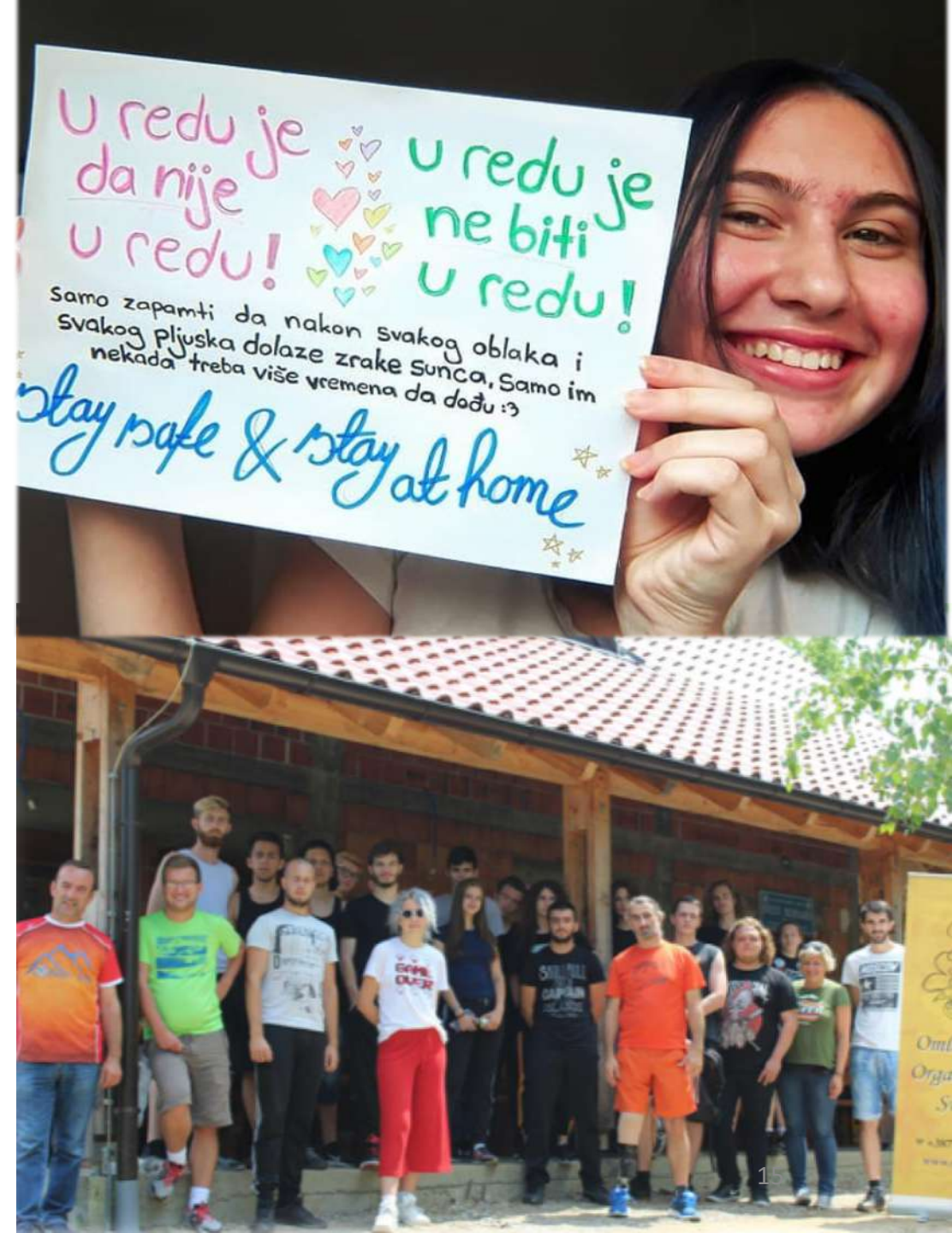
Svitac's Annual events, which are open to the whole community, enable families and friends of all ages to benefit from Svitac's unique window into the world of fun activities which promote peace and tolerance.

Youth Summer camps included [Creative](#), [Language](#), [Music](#) and [Eco](#) camps. In cooperation with the EU Infocenter and the Association of Nature Lovers, a two-day [ecological camp](#) was held at the mountain hut "Granaš" – St. Bernard (near Brčko town), for young people aged 15+.

Other events included:

Children Day, Anti-Racism Day, Anti Fascism Day, EcoProject, Peace, Democracy and Human Rights Day, Tolerance Cultural Diversity through Music, Art and Sport, and Volunteer Day.

During the very difficult time spent under quarantine, as a result of COVID-19, the Svitac team adapted its activities very well. The [online activities](#) gave us the opportunity to build stronger relationships with the parents as well as the children and [young people](#) that we work with.





In 2019/20, Svitac very much appreciated collaborating with 14 international volunteers from Germany, Turkey, the USA and Slovenia who came through European Solidarity Corps (ESC), weltwärts and self-funded volunteering programmes.

Svitac's staff and volunteers have been attending seminars abroad. They attended the conference [“Erasmus+ opening door 2019”](#) in Serbia, training [“Stand Together In Solidarity”](#) which was held in Italy and intercultural workshops [“POP UP ARTS BALKAN”](#) in Greece. These opportunities allowed Svitac's staff and volunteers to meet counterparts from other European youth agencies to share ideas and broaden their skills.

- Svitac also hosted [Trivago study group](#) when 14 young people from all over the world had the opportunity to assist with daily activities and learned about the development of the post-war generation.
- Sending [ESC](#) and [‘Weltwärts’](#) – Nine volunteers from Bosnia were doing their volunteering service in Germany, Spain, Austria and Slovenia (2 - 12 months).

Firefly International, IMET 2000 and ACT International partnership (Firefly in Palestine) Treatment for children with PTSD

A quarter of children in Gaza suffer from PTSD caused by violence, bombardments and stress of everyday life.

Firefly in partnership with [IMET 2000](#) and [Action for Child Trauma International](#) established a six month pilot service to treat psychological trauma among children in Gaza. In December 2019 we agreed to extend this service for an additional year, continuing to treat children, gather data and research the long term effectiveness of the treatment.

“It is heartwarming to speak to caregivers about the improvements in their children, their behaviors and overall condition after working with us. This is life changing for these children “ Mohammed, Child accelerated Trauma specialist.

- We employed two Gazan specialists in the treatment of psychological trauma to run the service.
- Over 70 caregivers attended awareness raising sessions about post traumatic stress disorder in children
- 62 cases were assessed
- 42 cases were successfully treated
- 18 cases were referred to other services.



Fundraising

Fundraising 2019-20 was our second most successful year ever after 2018-19.

- We raised £154,701 over the year.
- A major part of this came from our events and individual challenges taken on by our supporters £41,868.
- We were also successful in gaining grants from trusts and foundations £32,500
- As well as some generous individual donations £10,427.
- A new development this year was being accepted on to the Big Give Christmas Challenge platform. For one week in December they match fund every penny that our supporters give online. We raised £19,091 and will be applying for the 2020 challenge.
- Our monthly direct debits are growing and at present raise an annual total of £22,500. This regular income helps us to plan our expenditure.

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. 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.



Firefly's November Supper Club

In November, Firefly held a small Supper Club to introduce our projects to a new group of supporters. We were very lucky to have special guests Jeremy Irons and Joanna David give readings, and actor Neil Stuke was the compere for the night. Both Neil and Joanna have agreed to become Patrons and we are so fortunate to have their continued support. The evening raised £15,000

Films of both Joanna's and Jeremy's readings can be seen [here](#), plus more information about the Big Give Christmas Challenge.



The Big Give Christmas Challenge

Firefly applied and was accepted to take part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge. We smashed our target of £15,000 with a final total of just over £19,091

The Ellie Maxwell Award

Congratulations to the winners of the inaugural Ellie Maxwell Award, [COLOURS of Edinburgh](#) and [Mxogyny](#). These two new student organisations are doing innovative and inspiring work in their fields. Maisie Palmer and Mohammed Al-Haifi received the awards as founder members of their projects.

Many thanks to Edinburgh University for hosting a wonderful awards ceremony in the Old College with their Vice Principal Sarah Smith giving a rousing speech supporting the great young charities the students have founded. For more information, see here: [Ellie Maxwell Award Ceremony](#).



Peter Constable-Maxwell awarding the prize to Maisie Palmer and Mohammed Al-Haifi

Fundraising by Individuals

We are so grateful to our regular supporters and individuals who choose to fundraise for us by way of taking on personal challenges, donating from their birthday fundraisers or hosting events.

In May 2019, a group of Firefly supporters walked all 66 miles of Hadrian's Wall in 3 days, raising a fantastic £9,000. [Hadrian's Wall Challenge News](#) (right)

Rufus Holt, chose Firefly for his [Facebook birthday fundraiser](#).

On 30th August, Ian Reed swam the Hellsfont, raising £1,300 for Firefly.



Camp Firefly

Camp Firefly was generously organised and hosted by Rebecca and Mungo Chambers. It was attended by over 100 people of all different ages, many of whom set up camp. The children enjoyed football, cricket, swimming, tractor rides and art workshops in the Orchard.

There was a camp fire, BBQ and a live band. Everyone gathered in the early evening to listen as some of the children read out extracts from accounts written by Syrian refugee children. These told of their experiences of living in fear in Syria and some of the hardships they faced in their daily lives in the refugee camps. It also told of their enjoyment of making new friends and attending school again and the hope that this has given them for the future.



We then watched a short film about Firefly International, giving us all a brief overview of the projects that Firefly is currently conducting in highly challenging environments.

The event raised over £6000 for Firefly International.



Our Patrons

This year we are honored to announce that Joanna David and Neil Stuke have become Patrons of Firefly. We said goodbye to long time Firefly supporter and Patron Anthony Chambers, and we welcome his widow Rosemary who has joined as a Patron. Our Patrons are:

The Rt Hon The Lord Alderdice
Sarah Anderson
Viscountess Bridgeman CBE
Patricia Broke
Rosemary Chambers
Sebastian Chambers
Virginia Constable Maxwell
Lady Julia Craig Harvey
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

Financial Review



Our expenditure on Firefly for Syrians grew this year in line with the growth in their activity and impact. The spend grew by 27% from £59,014 to £75,080. Their capacity has grown from an average of 529 participants in 2018 to an average of 841 per month in 2019.

The spend on Svitac decreased from £40,161 to £35,769 in line with their increased sustainability through fundraising independently from Firefly.

Firefly in Palestine funded a small partnership pilot project this year and the spend decreased to reflect the end of our partnership and larger commitment to Project Hope.

We held a larger reserve (£10,000 more than normal) at the end of the financial year to give us a cushion against the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic on our fundraising ability.

Accounts for the year ended March 2020



Firefly International Accounts Year ended 31 March 2020		Actual Year to 31 Mar 20 £	Actual Year to 31 Mar 19 £
Income & expenditure account			
Income	Direct debits, donations and fundraising	122,182	126,043
	Grants	32,500	36,000
	Interest	19	13
	Total income	154,701	162,056
Expenditure	Firefly for Bosnians	35,769	40,161
	Firefly for Palestinians	3,919	10,611
	Firefly for Syrians	75,080	59,014
	Ellie Maxwell Prize	1,000	
	Fundraising costs	8,506	7,613
	Administration	19,608	22,742
	Total expenditure	143,882	140,141
Net income / (Expenditure)		10,819	21,915
Balance sheet			
Cash at bank		55,939	45,120
General Firefly reserve		55,939	45,120
Firefly for Bosnians reserve		-	-
Firefly for Syrians reserve		-	-
Total reserves		55,939	45,120
Cash flow			
Cash brought forward 1 April		45,120	23,205
Surplus / (deficit) within the year		10,819	26,915
Increase / (use) of Syria & Bosnia reserve		-	(5,000)
Cash balance at 31 March		55,939	45,120
Non project costs as a percentage of income			
Admin		13%	14%
Fundraising		5%	5%
Admin & fundraising		18%	19%



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 and foundations who have supported us and to everyone who has attended our events and fundraised for us.
Special thanks to those who have remembered us in their wills.
Every donation makes it possible for us to continue our work at Firefly.