



friends
INTERNATIONAL

may – aug 2017

opportunity

Sharing Christ with international students in the UK



Family International:

Supporting spouses
and children of
international students

www.friendsinternational.uk

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Leading Thoughts



As the days lengthen, more and more ministry seems to be happening among international students!

The programme of Summer Outreaches is being planned and teams are being recruited for a growing number of towns and cities across Britain and Ireland. This represents a great opportunity to reach out to our many language student visitors with the love of Jesus who otherwise may not have any contact with Christians while here. Many might be relatively young people on their first experience of another country and we want to make sure that they are welcomed well.

In another corner, we are concerned that when students arrive for a number of years of hard work towards a higher degree their families may accompany them, but without any particular employment opportunities it can be a lonely and unfulfilling time. So, a whole family approach to our hospitality and outreach can bring great rewards, and a CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other) group can be a part of the picture.

As ever we marvel at God's provision for ministry. See the brief financial review on page 10 and celebrate with us. However, let us continue to ask God for the provision of what is needed to push ahead with his plans for us this coming year.

We continue to reflect on the enormous range of possibilities for service that present themselves among the up to 1 million international students in universities and language schools in any one year. To this end we continue to look for churches willing to take up the challenge and where Friends International can be part of the scaffolding for emerging ministries – either through setting out the vision for reaching international students, through training, or through the accompaniment of a staff worker alongside church volunteers. We are glad to be recruiting new staff to make more possible – now 70 staff in 35 University Centres, as well as 50 church-based Affiliates linked into Friends International for training and fellowship. Don't hesitate to get in touch if we can help.

Alan

Alan Tower
National Director

**"And my God will meet
all your needs according
to the riches of his glory
in Christ Jesus."**

Philippians 4:19



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Friends International is an evangelical ministry dedicated to establishing and strengthening the Christian witness in every nation. Partnering with local churches to reach and disciple international students for Christ. Friends International is a member of the Evangelical Alliance and Global Connections. Registered Charity No. 1094095.



“It is amazing that God led me during all this time.”

Ena is from China; she is a Friends International Reach Volunteer in Southampton. Here she tells her story.

I was not a Christian one year ago when I came to England to study my Master's degree. It was my first time to live independently and I felt so lonely.

On one of those days at that time, I was walking down the road when I met a Jehovah's Witness. They said they were a Christian so I began to get to know them. They invited me to have one-to-one Bible studies. At the beginning I felt love, kindness and friendship. However, as time passed they began to push me to do something I did not want to do, and push me to believe that God exists. I was an atheist, so this made me feel very uncomfortable. I wanted to leave them but it was hard because we had become friends.

Around that time a friend told me about iExplore, a Friends International Bible study group specifically for international students. I wanted to make friends with new people so I went along and began to study the Bible with them every week. I felt freer there, because people just told us who Jesus is, why Jesus died for us, why we should believe in Him and so on. The style was gentle and I enjoyed the friendship with people there and the stories about Jesus.

There was a period of time that I was attending both iExplore and the Jehovah's Witnesses' Bible study. However, I began to find the differences between them. The Jehovah's Witnesses had their own booklets, and we just studied their books instead of the Bible. On the other hand, with iExplore, we studied the Bible and discussed what it said and the real meaning of these words. Finally, I decided to stop attending the

Jehovah's Witnesses' group but continued to study with Friends International.

Last year, after the Christian Unions' event week at Southampton University, I felt the love of God and He answered my prayers when I met difficult situations. It is amazing that God led me during all this time.

I decided to become a Reach Volunteer with Friends International because I want to help other internationals to know Jesus and I want to improve myself as well. Already during my time as a Reach Volunteer, one of my best friends has become a Christian! I witnessed the whole process of God changing her life and it encouraged me to keep going and to share the gospel with others.

I think that is why Jesus asked his disciples to go to all nations, because He loves us so much and has given everyone a chance to hear His good news.



Ena, bottom right, with the Friends International 2016-17 Reach Volunteers.

Family International:

Meeting the Needs of International Student Families

Many international wives and their children come to the UK while their husband is studying. Specific groups have been set up to welcome and support these families...

Birmingham

At least one PhD thesis has my name in the acknowledgments page for the simple reason that the doctoral student wished to thank me as the leader of CAMEO, a group for the wives of international students, which had helped to keep his wife sane, happy and supported through the demands of 3-4 long years of research and writing up!

Many wives experience great loneliness and isolation, away from their usual support structures; sometimes having left jobs behind and with limited English, and finding time heavy on their hands with husbands working long hours at the university. In several university cities there are groups set up for international student wives, often including provision for pre-school children. Some have taken the name CAMEO, which stands for Come And Meet Each Other, but others use different names. Their activities vary too, with some being mainly a social group and others offering Bible Study.

In Birmingham there are currently two CAMEO groups, plus an International Wives' Bible Study group. One of the CAMEO groups alternates each week between social activities and Bible Study. The group that I lead has been through various evolutions, but for the past 2 years we've chosen to be a purely social group with the aim of not discouraging any who would be put off by a group that includes a Bible study. As a result, we've welcomed a good many Muslim ladies to our sessions and they have clearly appreciated our activities and the friendships made. Along with the ever-popular craft and food-related sessions, we have had sessions which encourage discussion at a deeper level and provide opportunity to share about spiritual issues.





On one memorable afternoon, Maryam shared movingly about her home country of Syria. She wanted us to know that it had been a country of great beauty and culture where their diverse peoples had lived peacefully side-by-side, and how she prayed for the day when it would once again be like that. Afterwards our CAMEO WhatsApp group was filled with comments from everyone telling her that we'd all love to visit and were praying for her country. These kinds of interactions and the friendships built demonstrate the value of the group.

Our prayer is that all the women will experience welcome offered in the name of Jesus and be drawn to who He is. — **Patty McCulloch, Retiring Centre Leader, Birmingham**

Dundee

Here in Dundee, the University itself set the group up (well over 30 years ago) and a Christian

woman offered to run it for them. It was originally called the 'Overseas Students' Wives Group'. Later it changed to 'Dundee University International Women's Group.'

There are now many women who come here as international students bringing with them a husband or partner whose main task is to care for the children. Other couples are both studying and grandparents come here on holiday to care for the children. The university has changed the group to include men as they have wanted it to be an international families' group.

For several years, we have had a mix of dads and grandads attending as well as mums and grandmas. In fact we have found this has worked very well. We have had both men and women from a variety of Muslim majority countries coming and we have also had a lot of northern European dads – they get good paternity leave.

— **Ruth Farquhar, Staff Worker, Dundee**

Guildford

"I have been to several Parent & Toddler groups in different churches but this one is the friendliest. I don't feel like a foreigner here and everyone is so welcoming and takes time to understand and help me with my English. I look forward to coming here every week because I feel so happy."

This was said recently by a Thai mother at our CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other) Parent & Toddler group. We advertise the group as specifically for international parents and carers and it attracts international student families and local immigrants. Health visitors recommend our group to international parents as a good place to socialise and make new friends.

We will often have a craft activity for carers and children to do together and we have a sing-song time each week when we teach popular nursery rhymes the children will need to know when they start nursery school. We also teach simple Christian songs which convey gospel truth.

"I have wanted to find out what the Bible teaches since I have been in England but I

worried that my English isn't good enough. I'm so happy you have a crèche too."

This was said by a Chinese woman attending our weekly Discover the Bible group where we use simple English with plenty of stories. If necessary, we provide the Scripture being studied in their own language to aid understanding.

"Before I attended this group, I thought all Protestants were heretics and was very nervous about joining you. Since coming each week, I have grown so much in my understanding of the Christian faith and how it helps my life every day."

This was shared by a Polish Catholic mother after she had attended our International Women's Bible Study and fellowship group for a year. Over the years, the group has included a Latino Pentecostal, an Armenian Orthodox, an Iraqi Copt, a Korean Methodist, an American Presbyterian and a Nigerian Baptist. It has been a real blessing to pray for each other and learn about each other's cultures, Christian traditions and discuss how the gospel impacts all our lives – a real foretaste of heaven!

– Ruth Archer
Friends International Affiliate, Guildford





Teaching English; Making a Difference

Teaching English has been an increasingly common way for churches to engage with and serve the international communities around them.

The Oasis Language School in Ipswich was started by local churches and provides high quality English teaching to students from all over the world. Linda Pepper, a Friends International staff worker, is the Director there. She has been recently sharing through a blog the story of Oasis Language School.

Read one of the blog posts below and read the rest here:

www.teachingenglishnetwork.co.uk/blog



Fork Handles!

Do you remember The Two Ronnies famous sketch about four candles? It makes me laugh. It's so clever. There are moments when I think it really could have been written for our language school!

As Hwaia, Bakshan and Latetia (students from Portugal, Iraq and Latvia) are demonstrating in the photos ... smiles and laughter are good for the soul.

Amidst the laughter The Two Ronnies sketch brings home a good point; how we say things really is important for understanding.

A few of us have recently been teaching

the different pronunciations of 'ed', 't', 'd' when using past simple. It has been fun! As I've walked around the building I've heard American, Welsh, Scottish and regionally accented English teachers trying to make these sounds as clearly as possible... and then heard our students 'drilling' back. The building has echoed with the sounds of happy chanting.

But, it doesn't mean that students have really understood, or will remember. This text was sent to one of the teachers last week, "I'm not going today to school because the school of my daughter is close." Ah, more work needed!

So, we have to find different ways to keep consolidating our content. And we need to teach at a pace that keeps our students interested, engaged and learning... whilst also making progress in real life conversations.



Lucy is one of our most experienced teachers. She's worked in Belgium with the British Council, in Abu Dhabi with a private language school and as an examiner for IELTS here in the UK. She has volunteered to lead our next professional development time on how to teach phonetics so that students begin to actually say what they want to say. Working in a team is such a good thing.

As we approach Easter we are trying to find ways to talk about the death of a man in historical time, the spiritual significance of this death for all time, and the present reality of living in relationship with this once dead, now risen, intimately present Saviour every day. That covers a lot of tenses!

– Linda Pepper, Director of Oasis Language School

The Teaching English Network (TEN) seeks to resource and network Christians who are teaching English to speakers of other languages.

It is a Friends International initiative started 5 years ago.

To find out more or to join visit:

www.teachingenglishnetwork.co.uk

TEN
TEACHING ENGLISH NETWORK



Read the rest here:

www.teachingenglishnetwork.co.uk/blog

Financial Review

We are again thankful to God for continued financial provision to support the work of Friends International Ministries for the financial year ending 31st December 2016.

Whilst our core gift income fell by 3.1% from 2015 we also benefitted from receipt of two legacies totalling £34,690 as well as funds of £43,623 introduced from the merger with the Guildford based Christian Friends of International Students. This, together with reduced expenditure of 3.6% from 2015, has resulted in a relatively large surplus of £116,554 in 2016.

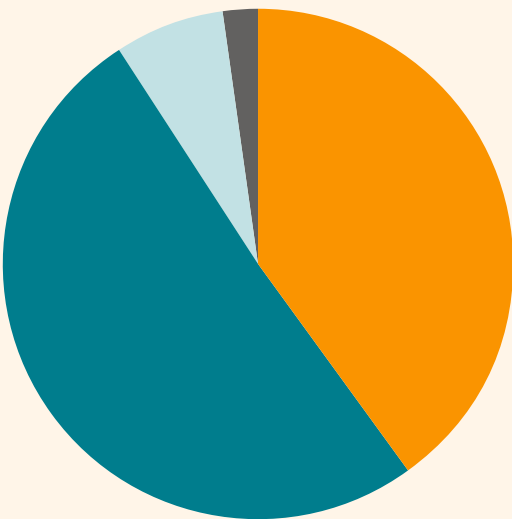
We are thankful for a stable financial position and for the continued generosity of a large number of faithful supporters who stand alongside our staff in many ways including vital financial support.

We wish to recognise the excellent work done by our Support Centre Team as they administer our day-to-day finances, plan for the future, monitor our performance and liaise extensively with staff, local Branches and Development Groups and the Regional Development Directors.

We recognise that our staff can sometimes face considerable challenges in either building an initial support base or coping with the effect of a significant change in the circumstances of key supporters, and we wish to continue to provide the best support we can to our staff within the context of maintaining sound finances.

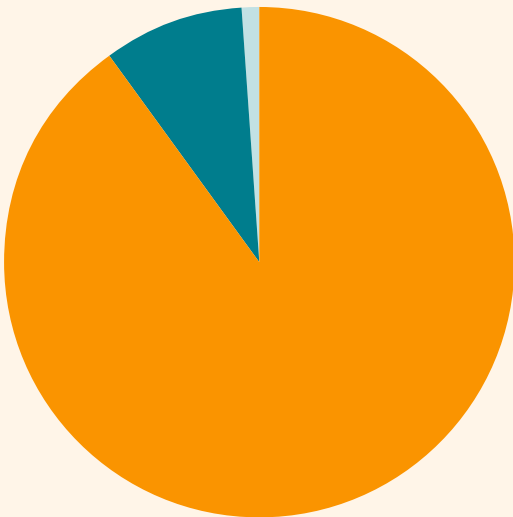
– Friends International Finance Committee

Income: **£1,489,908**



- From churches, trusts & local organisations: **40%**
- From personal donations: **51%**
- From Gift Aid reclaim: **7%**
- Other (E.g. Rent): **2%**

Expenditure: **£1,373,354**



- To direct ministry costs: **90%**
- To management, communications & admin: **9%**
- To generating funds: **1%**

Our Latest News

Mission Housing Trust

A huge thank you to all those that have pledged gifts, low-interest loans and equity loans towards our new initiative, the Mission Housing Trust. Since it was launched last September we have a staggering £600,000 pledged to the project and we are already viewing potential properties.

If you still want to be involved, it's not too late, simply contact Joel Callow for more information: joel.callow@friendsinternational.uk



New Directors

We welcome two new Regional Development Directors (RDD): Ramsey Pigott for the North of England and, from July, Sarah Dawkins for the South of England. We value the backup of the Support Centre for Finance, Communications, HR and Supporter Relations work and will be looking to replace Sarah's role there. We are developing the role and network of Cluster Leaders to help ministry Centres in pastoral and training issues, as well as Heads of specialist areas such as Innovation, Digital, Learning and Development, and Events Speaking. Please pray as we seek to integrate all these exciting pieces to solve the puzzle of more effective international student ministry!



New RDDs:
Ramsey Pigott & Sarah Dawkins.

2017 Summer Teams



This summer there will be summer outreach teams taking place in 8 cities across the UK and Ireland. You can use your Friends International Prayer Diary to pray for each summer team. If you can help us or want more information about volunteering then find out more here: www.friendsinternational.uk/summerteams

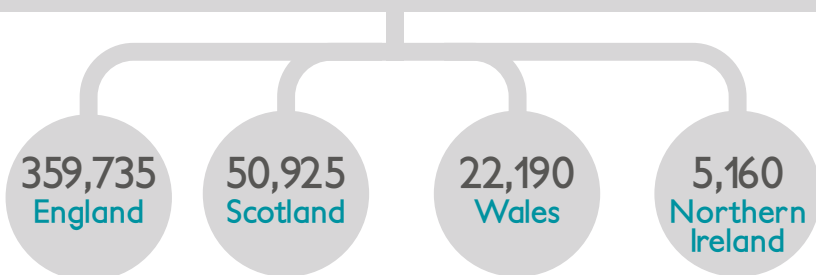
International Students at UK Universities



438,010 Total number of
international students



How this number is spread across the UK



46%

the percentage of students studying at postgraduate level in the UK who are from outside the EU.

91,215

The number of Chinese students at UK universities; far exceeding any other nationality.

38.4%

Business & Administrative Studies – The subject area with the highest percentage of international students.

14,975

University College London – The university with the most international students.

