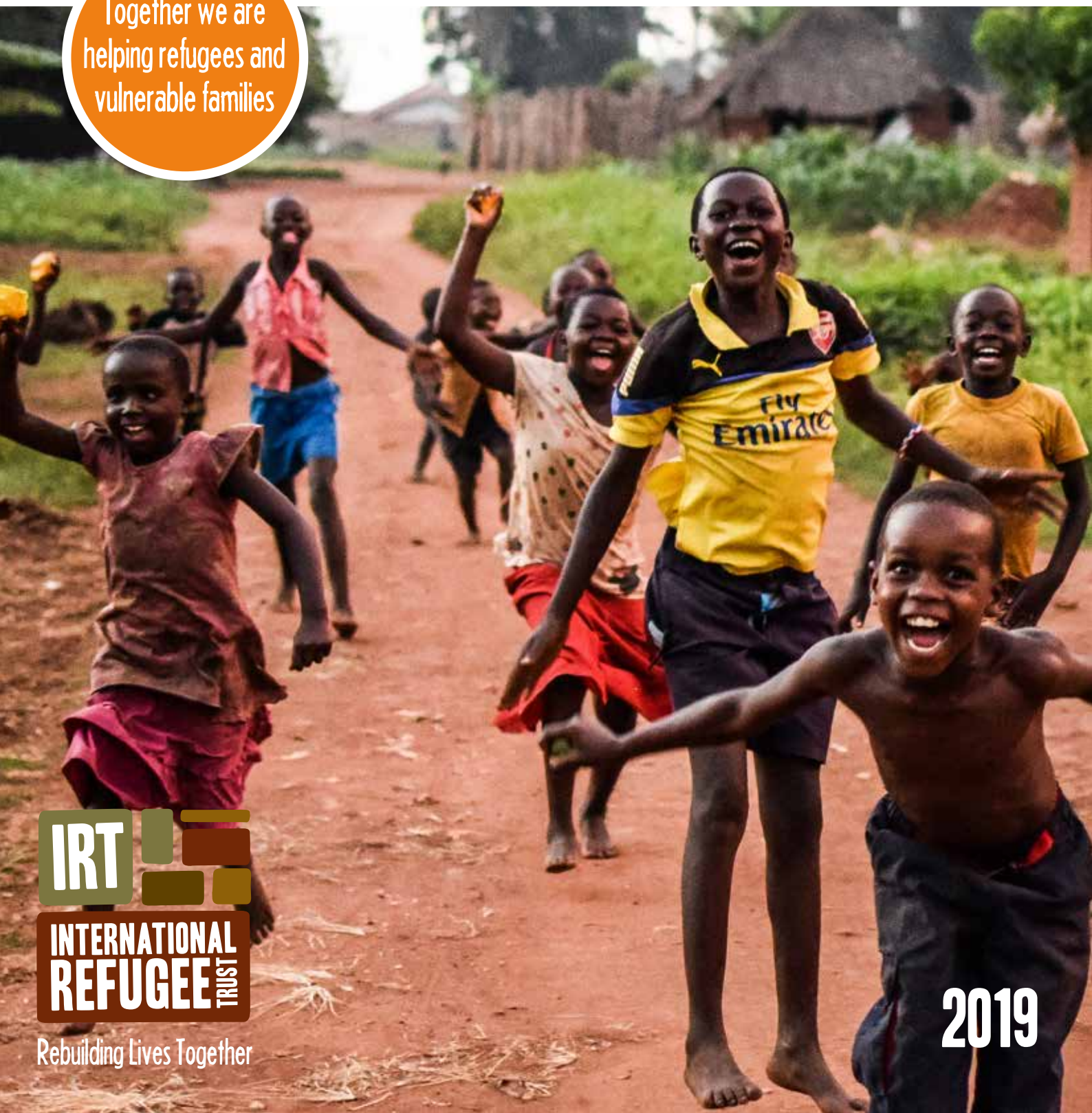


# Making a Difference

the annual newsletter of International Refugee Trust

Together we are  
helping refugees and  
vulnerable families



Rebuilding Lives Together

2019

# A word from Steve, Chief Executive of IRT



**Welcome to IRT's Annual Newsletter! This is our 30th year of helping refugees and those displaced by war and conflict, bringing dignity and hope to those who have lost everything. Often, they don't know what tomorrow holds, or even where their next meal will come from. They are at the mercy of others, open to exploitation, starvation, violence and poor health. They can't go back, and, without the help of others, they can't move forward. And it is down to the help of people like you that we are able to provide some relief and succour to those who need it most.**

I hope you will find the news that we bring you both interesting and uplifting. Since our last Newsletter, we have been able to complete our first 'StepUp' project in northern Uganda, which has taken 480 households (3,360 people) in the Alebtong District from absolute dire poverty to self-sufficiency.

**Building on this success, we have now expanded this highly effective programme into the West Nile region, bringing on board a further 4,676 beneficiaries.**

In South Sudan, the ongoing conflict has seen almost half of the country's population of 11 million internally displaced or fleeing as refugees to neighbouring countries. Our continued support of the hospital, the primary school and the HIV/AIDS project, all centred on the town of Nzara and run by the Comboni Missionary Sisters, is needed now more than ever.

Our support to the two 'Italian Hospitals' in Jordan also continues. With no National Health Service, and high costs for medical treatment, these hospitals are beacons of light for many of the 1.4 million Syrian refugees in the country, trying to live off their savings and what little work they can find. Offering free or heavily subsidised treatment to refugees, they provide a service that saves lives, prevents long-term deformity and ensures that babies are delivered safely.

Lastly, I would like to introduce you to our 'StepOut' project, which aims to bring high-activity/low-cost prosthetics to the developing world. Able to replicate the actions of a \$3,500 carbon-fibre equivalent, available in the West, these artificial legs can be manufactured for less than £100 each. Tens of thousands of amputees world-wide are unable to attain prosthetic limbs.

**Some 30,000 Syrians alone are estimated to have lost limbs during the war. There is a desperate need for this life-changing innovation.**

The team and I have been overwhelmed by the unstinting generosity and kindness of our supporters over the past year, and we offer you our most sincere thanks. As always, the encouragement we have received has been simply amazing. Thank you so very much.

Steven Smith MBE  
Chief Executive  
International Refugee Trust



# 30th ANNIVERSARY



**'For refugees, all distinctions of wealth, power, social function and role have collapsed completely and evaporated like smoke. Stability and security have disappeared. Refugees are unloved and unwanted by almost everyone...'**

These are the words of Father Kevin Doheny (1925-2000), who, along with Group Captain Lord Leonard Cheshire VC, founded IRT back in 1989. And it is because of you, our loyal supporters, that we are able to mark 30 years of supporting refugees. Over the years, your donations have helped thousands of refugees in Thailand, Cambodia, Pakistan, Eritrea, DRC, Kenya, Somalia and, more recently, Jordan, Uganda, South Sudan and Tanzania. We cannot thank you enough. Sadly, the refugee situation during that time has, if anything, grown worse, with wars in Africa and the Balkans being supplanted by the terrible conflicts in the Middle East. But we are determined to continue our vital work in a changing world.



**Mother Teresa speaking with Fr Kevin Doheny**

himself at the centre of the war in Biafra in the late-60s. Outraged by the sight of children dying all around him, he spoke out to the media and was successful in mobilising worldwide relief support for those suffering. In 1989, IRT grew out of a movement to mark the 30th Anniversary of the UN's first 'Year of the Refugee', which was held in 1959. And now, here we are, 30 years later, with so much work still to do.

**'Refugees need not only our sympathy; they need our understanding. Refugees do not want our pity; they want our practical assistance.'** Fr Kevin Doheny



Father Doheny devoted much of his life to refugees. His interest in the plight of those displaced by conflict began when he found



## Mother Teresa

At IRT, we are both proud and humbled that Mother Teresa, now Saint Teresa of Calcutta, was our first Patron. It was the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971 that acted as a catalyst to Mother Teresa's work among the refugees. An estimated 10 million people from the erstwhile East Pakistan fled to India. Mother Teresa and her 'Missionaries of Charity' immediately reached out to them, providing the refugees with food, clothing and medication. Later, she became known internationally for her work with the dispossessed, and her Sisters remain present in countries torn apart by war and violence, including Syria, Iraq, Congo, Somalia, Burma and Bangladesh.

# StepUp: a HUGE success!!



In a joint venture with our Ugandan implementing partners, Organisation for Community Action (OCA), the StepUp programme has already transformed nearly 14,000 lives in the Alebtong District of northern Uganda. These were people

living a hand-to-mouth existence, in absolute dire poverty. Families that were used to eating only one meal a day have been able to boost their food production quickly by planting kitchen

gardens, with basic foodstuffs, such as tomatoes, onions and cabbages, providing a ready source of nutrition. They have then gone on to learn improved agricultural techniques to increase crop yields substantially. Once they have met their immediate household needs, they are in a position to sell any excess produce at market, enabling them to improve their lives in all sorts of ways, not least meeting the costs of sending their children to school. All the while, exposure to the principles of good sanitation and hygiene, including the provision of clean water sources, has seen family health improve enormously.

## STEPUP 1

We are delighted to announce that our very first StepUp project (known as 'StepUp 1') has now come to an end after five years of intense effort. This is a major milestone, with 480 households (3,360 people) lifted out of poverty and achieving self-sustainability.

StepUp encouraged members of Adanganii village to form savings collectives so that members could grant loans to each other, advancing the lives of everyone involved and creating a strong, supportive community.

Angoi and Auma belong to the Kuc Obedo-yin group, and it was a loan from this group that enabled them to set up their



business (see their story below). So successful has it been that they have already paid back the loan of 200,000 Ugandan shillings (around £41). In addition, their savings enabled them to buy two piglets, increasing their financial independence even

further. StepUp's training in running small-scale businesses has ensured their success.

OCA Project Officer, Angella Abole, says of StepUp, 'One of the challenges we faced was that, due to lack of resources, we could only commit to 480

In Adanganii village, Angoi and Auma have seen their lives transformed through StepUp. They were able to form their own business selling pens to local students, which has meant they can now afford to send two of their children to school – a fantastic achievement!

Angoi said, 'Education status here has improved. Previously, our children could not study. Right now, I have paid school fees for my two children in primary education out of the profit I raised from my small-scale business.'



Angoi serving students





households out of the thousands that live in abject poverty.’ She highlights one of the successes of the programme being the way in which it brings communities together: ‘We must look at each other as brothers and sisters. Now we stand with each other, both in good and bad times. Guiding farmers towards reaching and

achieving their dreams is very heart warming.’

So successful did StepUp 1 prove that we continue to run with three further projects in Alebtong, together serving 10,423 people (men, women and children).

## STEPUP WEST NILE

Thanks to the incredible support of the Addax and Oryx Foundation, we have now been able to expand StepUp to West Nile, a region where extreme privation is rife. Addax and Oryx is a Swiss, non-profit institution, which supports organisations tackling poverty in Africa and the



Middle East. A grant of £165,000, spread over three years, is allowing us to work with our Ugandan partner, Organisation for Community Action, to lift 668 households (4,676 people) out of extreme poverty over a three-year period. It costs us around £80,000 each year to run the West Nile project (around £17 per person per year), and the grant covers 70% of that, so our annual target is to find a further £25,000 to ensure that the programme continues to run. We are confident that the outcomes in West Nile will match the tremendous successes already achieved by the earlier projects in Alebtong.

Take a look at our website to watch our latest film containing news and interviews with refugee families showing how the StepUp project has changed their lives.



The StepUp programme is delivered by the trainers of our implementing partner, Organisation for Community Action (OCA). These are people who understand the local context, speak the language, can relate to the villagers, and, in many cases, come from the same background themselves. Owing

to the dispersed nature of the participating villages, and in order to keep costs to a minimum, the weekly visits by the trainers are undertaken on motorbikes. Travelling by motorbike means staff can get to these villages via the most direct routes, thereby decreasing their travel time and allowing them to



reach more areas during the day. Not surprisingly, the motorbikes take severe punishment as they bump their way over dirt roads, littered with potholes, and forest tracks. The new motorbike will prove its worth countless times, ensuring that vital StepUp training reaches the most remote villages.

We were thrilled to receive a donation of £3,433, for a new motorbike, from our long term supporters, the Developing World Group, from our Lady of Lourdes parish, Harpenden.

# NEW HOPE for AMPUTEES



Amputees in the developing world face unimaginably harsh lives. In countries where jobs involving manual labour predominate, amputees struggle. When artificial legs are available, they are often restrictive,

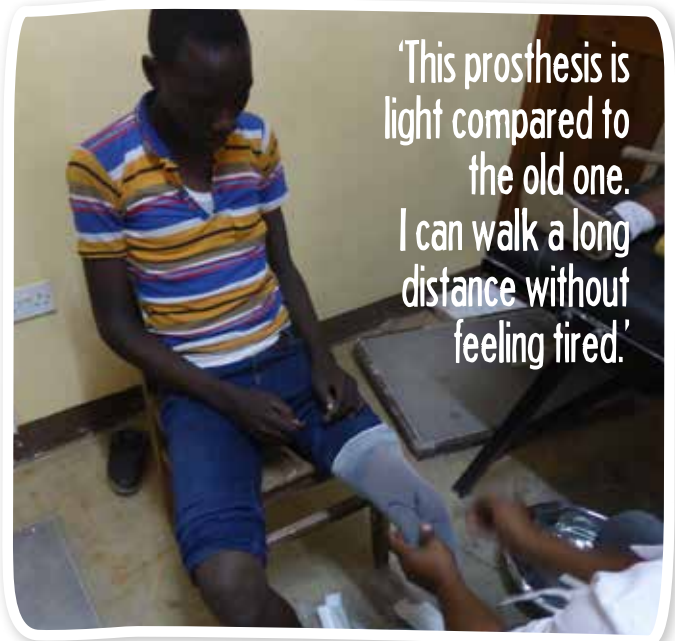
uncomfortable and unwieldy, having a fixed, immobile ankle. They are frequently unaffordable, and difficult to maintain and replace. It is estimated that 40,000 Syrian amputees cannot afford prosthetic legs.

IRT is working with an inventor, Ed Pennington-Ridge, to bring life-changing technology to lower limb amputees in the developing world. The 'DC-3'

artificial limb has a flexible ankle, which allows key activities, such as walking up and downhill, to be carried out more easily. It is cheap and simple to produce, using existing technology, as well as being lightweight, and available in both adult and child sizes.



Last year, IRT ran a trial for 20 beneficiaries, through the Tanzania Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologists. The results were amazing. Ninety percent of the participants expressed satisfaction with the DC-3



'This prosthesis is light compared to the old one. I can walk a long distance without feeling tired.'

limb. They said that the new limb had improved their quality of life, being lighter, more durable, and better suited to the environment than those they had used before.

**'Light and friendly to use when performing different activities.'**

So, where next? This year IRT plans to expand the trial to include 200 participants, split equally between Tanzania and Cambodia. If successful, beyond that, the sky's the limit. There are tens of thousands of refugees injured in conflict crying out for artificial limbs now. This could be the answer!

**'This is an ideal foot. I like the way it functions. It is very good when going downhill.'**



## BBC JOURNALIST VISITS IRT

We are very lucky to have the support of Stuart Hughes from the BBC on this inspiring project. Stuart is a journalist and landmine survivor who wears a prosthetic leg. He recently visited IRT's HQ in London and subsequently made a short

film about this exciting project. In the film, Stuart tries the new 'DC-3' artificial leg and is pleasantly surprised with how comfortable and durable it is. You can see the full video on our website [www.irt.org.uk](http://www.irt.org.uk)



# BECAUSE OF YOU...

In Karak and Amman, the two 'Italian Hospitals', run by Missionary Sisters, provide life-saving care to Syrian refugees fleeing the war. Over half of the patients are children.

Your donations have helped thousands of refugees who are struggling to survive. Here are just a few stories that the Sisters have reported to us recently...

## AHMED

Suffering excruciating pain, 11-year-old Ahmed was brought to the hospital in

Amman by his parents. He was quickly diagnosed with appendicitis, and underwent an appendectomy that same day. Without your donations, Ahmed would not have had the emergency surgery he needed to survive. He is now recovering well, and recently returned to the hospital for a check-up.



## FIRYAL

Twenty-six-year-old Firyal fled the war in Syria, crossing into Jordan in 2013. Heavily pregnant with twins, she sought help at the Amman hospital. Arriving with her two children, both under-5, she was already in labour. The foetal heart rate had slowed and Firyal was in urgent need of a caesarean section. The Sisters and staff immediately performed life-saving surgery, and delivered two beautiful girls. Firyal's situation is not unusual. Her husband had been compelled to move to the UAE to find work as a mechanic. Although he sends money back to cover the family's basic necessities, they cannot possibly meet the costs of expensive medical care. Both mother and babies are well and were discharged from the hospital in July.



IRT is proud to support the Paediatric Ward of the St Therese Hospital in South Sudan. The Comboni Sisters and medical staff have been working tirelessly in the past year, barely coping with a huge influx of patients.

### JOHN

Although it is the best-equipped hospital in the area, St Therese still has no capability for x-rays, blood or wound cultures (for detecting bacterial infections), general anaesthesia, or major surgery. Despite the limited resources, the clinical team sprang into action to provide the best care they could.

It quickly became clear that John needed to be seen by an orthopaedic surgeon. However, this would mean making a journey of almost 300 miles to Juba, the capital city of South Sudan. Failure to do so would see John losing the function of his arm. Worse still, because of the nature of the wound, with exposed bone and maceration of the surrounding tissue, the arm could easily become gangrenous and require amputation. He was also at high risk of developing sepsis.

Your donations ensured that John could be transported to Juba, where he underwent the emergency surgery he needed to save his arm. A few weeks later, John returned to St Therese Hospital with his father to thank the staff. His arm was still immobilised in a cast, but he was now able to move his fingers. The Sisters tell us that it was wonderful to see him smiling again.





## JOYCE

Ten-year-old Joyce arrived at St Therese hospital, in Nzara, one afternoon in late January. Even before the Sisters saw the small figure whimpering on a mat on the floor, their senses were accosted by the stench of rotting flesh. Her anxious father explained that what had started as a small laceration back in October, had progressed into a septic wound encompassing her right knee and a good portion of her thigh and lower leg as well. They live very far from the hospital and were afraid to travel due to the threat of unrest. That is, until the wound became unbearable, leading them to risk the danger of violence on the road to seek treatment. At first, the wound

seemed so extensive, they feared she would lose her leg. However, after debridement of the necrotic tissue, it seemed that, miraculously, the bone was unaffected.

Over the past five months, little Joyce has endured rounds of antibiotic therapy, multiple debridements, a blood transfusion, and daily wound dressings. She has shown amazing resilience and, while there have been some setbacks, her wound is slowly improving. Joyce knows the routine of her daily dressing changes, and even assists in removing the soiled dressing herself. She is now able to walk with the aid of a stick. We are hopeful that, eventually, she will be able to stretch the leg fully and bear weight on it. Joyce looks forward to the day when she is able to walk out of the hospital. The Sisters tell us they will miss her immensely.



# IRT and the Comboni Missionary Sisters



Recently, our CEO, Steve Smith, and Fundraising Manager, Jess Eames, were delighted to be able to visit the Comboni Missionary Sisters in Chiswick for morning coffee, in order to celebrate IRT'S longstanding association with the Order. That association goes back to the charity's early days, when the Sisters kindly offered us office space during our start-up. The link continues to this day, with IRT's support of vital Comboni projects in South Sudan and Jordan.

The Comboni Sisters have missions in 33 countries, across four continents, providing a 'bridge of encounters' that embrace peoples, religions, races and cultures. To this day, they remain wedded to the spirit of St Daniel Comboni (1831-1881) who dedicated his life to opposing the slave trade in central Africa.

*'The rich and the poor, the young and the old, the masters and the servants, will all have equal access to my heart.'*  
St Daniel Comboni

Steve and Jess were privileged to be given a tour of the Comboni Centre for Spirituality. Established three years ago, and blessed by the late Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, it provides an oasis of calm. Sisters Graça and Natalia, who run the Centre, organise prayer meetings, day retreats, courses for couples, youth activities and volunteering opportunities.

More information about the Centre's activities can be obtained from the Sisters at: [combonicentre16@gmail.com](mailto:combonicentre16@gmail.com)

## Thank you!

The Sacred Heart Sisters would like to thank you for your generous donations to support the Redeemer Children's Home and the Moyo Babies' Home in Uganda. Your response to IRT's recent appeal enabled us to send invaluable funds. The children, from new-born to 18, who live at the Homes have led unimaginably hard lives, and it is thanks to your donations that they can continue to thrive in a loving and safe environment, and enjoy good food, medical care, and education.





We are really excited about our Firewalk event in October! 200 of our supporters will bravely walk across 15 feet of hot, smouldering, coals reaching a temperature of 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit, all in aid of IRT.

Fancy ticking 'one off the bucket list'? We still have some spaces left on the team so if you would like to join in and bravely walk across hot coals in aid of IRT, sign up today!

For further details and to register, please go to our website, or call us on **020 8994 9120**.



We are also looking for volunteers to help out on the night. So if you would be happy to give up a few hours of your time on 12th October, please contact us on the same number.

## Students win grant for IRT in 'One World Charity Challenge'



IRT has recently been working closely with a group of Year 12 students from Ballerkermeen High School in the Isle of Man. The students entered the 'One World Charity Challenge' using IRT as a case study. We supported the students, engaging them in our cause, and supplying them with resources to create a compelling presentation. They then performed a 12-minute multi-media presentation, which examined the effectiveness of IRT's work, showing cultural understanding, and looking at the impact the charity has on individual lives. The students even wrote a song about our work, which they performed during the presentation.

We are incredibly proud to announce that the team came third in the competition winning a £1,600 grant for IRT! A big thank you to the students for all their hard work and dedication.

## New ways to fundraise!



IRT has recently partnered with PayPal, ebay and Facebook, giving our supporters more ways to fundraise and donate. Supporters are now able to make one-off or monthly donations using PayPal.

Do you have a birthday coming up? You can now set up a **birthday fundraiser** on Facebook choosing IRT as your charity!



Supporters are also able to sell items on ebay, and give a percentage of the sale direct to IRT. So, if you are thinking of having a clear out, and would like some telephone assistance to fundraise through ebay, please get in touch with the office and we will be happy to help!

## LEAVE A LEGACY

Leaving a gift in your will to IRT will change the lives of thousands of refugee families. If you would like to know more about the power of your legacy, please call us on 020 8994 9120.

# Here is my gift to support IRT's vital projects

**Online** visit our website to donate [www.irt.org.uk](http://www.irt.org.uk)

**By Phone** please give us a call on **020 8994 9120** to pay by debit or credit card

**By Post** you can send a cheque or add your debit/credit card details using the form below (use the Freepost envelope)

Title	First name	Surname
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address		
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Post code		<input type="text"/>
Email		
<input type="text"/>		
NOW PLEASE TICK THE BOX		
Are you happy that we contact you by email? <input type="checkbox"/> If you do not wish to received acknowledgment of your donation, please tick box <input type="checkbox"/>		
£	I enclose a cheque made payable to International Refugee Trust	
OR please debit my Mastercard / Visa / CAF card number		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Expiry Date	Today's Date	Cardholder's Signature
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If you would like to set up a standing order, please call us on <b>020 8994 9120</b>		
<b>Gift Aid adds 25% to your donation at no extra cost to you</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.		
(Please note, IRT cannot claim gift aid without your name, address and signature)		
Please use the enclosed Freepost envelope to send your payment and completed form to IRT		
Thank you for supporting IRT's vital projects		

The IRT promise: We will never give your name or address to another organisation



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THANKS  
AGAIN  
FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT.  
YOU'RE  
AMAZING!