



Journal of Anglo-Turkish Relations Volume 2 Number 2 June 2021

Interview with Fethiye International Group (FIG)¹

Gülşen YEĞEN²



Gülşen YEĞEN: Could you introduce yourself, please?

Ann-Marie CLARK: My name is Anne Marie. I'm from Edinburgh, Scotland. I've lived in Turkey for nearly six years. And I live here, okay. I previously worked in finance, and I worked in banking. And I decided with my husband to retire early. So we left Scotland in

October 2015 to move to Fethiye. And shortly after that became involved in the charity, and we've met lots of friends, and we now run the charity with our friends. And we work in the shop, we do coffee mornings and we raise money to help Turkish children.

Gülşen YEĞEN: When and how was FIG founded?

Ann-Marie CLARK: FIG was founded many years ago, I think nearly 20 years ago by an English lady. We first became aware of FIG when my husband, Norman, had had a photograph in a calendar competition for FIG and he won. So, we, that's how we found out about FIG. And initially we just worked in the shop as volunteers. I am, but no, like I said, we run the charity with our friends.

Gülşen YEĞEN: What is the purpose of FIG?

Ann-Marie CLARK: The purpose of FIG is to raise money by selling second hand clothing and household items. And we use that money in conjunction with the setup who govern the charity, and to help local schools and where they have needs that their budget can't meet. We like to raise money to help specifically with educational needs, but we also sometimes help

¹ Fethiye International Group or FIG is a group of volunteers that run a charity that raises money for the benefit of local children. In 2003, a group of people who had adopted Fethiye as their home wanted to give something back to the community within which they now lived. A mix of foreign and Turkish residents met to discuss the possibilities and decided to do something to help the local children. In January 2004 FIG was born. Over the years FIG has grown from a weekly book swap to an active part of the community. Today's FIG includes a Charity shop, weekly coffee mornings, regular craft fairs, other fundraising events and much more. FIG operates legally under the banner of FETAV (Fethiye Tourism, Promotion, Education, Culture and Environment Foundation). Contact details:

<http://www.figfethiye.com/>, <https://www.facebook.com/figfethiye/>, figfethiye@gmail.com,

Photograph: The Management Team of Fethiye International Group (FIG). The names from left to right are Norman Clark, Aimee Lonsdale, Linda Jones and Ann-Marie Clark.

² Emerita, Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University. Director of Fethiye Tazelenme University. E-mail: gulyegen@gmail.com



Journal of Anglo-Turkish Relations Volume 2 Number 2 June 2021

children with some medical problems. And but the sole purpose is to raise money to help underprivileged children. Yes.

Gülşen YEĞEN: What are the activities of FIG?

Ann-Marie CLARK: The activities of FIG are the shop. We have the shop open at the moment, three days per week due to the pandemic. We've been very careful. We also try to have coffee mornings once a month. Again, that's been impacted by the pandemic. And we're hoping to have one in July. We also, in the past, have had craft fairs where local Turkish crafters and all other nationalities can hire a table to sell their handcrafted goods. And we get the money from the sale of the tables to help FIG, yes.

Gülşen YEĞEN: What is FIG's vision?

Ann-Marie CLARK: FIG's vision? Yeah, I would say is to continue to operate the shop to try to help as many children as possible. And we pay for some school bus fares. We also do some bursaries. We would like to take on, maybe next year, another school project. And in the past, we've done a chess room. We've done security safety railings in a school. So we would just like to continue to be able to help with some larger projects. Once, the pandemic makes it possible.

Gülşen YEĞEN: What does FIG think about the future?

Ann-Marie CLARK: At the moment we have no big projects planned. We really just want to try to protect the shop. So, if we don't make enough money to pay the rent, we would have to close the charity. So that, at the moment, is our main focus. To just keep going and hope that in the future, things in general will improve and we can go back into projects again.

Gülşen YEĞEN: What does FIG think about the relations between Turkey and England?

Ann-Marie CLARK: I think personally, and as a charity, we have, we have very good relationships between our British volunteers and Turkish volunteers. And we, we are recognized in the community as doing something valuable and important for Turkish children. So, I think we have good relationships.

Aimee LONSDALE: My name is Amy Lonsdale. And I've lived in Turkey now for seven years. Previously to that when I worked in the UK, I managed a sales office. So I've worked in sales for quite a long time.

Gülşen YEĞEN: What do you think about the relations between Turkey and England?

Aimee LONSDALE: I think they're very good. We have a lot of different people, which you mean, as supporting the charity? Yeah, we have a lot of people that come in from many different national... nationalities. And yeah, I think it's okay.

Gülşen YEĞEN: Thank you very much for your time.



Journal of Anglo-Turkish Relations Volume 2 Number 2 June 2021

Ann-Marie CLARK: Thank you.