



FRIENDS OF
IBBA GIRLS SCHOOL
SOUTH SUDAN

March 2016

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DONATE NOW



Cheques Payable to: Friends of Ibba Girls School
Send to: 12 Ash Grove, Chinley, High Peak, SK23
6BQ

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moneygiving

If you feel you're able to contribute please do so through our link [HERE](#) to Virgin Money Giving! Every contribution counts and anything you do will make a huge difference to our cause! Thank you, from all of us.



International Women's Day

Pledge for parity on International Women's Day!

8th March 2016

Dear Friends

Today, International Women's Day (IWD), we ask you to join thousands around the world to Pledge for Parity for the young women of South Sudan. Take these 3 steps

- Link [here](#) to the FIGS page on the IWD website
- Read Margaret Eddershaw's inspiring poem [here](#)
- Pledge your solidarity [here today](#) with the 100 + girls now at Ibba Girls School.

THE STRUGGLE FOR PARITY AND PEACE

[Read here](#) about the lack of parity (equality, justice and basic human rights, to clean water; safe sanitation; education; health; skills and jobs) facing young women in a country where, after more than 50 years of war:

- Only 1 in 3 girls gets the chance to go to school
- Most of those who do start school, drop out around the age of 10 because of pressures to help with domestic work and childcare
- By the age of 15 a girl is more likely to have died in childbirth than to be in secondary school
- Prices of food and basic necessities are rocketing. The consumer price index has risen by 165% over the past 12 months, and 2.8million are facing food insecurity or even famine

However, read below 10 signs of cautious hope which Jean Hartley and I have seen in our recent visit to South Sudan as FIGS Trustees.

You can also catch up with John's blogs from the trip here:

[John's Blog #1: An Explosive Start to our Trip To Ibba!](#)

[John's Blog #2: Bore Hole, Bucket and Bed](#)



Signs of Cautious Hope

1. Two Steps Forward, One Step Back?

In spite of the continuing political economic and social instabilities in South Sudan, the many people we met in Ibba, Maridi and Yambio are cautiously hopeful of a gradual move (two steps forward, one step back) to restore peace, law and order and civilian government over the next few months. They are weary of the conflict, and worried by the risk of a collapse in the economy, but determined to continue with daily life and work as far as possible. They admire Ibba Girls School for keeping going through all the troubles last year, and see it as one of the sources of practical hope on the horizon.

2. A Good Start to Year 3 at IGBS - with 100+ Students, 20 Staff, 10 Goats

The 3rd year of Ibba Girls School has got off to a good start, now with around 100 students and 20 staff – and a growing number of goats! The students say that they feel safe and well fed and cared for at the school and the staff are committed to their education and development.



3. Long Term Commitment By The School Leadership Team

All the school's staff (head-teacher, senior management team, classroom teachers, nurse, matrons, cooks, cleaners, groundsmen and security staff) returned at the start of the new school year, and got down to work straightaway. Head teacher Richard Aluma, Director of Studies Vicky Dratia and Finance Manager Sonaa Santino have all made a long term commitment to the leadership of the school over the next 7 to 10 years, and to its development as a centre of excellence without elitism (actively promoting parity and equal access for the poorest of the poor).



4. Encouraging Signs From The Year 2 School Review:

The annual review of last year's work carried out jointly by Jean Hartley (FIGS Trustee) and Vicky Dratia (IGBS director of studies) found many encouraging signs of solid achievement at the school last year, as well as several areas needing further

development and improvement. Read a summary of their full report [here](#).



5. Getting Basic Tools To Do the Job

Progress at IGBS in 2016 will be greatly helped by the generous donations of books and equipment which we took to the school in February:

- 500 textbooks donated by Julia and Paul Sanders and friends
- 45 English dictionaries donated by Margaret Eddershaw
- 2 laptop computers donated by Melanie Dowden and Jackie Johnson respectively
- A printer donated by Xerox
- First aid equipment for the school nurse and clinic
- Embroidery silks and needles donated by Margaret Eddershaw.





6. Increasing Ownership

We held good meetings and honest discussions with the South Sudan Trustees and Board of Governors for IGBS, about how to take increasing ownership and responsibility for the governance and funding of the school. Their commitment to the school is remarkable at a time when many of them face great uncertainty over their own jobs and futures, because of the Government's controversial proposals to replace the 10 current States with 28 smaller States. (Joseph Bakosoro the former Governor of Western Equatoria State is still under house arrest).



7. New Government Structures

Bridget Nagomoro (Chair of IGBS Governors) , who had been promoted to Minister for Health for (the former) Western Equatoria State, introduced us to her successor as Commissioner for Ibba County (Tito Gerusama), and to the Governor designate (Africano Monday) for the proposed new Maridi State which will include Ibba County. Both were very positive about IGBS as a working demonstration of what good quality education for girls could look like in South Sudan. Governor Africano sent a film crew to the school and said he would broadcast it nationally.



8. Solidarity With the Sisters

We stayed several days with Sr Margaret and the small community at the Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio. We were greatly impressed by their quiet determination to resume a full teacher training programme after the troubles in Yambio last year. We were pleased to discuss and develop a long term working partnership between STTC and IGBS to try to raise the quality of teaching in that region, and to support in service teacher training and development. Two of IGBS teaching staff (Yoane and Fabiano) completed their certificate teacher training at STTC, so we already have a good bond. And Sr Margaret has been one of our committed friends, Trustees and Governors since we first met her in 2009.



9. Building In Progress

Good progress is being made with the building programme, in spite of the delays

caused by the troubles last year, which prevented lorries from being able to deliver some materials to the site e.g bricks, tin roofing. We are now making our own mud bricks on site to speed things up, and we hope that Dormitory 3 will be complete by Easter. Meanwhile the girls in Primary 4 and 5 love sharing a crowded dormitory with their new matrons Olivia, Regina and Ludia. [See photos](#) We now need to get started quickly on fund-raising to build the new classroom, dormitory and dining/assembly room needed by next February when the next 40 students enroll, and when the school will have 160 students.



10. Fund-raising Has Been Encouraging

We have received:

- £53,000 from 96 generous supporters of our Big Give appeal
- £10,000 from the Bonavero Charitable Trust
- £18,350 from the Joyce Carr Doughty Trust
- 40 Student sponsorships at £27 per month
- Over 20 one off donations, warmly appreciated, large and small
- Gifts in kind of school textbooks, dictionaries, laptops, first aid kit
- Sales from Margaret Eddershaw's lovely book of poems about Ibba and Africa (Order your copy [here](#) for only £5 – it makes an excellent present for friends, and all proceeds have been donated to FIGS by the writer and publisher)
- Mystery donor - was it you?? FIGS has received some £1,200 from unknown donors via the Charities Trust (payroll giving or Charity Cheque) in the last few months. If you have been donating in this way, we would love to thank you more personally. Please would you email Chernise at chernise.neo@gmail.com, to notify us of your giving? Thank you so much for

supporting FIGS in this manner.



3. Fund-raising News - Report from Chernise Neo

[Read](#) Chernise's full report on fund-raising.

We are as grateful for the widow's mite as for the millionaire's tithe. Thank you all for your great generosity.



Please Pledge For Parity On International Women's Day

Our top priority now is to find another 80 people who will commit themselves to sponsoring a group of girls at IGBS at the rate of £27 per month.

If you would like to begin a Student Sponsorship this International Women's Day, particularly to support one of the 40 new girls at IGBS, there can be no better time. Simply arrange to give £27 a month via [Virgin Money Giving](#), or fill out our [donation form](#) and return it to **Treasurer Gary Bandy at Clover Cottage, Stubbins Lane,**

Chinley, High Peak, SK23 6AE. (Please use this address instead of the one on the donation form, as Gary has moved house)

Each of our Student Sponsors receives reports twice a year on the cohort of girl students that they are supporting, including photographs, stories from the girls recounting their experiences at the school so far, and comments from Director of Studies Vicky Dratia. We are also planning to include a selection of the students' essays and artwork in future, and would love to share these with as many of you as possible – so please do join in and [sponsor](#) the girl students!

Thank you!

With our best wishes and warm thanks,

John Benington Chair, on behalf of the Trustees and Friends of Ibba Girls School

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