



FRIENDS OF
IBBA GIRLS SCHOOL
SOUTH SUDAN

NEWSLETTER
November 2014

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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.



Friends of Ibba Girls School (FIGS) South Sudan

Newsletter November 2014

5 Fireworks To Light Up Your Sky

Dear Friends and Supporters

Here are 5 fireworks to light up your sky this dark November!

1. Help Us To Find The Next Outstanding Head-Teacher To Lead IGBS

Join us in a worldwide search to find an outstanding Head-teacher to lead IGBS forward from Year 2 onwards - to build on the excellent foundations laid in Year 1 by our Australian volunteers, Paula and Jamie Sgherza, who have been working closely with Betty, Yoane, Nama, Agnes and the rest of the Ibba School team to get the school up and running. Paula and Jamie are now returning to Australia, and Betty is leaving IGBS, so the search is on!

Read below the kind of person the Trustees and Governors are looking for – and think whether this person might just be You - or one of your friends or colleagues? Please send us your suggestions, and we will follow up.

2. Double Your Donation With Big Give at 10am on Dec 4, 5 and 6

Read below how to join us in raising funding for Year 2 of IGBS through the Big Give Christmas Appeal, at 10am on Dec 4, 5 and 6. Big Give is not always easy to understand, but we have someone who does understand, so **please read and obey Chernise's instructions below!**

3. Sponsor A Class of Students In Ibba

It costs well over £27 per week to support a student at IGBS – including of teaching, equipment, accommodation, food, electricity, transport, security, health and pastoral-care. **Please read John Scouller's note below** about how to contribute to the sponsorship of a student or a class.

4. Sorry If You Missed Our Friendly Annual Meeting on Nov 1

However, you can look at the photos and read the reports from the lovely lively Annual Meeting held in Coventry last Saturday, Nov 1, with 50 or so Friends and supporters and a live Skype link to Ibba Girls School

5. The Context: Planting Seeds of Hope

Some encouraging words from the Governor of Western Equatoria State

Please follow the links below to learn more, and then respond with action!

Head Teacher for Ibba Girls Boarding School (IGBS), South Sudan

The Challenge - and the Opportunity of a Lifetime

We are looking for a qualified, committed, inspired and inspiring Head Teacher to help lead, develop and manage the new Ibba Girls Boarding School (IGBS), in Western Equatoria State, South Sudan, from Year 2 onwards - to build on the excellent foundations laid in Year 1 by our Australian volunteers, Paula and Jamie Sgherza, who have been working closely with Betty, Yoane, Nama, Agnes and the rest of the IGBS team to get the school up and running.

Paula, who has been the volunteer co-head since the school's opening in March 2014, will be returning to Australia at the end of this successful first year, and Betty, the second co-head, will also be leaving at the same time. The Trustees and Governors have decided to change the structure from two co-heads to a single post of Head Teacher, and to search worldwide to find the best possible person to take on this exciting role and responsibility to lead IGBS forward over the next phase of its development.

IGBS' aim is to provide high quality residential education for 360 girls aged 10 to 18 plus (from Primary Level 4 through to Senior Level 4) from across the whole of Western Equatoria State, and to empower young women with the values, knowledge and skills for leadership in their local communities and in this newest African nation.

IGBS opened to its first 40 ten year old girls in March 2014. An additional intake of 40 girls will start in February 2015, and again in each year for the next 8 years, until the target of 360 students is reached in Feb 2022. IGBS aims to provide high quality education rooted in Christian values, but open and welcoming to people of all faiths and none.

The Head Teacher

The UK and South Sudan Trustees and Governors for IGBS ideally would like to find an outstanding Head Teacher from South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya or rest of Africa, or from the Diaspora - but we are also keen to search internationally (including the UK) to find the best possible candidate for this very important job.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to make a practical difference to the education and life chances of girls in South Sudan, the majority of whom traditionally get no schooling beyond the age of 10 - because of traditional and family pressures to help with domestic labour (fetching water and fire wood) and looking after younger children – and then early pregnancy and marriage (often as young as 14 years).

Expressions of interest in this post are therefore invited by Dec 7 from trained teachers of whatever age or background or country of origin. We are willing to offer a highly competitive salary, food, accommodation and vehicle at the school (which has solar electricity, running water and satellite internet) – but a clear vocation and personal calling to serve and improve girls education in South Sudan are even more important.

The person appointed must be committed to the core Christian vision and values which led the Founders and Trustees to set up the school, and to the educational guiding principles outlined in the job description.

Above all the Head Teacher must be able to lead and manage the school in a way which models and inspires high standards of teaching, a love of learning, a sense of safety and security, and a culture of caring for each other and for the wider community. We need a person (whatever their age, background or experience) who can combine positive energy, clear leadership and warm inter-personal skills with a firm commitment to achieving the highest standards of teaching, learning and behaviour throughout the school, working in partnership with the UK and South Sudan Trustees and Board of Governors, and trying to combine the best of African and Western approaches to education.

Further details, the full job description, and a short film made in Ibba in June 2014, can be found on our website [here](#).

Please send expressions of interest with CV and referees, by Dec 7 to John Benington J.Benington@warwick.ac.uk (Chair of Trustees, Friends of Ibba Girls School); Hon Pia Philip Michael piaphilip2@yahoo.com (Vice Chair of the South Sudan Trustees for Friends of Ibba Girls School); Commissioner Nagomoro Bridget nagosb@yahoo.com (Chair of IGBS Board of Governors)

Double your donation at 10am on 4-6 December with Big Give!

Friends of Ibba Girls School has been selected to take part in the UK's Big Give Christmas Challenge this year, where your online donations to us on Dec 4 to 6 will be doubled in value, while Big Give funds last!

In other words, for every £10 you give, FIGS will receive £20; for every £100, FIGS receives £200, and so on up to a maximum gift of £5,000 which will be doubled to £10,000!

To take advantage of this amazing opportunity, please book 10am on 4-6 December, into your diaries NOW. Matched funding is time limited, so it is essential to be online at exactly 10AM on Dec 4, 5 or 6, at <https://secure.thebiggive.org.uk/project/FIGS> in order to double your donation.

If you intend to give £500 or more, we are requesting that you kindly notify Chernise, on our FIGS Fundraising Team, at chernise.neo@gmail.com, so that we have some ability to predict how the Christmas Challenge will go.

All funds raised will go towards building and furnishing the school for its second intake of 40 girls in 2015.

Please note that FIGS cannot arrange to make your donation on your behalf, due to questions arising over donor consent. You can, however, ask a trusted friend or family member to help you to donate on-line on Dec 4,5 or 6.

We are also exploring options for providing Big Give technical support at a 'Giving Party' in Coventry - watch this space! For other answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the Big Give, please visit

<http://content.thebiggive.org.uk/christmas-challenge-supporters-2014/> or email chernise.neo@gmail.com to discuss how you can contribute.

Thank you very much for all your support for the girls in Ibba!

Ps. Some of you have also said that you would love to help us spread the word about the Big Give - thank you very much!

Please feel free to copy and paste the above paragraphs into a Facebook post, email, or other form of communication."

Sponsoring students at IGBS

A good number of people have shown interest in "adopting" a girl- child student at Ibba Girls' Boarding School. Whilst FIGS is having to be very busy fundraising for buildings, many Friends of the school prefer to focus on the children, and are attracted to the more personal approach of girl student sponsorship.



We've not rushed into this, as FIGS did not want to set something up for just a few of our girls, or to be seen to be giving preferential treatment to them. How can you fairly choose which girls from a class of 40 to support? Rather our aspiration has been to identify sufficient sponsors to support an entire class of 40 girl students. With an increasing interest in such as scheme, our aim now is to run a sponsorship programme from the beginning of the next school year, in February 2015.

FIGS has been in discussions with Global Care about administering a sponsorship scheme for us. They are a British registered, Christian international children's charity. They have over 30 years' experience of running educational & welfare programmes, with a particularly strong presence in East Africa. We hope to reach a Memorandum of Understanding with them shortly.



The level of sponsorship being recommended is £27/per month (plus Gift Aid). Whilst this is higher than some child sponsorship schemes, this helps to reflect the higher costs associated with running a residential school for adolescents, in the challenging conditions of South Sudan.

As a sponsor you would get regular news about the class of 40 girls as they progress through the school, until they 'graduate'. At minimum you would be sent information about the entire class of students twice a year, with their names and photos. It is intended that during their time at the school each of the girls in the class will have been profiled at least once in these reports, so that you will get to know about each of them individually.

Friends of Ibba Girls School and Global Care will regularly go out to visit Ibba, so both organisations will know personally the girls we are talking about in the updates. Hopefully some sponsors will have the opportunity to go out to Ibba and meet the girls as well.

There should be other opportunities to see and hear more of the girls. At this month's AGM we were able to have a Skype conversation with the class, and with the school satellite internet link more dialogue of this nature will be possible.



If you are interested in supporting an Ibba girl student in this way, please email John Scouller (FIGS trustee) at johnscouller@btinternet.com. He will then send you more information, along with standing order & Gift Aid forms should you decide to engage with the girls in this way.

A friendly Annual Meeting for Friends of Ibba Girls School

Around 50 Friends and supporters of Ibba Girls School found their way to the modern and welcoming Welcome Conference Centre in Coventry on Saturday November 1. We all enjoyed the film and the live Skype all to the school, some first class presentations, lively discussions, and signed up to support FIGS through our Big Give fund-raising campaign in December and through monthly standing orders – and bought lots of FIGS Christmas cards, Pencil Power T shirts, and took lots of silly photos with our Giant Pencil Power pencil!



Nigel and Carol Weallans

We began with a showing of Ibba the Movie, the 5-minute film made (pro bono) for us at Ibba Girls School in June this year by Jonathan Stevens and Nick Jones from Totality. You can access this [here](#).

We then had a live Skype call with students and staff at Ibba Girls School, with the conversations with some of them compared by Chernise Neo. It was amazing to meet some of them, hear their voices direct, and to enjoy the song they had written for us.



Chernise speaking with the girls via skype

This was followed by a session designed to put the school and the students in the

context of perspectives from South Sudan from members of the South Sudan diaspora, including:

Jacob Lagu (FIGS Trustee) on the political economic and social context in South Sudan, in a detailed analysis which combined "pessimism of the intellect with optimism of the will"



Jacob Lagu

Abaan Ajik, a young South Sudanese woman now completing her training as a lawyer in Birmingham, on her own experience and the importance of girls education and the challenge for the UK diaspora



Abaan Ajik

Ajok Wek (a little later in the day) on her family's experience and the importance of womens' empowerment in the emancipation of South Sudan



Ajok Wek

We then had a series of brief progress reports from FIGS Trustees on the following issues (detailed slides are on the website)

- The building programme (John Benington)
- The school development (Jean Hartley)
- The finances (Eric Shepley)
- Fund-raising (John Benington and John Scouller)
- Diaspora engagement (Jacob Lagu)
- Governance and giving (Yve Buckland)



Yve Buckland

Eric Shepley is retiring from his role as Trustee and Honorary Treasurer and was given warm thanks (and a book on Escapist Holidays!) for the painstaking work he has done in setting up rigorous systems for financial management for FIGS. Eric's son Laurence is continuing to help with our book-keeping, to help Gary Bandy as he joins the Trustees and takes over as Honorary Treasurer.



Jane Miller selling FIGS Christmas cards

The next session brought together several people who had been to Ibba as volunteers and could talk about their first hand experience of Ibba and South Sudan

- **Jane Hill** who had been to Ibba with a team from Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA)
- **John Forde**, who had been to Ibba and Yambio with FIGS to carry out a basic health needs analysis and hopes to return next year
- **Carol and Nigel Weallans**, who are FIGS volunteers from St Nics Church in Nottingham, who spent 4 months in Ibba this year working with Bishop Wilson and his team on basic health education and adult literacy – and who plan to return for longer in 2015
- **Chernise Neo**, from the FIGS fund-raising team who came to Ibba in June 2014 to help with the making of the film and the collecting of stories and photos of the girl students

Participants then made carousel visits to learn more or sign up for the following issues:

- Sponsor a class of students (John Scouller and Global Care)
- Big Give and Regular Give by standing order (Chernise Neo)
- Church Support and FIGS Prayer Network (Jane Hill)
- Volunteering with FIGS (Jean Hartley)



Threads were then drawn together in a plenary session for questions, comment and discussion of the next steps.



Finally the day concluded with an epilogue on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation led by the Dean of Coventry Cathedral, Rev John Witcombe. John spoke movingly of the lessons learned in Coventry after the blitz bombing of the city in the Second World War, and the role of the Cathedral in voicing the message “Father Forgive” as the basis for Coventry’s post-conflict reconstruction. Dean John also spoke of brokenness as often the basis for new life, and quoted Leonard Cohen’s song Anthem in which he says:

“There is a crack, there is a crack in everything; That’s how the light gets in. “

The day concluded with a blessing and prayer from Dean John, for the people of conflict ridden South Sudan, for all involved in running Ibba Girls School, and for the UK Friends of Ibba Girls School.



Dean John Witcombe

Planting seeds of hope - the part played by girls schools

The news from South Sudan is still very mixed, with daily ups and downs in the peace negotiations at national level, and fears that the end of the rainy season will lead to a resumption of fighting in some States and between some factions - who want to try to gain control of key towns (like Bentiu) before any peace settlement is sealed.

Hope for us comes from two main sources

- The Committee for National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation which met in Yei in October has agreed a Charter which outlines an inspiring vision for the future of South Sudan, and also some key values which should inform the peace-making process. (Follow the link on our website)
- The Fourth Governors' Forum held in Juba this month has agreed a number of recommendations on how to shape South Sudan, including that " the government should set up girls boarding schools in the states in order to

discourage girls from dropping out of schools...that more schools be built in rural areas in the country, as well as construction of a National Boarding School. It was also resolved that more teachers need to be trained in order to avoid shortage of teachers in the states”

The Governor of Western Equatoria State said something very similar in his speech at the official opening of Ibba Girls School in June this year, so it looks as if IGBS may be acting as a parable of hope for the future, and an example of how education can help to make the peace in practice.

FIGS Christmas Cards

There's still time to buy your FIGS Christmas cards! Each pack contains 2 cards of each design with 'Christmas Greetings' message.

Cards cost £5.00 for a pack of 10 cards. To order your cards, contact:

jean.hartley@open.ac.uk

Cards can be posted to you - postage rates £1.20 for 1 pack or £2.80 for 2-6 packs.

Pencil Power – Give A Girl The Power To Learn



Keep those Pencil Portraits coming in! All you need to do is take a pencil selfie (like our friend Harry Enfield) or draw a doodle selfie (like our friend Stephen Fry). Upload them to Twitter using #PencilPortrait and nominate your friends and family to do the same!

[Please remember to text PENCIL to 70660 to donate £5 to FIGS!](#)



Supporting The Running Costs Of The School

Warm thanks to the 500 of you who have donated so generously to get IGBS up and running. It simply would not have happened without your help!

The most urgent need now is to move forward from one off donations to regular giving through (Gift Aided) standing orders. So if you have not already done so please join the growing number of people who have decided to give monthly standing orders to support the running costs of the school and the students (e.g. helping to pay for the teachers, books, equipment, accommodation and food)

[Before you forget, please sign up right now to contribute £10, £20 or £50 per month](#)

We will make sure you get regular progress reports from the school and about the 40 girls. Alternatively, there are 4 ways to make a donation:

1. **By Cheque payable to:** Friends of Ibba Girls School, to our Honorary Treasurer Gary Bandy at: 12 Ash Grove, Chinley, High Peak, SK23 6BQ
2. **BACS Transfer for the credit of:** Friends of Ibba Girls School,
Co-operative Bank;
Account No: 65525782
Sort-Code: 08-92-99
Please add your name as reference.

3. **By Text** by texting FIGS14 followed by the amount you wish to give to 70070
4. **Virgin Money Giving** please click on the 'Donate' button.

If you feel you're able to contribute please do so by clicking on the 'Donate' button below! Every contribution counts and anything you do will make a huge difference to our cause!

Thank you!

With our best wishes and warm thanks for your continued support and generosity.

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

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