



**FRIENDS OF  
IBBA GIRLS SCHOOL  
SOUTH SUDAN**

**NEWSLETTER**  
*January 2015*

John Benington (Chair of Trustees)  
j.beningtonibbaschool@gmail.com  
Tel: +44 (0)24 7671 5655  
+44 (0)7557799648

Melissa Patel (Press/Media)  
ibbagirlsschoolcomms@gmail.com  
Tel: +44 (0)1242 282000

**DONATE NOW**



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

Gary Bandy (Honorary Treasurer)  
gary.bandy@mac.com



**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*

**BEYOND SURVIVAL – SAFE TO DREAM**

Dear Friends of Ibba Girls School

This coming Sunday Feb 1<sup>st</sup> a team of six FIGS volunteers is flying to Ibba to help get the school started for Year 2, with an additional 40 ten year old girls arriving, making 80 students in total.

We look forward to:

1. Welcoming the return of the first 40 Year 1 students, after their long Christmas break – read more of their lovely stories and photos below.
2. The return of the teaching and support staff – Yoane, Agnes, Nama, Simon and others who helped to create such a lively school culture in Year 1.
3. Working with the South Sudan Trustees and Board of Governors to select and interview for the new post of Head Teacher (to build on the excellent work by our Australian volunteers Paula and Jamie Sgherza, who with Betty and the other African staff got the school up and running last year). We have had 25 applications and have short-listed 4 for interview in Ibba on Sat Feb 7.
4. Running several training workshops with the Governors, teachers and PTA to share experience and develop capacity – our team of 6 volunteers includes 3 experienced teachers from the UK, Caroline Holland and Paul and Julia Sanders.
5. Interviewing a local applicant (a qualified accountant) for the post of business and finance manager. FIGS Trustee and Treasurer Gary Bandy is coming to Ibba as part of our team to ensure the school has rigorous systems of financial control and accountability.
6. Working with our architect Malcolm Worby to review the progress with the building of the new dormitory block and matron's quarters (funded by further generous donations from literally hundreds of FIGS friends and supporters); the extra water storage and septic tank (funded by the Joyce Carr Doughty Trust); and an extra water bore hole (funded by Fields of Life).
7. Welcoming the new intake of 40 additional ten year old girls into Primary 4. So we would like to ask you to consider signing up to sponsor one or more of this group of girls for their schooling at IGBS over the next 9 years. See the details below

## **ARE ESTHER, MARGARET AND LILY WORTH AS MUCH AS MY MOBILE PHONE SUBSCRIPTION?**

If you have not already done so, please make 2015 the time you sign up a standing order to give £27 per month (plus Gift Aid) to help support the first 80 students at Ibba Girls' Boarding School.

South Sudan's conflict-torn and oil dependent economy means that the full cost of supporting a girl-student at the school (including costs of teaching, equipment, boarding accommodation, food, electricity, transport, security, health and pastoral-care) – is much greater than this.

So in these difficult circumstances, your contribution of £27 per month (about the same as a monthly mobile phone subscription!) will make a real difference and will be matched locally by

# small contributions in cash and/or kind from the parents and families of the students

# a small per capita grant from the Girls Education in South Sudan (GESS) programme sponsored by the UK Department for International Development (DfID)

Please do it now – and please ask your friends to do the same. You will find the details below.

## **Beyond Survival**

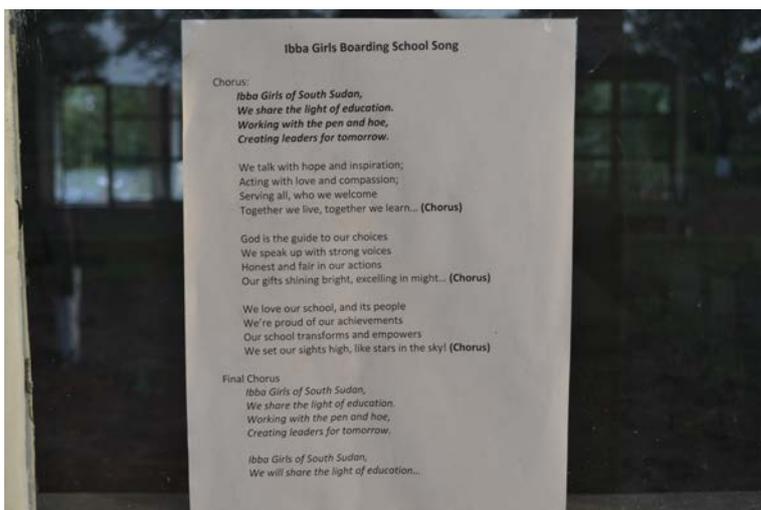
More stories and photos from Chernise Neo following her visit to Ibba as part of the Figs Team in June last year.

One of the most lasting impressions that I have taken away from visiting IGBS is of the girl students starting to accept that a level of security exists in their lives.



The girls queue for breakfast. At IGBS they can count on three meals a day

It is not in the previous experience of many students at Ibba Girls Boarding School that they were able to get to class on time because of a heavy burden of morning chores, that teachers reliably turned up prepared to teach lessons, or even that they ate that day. They or their classmates were punished often and for reasons they might not understand. Things are very different for them now.



School rules and rhythms have been reliably established

This newfound security at IGBS frees up the girls in a wide range of ways: from basic everyday matters such as expressing preferences for certain kinds of foods or extra-curricular activities, or having an opinion on the state of the school compound, to imagining themselves in future career roles that they have chosen.

## Esther J



Esther, second from right and standing tall. Margaret, mentioned below, is on the far left

When I met Esther, it struck me that she would not be particularly out of place in a large, bustling city. Full of pluck and curiosity, she seemed to be permanently at my elbow, trying to work out what I was writing down or how my camera focused on her classmates' faces. While doing all this, she also seemed able to find her way into a large number of photographs, often in highly memorable poses.



Esther J: sparky and memorable

From a class assignment that she produced for Teacher Yoane, I got the sense that it would not be Esther J who would have to keep up with school lessons, but the IGBS curriculum that would have to keep up with her.

She said: “I am happy because before I did not know how to spell words, but since beginning to learn in IGBS, I have now learnt many words and their spellings. I can speak more English than in my previous school. I like our dormitory and classroom, and all the school materials are good.”



A group selfie attempt, with Esther sticking her tongue out

Out of all the girl students interviewed, Esther was also the only one to say that she disliked something at the school. Every other student, without fail, said that there was “nothing I dislike about IGBS”. But Esther, who can be counted upon to have an opinion, frowned, and said, “yes, there is one thing I dislike in the school compound: the snakes”.

## Margaret



Margaret: quietly creative

Another student who stands out in a crowd was Margaret, soft-spoken but quirky, with a great sense of humour. She was chosen to play the part of Commissioner Bridget Nagomoro, in the girls' drama presented at the school opening ceremony, and did this with great style.



The school play. Starring Margaret (front, centre) as Commissioner Bridget, in a retelling of her story of determination to build a school for girls. In this scene various other dignitaries, including a Bishop, Catholic Father, Paramount Chief and government ministers are agreeing to support the school.

Margaret was also vocal about her other preferences:

“What makes me happy here is that we have an area for playing football! I also like the lovely sitting arrangement in our classrooms, which I have never seen in other schools.



Sitting in groups in the classroom and learning cooperatively was previously unknown to most of the girls

“When I was in my previous school, I did not know that there is a sound for each letter of the alphabet. But here we have been taught, and now I know the sound for every letter. English is my favourite subject.

“Here we have good toilets, and good beds to sleep on in nice dormitories. I feel lucky to be here. After finishing school, I want to become a nurse. I would like to work in a hospital.”

## Lily A

Finally, there was Lily A, football-obsessed, bean-loving, and carefree.



Lily A: future pilot

“I am happy to see our school buildings, especially the dormitory and the classroom. Before, all the windows and doors at my old school were broken. We had no chairs. I had no food to eat for breakfast at school, and I was hungry.



The school dormitory, which so many of the girls speak positively of.

“Now I am safe, because our school is fenced, and there is a lovely environment here. My favourite subject is social studies, I have learnt to spell, and my favourite thing to eat is beans! I don’t go hungry here. Life is good now because I am learning.



The school has two cooks, who ensure that healthy meals are served on time to the students

“I used to have no time to play at home because of chores, but here I am free to play and to do my school work. I play football many evenings. When I leave school, I want to become a pilot, so that I can fly airplanes.”

## Safe to Dream



The girls at IGBS increasingly know that they can safely enjoy life, and dream about the future.

An existence that includes having preferences and aspirations was beyond the wildest dreams of many of the first intake of girl students, who have spent the past year getting used to Ibba Girls Boarding School. It will be a wonderful awakening for the next 40 girls due to enrol in the 2015 intake. And it is our intention to continue giving 40 more girls such a secure existence, every year for the next seven years, until the school reaches its full capacity of 360 students in 2022.

## Sponsoring Students at IGBS

A good number of people have shown interest in “adopting” a girl- student at Ibba Girls’ Boarding School. Whilst FIGS is 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, and be seen to be giving preferential treatment to them. How can you fairly choose which girls from a class whom to support? Rather our aspiration has been to identify sufficient sponsors to support everyone in our two classes of girl-students. With an increasing interest in such as scheme, our aim now is to run a sponsorship programme from early 2015.

The level of sponsorship being recommended is at least £27 per month (plus Gift Aid). Whilst this is higher than some child sponsorship schemes, this helps to reflect the much 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 one class of 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 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 their individual stories.

Because various trustees and others from FIGS regularly visit Ibba, we 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.

If you are interested in supporting an Ibba girl-student in this way, please email Chernise Neo ([chernise.neo@gmail.com](mailto:chernise.neo@gmail.com)) to discuss any queries and also copy in

Gary Bandy (FIGS trustee and Hon Treasurer) at [gary.bandy@mac.com](mailto:gary.bandy@mac.com). They will then send you more information, along with Standing Order & Gift Aid forms.



## 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 £27 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*

John Benington (Chair of Trustees)  
j.beningtonibbaschool@gmail.com  
Tel: +44 (0)24 7671 5655

Melissa Patel (Press/Media)  
ibbagirlsschoolcomms@gmail.com  
Tel: +44 (0)1242 282000

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