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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.

Dear friends

A Hard Road to Hope is the theme of a major global peace forum, [Rising 2015](#), which we are supporting in Coventry on Nov 11, 12 and 13 – alongside Hilary Benn, Gordon Brown and speakers from Syria, South Africa and South Sudan (click [here](#) to get involved).

Join us in the following 10 steps on our Hard Road to Hope in South Sudan:

1. The current context: Follow the slow painful road to peace in South Sudan and Western Equatoria State (read more below).
2. Read Jane's, Helon's and Jacinta's stories of hope and struggle, among others still emerging from students at Ibba Girls School (see below).
3. [Study Vicky's report](#) (as IGBS Director of Studies) on Term 2, including the Music, Dance and Drama Competition (available on our [website](#)) and read below Agnes' story of her life-journey to teaching at IGBS.
4. Celebrate Dawn's cycling, Kineton's jazz, and West Orchard's gift – all part

of the long winding road raising funds to build and sustain IGBS over the next 7 years. More below.

5. Read our warm tribute to Marie McKenna who has died suddenly from cancer, aged only 49. Marie inspired us not only with a very generous donation to build a staff/guest house at IGBS, but also with the courage, love, hope and joy with which she approached both her life and death.
6. Please donate [here](#) now to help build and furnish the 3rd dormitory needed for the next 40 ten year old girls who start next Feb 2016. Read more detail below.
7. Support the team of FIGS volunteers who plan to visit IGBS from Oct 25 to Nov 6 for capacity building work with the Board of Governors, teaching staff and students. Do you have a spare laptop computer we can take for the school? IT Schools Africa generously donated 10 refurbished computers to get us started last year but staff and students are increasing and we need more. If you would like to help, please email John at John.Benington@wbs.ac.uk.
8. Take the short and easy road to Coventry on Sat Nov 21 to join us for our 4th Annual Meeting – with a live Skype call with staff and students in Ibba, reports from volunteers and updates from the diaspora, performance poetry from Margaret Eddershaw, and lots of good food and conversation with other friends and supporters. Book the day in your diary now, and e-mail Zsofia Ilona for more details: zsofiailona@googlemail.com.
9. Order and sell [FIGS Christmas cards](#) to raise money and spread awareness of Ibba Girls School – and remember that soon after his birth Jesus became a refugee, whose family fled from conflict by walking the long hard road into Egypt. Details and order form below.
10. Some of you will recall Mariam, whose story of learning to read and write at IGBS we told some months ago. (You can read it again [here](#)) Sponsor the schooling of girls like Mariam, Jane, Helon and Jacinta now, by giving £27 a month (plus Gift Aid) [online](#), or using our [paper donation form](#).

Read more about all this below.

1 - The Current Context: The Slow Painful Road To Peace In South Sudan And Western Equatoria State

The horrifying events which have been unfolding globally over the past few months (with massive numbers of people fleeing as refugees from war, terror, poverty, hunger and disease in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa) are a painful reminder of the difficulties facing so many countries in establishing safe, stable societies – complex dilemmas of borders and identities, and of our inter-dependence as human beings across different cultures.

South Sudan has experienced similar large-scale movements of people fleeing from their homes and communities for over 50 years, during their protracted war with the government of (North) Sudan.

Sadly peace in South Sudan has not yet become fully established even since they gained independence as a country in 2011. And over the past few months some of the volatilities have encroached even on Western Equatoria State, which up till now has been completely peaceful and stable.

There have been sporadic outbreaks of localised conflict in Maridi, Mundri and Yambio - and the tragic explosion of a petrol tanker in which over a hundred people lost their lives.

And yet the recent national peace agreement signed on August 28 is seen by many as the most hopeful yet, backed as it is by the USA, UN and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and reinforced by the threat of US and UN sanctions.

Commissioner Bridget, Bishop Wilson, Father Joaquin, the paramount chief and other community leaders have been working hard with the newly appointed State Governor to reaffirm the commitment to peace in Ibba County, and security for the school.

We know of one South Sudanese girl who has said, “If I am alive, I must have an education” (read the full article [here](#)). As long as Ibba County remains relatively stable and peaceful, and the school is secure, we must continue to educate girl students, for that way lies the road to a sustainable, long-term peace.



2. Building a High Quality School - Step by Step

Amid the many struggles and varied fortunes of our girl students, what remains consistently clear is their great thirst to learn and the quality of the education that they receive at IGBS, which is meeting that thirst. We hear in this newsletter from Jane, a new student who joined the Primary 5 cohort in February, as some of the original 40 girls had failed their end-of-year exams last year and been retained in Primary 4. And we also catch up with two students whose stories you had read last year: Helon, one of the students who was retained, as well as Jacinta, now thriving in Primary 5.

(Interviews were conducted by Agnes Ozitiru and Yoane Kumbonyaki, the Primary 4 and 5 classroom teachers respectively).

Jane



I come from Yambio, and have five siblings, of whom three are in school. My parents are both teachers. In Yambio it took me an hour to walk to school each day. I carried some stationery in my bag, but usually had nothing to eat for recess and lunch breaks at school. I also disliked the beating.

My father heard about IGBS and we decided that I should come here. He wanted me to be in a boarding school to avoid an unwanted pregnancy, and I wanted to learn in a school where you stay in the compound and there are no boys. It took us about four hours on a motorbike to get here.

What I like about IGBS is that I am not being beaten, and there is no need to go outside to fetch water. I can just walk out of the dormitory and go to class directly. I also enjoy playing football after class, and my best friend is Joana.

So far in Science I've learnt about opaque materials, which do not allow light to pass through them. In Social Studies, we've also been learning about the time in history when people began to trade.

Learning at IGBS will change my life. I am going to be a very educated woman who will know how to care for myself and my people. I want to be a doctor.

Helon



I'm from Namarabia Village, Ibba County. Both my parents are farmers. They are divorced and I live with my grandparents when at home.

In Primary 4 last year, I remember learning lots of things – about the Azande tribe and payams; adolescence, malaria, AIDS and sanitation; and germination in Science. When I saw my family in December, I shared what I had learnt in school with them. I was happy to see them, but also worried whether I would be re-admitted to IGBS or not. And if I came back and was still in P4, would I pass? I thought about going to another school.

But my family said that studying at IGBS makes a child learn faster. They said that it has the best teachers and good quality teaching, and that if I continued here, I would do well. When my father brought me back on the motorbike and I stepped into the school compound, I was very happy.

My best subject so far this year is Christianity and Religious Education (CRE); the hardest is Agriculture. So far, I have learnt about air and sanitation in Science, early peoples in Social Studies, reading and writing about time in English, and arable farming, growing crops and making bread in Agriculture. We have also learnt to make masks. After class I like to read and cook.

Jacinta



I come from Ezo County, in Western Equatoria State. My parents run businesses, and I have seven brothers and seven sisters.

Last year, the best thing about IGBS was the chance to learn. I learnt to use a computer, to remember the place value of a number in Maths, and about an Azande King called Gbudue in Social Studies. When I went home in December, I taught my younger brothers and sisters to spell from my storybook – they all really wanted to learn too. I also helped my parents with garden work, and it was great to be home for Christmas.

But I didn't want to stay at home for long. There were violent incidents in the village and in my family, and some people were killed. Boys in the village also made it hard for girls to go to school there. For these reasons, I found myself wishing to be back at IGBS in order to be safe.

My uncle brought me back to IGBS by motorbike and when I arrived I felt so relieved and happy to be safe. I have good friends here – they are Susan E, Jacinta J and Esther W. This year my favourite subjects are CRE and Social Studies. I have learnt about having good relationships, and about the different tribes of South Sudan. We also learnt about poems in English, but the hardest subject is Maths. I am enjoying the chance to only speak English here, and I also like understanding some subjects more and more – especially CRE and Social Studies.

Helon and Jacinta were first featured in our [July 2014 newsletter](#).

3. Ozitiru Agnes (The class teacher for Primary 4 girls.)



I was born in Arua, in Uganda, in 1987. After completing primary school, I joined a secondary school, aiming to get my 'O' Levels (GCSEs), but soon decided to switch to a training college, also in Arua. However, my parents were unable to support me through education as well as my sisters and brother so I started to work in a health centre to earn the money for my college fees. After

completing my training, I continued with nursing for six months in Arua, and then taught for another three months, whereupon I joined IGBS in South Sudan.

Sadly my brother had a motorcycling accident and passed away in early 2015. My mother is also ill and in a hospital in Kampala. I'm now trying to work hard to help my siblings, especially one of my sisters who is in her second year of secondary school.

What I like best about IGBS are its values of cooperating and sharing, both among the students, and with the teaching and non-teaching staff. The environment here is very good, and I appreciate that accommodation is provided.

4. Fund-raising activities - and could you help?

The generosity of hundreds of FIGS supporters, churches and charitable trusts has helped us to raise the funds to build and furnish the needed facilities for living and learning at the school so far – and to appoint an excellent team of teaching, security and support staff.

This made the opening of the school possible in March 2014, and the enrolment of two cohorts of ten-year-old girls – a total of 83 students, now living and studying at the school.

Here are some of the recent events organised and gifts made:



- Congratulations and warmest thanks to Dawn Hart who raised a magnificent £1350 for FIGS from her 100mile cycle ride in the London 100 in August.
- [Kineton Jazz Concert](#), organised by Jane Hill. A lively evening with an amazing pianist and trumpeter in aid of IGBS. St Peter's Church Kineton has already donated generously to support a teacher at IGBS.
- The Horne Family Charitable Trust have given a further grant of over £10,000 towards teaching costs at the school, in addition to their previous annual donations.
- West Orchard United Reformed Church,

Coventry have generously donated £3000 towards the education of one of the poorest Ibba girls, through her years at school.

If you would like to cycle or sing for Ibba, or otherwise mobilise your church, community or charitable trust to donate, we would love to hear from you. [Get in touch](#) with Chernise to describe your fundraising idea.

5. A warm tribute to Marie-Agnes McKenna

Marie and Patrick McKenna have shown close personal interest in the development of Ibba Girls School, and just before Christmas made an outstanding donation of £50,000 to build staff and guest accommodation at IGBS – and talked of travelling to Ibba with us, to see the school for themselves and to meet the girl students and staff.

Just before Easter Marie was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of cancer, and died within a very few weeks, on July 26. Several FIGS donors and supporters attended her funeral in London on July 26, together with many family and friends.

We were all greatly inspired by the way in which Marie and Patrick and their children approached her illness and death – and especially moved by her daughter Victoria telling us that right up until the day of her death Marie had asked them to tell her of

three good things that had happened today.

Marie had reminded them that “while we all get to die, not all of us get to live”! This kind of hope and joy is infectious, and inspires the work of the staff and students at IGBS. This will be an enduring part of Marie’s legacy at Ibba Girls School.

Please help to build the third dormitory



Would you be willing to help us with our next big challenge – building, equipping and staffing another dormitory for the next group of 40 ten-year-old girls who arrive in February 2016?

As you know we aim to enroll an additional 40 ten year old girls each year until 2022, when the school will reach its planned capacity of 360 students, aged 10 to 18 years, in 9 classes from Primary 4 to 8 and then from Senior 1 to 4 – by which time these young women will be equipped and empowered to go on to university or into

jobs, trades and professions, helping to lead the regeneration of this war-torn country.

So we must now build, furnish and staff the next dormitory to provide for a third cohort of 40 ten-year-old girls who will start their schooling at IGBS in Feb 2016.



The first intake of 40 girls at Ibba Girls Boarding School

The dormitory, the matron and the cooks form a very important part of life at IGBS, providing a safe home and a caring community for each girl for the whole 9 years they are at Ibba Girls Boarding School.

This loving residential school community also helps them to concentrate on their learning, as many of them come from distant villages across Western Equatoria State, still devastated by poverty, ill-health and the legacy of conflict. Walking over 20km each way to a day school is not realistic or safe.

Building, equipping and staffing each dormitory at IGBS is expensive, because South Sudan's post-conflict economy is still very uncertain and its infrastructure (e.g roads, water, sanitation, electricity, transport, skills, business, trade) are very basic indeed.

Even with rigorous management and financial accounting procedures in place, and using as much local materials and labour as possible, the costs of importing materials and goods (e.g roofing) from Uganda are high.

About £120,300 in total is needed to build, equip and staff the new dormitory, to provide each of the 40 girl students with a safe home, where she can focus on learning, for the whole 9 years of her IGBS education from Primary Level 4 to School Certificate level in Senior 4.

We have already received donations totalling £32,824 towards these costs, so the balance to be raised to build, equip and staff the new dormitory and wash block is therefore $£120,300 - £32,824 = £87,476$ for 40 girls.

This equates to £2,187 per girl student to provide a safe caring home at IGBS for the whole 9 years of their schooling.

Residential schooling provides an orderly environment conducive to the girls' education up to Senior Level 4.

We are hoping and praying that we can find enough people who will contribute shares of these costs - or who will mobilise their church, charitable trust or community to do so. We would like to find:

- 10 people or groups willing to give £2,187 each
- 30 people or groups willing to give £1,093.50 each
- 40 people or groups willing to give £546.75 each
- 50 people or groups willing to give £218.70 each

We will publish a written record of all those who fund a place, or a share of a place, for a girl in their 2016 dormitory home (unless you prefer to remain anonymous).

We will also send you regular news about these 40 students and about the school, and will invite you to our Annual Meeting on November 21, with a chance to meet the girls whom you have supported, via Skype.

We need to raise these funds by the end of October if we are to get the dormitory built and fitted out in time for the arrival of the additional 40 girls in February.

So please send your Gift Aided donation form ([here](#)) to our Treasurer:

- Gary Bandy, 12 Ash Grove, Chinley, High Peak, SK23 6BQ

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to email me at j.benington@warwick.ac.uk, or ring me on 07557 799648.

Help an Ibba girl to get safe, stimulating schooling, and travel the hard road to hope.

Christmas Greeting Cards from IBBA Girls School, South Sudan



'When you educate a girl. You educate a nation' (UNICEF)

Christmas is fast approaching and Friends of Ibba Girls School is selling packs of Christmas cards to raise further funds for the school and to spread the message about girls education in South Sudan.

The cards feature the girls at the school, with a Christmas border based on the school star. Each pack contains 10 cards, 2 of each design. Price: £4.50 + postage. Postage details are on the website.

Please order packs of cards, either from Zsofia Ilona at zsofiailona@googlemail.com or through the website, or by writing to:

- FIGS, 77 Styvechale Avenue, Coventry CV5 6DW.

FIGS is a UK Charity dedicated to developing a residential girls school in Ibba, South Sudan. It aims to provide high quality education, rooted in Christian values, and is for girls of all faiths and none.

Ibba Girls school educates girls aged 10-18 years who will benefit from schooling, whatever their background, status or parental income. The school opened in spring 2014 and now has more than 80 girls studying and learning in the school community. The school will grow by a cohort of 40 girls for each of the next 7 years.

Of course we are continuing our fundraising for capital cost - for the buildings and resources required for the next in-take of 40 girls in March 2016. 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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