



FRIENDS OF
IBBA GIRLS SCHOOL
SOUTH SUDAN

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES Candidate Brief



WHY WE CHOOSE TO EDUCATE GIRLS IN SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan became independent from Sudan in 2011 after a referendum on self-determination following decades of civil war. Since then, it has weathered many storms, including renewed outbreaks of conflict in 2013 and 2016, internal mass displacement, an exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries, poverty, food insecurity, floods and, on top of everything else, the COVID pandemic. A Transitional Government of National Unity has now been formed, although the latest peace agreement has yet to be fully implemented. Despite all the challenges facing the country, its people are resilient and continue to hope for a lasting peace. South Sudan has a rich cultural tradition and is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, including

minerals and vast areas of fertile agricultural land.

Literacy levels are low, with 75% of the country's children out of school. Very few girls in South Sudan get the chance of education beyond the age of ten because of poverty, domestic pressures and the prevalence of early and forced marriage. **The opportunity for girls to complete their secondary schooling can therefore be transformational, raising awareness of their rights, equipping them with the values, knowledge and skills for leadership in their communities and at all levels, and empowering them to contribute to peace-building in their country.**

South Sudan is a country where personal relationships are hugely important, particularly in decision-making. The ability to develop a strong network of contacts, to earn people's trust and to understand local political and social dynamics is therefore crucial. In terms of school governance, the operating environment is much more informal than in the UK and few people have experience of formal governing bodies.

Amidst all the challenges facing the country, Ibba Girls School in Western Equatoria has not lost a single day of schooling since it opened in 2014 until the current temporary enforced closure of all schools because of the COVID lockdown. The school has achieved remarkable success in its first 6 years including:

- Raising over £3m to invest in the initial infrastructure, buildings, and operation of the school
- Creating a safe and happy school community now with over 260 students with plans to grow to 360 students
- The first two cohorts of pupils all passed their primary certificate exams making Ibba one of the top schools in the country
- Making a measurable impact in the local community, in terms of extending knowledge of health, hygiene, literacy and numeracy to parents, family members and others in the community.
- Gaining a national profile and the potential to become a centre of excellence for the whole country.

MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF IBBA WITHIN SOUTH SUDAN





CANDIDATE BRIEF

The Trustees of Friends of Ibba Girls School (FIGS) are seeking a new Chair for this UK charity concerned with girls' education in South Sudan. The charity is small, but punches above its weight in terms of influence with local and national stakeholders in South Sudan because it is able to demonstrate solid change on the ground in very difficult circumstances.

Ibba Girls School is:

- a community school, not a private or a state school; it is a partnership between the local community, parent and teacher association; state and local government; churches of all denominations; and other stakeholders (including FIGS as co-founders and funders)
- a school based on core Christian values but open and welcoming to people of all faiths and none. It aims to cultivate a critical questioning approach to knowledge and learning
- a school which focuses on girls from age 10 upwards, as few get the chance of education beyond this age because of competing demands for domestic labour, child care, early marriage, pregnancy, and very high risks of maternal mortality
- a boarding school which makes it possible for girls from a wide catchment area across the whole of Western Equatoria State to attend
- a school that aims to offer excellence without elitism; it is open to all students with the potential and commitment to learn, whatever their background status, or finances
- a school that fosters learning both with "the pen and the hoe", thus combining academic knowledge with a wide range of vocational and life skills

- a school that prepares girls to contribute as knowledgeable, transformed and empowered women, to the development of their communities, and to the leadership of this new nation.

Since 2011 FIGS has raised over £3 million divided roughly equally between donations from individuals and from institutions like charitable foundations, schools and churches. About half of the money has been spent on constructing school buildings and the remainder on running the school since it opened with 40 girls in 2014.

Much work still needs to be undertaken in the UK in fundraising, widening the base of support for the school through the school's friends, supporting the school professionally, and taking the learning from this development

“We appreciate so much the positive attitude of parents towards supporting their daughters to stay at school rather than pushing them towards early marriage which is still so common here.”

— Vicky, Headteacher

project into wider challenges about education in South Sudan. The Chair will mainly work in the UK but it will be helpful to be familiar with development issues in sub-Saharan Africa, and perhaps make an annual visit to South Sudan, along with other trustees.

HEADTEACHER VICKY AJIDIRU WITH SOME OF THE PUPILS



The Governance Structure in the UK

In 2011, Friends of Ibba Girls' School (FIGS), was registered as a UK charity, to support the design, building and development of the school with funding and professional/technical advice (i.e. architecture, governance, financial management and excellent teaching and learning). The Trustees are responsible to the Charity Commission for the management of the charity, and to Companies House as directors of a company limited by guarantee. There are 11 UK Trustees and they include members from the South Sudanese diaspora, as well as a range of professions including a diplomat, a university professor, a public servant, an accountant, a lawyer and serving and retired headteachers.

The Governance Structure in South Sudan

In 2013, Ibba Girls Boarding School (IGBS), was registered under South Sudanese law, with its own body of South Sudanese Trustees and Board of Governors (on which the FIGS Trustees are represented). The South Sudan Trustees (who meet once a year) are responsible for guarding, developing and promoting the vision, values and strategy for the school, holding the land and buildings and other assets in trust for the school. The Board of Governors, which meets once a term, is responsible for implementing this strategy, developing a school educational plan and budget, and supporting the Headteacher and staff in the achievement of these goals.

A SCHOOL GOVERNORS MEETING IN 2018





THE ROLE OF CHAIR

This is an exciting, demanding, but hugely rewarding position where the results are tangible. The overarching role of Chair is to retain oversight of the work of the UK Trustees, including ensuring that fundraising achieves its goals in order to maintain and develop the school and the modest UK commitments, encourages and supports the school to achieve high standards, and helps move the school to sustainability from within South Sudan in the longer term.

Outstanding interpersonal skills will be critical to success in the role. The Chair needs to have the ability to win the trust and confidence of donors and potential donors as well as other stakeholders in the UK internationally.

In return the Chair will enjoy guiding a startup organisation into the next chapter of its development and positively impacting the lives of hundreds of disadvantaged girls and their families, for generations to come.

“What I like about school is I have enough time to do my studies because I do not have to work in the family garden or go to the village market.”

— Adia, Senior 1

Key responsibilities

Strategic vision

The Chair will:

- Lead the Board of Trustees (currently 11 members) and its sub-committees (each chaired by a Trustee and supported by volunteers with expertise in specific areas)
- Lead the development and implementation of FIGS's strategic and operational plans, and help develop a robust business model, funding strategy, and action plan to create a solid foundation to carry the organisation forward for the next 5 to 10 years
- Ensure that FIGS and IGBS uphold the highest standards of governance and accountability, to ensure the professional management of finance, staff, students and stakeholders.

Donor and stakeholder relations

Articulate the vision of FIGS, both in relation to the school and wider education in South Sudan, and inspire philanthropists, donors, NGOs and the wide base of 'friends' to support the school financially and consistently, ensuring FIGS is able to develop a long-term strategy. The Chair will need to be a confident speaker and good at networking in order to build financial, governmental and community support for the school.

Represent FIGS and its values, strategy and priorities to potential funders, at all levels of government, among churches and NGOs, and in public settings, including the media, in the UK and where appropriate in South Sudan.

THE MATRONS, NURSE, COOKS, CLEANERS AND GROUND STAFF WHO LOOK AFTER THE GIRLS AND THE SCHOOL



The Chair will oversee and maintain continuous dialogue and feedback with key internal and external stakeholders and in particular, to:

- Establish working relationships with appropriate UK government officials, national and international aid agencies and NGOs working in both the UK and South Sudan
- Develop and nurture positive working relationships with a wide network of donors and potential funders
- Working with other Trustees and volunteers, develop the fundraising and communications strategy for FIGS in the UK
- Working with other Trustees and volunteers, to develop the growing base of volunteers
- Ensure that FIGS operates with the best available evidence about performance and development.

Leadership and management of the board

The Chair of FIGS will provide strong leadership to the board, providing clear direction and sense of purpose, whilst delegating areas of work to those who have the skills and experience on the board and among volunteers.

Particular requirements are to:

- Plan the annual cycle of board meetings, prepare the agendas and authorise action between board meetings
- Identify, with the Trustees, the key short-term and longer-term challenges which the board need to address

- Facilitate change and support the development of the Board of Trustees to enable initiatives to be implemented
- Bring impartiality and objectivity to decision-making

Working with the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors in South Sudan

Consolidate FIGS' working partnership with the South Sudan Trustees and stakeholders drawn from the community, local and state government, churches of all denominations, the private sector and International NGOs. The Chair must have the capacity to visit the school in South Sudan from time to time. In particular to:

- Represent FIGS at the Annual Meeting of the IGBS Trustees in South Sudan (on which FIGS has two places), and continue to foster high level relationships with South Sudan Government Ministers and civil servants, the Universities, church leaders, national and international aid organisations
- Where appropriate, take part in the selection of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team by the IGBS Trustees.



Articulating the vision and values of IGBS

The FIGS Chair will be expected to have empathy with the school's commitment to core Christian beliefs, whilst being actively welcoming to people of all faiths and none. In particular:

- Have the leadership capacity to articulate the ethos and values of the school to Trustees and other stakeholders in the UK
- To visibly support the Christian life of the school when in South Sudan

Governance, management and financial oversight

The Chair will have an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship. The Chair will

provide good governance and tight management of all administrative functions of FIGS Trustees.

The fundraising challenge increases as the school grows in size each year. Over the next five years, the challenge is to raise £2 million to complete the building programme and operate the school at full capacity.

In particular, it is the Chair's role to:

- Ensure that FIGS and IGBS operate within tight financial parameters and that procedures are followed
- Work with the Treasurer and independent examiner to ensure that accurate accounts are produced, approved and published.

“I know the importance of education and I want my daughter to have the best education. Ibba Girls School is providing this.”

— Charles, Parent



THE PERSON

The Trustees seek an inspirational Chair who will lead FIGS with compassion, vision and drive. The overarching role of the Chair is to mobilise everyone who comes into contact with FIGS and Ibba School and in doing so, will be a compelling public speaker who inspires donors to commit to supporting girls' education in South Sudan.

To that end, the role is complex, wide-ranging and challenging and it is likely that the successful candidate will have many, if not all of the following key skills, experience and attributes.

Experience

- Prior experience of chairing a board or management team
- A working knowledge of international development, particularly education and it

would be desirable if candidates had experience of working in, or with, organisations in sub-Saharan Africa

- Experience of strategic planning, operational planning and resource management
- Experience of fundraising will be an advantage
- Working with the press and media and an understanding of social media

Skill and abilities

- The ability to articulate the compelling strategic vision for FIGS and the Ibba School to work with the South Sudan trustees to align UK and South Sudan perspectives

- Ability to undertake strategic thinking and action to address complex challenges in both the UK and in South Sudan
- Ability to think strategically about fund-raising and to work with a wide range of stakeholders in UK and South Sudan to raise funds for the long-term development of the school
- Understanding of financial planning and management, and other resource management
- Excellent communication skills (both verbally and in writing) with the confidence to engage a wide range of audiences
- The ability to create alignment between stakeholders, build coalitions and negotiate
- Excellent decision-making, problem-solving and problem-spotting abilities, including evidence of having dealt successfully with a range of challenges.
- Excellent interpersonal skills arising from the ability to utilise active listening and an innate curiosity about people from a range of cultures and backgrounds
- Pro-active in reaching out to people and the ability to network effectively
- Empathy with South Sudanese society and the tact, diplomacy and political judgement to manage a wide range of stakeholders
- Excellent judgement, integrity and sense of fairness, with the ability to handle disputes with tact and diplomacy and to deliver tough messages when required

Remuneration

Until now, FIGS has been volunteer-led, with Trustees taking an active role in helping to establish, and set up Ibba School. Time and travel have been entirely on a voluntary basis, including those Trustees who have visited the school in South Sudan. However, the Trustees realise that a different set of arrangements may be needed for the new Chair, so whilst the role itself does not come with any remuneration, expenses will be discussed as part of the recruitment process.

Personal attributes

- Able to act as a motivational ambassador and professional advocate for the UK Trustees and the School, with strong personal credibility and the capacity to build relationships with a wide range of people from a local to global level

“The things I like about school are very many. We have enough teachers and we have books to study from. Many schools have few teachers.”

— Susan, Senior 1

HOW TO APPLY

Julie Lodrick, the trustee chairing the HR sub-committee, is the initial point of contact for candidates and can be contacted at julie.lodrick@friendsofibba.org. You can also find out more about Friends of Ibba Girls School at our website, <https://www.friendsofibba.org>.

The closing date for applications is noon on Monday 26 October 2020 and candidates should submit a covering letter with their CV to Julie Lodrick at the email above. The letter should evidence the experience and personal attributes required of the role of Chair.

A shortlist will then be drawn up and at this stage candidates will be given the opportunity to speak with the current Chair, the Treasurer and the Chair of the Fundraising sub-committee.

Candidates will be invited to attend interviews during the week commencing 9th November and these will be held remotely. On Tuesday 10th November, candidates will meet with members of the Personnel and HR sub-committee and on Thursday 12th there will be an interview with the board of FIGS Trustees.

References will be taken up at this stage and the successful candidate will undergo a full Disclosure and Barring Service check

FIGS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

