

Saturday, the 24th of January 2026, marked the International Day of Education. A day when we celebrate the transformative power of education and the vital role young people play in shaping a more just and sustainable future.

UNESCO reminds us that people under 30 make up more than half of the world's population and represent a powerful force for innovation and social change—yet many continue to face significant barriers to learning and opportunity.

Responding to this reality, the Youth Declaration on Transforming Education places young people at the heart of educational change, recognising them as co-creators of education, from local initiatives to global decision-making.

The 2026 International Day of Education highlights youth-led innovation and participation, celebrating students who are actively shaping their own learning and futures. At Ibba Girls Boarding School (IGBS), this global vision is lived out every day. Our students are not only beneficiaries of education—they actively shape it, building the confidence, skills, and leadership needed to transform their communities.

This celebration comes at an exciting moment: Term 1 begins on February 2nd, and our recruitment process for Primary 4 and Secondary 1 is currently underway, as a new cohort of girls prepares to begin their education journey.

To celebrate the International Day of Education, we wanted to share two reflections of this global vision in action: the story of a young woman completing her education at Ibba Girls Boarding School, and a moment of global sisterhood shared with students at North London Collegiate School last November.

When young people are given the chance to learn, lead, and be heard, the impact reaches far beyond the classroom. At IGBS, this is reflected in the journeys of individual students; globally, it is echoed in moments of connection between girls learning from and inspiring one another across borders.

Mary, Senior 4 School Leaver

“I joined IGBS in 2017 when I was ten years old. Leaving home to join a boarding school was difficult at first, but with encouragement from my matrons I learned to take care of myself, respect others, and value my education.

At IGBS I learned to read and write confidently, to speak fluent English, and to stand up for my future. Being in boarding school saved me from early marriage and early pregnancy, which are common in my community. IGBS taught me that education is the path to a better future.”

I want to use what I have learned to help other girls understand the importance of education. My dream is to become a doctor.”

— Catherine, Senior 4 School Leaver

Catherine’s words capture the full impact of an IGBS education: academic confidence, personal independence, and the freedom to choose her own future. What began as a daunting step away from home became a pathway to safety, learning, and ambition—opening doors not only for Catherine, but for the girls she hopes to inspire next.

Celebrating Global Sisterhood





Last November, FIGS partnered with North London Collegiate School (NLCS) to host a collaborative Festival of Words, celebrating Global Sisterhood through poetry, music, storytelling, and creative exchange, with IGBS students winning over hearts and minds through their presentations of original poetry and essays. FIGS was represented by Julia Sanders (FIGS Trustee, pictured above) and Tedros Getachew (Head of Fundraising and Communications) to share the voices of IGBS students with a global audience celebrating global sisterhood.

The evening featured live performances from NLCS primary and secondary students, alongside contributions from NLCS sister schools in Dubai, Japan, and South Korea.

One highlight was the poem “Teach Girls – Transform a Nation”, a powerful reminder that educating girls strengthens families, communities, and nations preformed by the IGBS Kids of Brilliancy. You can watch the poem on our YouTube channel by clicking below.

Audiences also watched a video of IGBS girls performing their original work, together with a message from Head Teacher Rita Akello, bringing the spirit of IGBS directly into the room.

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Dr Boriana Alexandrova of the University of York, whose work on gender and education underscored the importance of young people’s voices in shaping a more equal future.

As one IGBS student wrote:

“Global sisterhood means unity, friendship, and support among women all over the world. Education brings women together from different backgrounds, helping girls unite across the world and rise into leadership.”

— Kubana, IGBS student

Moments like these reflect UNESCO’s vision of young people as agents of change, connecting classrooms across continents and building understanding through shared learning.

Together, we are empowering girls, amplifying young voices, and celebrating the transformative power of education.

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