

BibleLands

.....Overseas Partner Fact Sheet.....

Talitha Kumi School

How it all started

This Evangelical Lutheran school was founded in Jerusalem in 1851 by Pastor Theodor Fliedner and Sisters of the Deaconess Institution in Kaiserswerth, Germany, the town where Florence Nightingale trained as a nurse. It began as a home for orphaned Arab girls, later developing into a girls' boarding school.

In 1961, the school moved to Beit Jala, a Christian village beside Bethlehem, and in 1980 it became fully co-educational.

Taking the child by the hand, Jesus said to her, "*Talitha kumi!*" which means, "*Little girl, I tell you, get up!*"
Mark 5:41

The name Talitha Kumi was given as a motto and an inspiration. Dr Duerr, the school's Principal, says: "The name itself has turned into a commitment for us. It's a word that calls for life. A word that fills someone's heart with courage and makes them look to the future with hope and optimism."



Pupils at Talitha Kumi School, Christmas 1900

Current Activities

There are about 900 pupils at the school, with an equal number of boys and girls. Keeping the proportion of girls high is not easy, as many Christian families prefer to send their daughters to single-sex schools. However, Talitha Kumi has such a good reputation that parents are prepared to allow their daughters to attend.

The school teaches the usual government curriculum, with an additional emphasis on languages, sport, art and vocational education. As well as learning English from an early age, pupils also learn German, an option that is not available in most other schools, and which includes an annual exchange programme with pupils from Germany.

The school has excellent sports facilities, including an indoor games hall – the only gymnasium of its kind in the West Bank – for basketball, gymnastics and volleyball. Outdoor facilities include playgrounds for football, basketball, and athletics.

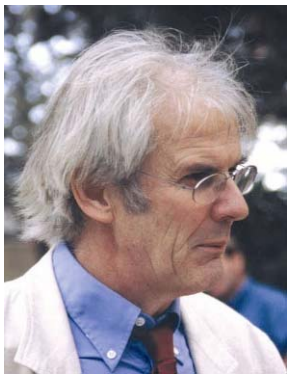
Key facts

Founded: 1851

Location: Beit Jala, Holy Land

First Grant from BibleLands: 1967

BibleLands' Grant: £65,820 p.a.



*Dr Georg Duerr,
the Principal*

The students' last two years at the school can be spent either in the academic section or learning about all aspects of hotel management, from catering to business studies, in the vocational training section. The school has a guesthouse on site, where these students can put their learning into practice.

Up to 50 girls board at the school, either because they do not live locally, or for economic and social reasons. The girls live in four 'families', each with a house mother, who helps and advises the girls in their studies and provides care and attention through this time of growing up. Many of the girls consider the school their second home, with its atmosphere of love and care.

The presence and caring attitude of the Christian staff all help to further the Christian education of the children.

About ten per cent of the children come from Muslim families and the law does not allow them to attend the Bible lessons that the Christian children receive. However, everyone joins in Morning Assembly, led by Christian staff or the local Pastor, and the boarders join in evening devotions.

Talitha Kumi Scout Troop was established in 1995 and has about 120 members. The Scout Troop has a band with drums, bagpipes, trumpets and a pair of castanets! The Troop has a camp every summer, which lasts for two weeks. This is held at the school, using its excellent facilities, especially the sports hall.

The high levels of unemployment and poverty across the West Bank mean that many parents can only pay a nominal sum towards their children's education. However, no child is turned away because of financial difficulties.

Therefore, BibleLands' child sponsorship scheme is appreciated, as it enables the school to continue to offer an education to these children.



Top: The school Choir performing at the annual Christmas concert.

Above: One of the boarding 'families', named 'Peace'.

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