



SOLIDARITY with South Sudan

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July 2019

Proposal to Educate Teachers with BA Degree

Summary:

I write appealing for assistance to finance a pilot scheme that we are starting with the Catholic University of South Sudan (Juba). The Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio (STTC) would like to send 10 graduate students to enroll in the B.A. (Ed). They would complete the final two years of this course and then emerge with a Bachelor's Degree that would allow them to teach either in primary or secondary schools in South Sudan. We would like to do this for two batches of students and then review this scheme, before deciding its future. The arrangement involves paying academic fees of \$1,000.00 per student per year plus giving each student \$100 book allowance per semester. The cost in year one would be \$12,000, in year two \$24,000 and \$ 12,000 in year three. Total cost \$ 48,000. All living and accommodation expenses are the responsibility of the individual students. We already have \$12,000 secured!

Background:

The STTC is staffed, administered and financed by Solidarity with South Sudan and is run in collaboration with the Catholic Bishops of South Sudan. The mission statement of Solidarity with South Sudan states that '*Solidarity with South Sudan aims to create self-sustainable educational, health and pastoral institutions and programs that will help to empower South Sudanese and Nuba Mountains people to build a just and peaceful society. Solidarity is a collaborative commitment of religious institutes of men and women, members of the Union(s) of Superiors General in Rome and the Church in South Sudan working in partnership with the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference*'.

Since its start in 2013, 267 students have graduated from the STTC, 45 of whom are female, with a Certificate in Primary School Education. This is recognized by the University of Juba. In addition, Solidarity has completed in-service training for over 118 untrained primary school teachers. While these numbers are small given the overwhelming demand of qualified teachers in the country, the school has remained in operation throughout the grave insecurity that has affected the country since its independence in 2011. One estimate says that currently there are 30,000 untrained teachers in the country and that 41% of the country's population of 12 million is under the age of 15 years.

The college provides a two-year training program and recruits from all regions in the country. Among its objectives, it seeks to provide quality education to the trainee teachers. It actively promotes the enrollment of women in its program in a country where this is tremendously counter cultural. It also encourages a culture of peace by helping the various ethnic groups to live together in harmony on campus.

For some time, students have asked for the opportunity to take their studies to the level of bachelor's degree. This is an understandable request in a country where there is a grave shortage of highly trained teachers and professionals. To date 2 graduates were sent annually to start a Bachelor's program in Kenya. Due to a lack of accreditation between the two countries, this has proved to be a long and expensive process. The College is starting a process of reflection to see if it can offer a three-year Diploma program. In the meantime, it would like to enter into partnership with the Catholic University of South Sudan and offer a pathway to higher education to a greater number of STTC graduates.

Catholic University of South Sudan:

The Catholic University of South Sudan (CUofSS) welcomed its first students in 2009, and currently has faculties of Arts, Social Sciences and Economics and Business Administration in Juba and the faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences in Wau in Western Bahr El Ghazal State. The Faculty of Education was started in 2015. This year the University has 930 enrolled students in Juba and 450 in Wau. It is affiliated to the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi.

The Faculty of Education 'aims at providing quality and holistic education for all who desire to become teachers and school administrators for service in the church and the society. It seeks to equip learners with knowledge and skills needed in the field of education for them to become good teachers. The expectation of the University is that learners will develop zeal and interest in the field of education and contribute their talents to the community needs'

Given the similarity of the mission of these two Catholic Institutions, cooperation and partnership seem to be an obvious way forward, especially in the light of the many challenges facing education in this country. One of the present difficulties in development of Primary and Secondary Education in South Sudan is that teachers are not well paid, and consequently careers in education are not that popular among undergraduates. By pooling our resources, we hope to consolidate the link between two existing educational institutions in South Sudan and to assist the Church and State in better responding to the great need for the training of primary and secondary school teachers.

Proposal:

STTC would select 10 of its graduates for entry into the CU of SS program in the academic year 2019-2020, and ten more in the year 2020-2021. These students would be accepted into a three month 'bridging session' where they could be examined on their fulfillment of University course requirements. Upon acceptance, they would enter the third year of the four-year B.A.(Ed) program.

Each transition student from STTC will be subject to the same course requirements and assessment procedures as are required of continuing Catholic University students. At all stages throughout this pilot scheme, students will follow the academic standards set by the University. The university retains all rights to grade the students as it normally would. Promotion to fourth year would not be automatic but must be earned. Should any student fail examinations, all financial costs associated with re-sitting examinations will be their responsibility.

It is understood that only the academic fees, plus a small book allowance each semester will be provided for each student. All other costs, including accommodation, living and transport expenses, will be their responsibility.

Potential Gains:

1. The graduates of STTC would have a recognised pathway towards attaining a degree in education and be more qualified to teach in South Sudan.
2. The university would gain a supply of well-prepared and teaching-oriented students who are all secondary school graduates and who have undertaken extensive, supervised practical teaching experience.
3. A larger pool of potential tutors for the STTC and other educational initiatives will be created.
4. This may provide an attractive pathway for a higher percentage of female students to become teachers with degrees.

Conclusion:

South Sudan is the newest independent African country but one that has passed through an ordeal of tragic violence and destruction over the last years. Against this background many of its educational institutions are struggling to provide some small ray of hope for the future. In a limited but practical way this proposal offers the opportunity to a number of students to attain higher levels of education and to assist in the future development of the country. Twenty additional teachers with degrees in education will not solve national problems, but it will help the Church to better run some of its schools. If successful, this scheme could be expanded in the future. We invite you to help us make this next step in the development of educators in South Sudan.

Fr. Jim Greene M. Afr.
Executive Director
Solidarity with South Sudan

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