

STTC Newsletter - June 2023

Solidarity Teacher Training College, Yambio, South Sudan



Welcome to the new Students

STTC welcomes forty new students from different parts of South Sudan and Nuba Mountains for the four semester Preservice teacher training programme. These young women and men with a passion for teaching are ready to commit full-time to professional learning and school teaching practice for the next two years. STTC offers a completely free, quality education along with full board and lodging. STTC continues to promote girls' education. This time, students were happy to make the long journey from Juba to Yambio by road, covering about 360 km. This is because the road facility and security situation have improved. A very warm welcome is extended to all.



Visit of Sr Katherine O'Flynn

Sister Katherine O'Flynn fcj, a member of the Solidarity Board in Rome, spent almost a week in STTC during her recent visit to South Sudan for meetings with the Bishops' Conference. This was a very special visit on many counts, not least because Sr Katherine had been in Yambio eleven years' earlier and so could see for herself the transformation: from a village to a city, as she worded it herself. Sr Katherine met with each of the groups, listening to the stories of the students, and sharing her expertise in leadership with the Diploma students. The visit of Board members is a real support to the Solidarity communities and we thank Sr Katherine for making the time..

Icebreaking Games

The senior students organized games activities that enabled the new students to get to know each other. They organized meaningful group activities with a lot of fun. This helped to ease nerves and tension, foster friendships, encourage team building, and create an atmosphere of positivity. The new students need this exercise since they come from different tribes, states, religions and speak different languages. STTC constantly emphasizes respect for all tribes, cultures and creeds, and to be tolerant of differences. This helps to promote peace and unity on campus and forges bonds across South Sudan.





Workshop on Sustainable Development

Br Isaac Odongo and Br Stephen Wandabasi of the Christian Brothers (Edmund Rice), together delivered a workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN. Br Odongo shared from his own BSc degree studies in Sustainable Development, dwelling in particular on Goal No. 4 and our individual responsibility, 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. Br Stephen continued with a consideration of how to make projects like Solidarity sustainable on the ground when the missionaries have left. This thought-provoking workshop engaged the students personally as well as collectively.

Workshop on Sustainable Agricultural Development

One of the four capacity-building projects of Solidarity with South Sudan is Sustainable Agricultural Project (SAP) in Riimenze. The project includes conducting nutrition training programs, workshops on farm planning, plant protection, crop rotation and propagation, harvest handling, and livestock, especially pigs and chickens. Recently, Br. Joseph Mammah FMS, the Director of the SAP and Mr Samuel Onyango, the Agricultural Specialist from the farm conducted a workshop for STTC students on Sustainable Agricultural development. The students learned about horticulture, having poultry and piggery farms, cultivating various crops, creating organic farms, marketing techniques and how to become entrepreneurs in the farm industry



Creative Arts at STTC

Throughout the semester, and especially whenever there is a public holiday, the students devote time to create new art products. In the Department of Creative Arts the display of swans and snowflakes, stars, rosary beads and bangles, cribs and crochet, the work of past students, inspires the newcomers. Pencil bags and sewing cases already demonstrate the creativity of PS1, and we look forward with interest to further productions. The transformation of the Creative Arts classroom itself, with students painting walls and cupboards, makes the room and its contents a mandatory stop on every tour of the college.

Caring for the Library

The Library of STTC is a treasury of mostly English-language and education related materials built up over the years by tutors, donors and visitors. Following on the subdivision of some bookcases and the creation of new ones, a team of students worked with Sr Jacinta to re-shelf the collections according to the existing Dewey system. The delight taken in the task was noteworthy as students came across some books for the first time. PS2 students, in teams of 3, now care for each bookshelf, and PS3 library assistants Stanceslous Muhuyi and Encio Baptist watch over every aspect of the library with the greatest diligence. The long-term goal is to see the library well-stocked and fully catalogued with the student teachers (Certificate and Diploma), along with the tutors, actively engaged in its management as well as using the collections to best advantage.



Cleaning and Gardening

The work projects during Eid Ul Adha break were inside and outside the campus, and co-ordinated by tutor Mr Kirya Julius. Deep pits were dug by teams of students to help dump kitchen wastes to produce natural manure. The students joined the *Laudato Si'* group and undertook slashing and ditch-cleaning inside the campus. As part of our local community commitment, teams of students slashed around the Abangite Catholic Secondary School. It is commendable to witness the involvement of the students with their tireless manual labour in the maintenance of the college premise with a great sense of belonging.



English Classes for Women

One of the student volunteer initiatives that has taken root is the English language programme for local women, including some of our own STTC workers. Held in the late afternoon, when classes - and work - have ended, female students from PS3 work as a team so that each group of women have class twice weekly (written and oral), divided according to their previous knowledge of English. This allows both large group work (about 14 women) followed by smaller groups of 2 or 3 women to each STTC tutor. The women are very clear about what they need English for: to greet and converse socially, to name what is in their own environment, to use in the market, and to be able to say their prayers and answer the Mass in English. The class content follows where they lead.

Farewell to Sr Josephine

Josephine Murugu, RNDM Sisters, has worked in Riimenze, South Sudan for the past fifteen years. She is the last to leave of the pioneering group who helped to establish Solidarity with South Sudan. Among Sr Josephine's many contributions to capacity-building in Western Equatoria was the establishment of St Paul's Nursery School in Riimenze, which she leaves in a thriving state, to continue its excellent work into the future. Fluent in the local Pazande language, Josephine advocated tirelessly for the local women, urging the younger ones to persevere in school and making it possible for several to pay their own fees through work at sewing uniforms. Her work was a model of self-help and community building. As she returns to her home country of Kenya and a new mission, she carries the thanks and blessings of many South Sudanese friends.



New Cabinet

An election for the new president and her leadership team was conducted as we began a new semester. Since the students come from different states, languages and tribes, it is an important exercise for them to learn the art of building relationships, defining identities, working together and achieving the common goals of the college effectively. It is also a practice in democracy, conducted in a good humoured but serious manner. Keji Beatrice, a second semester female student was elected as the president of the college and Isaac Malual as the vice president. Their leadership team has promised to work for peace and unity and the overall welfare of the college.