

STTC Newsletter - August 2023

Solidarity Teacher Training College, Yambio, South Sudan



School Practice

Along with STTC tutors, the final semester School Practice was observed by external examiners, Mr John Richard Otema and Mr Emmanuel Longa Auyub from the University of Juba, and Mr Alison Francis Wanode from the State Ministry of Education. Noteworthy this time round was the mixture of both Certificate and Diploma students in the one staffroom, a very positive development for the local primary schools. The external examiners met with the students individually and as a group to give them the feedback. At a staff meeting, they reflected on how STTC manages School Practice, commending many elements and advising on ways it might be improved further. This outside appraisal is important to the continuing development of the programme and the maintenance of high standards.



Thanks to USAID for the New Solar System

STTC is grateful to USAID for its huge contribution to install a new solar power system for the whole campus. Mr Peter Stemp, the Associate Director of the De La Salle Solidarietà Internazionale, Sr Joan Mumaw, the former Director of Friends in Solidarity with South Sudan, and two other key persons from the De La Salle Brothers congregation, Brother Craig Franz and Brother Amilcare Boccuccia were instrumental to facilitate the whole process of bringing the container load of materials from Austria to Yambio, South Sudan. STTC used to have limited power supply from the diesel generator each day for its essential operations. Students were living in dark the whole night last five years. This solar power system will bring new life to the campus. Having a solar system with a clean and green source of energy is a great way to reduce carbon footprint. Thanks to USAID for its contribution.





Action for the Environment

The *Laudato Si'* movement challenges all in STTC to take care of our Mother Earth. Organised into groups named for the *Laudato Si'* Goals (adding 'Ecological conversion'), the student groups take turn to lead the campaign. Taking advantage of the good contacts built up through School Practice, they selected six local primary schools and prepared a team for each to conduct a Saturday session with the pupils and their patron or local teacher about hygiene and environmental conservation, culminating with the activity of planting trees. The trees were grown on campus from seedlings. Sr Elizabeth kindly drove the pickup, filled with plants, people and tools, to each of the venues, making for a real carnival atmosphere.

Skills Training

Training in the use of some new technologies was a campus highlight for the past few weeks, both for trainees and spectators. Outside experts instructed students, operation and care of the new gasoline grass cutter. Students queue to use it both inside and outside the compound, with spectacular results. How to use the knife grinder was another new learning. Under careful instructors, with sparks flying, students took turns sharpening the slashers, knives and even the paper cutter from the Library. Bread-making is yet another skill that is passed on to the students in STTC by the local cooks. An additional local oven was recently made, recycled from an oil barrel, so that the daily baking count of 700+ breads can be more easily achieved.



Webinar on Laudato Si'

Sr Guille, Br Stephen Wandabusi, and eleven *Laudato Si'* members, participated for the first time in an international webinar on 17 August 2023. The theme was "*Young people: essential partners in Laudato Si' Action Platform*". The STTC students got a strong experience of being linked with so many people they did not know, from different countries who shared the same spirit and concern for Mother Earth. In their reflection at the college assembly the following day, they recalled the quotation, 'small people, in small places, all around the world, make the difference'. They hope to extend participation to more members as this webinar occurs monthly. They have already started posting the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (Rome) in the social media.

Computer Training for Local Women

On Friday afternoons, over three months, a group of local women attended a basic computer course in STTC. The course was organized by Sr Shu Fang Wang who first trained the student teachers to be effective tutors. The final weeks were under the sole direction of Robert Arike, the final semester student, and his team. The parish priest, Fr Joachim Oboi, presented the certificates of participation to the seventeen women, in the presence of family and friends, on 19 August 2023. The women were hugely appreciative of this opportunity, while the student teachers benefited from the experience of working with learners for whom the computer is entirely news.



Progress on the Construction of the New Classrooms

The process of creating the foundations has been followed with keen interest by students, staff and visitors alike. Layer after layer of heavy stones, aggregate and gravel have been spread systematically, pounded down by dozens of men and completed by the compacting machine. The race to pour the cement involved even more men, working in teams with numerous wheelbarrows. The concrete on the top, called the German floor, is now completed. The men entrusted with this work are most certainly putting in the effort to make these classrooms solid and long-lasting. All that we have witnessed so far would give you great confidence in the final product. Thanks to the Sudan Relief Funds (SRF, USA) and the Solidarity Funds.



Campus Refurbishment

Under the leadership of Sr Elizabeth Blok, the administrator, several much-needed refurbishment projects were undertaken. The termite-eaten wooden doors of the girls' toilets were replaced with strong metal doors and the entire toilet and shower block was renovated and painted. Across the campus, gutters were cleaned and leakages repaired. The college's huge water-tanks - into which water from the boreholes is pumped - were emptied, cleaned and treated with chlorine. Outside experts trained a team of students and together a great work was done. The students very much appreciate the chance to gain knowledge and skills that they will apply back in their home villages. Water management is an important public health service in South Sudan where typhoid and malaria are rife.

