

STTC Newsletter - October 2024

Solidarity Teacher Training College, Yambio, South Sudan



Early Childhood Education

A significant focus in the curriculum of the teacher training program is the study of Early Childhood Education (ECD), as required by the new guidelines for Initial Teacher Training in South Sudan. For their first teaching practice, the current first-year students spent two weeks at Solidarity Nursery School in Riimenze. They combined child observation with a school report and taught Language and Mathematics using an Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) approach. The task was highly successful, measured by the fun and laughter in the classroom. The multisensory teaching method was embraced, with many action songs and children's games.

Safeguarding Workshop

When new students begin their intensive teacher training program at STTC, their first briefing includes comprehensive instruction on Solidarity's Safeguarding Policy for Minors and Vulnerable Adults, followed by annual professional workshops led by experts. Sr. Kasoo Damiana, from Nairobi, conducted a three-day workshop covering essential safeguarding topics. These included safeguarding practices, acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, breaking the culture of silence, bullying and intimidation, responsible communication on social platforms, strategies for preventing abuse, and disclosure procedures. Ongoing training and briefings are aimed at ensuring a safe and happy environment at the college.



Health & Wellness Session

In mid-September, Sr. Jessie Joseph, a medical doctor from India and a Solidarity missionary from CHTI-Wau, conducted an informative workshop on health and hygiene. She provided in-depth information on malaria, typhoid, ulcers, seasonal flu, drug addiction, first aid, tuberculosis, and other contagious diseases. Sr. Jessie also addressed symptoms, causes, and prevention strategies for common illnesses. She held a separate session for female students to address health issues specific to them. The students visited Sr. Jessie at the dispensary for medical treatment and personal consultations as well. These sessions equipped student-teachers with practical knowledge to protect themselves from illnesses and promote healthier lifestyles.



Sustainable Agricultural Project

In addition to their teacher training, STTC student-teachers have the opportunity to gain advanced knowledge of agriculture by visiting the Solidarity farm in Riimenze. Recently, students visited the farm to acquire firsthand knowledge on sustainable agriculture. The Solidarity Sustainable Agricultural Project (SAP) is one of four capacity-building projects in South Sudan. It includes workshops on nutrition, farm planning, crop rotation, plant protection, harvest handling, and livestock farming (especially pigs and chickens). Brother Tom Mutuku, Assistant Director, and Mr. Samuel Onyango, the Agricultural Specialist, conducted a workshop on Sustainable Agricultural Development for the students. They learned about horticulture, poultry and pig farming, organic farming, marketing strategies, and how to become entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector.

Final Exams with External Supervision by Juba University

On September 9, 2024, Preservice Certificate students sat for their final exams. Twenty students completed the two-year Certificate in Primary Education program successfully, qualifying as teachers. The exam process was overseen by an external examiner, Professor Ustaz Ben Saliba from the University of Juba, who reviewed the marking schemes and student answer scripts. The exam board meeting, chaired by the Principal, took place after the final exam. Professor Saliba praised the high standards of the exam system at the college and made valuable suggestions for improving future exams. STTC is grateful to the University of Juba for its ongoing support and collaboration.



Farewell & Departure

Twenty students who completed the two-year Teacher Training program were honored at a special ceremony, followed by a farewell dinner. Professor Ustaz Ben Saliba from the University of Juba attended the event and congratulated the graduates on their success, wishing them well in their future careers. The students expressed their gratitude to Solidarity for the two years of valuable training. Each student received a course completion certificate and is awaiting their final certificates and transcripts from the University of Juba. The graduates pledged to enter the field of education with confidence, and the college administration wished them success in their teaching careers.

Evaluation of the Semester

Brother Francis Xavier, one of the Solidarity missionary teachers at STTC and the HR Director, led the end-of-semester evaluation. A questionnaire was circulated to all members prior to the one-day group evaluation session. The evaluation focused on teaching experience, leadership, strengths and challenges, support systems, student-teacher relationships, professionalism, administration, academic activities, student participation, Christian values, and more. The members found the evaluation process efficient and appreciated the insights gained for further improvements.



Visit of Bishop Eduardo

Rev. Bishop Hiiboro Eduardo, Bishop of the Tombura-Yambio Diocese, made a pastoral visit to STTC. His visits always bring joy and inspiration to the students, who were captivated by his eloquent speech, filled with inspiring stories. The Bishop shared the history of *Solidarity with South Sudan*, especially the establishment of the Sustainable Agriculture Project in Riimenze and the Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio. He emphasized the importance of teaching as a vocation, not just a profession, and urged students to remain diligent in their studies. He encouraged them to be part of the solution for transforming the country through education. STTC thanks the Bishop for his continued support and encouragement.



Welcome to Bro Ismael Juma

STTC welcomes Brother Ismael Juma, a young and energetic educator from Kenya and a member of the Christian Brothers Congregation (Edmund Rice). Brother Ismael holds a Bachelor of Education Science degree (Mathematics & Chemistry) from Tangaza University, Kenya, and has extensive experience in secondary education. He previously headed the Mathematics Department at a secondary school in Kenya and contributed to curriculum development to enhance student learning. He has proven leadership in community service, program management, and student engagement, with numerous certifications and leadership roles fostering both academic and holistic student development. Brother Ismael is passionate about empowering students through classroom instruction and extracurricular activities, and STTC wishes him the best in his new role.

World Teachers Day

Solidarity Teacher Training College celebrated World Teachers' Day on October 5, 2024, on a modest scale. The students gathered to mark the occasion, sharing their experiences and reflections. They spoke about the joys, challenges, and practical difficulties of being a teacher. Some students expressed a strong calling to the teaching profession and shared how fortunate they felt to have the opportunity to study at Solidarity Teacher Training College. Alongside their appreciation, they shared their concerns, highlighting the poor pay teachers receive for their noble service and the inadequate facilities many schools face in the country. Despite these challenges, they pledged to remain committed to the teaching and determined to educate the next generation.



Prayers and Thoughts

Solidarity Teacher Training College was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of the following members connected to the college. We pray that they rest in eternal peace and that their families find strength and comfort in the Lord.

Death of Mr. Albino Mungu: A committed watchman at STTC and a young, healthy man with a beautiful family who passed away suddenly.

Death of Fr. Charles Tombe: Former Vicar General of the Diocese of Tombura-Yambio and a valued member of the STTC Board.

Death of Fr. David Gentry: Worked as Mission Promoter for Solidarity with South Sudan. He briefly taught at STTC Yambio during his short visit to South Sudan in October 2021, where he was getting to know the country.



Mr Albino Mungu



Fr Charles Tombe



Fr David Gentry