



## *Solidarity with South Sudan*

South Sudan: PO Box 144, Juba  
Italy: Piazza di Ponte S. Angelo, 28 Rome 00186

### *White Paper on Solidarity with South Sudan*

Updated, July 2012

*“Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, near and far, rather it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good.” (Sollicitudo Rei Sociallis)*

#### Preface

*Solidarity with South Sudan (Solidarity)* is an act of solidarity between religious congregations of women and men who are members of the Union of Superiors General (USG), the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) and the Church in South Sudan under the direction of the Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference (SCBC). This initiative, centering on health, education and agricultural training reflects a new model or paradigm for religious congregations to collaborate with one another in order to respond more effectively to the immense and urgent needs in South Sudan.

#### History

After 21 years of civil war, a fragile Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) from 2005-2011 promised a referendum on future unity or separation of the South from the North of the country. The referendum held in January 9<sup>th</sup> 2011, after an extensive prayer and civic education campaign, resulted in an overwhelming vote for separation. Independence Day celebrations on July 9<sup>th</sup> 2011 were joyous, thankful that the long years of war were finally at an end.

Now begins the work of building the new country called South Sudan and of creating unity among different tribes and clans. Fundamental infrastructure and basic human services need to be developed in South Sudan. Government and Church leaders need to be encouraged and supported, diocesan and parish leaders need to be reenergized, and basic physical structures need to be built in order to deliver the 5 R's of the CPA: reconciliation, rehabilitation, repatriation, reconstruction, and re-education.

Because 85% of the country has been displaced (IDP – Internally displaced persons), social structures for health and education have been completely disrupted in an area replete with chronic needs on many levels. With eighty five per cent of its population illiterate, South Sudan ranks as the most illiterate country in the world. Less than 10% of its teachers have had any kind of training. There is a current unmet educational need for 45,000 new Primary and Secondary school teachers in South Sudan, while of the current teaching cohort 24,000 are largely untrained.

From a health perspective, the need for trained health personnel is equally severe: one out of four children will die before the age of 5 due to health related illness in a country where

there is only 1 physician per 100,000 people. Rates of maternal death at childbirth are among the highest in the world. In an effort to address critical needs in education and health, the combined efforts of Roman Catholic religious congregations are providing professional expertise in training teachers and health care workers through *Solidarity with South Sudan*. Providing qualified teachers and health care workers will help put a fractured new country on the road to recovery and stabilization.

### Inter-congregational Communities

*Solidarity with South Sudan* originated with a request from the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference (SCBC) to help them to address critical educational, health and pastoral needs in South Sudan. This project addresses these vital needs by creatively merging the talents, abilities, energies and charisms of over 200 religious congregations to work collaboratively on this innovative project. The synergy created by this blending of female and male religious presents a unique opportunity to collaborate harmoniously in the best interests of the people we serve in South Sudan.

### Current Status of the Project

The project has strong management. A full time Executive Director has been appointed with an office and support staff at the UISG in Rome. A Board of Governors, made up of congregational Superiors General or their Councilors, helps direct activities. A central office has been established in the South Sudan capital of Juba which serves as an important coordinating office for the project and offers the opportunity to collaborate with other NGOs serving the people of South Sudan. The Sudan Management Team made up of the Directors of Projects, Teacher Training, The Catholic Health Training Institute and Pastoral Services - works with the Executive Director on day-to-day planning and decision making.

Five communities (Malakal, Riimenze, Wau, Yambio and Juba) have been established where 31 religious from 20 different congregations and 14 different nationalities plan and work in the teacher training program, the health care training institute and organize local and pastoral activities. The agricultural project in Riimenze focuses on community farming and on developing a sustainable farming project. Recently two lay volunteers from the Voluntary Missionary Movement (VMM) have joined *Solidarity with South Sudan*. The education and health programs are being developed in coordination with the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (RoSS). The sustainable agricultural project is working closely with various ministries in Western Equatoria. Another is planned for Wau in Western Bahr el Ghazal.

### **Catholic Health Training Institute (CHTI)**

A Misereor-funded facility in Wau, Western Bahr el Ghazal, operated for four years training medical officers before military activity in the local area in the late 80s necessitated the closure of the facility and the relocation of students to safer areas. After the war, residents moved back into the Wau area and a large number of internally displaced people (IDPs) became resident in the various buildings of the CHTI campus. During this time, desks, doors and books were burned to provide cooking fires for the squatters.

The property was owned by the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference (SCBC) who asked *Solidarity* to renovate the buildings and to develop a health training institute for the training of health professionals. Sr. Maria Martinelli CMS assumed the leadership role of the restored Catholic Health Training Institute (CHTI). Together with members of other



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congregations she coordinated the enormous work of both preparing the programs and restructuring the facility to become a fully functional health training institute. Sr. Dorothy Dickson RNDM has recently become Director of the CHTI with Sr. Sneha Joseph SSps acting as Principal.

The main instructional building has been totally refurbished, dormitories cleaned and fully repaired and a central service area for food and other services is fully operational. The classrooms have been repaired and refurbished. Work on the adjacent wing which houses administrative offices has also been finished. Staff quarters have been refurbished; the Solidarity staff house is completed.

Two cohorts of 17 and 14 students began their training for the Registered Nursing degree in 2009. An additional 33 students began the preparatory program in October 2011. The current student numbers are 75 – 21 registered midwifery students and 54 registered nursing students. Of these 22 are women – an enormous achievement considering few women have attended high school.

The first program offered at the CHTI was a Registered Nursing curriculum, and this was significant in that it was the first RN certified program in the history of the country. The program requires 3½ years of academic training and clinical rotations. In addition to the SRN program the first cohort of midwifery students begin the state certified program in January 2012. At the request of the RoSS, Ministry of Health these programs have been instituted due to the critical need for these services in South Sudan.

Although not officially part of the project, Solidarity has supported the renovation of the Catholic Diocesan hospital in Wau. This facility, which is Church property, was used by the military during the two civil wars and in 2010 was returned to the Catholic Church. The entire facility is being reconstructed and will consist of an out-patients department, several wards, a surgical theatre, an area for obstetrics and gynecology, a midwifery unit, as well as general admissions areas, and a pharmacy. Thanks to an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the new St Daniel Comboni Catholic hospital and the CHTI, our nursing students are currently receiving appropriate clinical rotations and high quality instruction, in an excellent facility.

### **Teacher Training Colleges (TTC)**

South Sudan has enormous educational needs. In strategizing how best to assist South Sudan's educational needs, it was decided that a series of Teacher Training Colleges would be the most effective way to help the country move forward. While it was originally anticipated that each diocese would have a teacher training college, the challenges to securing sufficient staff and constructing appropriate facilities has currently limited these plans to two colleges in Malakal and Yambio, which also act as a base for Solidarity outreach programs to other dioceses. In addition some dioceses are constructing their own teacher training facility or are availing of facilities under the management of another Christian denomination.

The teacher training program began in February 2008 with the arrival of the first staff members in Malakal. The leadership of the educational component was assumed by the De La Salle Brothers (Brothers of the Christian Schools) in the person of Bro. Bill Firman FSC.

Malakal and Yambio offer both in-service and pre-service teacher training. In-service training is offered after regular school hours, on weekends, and during vacation periods. This component is designed for teachers who are currently in the classroom instructing students.

The pre-service component targets people who are academically competent to teach, but who have had little or no formal training in pedagogy. The two year program will consist of regular, semester attendance at a school which trains teachers. There are currently 28 residential students in Yambio TTC and 15 in Malakal TTC.

With slight variations, the facilities in both Yambio and Malakal consist of staff offices, several classrooms, a science classroom, a computer center, a library and appropriate living quarters for the students and staff. Construction has been completed and each site is currently in use. The first preparatory program for pre-service training began in February 2011. Sr. Margaret Scott RNDM and Sr. Ninet D'Costa are the Principals of Yambio and Malakal respectively.

Requests have come for Solidarity to work with teachers in Leer, Renk, Nzara, Tombura, Juba Rumbek, Agkok, Mapourdit, Abeyei and other locations. This is seen as another in-service training opportunity and is staffed by religious and lay who are both full-time and part-time members of Solidarity. To ensure that there is sufficient personnel to meet these outreach locations Solidarity invites religious and lay people with previous mission experience to come to South Sudan for 2-3 month periods per year. Staff members also travel from Malakal, and Yambio to provide in-service training at these locations.

Currently, Solidarity with South Sudan is instructing over 1564 teachers of whom 351 are women. Affirmative action to involve more women is underway. During the normal course of the day, each of these teachers instructs approximately 80 students. Accordingly, the impact of teacher training is reaching a beneficiary population of over 125,000 students at present.

### **Agricultural Training**

An agricultural program to help educate South Sudanese on how to effectively grow food for the local population is also being developed in Riimenze (Western Equatoria). Local family members – especially women - are being helped to grow new crops, explore ways of harvesting water and processing food for sale in the local market. There are two types of agricultural training programs in Riimenze. While both focus on developing community based farming skills, one is aimed at generating income for the Solidarity teacher training project in Yambio.

### **Pastoral Work**

The original founding documents of *Solidarity with South Sudan* saw the health and education centers acting as centers for pastoral activity in a post-war Sudan. It was believed and we continue to believe, that the pastoral dimension of our work should extend to our communities, our apostolic works, and the local communities. There counseling reconciliation, peace-building, trauma healing, spiritual accompaniment, and community building are being undertaken by religious men and women from around the world.



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Sr. Cathy Arata, who has spent significant time in South Sudan, leads the Pastoral component of the Solidarity with South Sudan initiative. In November 2010, personnel from all the dioceses in Sudan participated in a workshop called *Reconciliation for a Just and Lasting Peace* given by Robert Schreiter CPPS. This workshop gave staff from each of the dioceses “hands-on” practical training in mediation and peace building. The 101 Days of Prayer for a Peaceful Referendum in Sudan (an inter-faith initiative designed to promote peace in Sudan prior to the referendum) was an extraordinary success uniting Christians of all denominations and their Muslim brothers/sisters in prayer for a peaceful future. Later in 2011 Fr. David Hollenbach SJ gave a series of seminars in Juba on *Insights from Catholic Social Teaching* as a basis for constructing a new country. He also had the opportunity to address a group of parliamentarians.

The three initiatives mentioned above were sponsored by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and promoted by the Sudan Catholic Bishops’ Conference (SCBC). Additional programs and workshops have been offered on such topics as: The prophetic role of the African Church in the light of the Second African Synod; Capacitar – Basic Trauma Healing; Women planting seeds of peace; Social analysis and pastoral planning all sponsored by Misseo Aachen.

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