



*Where Learning Begins Again:  
A Christmas Story*

FROM THE SOLIDARITY TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE (STTC)

2025



# Lighting the Path of Learning in South Sudan

This Christmas, as families gather around tables filled with warmth and light, another kind of light is quietly rising in South Sudan—a light held in the hands of teachers who refuse to stop learning, even in the face of unimaginable challenges. That light shines at the Solidarity Teacher Training College (STTC).

## A Country Where Education Is a Daily Miracle

In South Sudan, learning has never been a given. Classrooms remain fragile spaces. Most children walk into classrooms without books. Many walk into schools without enough trained teachers. And far too many never walk into school at all. Today:



**66%** of girls and **56%** of boys remain out of school.



Only about **one-third** of adults can read and write.



**Barely half** of primary teachers meet the minimum qualification standards.

And yet—in this difficult landscape, STTC has become a light that refuses to go out. It continues to stand as a beacon—a place where hope is taught, shaped, and then carried into every corner of the country. And perhaps one of the most remarkable parts of STTC's mission is this:

***STTC has consistently welcomed students from all states of South Sudan—including the Nuba Mountains and refugee camps outside the country.***

When these students arrive on campus, they bring with them the stories, struggles, and dreams of communities often forgotten. When they graduate, they carry hope back into places where education is the difference between possibility and despair.

Since 2008, the college has formed **892 trained teachers**, now serving more than 71,000 children—children who would otherwise be left behind in overcrowded, understaffed classrooms.





# A Year That Tested STTC— And Revealed Its Strength

The 2024 academic year began with uncertainty. Internal challenges forced the college to close its doors from December 2023 to March 2024. Students returned home unsure if they would ever resume their studies.

But faith, solidarity, and determination prevailed.

On March 1, 2024, STTC reopened—and the community returned with renewed purpose. By April, classes had fully resumed, and the halls were once again filled with the sound of learning. STTC emerged stronger, more focused, and more committed to its mission than ever before. Its reopening marked a profound transformation.

## **Shaping Tomorrow's Teachers Through a Renewed Academic Model**

In January 2025, the Solidarity Teacher Training College entered a new phase of its evolution with the introduction of a three-term academic structure for its two-year Certificate Program. Previously operating on a traditional two-semester system, STTC reorganized its academic calendar into Level 1 and Level 2, each comprised of three terms, allowing for clearer progression and more deliberate distribution of coursework throughout the year.

This change unfolded alongside a major institutional transition: STTC shifted its academic affiliation from the University of Juba to the Catholic University of South Sudan. Although the program remained a two-year residential course, the affiliation change brought adjustments to the curriculum design, examination timelines, and enrollment processes. These updates ensured that the college's training standards remained fully aligned with the South Sudanese government's education framework and responsive to national teacher-education requirements.

Despite these structural shifts, one defining aspect of STTC has remained constant: its commitment to inclusivity. The college continues to welcome students from every state in South Sudan, as well as learners from the Nuba Mountains and refugee camps across the border—maintaining its reputation as a diverse and united learning community that reflects the broader realities of the country it serves.



# A New Door Opens in Wau

In January 2025, Solidarity expanded its reach by launching a new In-Service Teacher Training Program in Wau—a city with no formal teacher training facility despite hundreds of unqualified teachers in its schools.

Forty-five teachers became the first cohort—teaching in the mornings, studying in the afternoons and Saturdays, and returning home exhausted but filled with hope. For many, it is the first time they have ever received structured training.

## Growing Against the Odds: A Vision for 2026

Because of early and extensive recruitment efforts—despite floods, insecurity, and long travel distances—STTC expects to welcome 287 students in 2026, including:

**11** Pre-Service Certificate Students

**66** In-Service Students (Wau and Yambio)

**34** Diploma Students

**76** Students continuing into their 2<sup>nd</sup> year

Of these, 159 will be residential students, requiring full support for accommodation, meals, books, and training tools.

And in a country where girls often face the greatest barriers, 43% of incoming students are women—a quiet but powerful victory for gender equity.



# Beyond the Classroom: Forming Educators Who Transform Communities

In 2025, STTC expanded its formation activities to ensure that teachers are shaped not only academically but spiritually and socially, by providing:

- Safeguarding and trauma healing workshops
- First Aid and conflict resolution training
- Computer and English assessments
- Community outreach initiatives, including English classes for women and computer lessons for local children

Every course, every workshop, every session—each one forms a teacher capable of changing an entire community. Together, these experiences nurture educators who not only teach in classrooms but uplift the communities they serve.

## Why Your Christmas Support Matters

Every trained teacher becomes the hope of hundreds of children. Every lesson taught becomes a gift that lasts a lifetime. And in South Sudan, where the future is still fragile, education is the strongest peacebuilding tool we have.

**But STTC cannot continue this work alone.**

## This Christmas, we invite you to help us:



**Support the growing number of residential students**



**Ensure the successful roll-out of the Wau In-Service Program**

**Equip classrooms with essential learning materials**



**Provide food, accommodation, and pastoral support for the students**



**Continue forming teachers who bring stability, peace, and opportunity to their communities**



# A Christmas Gift That Truly Changes Lives

**When you support STTC, you are not simply funding a program.**

**YOU** are placing a teacher into a classroom where none existed.

**YOU** are giving a child a chance to learn their first letters.

**YOU** are strengthening families, empowering communities, and building peace—one trained teacher at a time.

Hope arrived in Bethlehem on a quiet night, in the simplest form.

Today, in South Sudan, hope arrives in the form of trained teachers stepping into classrooms that desperately need them.



*May your Christmas be filled with the same  
light you help bring into the lives of others.*







# SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

## Isaak Kuku

For the person who wants to be a teacher, I think the Solidarity Teacher Training College (STTC) is excellent. In South Sudan, people do not always see education as a vocation. Many see it as a last priority. If you fail here, then you go there. This way of thinking has affected education very badly because teachers are not willing to go for training or to take teaching seriously as a profession. When I came to STTC, I did not fully accept teaching as my vocation. I resisted it at first. But after spending time at the college, my thinking completely changed. I realized that teaching is more than just teaching. It is something deeper, something important.

STTC helped me to accept teaching fully and to take it seriously. I did not decide this on my own — the college pushed me to like it, to value it, and to see myself as a professional teacher. Now I see where I belong. I know I must continue from the certificate and move ahead to further education. There is no need for me to stop here.

I am very happy with STTC because it trains us to become teachers and also encourages us to love the profession and to grow in it. That is why I am here, and that is why I like the college.

Isaak Kuku





# Zakia John Idriss

## SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT TESTIMONIAL



To begin, I thank God. I was not even hoping to receive a scholarship, but through God's help, we received a scholarship through Solidarity and were able to study at the Solidarity Teacher Training College (STTC) and complete our certificate successfully.

Being at STTC, I have learned a lot — not only in the classroom, but through different activities and skills that we gained through the college. All of this has really helped me to become someone. Before coming to STTC, I was an introverted person. I could not speak easily with people.

When I arrived at STTC, things began to change slowly. I adapted to the system and the culture of the college, and that helped me grow in confidence. This experience helped shape who I am today.

Solidarity is not only offering scholarships at STTC, but also other opportunities. For example, I have been offered a scholarship to study online. I am currently studying environmental science online and am now in my second year. These opportunities are good fruits of what Solidarity is doing for society in South Sudan and beyond.

Zakia John Idriss

