

“Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness.” (Mt 9:35)

Awakening our passion for Christ and passion for humanity, we, volunteers from member congregations of the UISG and USG and from among our lay faithful, see ourselves as a prophetic community of Jesus’ disciples in solidarity with the people of South Sudan. At the invitation of the Bishops of South Sudan (SCBC) and in partnership with them, we seek to help build God’s reign in this country, particularly in the formation and training of teachers, health care workers and pastoral agents. As we build the capacity of our people, we hope to reveal God’s love, compassion and enduring faithfulness towards us all.

The Mission Statement with the Vision and Values were reviewed by the Board of Directors during the Strategic Planning Process and adopted at the December 2014 Annual Assembly, according to Statute 5.6.1 (“The following powers are reserved to the General Assembly only: Amendments to the Missions Statement of the Association.”) Further revisions are possible and would simply require a similar process.

Mission Statement

Solidarity with South Sudan aims to create self-sustainable educational, health and pastoral institutions and programs that will help to empower South Sudanese people to build a just and peaceful society. *Solidarity* is a collaborative commitment of religious institutes of men and women, members of the Unions of Superiors General and the Church in South Sudan working in partnership with the Sudan Catholic Bishop’s Conference.

Vision

Through *Solidarity with South Sudan’s* focus on teacher training, nursing and midwife training and pastoral services, the organization has as its fundamental vision three very inter-related qualities:

- 1) the offering of educational and capacity building opportunities for South Sudanese citizens in order for them to become dedicated and service-oriented teachers and practitioners throughout their country
- 2) a unique collaboration and commitment of religious congregations and highly trained people from diverse cultures working together in community to provide these needed capacity building skills and inherent values within South Sudan
- 3) the creation of a strategy built upon collaboration and experience in-country, and in *Solidarity’s* headquarters in Rome, to gradually hand-over the programs to South Sudanese Church and

Religious Institutions present in the country.

Values

Solidarity with South Sudan – from its Board members, office staff and the personnel working in the country - is built upon a foundation of fundamental and **practised values**:

- **recognition of the dignity of each person**, both within the organization and in South Sudan, committed to its community members to embrace and act out of a spirituality of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.
- **acknowledgment of vulnerability and powerlessness**: placing ourselves at the service of the people of South Sudan.
- **appreciation and respect for local cultures**: learning from the values of others which in turn enrich and challenge our way of living.
- **mutuality and understanding**: recognizing the Spirit of God at work in the behavior of each person within the organization, whether executive administration, governing board, personnel in the South Sudan, the Bishop's Conference of South Sudan, and our students.
- **proclamation**: of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ through our community life together, our life witness and committed action.
- **solidarity and accompaniment**: empowering and supporting the South Sudanese people as they rebuild their lives, their communities and their social structures.
- **Peace-building, hope and reconciliation**: experiencing and shouldering the struggle together with the South Sudanese people in their journey of healing past divisions and building appropriate and lasting relationships that lead to lives of peace and hope.'

2- BACKGROUND

4.1 Brief history

Following the 2004 Congress on Consecrated Life with the theme "Passion for Christ, Passion for Humanity", *Solidarity with South Sudan* originated from a request in 2005 from the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference to Religious Congregations to help them to address critical educational, health and pastoral needs in South Sudan. From the initial investigations in 2006, *Solidarity* members have firmly established their presence in South Sudan, creatively merging the talents, abilities, energies and charisms of over 260 religious congregations to work collaboratively in this innovative ministry.

Currently there are 31 religious and lay persons from 18 countries and 19 congregations in *Solidarity* communities in South Sudan. Training facilities in Malakal and Yambio, pastoral and agricultural facilities in Riimenze and central administration and pastoral coordination in Juba.

To financially support its projects *Solidarity* established a fundraising office in 2008 which drew from long term fundraising skills in the De Lasalle, Loreto/IBVM and Claretian congregations. This fundraising committee raised close to €4,000,000 for the building phase of *Solidarity* from 2008-2010. Part of this became an endowment fund. The support of a small number of European funding agencies and foundations were vital to this development

phase. In March 2011 a new approach to funding was taken by appointing a funding officer (now Fundraising Director) intended to generate primarily recurrent operating funds in support of the current *Solidarity* strategy.

After a review of the organization by the L&P Firm presented at the 2012 General Assembly, *Solidarity* established two not-for-profit organizations for the legal transit of funds. Strong funding relationships with agencies, foundations, and private funding sources have been nurtured and further developed in support of *Solidarity* by the current funding team, however only mainly for the short term. An opportunity now exists through the creation of this strategic plan to respond to openings for multi-annual funding.

4.2 STRUCTURES

According to our Statute 1.1, the name of the organization is the *Solidarity with South Sudan Association*. It is known as *Solidarity with South Sudan*, more often simply referred to as *Solidarity*. Governance, Executive Direction, Fundraising and Services in South Sudan are the main structures that compose the organization. (cf. Appendix 1)

4.2.1 GOVERNANCE

Solidarity with South Sudan is governed as described in the *Solidarity with South Sudan* Articles of Association, which are approved and amended as needed by the Annual General Assembly. The Governance of *Solidarity with South Sudan* is managed by the Annual General Assembly, the Governing Board, the Executive Council, the Finance Committee and Personnel Committee and ad hoc committees created as needed such as the Strategic Planning Committee. *Solidarity* holds a series of different manuals and procedures which are used to deliver its mission and purpose through strong governance. (See Appendix 3)

4.2.2 FUND RAISING

The roles of the Finance Committee, the Fundraising Director and the Chief Financial Officer and the Relationship Policies with Donor Agencies, Civic Authorities and *Solidarity's* Legal Bodies can be found in the Governance Manual.

Solidarity has created different legal entities in order to have juridical personality to operate and hold bank accounts. All entities comply with the legal requirements of the country in which they are established. (Cf. Appendix 4)

4.3 CAPACITY BUILDING SERVICES

“Living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him, who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body’s growth and builds itself up in love.” (Eph 4:15-16)

The people we serve come from all areas of South Sudan. They belong to diverse ethnic, and religious. Some come from the Nuba Mountains or Abyei, two territories belonging to

Sudan that are contested by South Sudan. Despite the difficult conditions of the present situation, our members in South Sudan are maintaining a high morale; and the people we serve and among whom we live appreciate deeply that we continue to stand by them. The aim of *Solidarity* is to establish sustainable structures and programs in order to guarantee now and in the future capacity building in teaching, health, agriculture and pastoral care for the people in South Sudan. (See Appendix 5)

The number of women in our projects is continuously increasing. To coordinate activities, the Executive Director with the Finance Officer are based in *Solidarity* offices in Juba, coordinating different *Solidarity* communities and services in South Sudan. An Associate Executive Director is responsible for the International Headquarters in Rome, working in collaboration with and accountable to the Executive Director.

4.4 SOME CHALLENGES *SOLIDARITY* FACES

Considering the data we collected we have identified several challenges to consider and hope to address in our Strategic Planning.

4.4.1 INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

From its inception, *Solidarity* was conceived as a collaborative project of support and solidarity in response to the bishops' initial request to the USG and UISG which came shortly after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in January 2005. "The nature and purpose of *Solidarity* involves the coordinated participation of several religious institutes with their different charisms in cooperation with the bishops of Southern Sudan." (Statutes 3.1) This collaboration enabled a quick response and the delivery of high quality services in several locations in South Sudan.

Facing a rapid growth, *Solidarity* had to create a **complex governing structure** which could hardly be passed on as a whole. The *Solidarity* Board of Directors is large (8 to 12 members). Board members are from General Councils who have as a priority their congregational commitments and a South Sudanese representative of the SCBC. The Bishop cannot easily get a visa to travel to Rome where the Board usually meets. Many decisions are made by the Board of Directors who only meets twice a year. The heavy work load is an impediment to the participation of general superiors or councilors on the Board and the functioning of the Board doesn't favor the involvement of the bishops in decision making. Our complex structures come from a different culture than the one in South Sudan. Therefore the governance structures in the *Solidarity* institutions in South Sudan should be straight forward and as uncomplicated as possible. Very few people in South Sudan understand what a Board should do; the CHTI Board was established in 2011 and it is still far from functioning well despite our efforts to train and support its members. We have not yet established an STTC Board but we have had several preliminary discussions about progressive drafts of a constitution. Very few current *Solidarity* members in South Sudan are willing to take leadership roles let alone mentor others into those roles.

Since the initial request of the SCBC in 2005, some bishops have retired and new bishops have been appointed or Administrators where a bishop has not yet been replaced. The

SCBC continues to be supportive of the *Solidarity* projects. Mutual expectations and responsibilities between *Solidarity* and the SCBC are listed in the Memorandum of Understanding (signed March 2010) which was never reviewed as it should have been every three years. **The participation of the SCBC** in decision making processes, the ten year span commitment (2008-2018) initially agreed upon and the passing on of the responsibility from *Solidarity* to the SCBC needs urgent attention. It became clear during this strategic planning exercise that a new paradigm and a process with clearly defined steps are needed for the transition of the responsibility of the institutions and programs to the Church in South Sudan; it is also clear that this cannot be accomplished by 2018.

The **commitment of the general administrations** of religious Congregations members of *Solidarity* is a tremendous strength of the organization, providing financial and material resources as well as dedicated personnel; however with changeover in general administrations, keeping the commitment alive can be difficult as the same passion for *Solidarity* may not even be there, let alone be passed on to the new Generalate team members.

Many religious, men and women, volunteered over the years to serve with *Solidarity* in South Sudan, all with great zeal; they were all accepted, not always to answer a clear need identified by our organization and not always following the established procedures for acceptance, probation and evaluation. In addition, **renewing personnel for *Solidarity*** from religious Congregations actually providing personnel can be difficult for these Congregations since some are facing diminishment. Depending on “foreign personnel” may not be viable for the long-term of the institutions and programs in South Sudan. New Congregations capable of offering fresh qualified personnel to answer identified needs must be envisioned. *Solidarity* needs to consider that Pontifical religious congregations may have more personnel from which to draw; diocesan local groups are very limited. It is also desirable to increase the employment of well-trained South Sudanese personnel in the nearest possible future; however in such an under-educated country this is a very slow process. It will take time to train, mentor and accompany good South Sudanese staff.

In South Sudan, intercongregational *Solidarity* communities of men and women, religious and lay from different cultures living and working together involves **challenges for community life and ministry**. To continue to have personnel afire with passion for our mission, it will be key that *Solidarity* passes on to new staff members its vision and values so that they live and act out of it. South Sudanese people who have already been well trained in our institutions and programs and/or who have potential for higher studies present *Solidarity* with opportunities for the future of our personnel.

In terms of **standard business procedures**, we have made huge strides with the appointment of a Chief Finance Officer based in Juba, and thus improved control within South Sudan but we are still establishing asset registers as opposed to inventories, agreed schedules for depreciation, and have not yet changed to implemented accrual accounting; the Quickbooks software is still to be fully implemented.

Solidarity continues to improve **processes and structures** for assessing the needs, preparing budgets, finding donors to fund the projects, prepare proposals and report back.

These processes and structures are **quite complex** and at times lacking, and they involve several governing bodies: the local *Solidarity* community and the local Board of directors if in existence, the South Sudan Management Team (SSMT) and the *Solidarity* Board of directors. A **more direct relationship** between the local institutions/programs and the donor agencies could simplify the processes and be a stepping stone for the transition to the local Church.

4.4.2 EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

From the prospect in 2011 of a promising future as the youngest independent nation in the world, South Sudan now seems to face much more challenging years ahead with the 2013 outbreak of **violence** resulting in a still unresolved conflict which breeds an increasing **lawlessness** in the country. The current reality is of daily insecurity of deep ethnic divisions, possible break-ins, major highways no longer safe to travel on, increased disturbances in areas and towns previously regarded as secure (e.g. shooting which occurred in Yambio on 1st of August) a dysfunctional government, an outbreak of cholera in Juba, a falling economy and a Church with several dioceses vacant and consequent diminishing leadership capacity. The events of 2014 and 2015, beyond our control, have set us back significantly and have an impact on our desired timeframe for transition.

This poses several challenges to *Solidarity*, ranging from **security** concerns, not only for our personnel but also for the participants in our programs, to material and **financial upheavals** of all sorts. We will need to be flexible as an organization to cope with potentially radically changing circumstances and adapt our strategic plan to these circumstances. The country is plunged in an economy of war causing scarcity of goods and increase in prices. It is increasingly difficult to purchase goods outside of Juba. The roads have become so bad the time for travel has doubled to most destinations; getting students from all areas of the country to our study centers now requires air travel whereas it used to be by road, due to the insecurity and bad road conditions. The presence of many international NGOs with strong financial support adds to the budget by setting higher schemes of salaries with which a faith-based organization such as *Solidarity* cannot compete.

Instability in governmental and financial structures puts at risk our personnel on the ground, our capacity to serve and the desired **sustainability** of *Solidarity's* projects noticeably since they are largely funded by outside of the country donors. Reaching sustainability with a local component in personnel, material and financial resources especially in times of turmoil may seem impractical. It is however notable that most of the key *Solidarity* funders and foundations have continued to support programs and the *Solidarity* team through a difficult period since the outbreak of violence in December 2013. *Solidarity* will continue with its communication, accountability and reporting to donors as the political and economic realities evolve.

Any sort of **development** in South Sudan **takes a long time**, as exemplified by the search to reach national recognition for graduates of the Yambio *Solidarity* Teacher Training College. Little takes place at the set time and it will be years before proper structures are in place in the country to ensure smooth transitions. Ensuring qualified local personnel will more likely require 7 to 10 more years, and preparing this personnel must start now. For

recent graduates who are identified as suitable candidates for future employment by *Solidarity*, an initial 2-3 years of practice in teaching, nursing or midwifery would at least be needed. Then 4 more years would be required to obtain a Bachelor degree, preferably from outside of South Sudan. Ideally people should have a Degree at Master's level which would even take longer. The CHTI and STTC have already begun this process of identifying suitable candidates for higher studies after their years of practice in view of them becoming staff members of *Solidarity*. The proposed timeframe in section 6 of this Strategic Plan will have to be flexible and adjusted each year according to the slow pace of development and progress in South Sudan.

A continual challenge, especially in the area of **pastoral services**, is the unpreparedness of most dioceses to re-start pastoral programs for **lack of infrastructures, finances, skills and personnel**. The pre-independence war has ravaged the physical diocesan offices and eroded what skills there were in running pastoral programs. It is taking some time to restore the pastoral centers and re-train pastoral agents, particularly the thousands of catechists. The present conflict has exacerbated this condition, particularly in that it forced dioceses to re-focus their pastoral initiatives from building-up normal pastoral structures to responding to the most basic humanitarian needs that the conflict has spawned. This is a big challenge to the vision of a transition to locally managed pastoral structures and services.

3- STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

Solidarity with South Sudan contributes to shaping a sustainable future by providing quality education and formation of teachers, nurses and midwives, and pastoral agents to empower the South Sudanese to build a just and peaceful society.

Despite uncertainty in South Sudan presently experiencing violent conflict, *Solidarity* remains committed to be with the people, sustained by faith and the courage of those who struggle for a future filled with hope. Planning for the coming years, *Solidarity* will foster the *Solidarity* ethos, promote greater sustainability of the institutions and programs, and prepare for the transition of management and administration of these services to the local church and communities. This will be led at an organizational level by the Executive Council in collaboration with the South Sudan Management Team and the Fundraising Office.

The numbering from 1 to 4 of the Strategic Goals does not imply an order of priority. They are to be seen as of equal importance. The numbering is for ease of reference.

Shaping a sustainable future!

STRATEGIC GOAL #1: DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH

In working toward a more sustainable future, *Solidarity* believes that partnership and collaboration with the local Church and the wider community in South Sudan are vital. Objectives to develop partnership and collaboration with the local Church focus on collaborative relationships with SCBC, the dioceses, RSASS, and religious congregations in South Sudan.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1.1 Develop the working relationship with the SCBC.
- 1.2 Engage more Congregations working in South Sudan and other parts of Africa to work with *Solidarity*.
- 1.3 Collaborate locally with the bishops, clergy, pastoral agents and lay groups in the implementation of *Solidarity's* mission.

STRATEGIC GOAL #2: BUILDING UP SUSTAINABILITY OF INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS

Sustainability means that institutions and programs do not depend solely and indefinitely on *Solidarity with South Sudan* as an organization. Each institution and program in South Sudan needs to have its own expertise and contacts to access funds and personnel to be sustainable and capable of running. Objectives to build up sustainability focus on management and governance, human resources, assets and fund raising, quality and scope of services.

OBJECTIVES:

- 2.1 Ensure effective leadership and management systems are in place in each institution and program.
- 2.2 Ensure qualified personnel for *Solidarity* Institutions and Programs.
- 2.3 Strengthen the commitment of religious congregations for continued support of *Solidarity*.
- 2.4 Work towards a sustainable funding base.

STRATEGIC GOAL #3: PROMOTING THE *SOLIDARITY* ETHOS

The *ethos* is the spirit rooted in the Gospel in which participants are formed so that they can influence and be transformative agents in schools, hospitals, government services, administrative positions, NGOs, etc. *Ethos* is about building or rebuilding the local Church in a collaborative manner. This means drawing from the good will and resources of as many people and groups willing to share in Christ's mission to bring about the reign of God. *Ethos* also refers to how the *Solidarity* mission, vision and values are lived, experienced, and caught, like a fire that spreads, sharing the flame; it's about being passionate. Objectives to promote the *Solidarity* ethos focus on *Solidarity* communities, personnel, participants in institutions and programs, partners in South Sudan, local governing boards, and the wider society.

OBJECTIVES:

- 3.1 Foster the *Solidarity* mission, vision and values among *Solidarity* personnel and communities.
- 3.2 Ensure that promotion of the *Solidarity* ethos is integrated into each *Solidarity* institution and program.
- 3.3 Share the *Solidarity* ethos with the local Church, partners, and the wider public.

STRATEGIC GOAL #4: PREPARING FOR TRANSITION OF MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Solidarity has successfully established institutions and programs which still need consolidation and development, which is a challenging prospect in this traumatic and divisive period. *Solidarity* needs to inculcate in its institutions and programs an attitude or mentality towards transitioning. Faithful to its long term vision, *Solidarity* aims to **prepare** a transition from institutions and programs entirely run by *Solidarity's* resources towards institutions and programs under the ownership and responsibility of the local Church and communities, maybe in some 10 to 15 years. Objectives for the next five years to prepare for transition will focus on coordination, human resources and governance structures.

OBJECTIVES:

- 4.1 Develop a process and models for transitioning suitable for each institution and program.
- 4.2 Ensure that governing boards are in place and operating well in each institution.
- 4.3 Adapt the role of the *Solidarity* Board of Directors and the SSMT to the new reality of operative local Boards.

