A marked vehicle with the Government of South Sudan’s Ministry of Health is parked outside the class room block of Catholic Health Training Institute (CHTI).

It is a hot, Friday afternoon and Mr. Henry Gabriel Sassa, Director for Human Resources and Training in Bahr-El-Ghazal State, Ministry of Health (MOH) is teaching a class in ‘Management of a Health Care Unit’. Even if it is the last lesson of the week, the 27 final year nursing students are listening carefully. They know that this information is very important to them – they will soon be the ones in charge of a health care unit in a smaller town or village in Bahr-El-Ghazal or elsewhere in South Sudan.

For the last three years Mr. Sassa, himself a former graduate of the Health Training Institute which started in the 1980s, has regularly taught classes at CHTI. This is just one of the important ways that the South Sudan Ministry of Health and CHTI are collaborating.
Mr. Henry Sassa is very grateful that his Alma Mater, which was destroyed during the war, has been totally renovated and re-established by Solidarity with South Sudan as the Catholic Health Training Institute (CHTI). “Ever since the war and up to now there has been, and still is, a serious scarcity of well-trained human resources within the health services. I am very pleased that the first class of nurses from CHTI will graduate this year”. Asked about the quality of the education given at CHTI, the MOH Human Resource Director sounds pleased, “I believe the nurses are very good, but we shall of course follow them and we shall be evaluating them over years to come”.

Mr. Henry Sassa is fully aware that resources are limited for the Ministry of Health, but he is confident that he will be able to appoint the nurses. “They are certainly needed”, he says with a smile, while the eyes show his deep concern about just how much they are needed.

CHTI started a Midwifery Diploma Course in 2012 following the Ministry of Health Curriculum, which Sr. Sneha Thenammaki, Principal of CHTI was involved in developing together with MOH and UNFPA. “The Midwifery School is extremely good”, says Mr.Sassa, and we are very happy for this expansion. Maternal mortality in South Sudan is the highest in the world and we need both well trained midwives and nurses. CHTI plays an important role in their training and together with us in the Ministry of Health we can better address the need of the mothers, children and families of our new nation, South Sudan.”

…and Solidarity with South Sudan is grateful and proud to be working alongside the South Sudanese Ministry of Health towards better health for all in the years to come.