

# ASEC-SLDI Educational Insights

*Empowering Women Religious to Address Africa's Challenges*



Above: U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump pose with 2017 TIP Hero Vanaja Jasphine of Cameroon, at the 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report Launch Ceremony on June 27, 2017.

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## US GOVERNMENT HONORS SLDI ALUMNA, REV. SR. VANAJA JASPHINE FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

*by Rev. Sr. Vanaja Jasphine, ICM and Sr. Clarisse Remjika Jaiwo, SST*

**Sr. Vanaja and her organization identify Cameroonian trafficking victims in the Middle East and bring them home. On June 27, 2017, Sr. Vanaja received an award in recognition of her unrelenting efforts to combat modern slavery.**

The 2017 U.S. Department of State honored SLDI Alumna Sr. Vanaja Jasphine at the 2017 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Launch Ceremony on June 27, 2017.

At the ceremony, Sr. Vanaja received the “2017 Hero Acting Modern Slavery Award” in recognition of her groundbreaking work in identifying a key migration trend to prevent human trafficking of Cameroonians in the Middle East and her dedication to ensuring survivors have legal support and assistance in reintegration.

*Continued on page 3*

## **SR. DRARU MARY CECILIA, LSMIG NAMED NEW ASEC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



We'd like to begin our newsletter with a warm welcome to Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia, the newly appointed ASEC

Executive Director. She is of the congregation Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu (LSMIG) in Northern Uganda and began her role as ASEC Executive Director in November 2017.

Sr. Draru has vast experience on gender, education and sustainable development in Africa. She received her Ph.D. in September, 2017 from Radboud University in Nijmegen, Holland after successfully defending her doctoral thesis, *Education Pathways: Narratives of Female Academics and Administrators*.

Prior to her new role as ASEC Executive Director, Sr. Draru spent 15 years serving at ASEC's HESA partner institution, Uganda Martyrs University (UMU). Her most recent role at UMU was Dean of Students, where she was responsible for student welfare, student extracurricular activities and managing alumnae relations.

In October, Sr. Draru had the opportunity to address SLDI Finance II Workshop participants in Uganda. She encouraged the sisters to embrace all educational opportunities given to them in order to improve professionalism in their Congregations and ministries.

The sisters prayed for her that God will be always there for her and that our Mother Mary may accompany her always.

## **ASEC EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT: MY REFLECTIONS**



**Sneha Akruvala, ASEC Research Assistant**

ASEC gives its employees and student workers hands-on experience and a platform to use and apply their knowledge, expertise and skills in the real world.

My journey with ASEC began in August 2013 when it was a small organization of less than 10 staff working towards the mission of providing African Catholic Sisters access to quality education. Four years later, it is astonishing how quickly ASEC has grown and how far we have advanced our goals. Today there are approximately 40 staff and graduate students working at ASEC's US and Africa offices.

Reflecting back on my four years of experience working with ASEC as graduate assistant, research assistant and data manager/analyst, I feel ASEC offers a limitlessly rewarding job experience. It has been the best job and experience of my life. Along with growth of the organization, ASEC is always considerate of my personal and professional growth and made efforts to develop and enhance my life.

### **PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

ASEC serves sisters in 10 African countries. My interaction with people in these countries has not only heightened my cultural awareness and competence, but significantly improved my confidence to interact with others from different backgrounds. ASEC heightened my awareness to several social, cultural and health issues that African sisters work hard to address. I am truly inspired by the work of the sisters. They've inspired me to explore my 'sense of being' and gain a better understanding of myself. Such self-realization helps to improve my life and also makes me want to find more ways to give back to the community. It has taught me the true meaning and importance of philanthropy and social responsibility. Working with ASEC also provides me with a sense of purpose and a direction for my future work.

### **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

ASEC staff in the US and Africa rely on one another and work together to achieve our mission. ASEC is a well-functioning team and working here has made me an effective team player. My communication skills have excelled, as part of my job is communicating with staff in Africa about various documents and forms for the HESA program. Over the years, I have been presented with many opportunities to work on projects that helped improve my research, analytic, administration and organizational skills. ASEC also offered leadership opportunities in training new graduate assistants in processes for data gathering and entry. My superiors are very supportive and encourage presentations at conferences to gain experience as well as to make ASEC known in the community. In addition, ASEC has greatly helped me in learning and implementing essential time management skills.

Knowing and working with the entire staff of ASEC has changed my life for the better. I feel like a new, confident, independent professional ready to tackle the issues of life head-on, along with embracing the changes for a brighter future.



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING EFFORTS *Continued from cover*

U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, and Advisor to the President, Ivanka Trump, presented the award with these inspiring words:

*"Sr. Vanaja Jasphine is the driving force behind and coordinator of the Kumbo Diocesan commission for Justice and Peace in the North West region of Cameroon. In this role, she has placed her organization at the forefront of the fight against human trafficking in Cameroon and has contributed to a renewed government commitment to combat human trafficking.z*

*Rev. Sr. Jasphine has worked tirelessly to inform authorities and civil leaders, including those in the religious community and media partners, about human trafficking, especially on patterns of movements that creates vulnerability. She played a key role in recognizing the trend of Cameroonians traveling to the Middle East and being forced into domestic servitude or sex trafficking, and then spurred the government to take action including drafting migrant workers agreements and enhancing screening measures at airports..."*

How did she accomplish this you may ask? Sr. Vanaja says in an audio interview with NPR,

*"As we heard that our children are trafficked to Middle East, we had a public demonstration. And it became a national issue. We contacted the government, especially the prime minister, the secretary general for security and the police commissioner. So in that process, we had the chance to meet the U.S. embassy. They supported us. They took our report. And they called the government to implement the law effectively to intensify the existing structures. Recently, it was not working, but now with the collaboration of U.S. embassy and our organization, we have really intensified the effort of task force."*

In other situations, when Sr. Vanaja and her organization receive a trafficking case the first step is to investigate. Once they know the perpetrator, they try to negotiate to return

the victim. If they will not negotiate, the case is taken to court. Sr. Vanaja said that the process, "...can go three years, four years. It is indefinite."

Sr. Vanaja also works to provide reintegration and rehabilitation assistance to survivors of trafficking. She has initiated several trafficking-related court proceedings and offers legal assistance to victims. Some victims receive startup capital for business or assistance in learning a trade or returning to school. The fourteen victims returned from the Middle East were also provided with psychosocial assistance.

Why does she go so far to help these victims? Sr. Vanaja says,

**"[HUMAN TRAFFICKING] IS THE BREACH OF ONE'S FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS. AND THE HOPELESSNESS OF THE CHILDREN MADE ME TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE, MORE COMMITTED. AND I DEDICATED MYSELF FOR THAT TO RESTORE THEIR DIGNITY."**

On August 30, 2017, Bishop MGR. George Nkuo officiated a Pontifical High Mass at the Kumbo Cathedral in Cameroon where citizens welcomed Sr. Vanaja home. Members of the Kumbo Diocese and delegation from the Bamenda Archdiocese Justice and Peace Commission also attended the celebration.

Sr. Vanaja is a member of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She is an Administration Track participant of ASEC's Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) Program (2014-2015), completing the workshops in Cameroon.



*SLDI Finance II participants pray over ASEC's new Executive Director, Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia. Sr. Draru addressed the workshop participants on October 13, 2017 at ARU Secretariat in Uganda.*



**5,300** SISTERS & STAKEHOLDERS SERVED

**80%**



REMAIN DEPRIVED OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### WHY CATHOLIC SISTERS?

Catholic sisters dedicate their lives to service. They work tirelessly to improve the conditions of their congregations and communities. But, many African sisters simply don't have the opportunity to learn new skills. They lack the education and resources to carry out their important work. In fact, of the 40,000 sisters in the region ASEC serves, 80% have no higher education credentials.

We are changing that statistic.

### EDUCATED SISTERS ARE KEY PLAYERS IN OVERCOMING MANY OF AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

This newsletter is meant to celebrate the accomplishments of the sisters we serve and demonstrate that educating a sister can result in rippling, far-reaching impacts that significantly contribute to sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa.

### ALUMNAE IMPACT

The most recent data from a 2017 alumnae survey reveals that alumnae and their mentees:

- Raised over \$12.2 million dollars for their own projects.
- Mentored 20,000+ people individually (80%), in groups (57%) and through trainings (27%).
- Created nearly 3,000 jobs.
- Received promotions (48%).
- Were asked to participate in leadership activities (54%).

**83%**

OF MENTEES  
ARE **SHARING**  
THEIR KNOWLEDGE



**3 K** JOBS  
CREATED

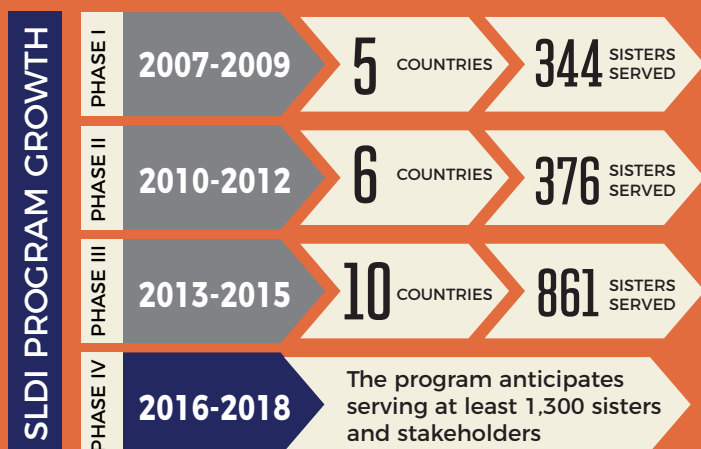
**2 M** INDIVIDUALS  
SERVED



SLDI Finance II participants in Uganda pose ASEC's new Executive Director, Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia, LSMIG (standing, center).



# SISTERS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (SLDI)

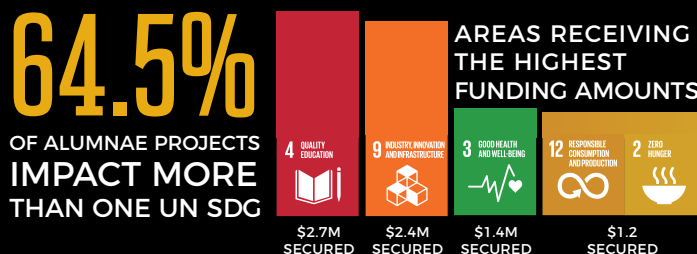


As ASEC's largest program, SLDI has served more than 2,200 sisters and stakeholders to date. Since its inception in 2007, SLDI has expanded from 5 countries of operation to 10, and is serving more and more sisters each year. In the current three-year phase (2016-2018), over 900 sisters and Superior Generals have been served so far. The program anticipates serving at least 1,300 sisters and stakeholders by 2018.

Through SLDI workshops, sisters are equipped with skills and knowledge in technology, finance, administration and leadership. They gain confidence as they learn how to work more effectively and collaboratively.

## IMPACT ON UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

It is important to note that 64.5% of projects initiated by SLDI alumnae impact more than one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is common that one project can affect several areas of human and/or social development.



## HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SISTERS IN AFRICA (HESA)

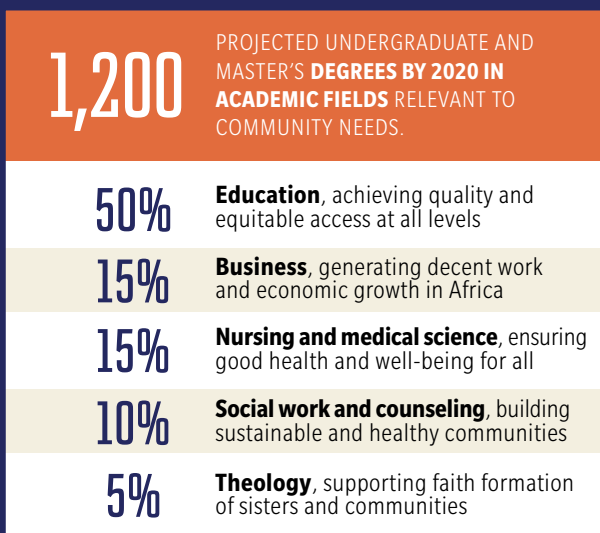


Initiated in 2013, HESA ensures that women religious receive credentials to enhance service to their communities. HESA provides opportunities for Catholic women religious in 10 African countries to access tertiary education at the undergraduate and master's level in academic fields identified as relevant and needed to their congregations, ministries, and communities. In Phase II the HESA program anticipates serving at least 850 sisters. By 2020, HESA will have served approximately 1,200 sisters at 22 partner colleges and universities, with an estimated

- 550 Bachelor's Degrees
- 175 Master's Degrees
- 25 College Diplomas

About one-third of HESA participants completing a portion of their studies online.

*HESA students are averaging a B to B+ in their studies.*



## **Sr. MARY KATHRYN DOUGHERTY, OSF ELECTED ASEC BOARD CHAIR**



Sr. Mary Kathryn Dougherty was elected as congregational minister of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia (OSF) in June, 2014. She has been a professed member of the congregation for 36 years.

Sr. Mary Kathryn was born in Baltimore Maryland. She holds a B.A. in Psychology from Notre Dame of Maryland University and an M.A. in Systemic Theology from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana.

Sr. Mary Kathryn's ministry has primarily focused around education on all levels and religious formation. From 1997-2001 She served as the Vice President of University

Ministries at St. Bonaventure University in New York. Her formation ministry saw her as Director of Candidates during that same time, after which she became director of the congregation's novitiate program. From 2005-2010, Sr. Kathy was an adjunct professor at Neumann University. From 2010-2014 Sr. Mary Kathryn served as a chaplain at the Baltimore City Women's Detention Center providing spiritual opportunities for women who were incarcerated.

Over the years, Sr. Mary Kathryn has served on numerous committees and boards including:

- The Catholic High School of Baltimore, MD
- St. Joseph Medical Center of Towson, MD
- Transitional Programs for Women (Transitions) of Spokane, Washington
- The National Advisory Council to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Sr. Mary Kathryn has been on the Board of Members for ASEC since 2014.



'17 Uganda Reflective Learning

## **CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE**

ASEC is committed to providing education to all of our staff. Here are some conferences we've attended in 2017:

- Nonprofit Technology Conference, Washington D.C., March 2017.
- United States Distance Learning Association Conference, Indianapolis, IN, April 2017.
- Wilkes University and King's College Women's and Gender Studies Conference, Wilkes-Barre, PA, April 2017.
- Human Science Institute 2017 Conference, Salt Lake City, UT, September 2017.
- The 22nd Annual Values & Leadership Conference, Los Angeles, CA, October 2017.





# VISITING SCHOLAR PROGRAM SELECTS AFRICAN SISTERS FOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS IN THE USA

In October 2016, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) received a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for research and to host three African women religious over three years as visiting scholars.

CARA, located at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, is a national, nonprofit research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic church. ASEC has partnered with CARA to help in recruiting the sister scholars utilizing our network of partners in the 10 African countries we serve.

The chosen sisters will work and study with CARA to advance their research skills. ASEC also hosts the sister scholars for one week and offer emergent opportunities for research.

## **Sr. BIBIANA**

Sr. Bibiana M. Ngundo, LSOSF, Ph.D. arrived in the US in January, 2017 to begin her six-month term as the inaugural CARA Visiting Scholar. Sr. Bibiana is faculty and chairperson of the department of Religious Studies at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), Nairobi, Kenya. She has published research on African culture, religious life and the interaction of culture and religion.

Sr. Bibiana visited ASEC's USA headquarters in Scranton,



*Sr. Bibiana experiences snow for the first time during her visit to ASEC's Scranton headquarters (March 2017).*

PA from March 6 to 10, 2017. During the week, she offered ideas about the SLDI and HESA programs and gave key recommendations to hone ASEC's evaluative surveys for delivery to women religious in Africa.

*Opposite: The ASEC Advisory Board held a meeting at ASEC's headquarters on Marywood University's campus. ASEC staff members posed for a group photo with Members of ASEC's Board of Directors and Advisory Board (April 2017).*

Sr. Bibiana completed her term at CARA in July, 2017 and is now sharing her skills with sisters studying at CUEA because in Africa research on Catholic women religious is sparse. She says,

**"I READ THEIR PROJECTS, I READ THEIR RESEARCH, EVEN IF THEY HAVE THEIR DIRECTORS. THEY BRING THEM TO ME, I READ FOR THEM, I HELP THEM. I GIVE THEM SUGGESTIONS. THEY ASK ME QUESTIONS EVEN ON ACADEMIC LIFE."**

## **Sr. FLORENCE**

The second CARA Visiting Scholar to be selected for the research fellowship is Sr. Florence Emurayeveya, EHJ, M.Ed. of Nigeria. Sr. Florence began her six-month fellowship in September, 2017 and plans to visit ASEC's USA headquarters in December, 2017.

For the past twelve years, Sr. Florence has been the Project Manager of her congregation the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus (EHJ). Since then, she has been changing lives through grant writing and efficient supervision of projects. She has been an active ASEC-SLDI alumna since her completion of the program in 2009. Sr. Florence has plans to work on her proposed research topic regarding *"The impact of statistical records and information management on the overall performance of women religious services in Lagos State."*

ASEC will continue working with CARA to support the program through 2019 and plans to continuously engage alumnae in research on the project.



*Second visiting scholar Sr. Florence Emurayeveya, EHJ, M.Ed., of Nigeria, was greeted by CARA Executive Director, Rev. Thomas Gaunt, S.J. shortly after arriving in the USA for her six-month research fellowship (September 2017).*





ASEC board members Brigid Blake (standing, top) and Terri Peters (bottom, right) pose for a group photo with ASEC staff during the staff training in Tanzania (January 2017).



Srs. Eleanora, Francisca, Germina and Martha (clockwise from top left) participating in the ASEC staff training in Tanzania (January 2017).

## ASEC STAFF TRAINING

### STAFF MEMBERS FROM 10 COUNTRIES GATHER FOR A WEEK OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS IN TANZANIA

In Tanzania during the first of week of January, 2017, staff members from nine countries in Africa gathered by the emerald waters of the Indian Ocean in Dar es Salaam. Many of them were new to the ASEC organization and were unsure what to expect from this week-long series of professional development workshops. They were joined by Sr. Jane Wakahiu, ASEC's former Executive Director, Jennifer Mudge, Rosemary Shaver, Brigid Blake and Terry Peters, from the USA, and Naomi Wambui from CORAT in Nairobi, Kenya. Several others presented and interacted with the group electronically.

With such representation from the Global North and South, West and East, real and virtual, ASEC was truly evolving into a world class organization— a global sisterhood.

Throughout a week of work, play, reflection and prayer, staff developed a deeper understanding of ASEC's mission. Staff collaboratively reviewed the 2020 strategic plan draft, to which a number of them had already contributed. Staff also provided feedback on the strategic directions that will drive the mission forward, embraced it enthusiastically as the path to the future success of ASEC, challenged themselves to see their own role in its implementation and made individual commitments to making the future emerge in whatever ways will be most beneficial to the sisters they serve. They learned about ASEC's governance, its organizational structure, how they will function within it, their part in making ASEC programs successful, how to make their voices heard and much more.







*Board Members Bridghid Blake and Terri Peters presented ASEC's strategic plan draft to USA and Africa staff.*

Team-building exercises encouraged creative, non-linear thinking, cooperation, over competition and collaboration. They also generated much laughter! A climate of mutual trust and interpersonal respect was established. As the week progressed, the sense of shared mission, the conviction that we are all part of a one organization, the understanding that when we work collaboratively our impact expands exponentially, became palpable. A group of individuals developed into a cohesive team in that short space of time.

The Tanzania Catholic Association of Sisters (TCAS) and its President, Sr. Gaspara Kashamba, offered ASEC and all the visitors a warm welcome. She praised the work of ASEC in educating women religious in Africa and drew attention to the dynamic created by the collaboration of international and local efforts to benefit hundreds of thousands of people in Africa.

I left Dar es Salaam with a sense of reassurance about and confidence in ASEC's future. The collective energy generated by collaboration and team efforts is guaranteed to move our mission forward. It was a great privilege to participate in that experience of vitality.



**Brigid Blake, MA**  
*Board of Directors Member, ASEC*

*Below: During a site visit, ASEC staff were able to meet three of the sisters we are supporting at Bigwa Secondary School in Morogoro, Tanzania (January 2017).*



*Bigwa 2017 form six graduates from L-R: Sr. Genovefa Mrope, OSB, Sr. Syrilla, OSB, and Sr. Idda Mponzi (Collegine sister) express their gratitude to ASEC donors for the financial support of their Bigwa scholarships (April 2017).*

## **22 ASEC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS GRADUATE FROM BIGWA SECONDARY SCHOOL**

On April 26, 2017 the entire community of Bigwa Seminary Secondary School was overflowing cheerfulness to celebrate the 28th graduation festival. Parents, guardians and friends joined hand-in-hand to congratulate the 44 secondary school graduates; 21 Catholic sisters and 23 girls. Many thanks to **ASEC's donors in the USA who financially supported 22 of the graduating students.**

## **BIGWA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

In 2018, Bigwa Secondary School (est. 1968) will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Inaugural ceremony preparation officially took place at Bigwa on April 29, 2017. Over the years, Bigwa has seen great development in performance as well as strong growth of moral integrity and spiritual ethics. The school administration enthusiastically invites donors, good wishers and former Bigwa students to join together for the 50th anniversary celebration, which is expected to be held on May 29, 2018.

## **CURRENT CHALLENGES AT BIGWA**

Despite the success of Bigwa, the school is still wrestling with many challenges such as a shortage of water, an old drainage system needing repair and lack of funds to continue renovations on the administration building.

We invite the donors and good wishers of Bigwa to join together in support of their mission to sustain quality education for the next generation of leaders.

## ASEC'S FIRST SERVICE LEARNING TRIP TO KENYA

Eight students from Marywood University & Chestnut Hill College attended a three-week service trip to Kenya this summer. They provided service at various sites in and near Nairobi, Kenya, including a refugee center, a hospital, a home for street boys and an orphanage for physically and mentally disabled children. Students also attended the graduation celebration for HESA sisters graduating from Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA).

Students traveled to the Kibagare slum and volunteered at the St. Martin's feeding program for impoverished children. Students fed 1,644 hungry children that day. Olivia Alessandri, Service Learning Participant said that this was, by far, the most eye opening experience of her trip. She said she always knew that there were many hungry people in Africa, but had never seen hunger to the degree witnessed in this slum area.

**"THE CHILDREN, SOME OF WHICH WERE YOUNG ORPHANS, WALKED SEVERAL MILES JUST TO GET SOMETHING TO EAT."**

Olivia added, "when the call came for seconds, all of the children ran as fast as they could for the line, a sight that both broke my heart and left me speechless."

Another participant, Alex McCown, said one of the most profound and impressionable relationships she's ever made

was while volunteering at St. Francis Community Hospital. Alex befriended a young girl about her age (20), who we will call Mary to preserve her confidentiality. Mary was in the hospital over a month past her official discharge date because she did not have the funds to pay the hospital bill. Alex noted that, "Despite her situation, Mary was always brightly smiling whenever I saw her. Mary seems to represent the way many Kenyans view life—as a gift."

Alex and Mary shared stories about their families,



*Service Learning students from Marywood University and Chestnut Hill College play a dancing game with street boys from the Ukweli Home of Hope.*

interests and even boys! Their conversations highlighted variations of their cultural differences, which Alex felt to be a really enriching experience.

All Service Learning participants agree that visiting with the street boys at the Ukweli Home for Hope was an amazing part of the trip. "We danced, played, talked, and made lasting friendships with the boys at the Home," said Olivia.

Jacqueline C. Reich, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Political Science at Chestnut Hill College was one of two chaperones on the trip. She bonded quickly with a 10-year-old boy at Ukweli Home and spent an hour on her last day in Nairobi consoling him with hugs as he cried over her imminent departure.

On the weekends, students had the opportunity to learn more about African culture and history; overlooking the Great Rift Valley where some of the earliest human fossils have been found, visiting the Karen Blixen museum, the National Museum of Kenya, Mamba village (a crocodile and ostrich farm), an orphanage for elephants, Uhuru park and a center for giraffes. Students also went on a safari and climbed Mount Longonot, a stratovolcano located in the Great Rift Valley of Kenya, Africa.

Chaperone Jacqueline Reich commented that what surprised her the most about the trip was,

**"...HOW UNAWARE I HAD BEEN ABOUT THE OBVIOUS SUCCESSES OF CATHOLIC SISTERS IN HELPING THE POOR BECOME EDUCATED, SEIZE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES, AND TO LEAD HEALTHIER LIVES."**

Students say the most rewarding part of the trip was the opportunity to provide service to those truly in need. They were eager to thank ASEC for organizing the for the opportunity to provide service in a developing country. Many of the participants are eager to return to Kenya to catch up with their new friends and provide service to the many others in need.







'17 Tanzania Alumnae Meeting



'17 Nigeria Alumnae Meeting

## ALUMNAE MEETINGS NOW INCLUDE HESA STUDENTS

2017 marked the first year HESA Alumnae were invited to attend alumnae workshops, as there are now HESA alumnae who have graduated from the program!

Through ASEC's alumnae workshops, SLDI & HESA alumnae and their mentees engage in continuing education and networking. In 2017, 3-day workshops were held in Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

During these workshops, sisters learn more about specific topics and skill areas planned by other alumnae. They also share successes and challenges experienced in their own work and network with other alumnae and their mentees.

A total of 425 participants, including 45 HESA alumnae, 9 of their mentees and several current HESA students attended this year's alumnae workshops.

Among the topics covered in alumnae workshops in 2017 were United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, African women religious as agents of change, environmental conservation, conflict resolution, grant writing, challenges facing African women religious and many more.

## THANK YOU SERVICE LEARNING SUPPORTERS

Elizabeth Wemple, Naomi R. Sickler, Linda Wozniak, Amy Watkins, Cathy Barber, Debra Joyce, Frances Thompson, Kenneth Harvey, Margaret Thomas, Mary E. Endrusick, Mary Fitzgerald, Merion Mercy Academy, Nicole Morristell, Saint Colman Church, Donna Harvey, Davis C. Haire, Elaine Cooper, Jane Farr, John Hovan, John Thomas, Mara Powers, Mark Powers, Marie Thomas, Nuemann College, Ron Ancherani, Samuel Cole, John F. Davenport, La Tri O, Lemon United Methodist Church, Tunkhannock Rotary Club, Wendy Peckins, Sheldon Kukuchka Funeral Home, Inc, Srs. Servants of the IHM, Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Catherine Thomas, Marywood University, Brigid Blake & Robert Ryan, Chestnut Hill College (and the individual donors that supported their students).

*Opposite, bottom: Olivia Allesandra, Service Learning participant, preparing a meal for hungry children at St. Martin's feeding program in the Kibagare slum, Kenya.*



'17 Uganda (left) and Kenya (right) Alumnae Meetings



## 260 SISTERS JOIN HESA PHASE II, YEAR 1

In May 2016, ASEC was awarded a \$15.3 million grant from Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to support and expand the HESA program. In the first year of Phase II (2016-17) HESA enrolled 260 new sisters. The sisters entered bachelor's degree (156), college diploma (54) and master's degree (50) programs, joining the 216 already enrolled HESA students and 56 alumnae.

50 of the new sisters are participating in the HESA online-onsite model. They will study for one year online at one ASEC's charter intuitions – Marywood University, Chestnut Hill College, or Rosemont College – before transferring onsite to specified partner intuitions in Africa. The remaining sisters joined HESA's onsite model, entering directly at partner colleges and universities in Africa.

HESA recruits sisters to study at its partner institutions in cohorts of 4 to 20 sisters. Together the sisters participate in HESA orientation and annual reflective learning workshops. The cohort serves as a support network throughout the sisters studies.

Through HESA, sisters also receive tuition, a laptop and a textbook stipend to support their studies. Other costs, such as room and board and transportation, are supported by the sisters' congregations.





# THE GIFT OF LAPTOPS

ACCESS TO COMPUTERS HAS BEEN A MAJOR CHALLENGE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, AND POSSESSION OF ONE REMAINS A DREAM TO MANY. THANKS TO ASEC'S FUNDERS, THIS DREAM IS NOW A REALITY FOR MANY RELIGIOUS SISTERS.

*Above: Sisters attending the SLDI Finance II workshop in Tanzania pose with their new laptops.*

**"PLEASE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO THE HILTON FOUNDATION AND OTHER DONORS. WE KNOW THEY ARE MAKING BIG SACRIFICES TO MAKE ASEC PROGRAMS A SUCCESS. WE THANK THEM FOR THEIR FINANCIAL, SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT."**

*-Mkume, SLDI Finance Participant, Zambia*



For some sisters, receiving their laptop is the first time they have touched a computer and that brings a lot of joy and excitement! This was particularly true for the SLDI workshop in Malawi where many sisters never had the means to access a computer (April 2017).



*Four students in Lesotho pose with Sr. Eleanora Molai, ASEC Director -- Lesotho (left) and Facilitator Sr. Marie Makoe (right) after receiving their laptops during HESA onsite orientation (July 2017).*



*Sisters in Ghana holding their new laptops.*

**"A LAPTOP OFFER HAS NEVER BEEN SO TIMELY! I WAS VERY HAPPY AND GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE IT. IT HAS BEEN OF GREAT HELP IN MY ACADEMIC RESEARCH; MAY THE LORD BLESS OUR BENEFACTORS ABUNDANTLY THAT THEY WILL NEVER LACK."**

*-Sr. Mary Wangui Matahi, HESA Participant, Kenya*



Right: Forty-two sisters from sixteen different congregations participated in a HESA orientation workshop at St. Augustine Institute Kampala, Uganda. The sisters were so excited and overwhelmed to receive the laptops for their studies. Many were handling a laptop for the first time (July 2017).



**BECAUSE OF OUR GENEROUS DONORS, MANY SISTERS WERE HOLDING A LAPTOP FOR THE FIRST TIME.**



Participants of SLDI Administration I Workshop, Kenya, pose for a group photo with their laptops (on the left Mr. Njiraini and Sr. Joyce, on the right Sr. Lina) (May 2017).



Sisters attending an SLDI Administration Workshop in Zambia configure and update their new laptops (April 2017).

**"...FOR ME, IT HAS BEEN A DREAM TO OWN SUCH POWERFUL TOOL TO ASSIST ME IN SIMPLIFYING MY JOB. IT HELPS ME TO BE MORE PROFESSIONAL IN MY WORK. I EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO OUR DONORS AND SPONSORS, ASEC [STAFF AND FOUNDERS] GOD BLESS YOU ABUNDANTLY."**

*-Sr. Crescensia Roman, FCS, SLDI Participant, Tanzania*

Participants of the SLDI Finance I Workshop in Cameroon received their laptops in June, 2017.



L-R: Sisters Scholastica, Ritta, Lucy and Priya work together on the laptop.



Sr. Ifeoma (MSHR) was so excited that she kisses her laptop!

**"THESE COMPUTERS ARE LIKE MAGIC WORKERS, THE WORK WHICH WOULD TAKE ME SO MANY DAYS IT'S NOW DONE WITHIN HOURS, MORE ESPECIALLY FINANCIAL REPORTS..."**

*-SLDI Participant, Malawi*

# DONOR APPRECIATION

Our sincere gratitude goes out to our generous donors. What we do is not possible without you.

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- Patricia Bombard

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to the following people, who gave so much to assist in strengthening our organization during their time of service in the following roles:

- Former Executive Director, Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, Ph.D.
- Interim Executive Directors Sr. Margaret Gannon, IHM, Ph.D., Jane Farr, Ph.D., Sr. Marcia Sichol, SHCJ
- ASEC Board Chair, Sr. Carol Jean Vale, SSJ, Ph.D.
- Former Board Members Sr. Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ, Terri Peters, Ph.D.
- Former Associate Board Member Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., Ed.D. — representative for DePaul University
- Former Advisory Board Members Kenya Grooms, Ph.D., Laura Ann Camlet Houser, Ph.D., Brad Myers, MA, Sr. Rosemarie Nassif, SSND, Ph.D.

**WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE SEARCH COMMITTEE, STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE SEARCH PROCESS FOR OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. WE WILL BE FOREVER GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION TO ASEC.**

**GIVE, AND IT SHALL  
BE GIVEN UNTO YOU.  
LUKE 6:38**



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*\*Welcome new Members*



*Left: SLDI Participants from Zambia: Sr. Dorothy Kamuchere (right) assembling her new laptop while Sr Dyness Mambwe (left) looks to her neighbor for some assistance.*

*Below: New ASEC Executive Director Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia addresses SLDI Finance II Workshop participants in Uganda (September 2017).*



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*\*Welcome new Members*

## ASEC ALUMNAE MEETING LEADS TO CREATION OF CUSTOMER DESK AT ST. MARTIN DE PORRES HOSPITAL IN NJINIKOM, CAMEROON



*During the 2017 alumnae meeting in Cameroon, sisters discussed the topic of customer service. This discussion led to SLDI alumna Sr. Euphemia Beri's idea for a "customer desk" at the St. Martin de Porres hospital where she works.*

*The customer desk is helping hospital patients and visitors to get important information upon their arrival. In the article below, Sr. Euphemia explains how she was able to turn her idea into reality.*

Treating our visitors better has yielded not only a good reputation to our hospital but leaves those we are serving with a feeling of worthiness and wellness even in their pain!

The customer service training also shaped my moral behavior. I learned that I was being more reactive to questions rather than responding to the needs of others. It was negatively affecting the lives of others. Through the alumnae meeting, I have been transformed into a happier sister because I've made a conscious effort to **respond rather than react** to people's needs.

### MENTORING OTHERS

To spread the knowledge I gained at the alumnae meeting, I've mentored two hospital employees who work at our new customer service desk; Suh Ernest and Ndah Ornella Kaihn

Suh testifies, "...I have learned a lot on customer service, knowing especially that the customer is the king in every business and should be treated as such. I have learnt from Sr. Euphemia to have patience, understanding, care and a friendly attitude. Above all, I have learned as a good steward to be accountable."

My other mentee Ndah says, "I am doing my best to practice what was taught by my lovely sister and I have just realized that I am the 'door' of the hospital who has the mandate to encourage more customers to come to our institution. I have learned how to treat customers well by being sociable, humble, polite, loving, bring myself to their level.

**Sr. Euphemia Beri**  
SLDI Alumna - Cameroon

## ASEC HAS CHANGED MY PERFORMANCE AS AN ADMINISTRATOR

Viva ASEC! It is a great joy and achievement to know that we now can work and serve with confidence. We had been administering without any knowledge of what an administrator is supposed to be and do. But, now we can act with courage and confidence by using the knowledge learned in SLDI Administration Workshop. We were given books and laptops and training to learn how to make the best use of them. This is helping us to more effectively serve our congregations, communities, parishes and other institutions where we minister. Thanks to ASEC, our superiors, coordinators and co-workers.

**Sr. Joanita Kayungilizi FDCC, SLDI Administration Track Participant, Cameroon**

*Below: Sr. Yvette Sam (SUSC), SLDI Administration Alumna, Cameroon, poses with her students at St. Marys' Catholic Comprehensive College.*





## INTERNET CONNECTIVITY ISSUES RESOLVED FOR SISTERS IN CAMEROON

Until you completely lose an arm, then do you value having two fingers on an existing arm. We have so often complained about our unstable internet connectivity in Cameroon, even though we still managed to get our work done online. Not until recently, **when internet services were completely disconnected** in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, did we value even more the unstable, yet present, internet connection.

Internet services were deactivated in Cameroon on January 17, 2017. To find connectivity one had to be creative. While driving past an area about 1.5 hours from home, I noticed the internet connected on my phone. It was like an oasis for me! I planned regular visits to that spot to access the internet and get going with work.

This glory became short-lived because by my second visit others were also coming to the same area. That's when it became unsafe to use the roadside for internet connectivity. There was a big concern of being mistaken as sending unacceptable messages and being subjected to arrest.

## A SOLUTION FOR SISTERS STUDYING ONLINE

We were able to come up with a solution for the HESA sisters in Cameroon studying online—we asked their superiors to move them to communities where they could access the internet. Thanks to the understanding of the superiors and their commitment to have the sisters to continue studies, nearly all HESA students were relocated.

This experience has given me the chance to empathize better with those in situations like mine as well as those in worse situations. I also believe more in God and in the adage that “necessity is the mother of invention.”

**Sr. Clarisse Remjika Jaiwo,  
SST, ASEC Director -  
Cameroon**

*Right: Sr. Clarisse, ASEC  
Director, Cameroon, searching  
for an internet connection on  
the side of the road.*



## SLDI FINANCE I WORKSHOP IN CAMEROON (JUNE 2017)

*First Photo L-R: Sisters Scholastica, Ritta, Lucy and Priya work as a group on the laptop.*

*Second Photo L-R: Sisters Scholastica, Collette, Anthonia, Francisca and Laurencia at working together.*



## ORGANIZING A STRATEGIC PLAN WORKSHOP

After attending the SLDI Grant Writing Workshop, I organized my own two-day workshop to help the Handmaids in Cameroon create a five-year strategic plan. This is the first time that the Handmaids will have a Strategic Plan to guide them!

Because of the SLDI program, I was able to use my new network to connect our councilor and workshop facilitator together in the name of spreading knowledge and empowering sisters in Cameroon. The 19 sisters who attended were all grateful. Each one expressed the need to develop a strategic plan in their own ministries. Now, they have a guide and sense of direction to make their own strategic plan documents.

**Sr. Vera Otia, SLDI Alumna, Cameroon**

## SPOTLIGHT: SR. CAROLINE NANYI ACHA, SST

SLDI Phase III, Administration track

**TOTAL FUNDING SECURED: \$51,502**

- Diocese of Limburg (grant) \$22,957 - Vehicle Purchase for Youth Development Office.
- Province West Flandeurs, Belgium \$19,222 & NGO VIA Don Bosco, Belgium, \$4,304 - Construction of Classrooms for St. Therese School and Women's Center Also received in-kind donations of building materials, labor, food, accommodation in amount of \$1,330.
- Individual donor from Belgium, \$2,670 - Reusable sanitary pads for women and girls.
- Additional fundraising and donations, \$1,019- Classroom construction.



## THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS IN GHANA

I have enjoyed the SLDI program which I have been in for the past year. Foremost, it was a rich experience to have an encounter with sisters from different congregations and nationalities. This included shared experiences during the learning process in class, group work and interactions outside of class such as meal time and liturgy. As I reflect on my experience, I've realized that beyond educational information, I have learned things which add to my personal growth.

On the first day of this program, we were asked to recall someone who made a meaningful and positive impression in our lives. I believe ASEC will be one of those I will always recall as having a significant impact on my life. In the SLDI program, I can summarize my extensive learning as follows: knowledge of basic computer, learning techniques for mentoring, stewardship as a process of demonstrating a sense of responsibility for taking care of resources, integrity as doing the right thing, leading change in management, managing resources for the common good, strategic planning and developing visionary mission goals.

I wish to say thank you once again to our ASEC benefactors, coordinators and facilitators who donated their money, time, energy and experiences to us, I say "Ayikoo!" (Well done). God richly bless you all.

While grateful for all that I have already expressed, I feel **the sisters in Ghana need more training in academic fields to face the challenges of our country** and our world today. The educational system in Ghana is such that, without good grades from the Senior High School (SHS), you cannot continue your studies anywhere. This negatively impacts your future ministries as a sister. Establishing a SHS in the ASEC program would be so beneficial to the sisters in Ghana. Then, after the initial formation as a

religious, the young sisters can be enrolled in this SHS to have intensive classes to enable them pass their exams well. If this SLDI workshop that we just finished were to be SHS preparation for certificate examination, we would have all passed!

We would also be grateful if sisters who have already attained their first degree could continue studies in nearby institutions while continuing to work. This will enable the sisters to mature in carrying out multiple responsibilities. If we observe carefully, when a young sister is happy it is because she finds herself well-grounded. That is to say, she feels prepared professionally and is finding fulfillment in the life she has chosen. This strengthens her religious calling.

**I believe that each congregation needs a coordinated educational plan for the many young ladies would like to join religious life.** Without such a plan, they might end up losing their vocation because of so many challenges in the world. So let's all work together for the greater honor and glory of God! Let's get some comprehensive educational plans in place.

*Sr. Winifred Tovuor,  
SSpS, SLDI Administration Track Participant - Ghana*







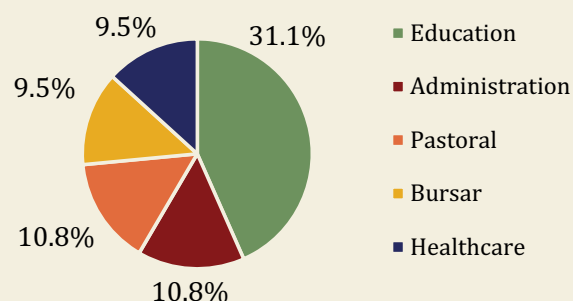
## SPOTLIGHT: SR. BERNARDINE PEMII BARINEM, DC

SLDI Phase I, Project Directors track

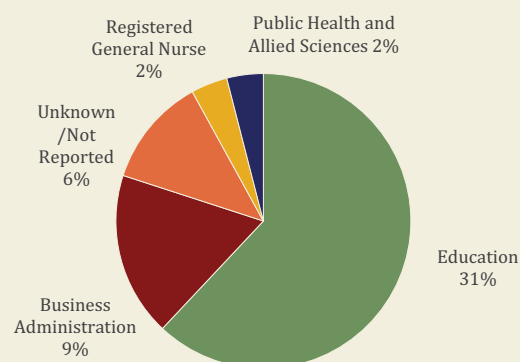
**TOTAL FUNDING SECURED: \$374,083**

- Hilton Fund for Sisters \$10,000 - laptops to develop the IT skills of the Religious Women's Counsel of her diocese.
- Aid to the Church in Need, \$38,085, File de la Chante France, \$325,998 and land donation - to build a convent where health, education, pastoral and social services are provided.
- 4210 individuals (sisters and community members) are served and 22 jobs were created.
- Sr. Bernardine also facilitated a two-day workshop for the Religious Women's Council of her diocese on Project Writing and Reporting, which resulted in participants writing two successful grant proposals.

**Top Ministries Among 2017 SLDI Participants in Ghana (N=74)**



**HESA Areas of Study, Ghana**



## WAMETUTOA MBALI MEANS: ASEC HAS BROUGHT US FAR

"ASEC/SLDI wametutoa mbali," literally translates as "ASEC/SLDI has brought us far." Such an utterance was on the lips of sisters during the Administration Training I attended in the month of May 2017. We have come from a place of insecurity in our ministry to a new world of understanding expectations of us and having the skills and knowledge to accomplish these. It is such a good feeling, but more importantly, it is vital to the future strength of religious congregations and to the church and nations they serve. So let me share my story, the course content, its incredible match to my professional needs and some applications of my new knowledge which touch the lives of others.

I am the secretary of my congregation at the regional level and also the administrator of a radio station. It was a new experience for me when I was chosen by my congregation to fill a vacancy as a school administrator so that the prior sister-administrator could pursue higher education. I am a journalist by profession but had no clue about what is expected of a human resource manager (administrator). But there I was, expected to lead a group of 22 staff members. This part of the world is famous for placing church personnel in positions for which they are not trained. It was some consolation to me when I arrived in the ASEC/SLDI Administration Training I class to find many sister colleagues in the same predicament. We all had the sense that the time was ripe for us to step up to the challenge, pay attention, acquire appropriate skills and return to our new ministries **full of confidence that we can now meet the highest of expectations.**

**"WE REALIZED THAT WHAT WE WOULD BE LEARNING WAS A PERFECT MATCH TO OUR MINISTERIAL NEEDS."**

Since the completion of the training, I have written one project proposal using my newly acquired skills. I am looking forward to positive results.

*Sr. Adelaide Ndilu, SLDI Administration Track Participant - Kenya*



*Jennifer Mudge, ASEC Evaluation Manager and Sr. Lina Wanjiku Ndung'u, SE, Regional Director East & Central Africa celebrate with HESA students graduating from Tangaza University (May 2017).*

## TRANSFORMED FROM A LIFE OF DOUBTS TO A LIFE OF POSSIBILITIES BECAUSE OF ASEC'S HESA PROGRAM

In my lifetime I never dreamed of joining a higher institution of studies but God showed me that man's thoughts are not His thoughts. My religious congregation had supported me up to the diploma level in Early Childhood Education. Through ASEC's HESA online program, I was introduced to online learning through Marywood University in Scranton, PA, USA.

**This was an opening to the rest of my educational life.** From the 26th Nov 2012 until Dec 2016, I was a regular student at the Catholic University. The outcome of this education and its effect on both my professional and congregational life.

My professional life has improved very much because of my education. **I can now carry out my duties with a lot of confidence and conviction.** I work as a deputy principal in our school where I take care of student discipline, organizing both the curriculum timetable and the exam schedule. I also organize and plan for meetings in the school. **These duties help me to feel focused and responsible** in order to achieve the objectives. This calls me to be more open to the happenings of the day.

Many skills I have learned such as teamwork, conflict resolution, stress management and public speaking are very applicable to my daily work.

**"I FEEL THAT THERE IS NO RESPONSIBILITY THAT I WOULD FEAR TO EMBRACE IF GIVEN TO ME."**





*Sr. Lina, Dr. Rita and Sr. Joyce pose with sisters holding their new laptops during HESA orientation in Kenya (July 2017)*



*SLDI Administration II workshop participants blessing their instructor after class.*



*SLDI Administration 1 workshop participants attend a site visit to appreciate the work of Sisters of Ulongwe.*

This conviction and confidence brings a lot of creativity and openness of mind in everything that I encounter.

My congregation has also given me a leadership training responsibility in the community so I apply the skills, knowledge and values that I attained at the University to this work. **Learning about grant-writing adds to the skills I can share in my congregation.** The improvements in my life because of my new education made me to feel holistically empowered by raising my self-esteem. The effects of this are what I strive to model for those congregation members in my charge.

ASEC's HESA program has changed my entire life from a life of doubts to a life of possibilities. This has even strengthened my faith as well as confidence in life. May ASEC live long to keep transforming the lives of religious so that we may be able to reach out to many in our different missions. I write this with a lot of thanks and appreciation. To each and every one who plays a part, whether it is big or small, I ask God's blessing on you!

*Sr. Jane Njeri Watenga, HESA Alumna (2012-2016) - Kenya*

## **SPOTLIGHT: SR. CONSOLATA ALOO, FSSA**

SLDI Phase I, Administration track  
**TOTAL FUNDING SECURED: \$748,000**

Since 2011, Sr. Consolata has successfully obtained grant funds and/or donations from 9 sources, including Mission Zentrale der Franziskaner, Missio, Church in Need, Mensen Met een Missie, Serra International, the Catholic Scholarship Program, Hilton Fund for Sisters, Terre des Hommes, and anonymous donors.

**The funds raised addressed urgent needs in local hospitals, schools, orphanages, homes for individuals with disabilities and also helped fund her fellow sisters' education.**

She also secured funds for education, infrastructure, health equipment, sanitation & clean water, nutrition & feeding programs, farming, dental care and formation. In a report submitted to ASEC, she successfully secured 60 grants and donations since 2011, and more before that time.

*Sr. Consolata (far right) on visit to Canada to celebrate the closer of a 8-year successful Scholarship Program of Lwak Girls.*



## GRATITUDE FOR THE GIFT OF ASEC PROGRAMS IN LESOTHO

In Lesotho, among many other graces, we are grateful for the gift of computers and three types of workshops to train Catholic Sisters from 9 different religious congregations: Basic Technology (24 sisters, 2016), Administration (12 sisters, March 2017) and Finance (12 sisters, September 2017). We also had a group of 4 sisters who started their higher education under the HESA Program at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) in August 2017.

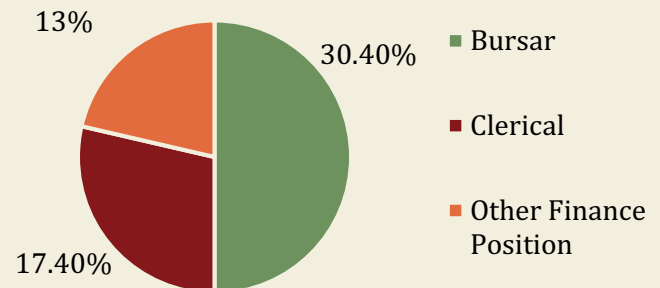
Participants of the SLDI programs this year were marveled at the effective transmission of knowledge and skills experienced during the workshops. They were left with awe and amazement at the binding effects of the workshops for the Sisterhood. They said:

**"WE HAVE DONE MANY THINGS TOGETHER, AND EACH TIME FRUSTRATION AND FATIGUE TENDED TO TEAR US APART. BUT IN THE ASEC WORKSHOPS IT HAS BEEN GOOD TO BE TOGETHER FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END, EVEN BEYOND..."**

For a long time, the Conference of Major Superiors of Lesotho have been searching for ways of providing relevant formation and training to prepare our sisters for serious engagement in their religious life and in their different ministries. For the whole Sisterhood of Lesotho, ASEC programs came at the right moment; at the ripening of their desire.

This desire was manifested five years ago when the Beekeeping Association Catholic Sisters of Lesotho was initiated by our sisters. This association is meant for all activities and projects for self-reliance such as projects that benefit the common welfare of their communities and ministries. The Association is a very positive step in the

**Top Ministries Among 2017 SLDI Participants in Lesotho (N=23)**



right direction but the struggle for survival was difficult. ASEC has come at the very right providential moment when our sisters needed knowledge, skills and courage to move forward and renew their efforts.

We are, indeed, grateful for the gift of ASEC to Lesotho at this moment of grace. The participants are eager to show this gratitude through their commitment to mentoring others and improving their services.

For me personally, I feel grateful to be alive to witness the goodness of the Lord in giving the opportunity for our sisters to be empowered through these programs. It is deeply gratifying for me to be part of the work done by ASEC's SLDI and HESA programs. It is empowering for us as leaders of our congregations to get such well thought out and planned programs at our disposal coming at the right time. We see ASEC as the work of divine providence, inviting us to collaborate. It really seems like a dream to us! Now the flames of hope have been rekindled into our hearts and we feel energized again in our consecrated life of service.

**Sr. Eleanora Molai, HFB, ASEC Director – Lesotho**



*Sisters from the SLDI Administration Workshop in Lesotho (March 2017) sing "Lord, You picked me up from the floor and you placed me higher up..."*





Left: Students in Lesotho pose with Sr. Eleanora Molai, ASEC Director – Lesotho (left) and Facilitator Sr. Marie Makoe (right) after receiving their laptops during HESA onsite orientation (July 2017).

**AS LONG AS  
WE LIVE, WE  
WILL DO GOOD  
TO ALL WE  
MEET**

## LESOTHO CELEBRATES THE ORDINANCE OF THEIR FIRST CATHOLIC CARDINAL



Cardinal-designate Sebastian Koto Khoarai of Mohale's Hoek, Lesotho, right, blesses Bishop Joseph Sephamola of Qacha's Nek in 2013. Cardinal-designate Khoarai was one of 17 new cardinals consecrated by Pope Francis on Nov. 19, 2016. (CNS photo CatholicPhilly.com / courtesy CCJP)

Supporters joined Lesotho King Letsie III to celebrate the installation of the country's first and only Catholic cardinal, His Eminence Sebastian Koto Khoarai., O.M.I.

On January 21, 2017 thousands of Roman Catholic Church followers joined Lesotho King Letsie III to celebrate the ordinance of the country's first and only Cardinal, His Eminence Sebastian Koto Khoarai. Archbishop of Durban Cardinal Wilfrid Napier led the celebration held in Mohale's Hoek.

There are more than 1.2 billion Roman Catholics in the world and only 226 cardinals, 24 of them in Africa. Cardinals are chosen by the pope (Pope Francis) to be members of his inner circle of counselors and advisors. During an address to the crowd, King Letsie III announced, "Our gratitude to the Holy Father for this great honor he has bestowed on this small country, on this small nation."

Retired Bishop Sebastian Koto Khoarai, 87, has been in the church for 60 years. He is the first Mosotho Cardinal who is also an Oblate of Mary Immaculate. He also has been given the title of Saint Leonard of Port Maurice in Acilia, which is a diocese in Rome. He will be called Cardinal Priest of St. Leonard of Port Maurice in Acilia.

Sr. Adelina Lesaoana of the Holy Family Sisters in Lesotho commented that this event was special to us in Lesotho, but even more special for us in the Catholic church. She adds, "Please rejoice with us. It's a great joy for us."



'Mabolekana Holy Family of Bordeaux Health Centre, Lesotho

Tsensola is a village in the foothills surrounded by mountains where 'Mabolekana Holy Family of Bordeaux Health Centre is located.

"In our health centre we continue to give health services to our Clients living with HIV/AIDS as well as curative, immunisation, maternal and counseling services to the village of Tsenola."

May God bless the work you do to uplift African Religious Congregations and its people.

**Sr. Adelina Lesaoana  
Holy Family Health Centre  
employee and SLDI Participant  
- Lesotho**

## AN ALUMNAE SESSION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING HELPED SAVE MY NIECE'S LIFE

Last year, my niece saw an ad in the newspaper for a job opportunity in Kuwait. She was excited about the opportunity, especially because her salary here in Malawi was so low in comparison.

When she told me about the job I remembered what I had learned at the human trafficking session prepared by our ASEC Coordinator in Malawi for the alumnae meeting. I tried to convince her not to go, but couldn't persuade her due to a formal pronouncement by the Malawian government about making agreements with foreign states to hire our youth. Deep down I knew that human traffickers would use this announcement to fulfill their own sordid desires.

It took only a week before my niece left for this new "job opportunity" in Kuwait. Upon their arrival, the girls were sold to households and forced to hand over their passports. But luckily, she managed to keep her phone. It was through that communication my family helped her to escape. She is now home safe.

I would have never known about human trafficking without attending this alumnae session. And because of that, some girls, including my niece, have been rescued from this horrible fate.

Let us just open up our eyes and see, because it is not only Malawian girls who are trafficked. It's a problem for many children, men and women throughout Africa.

**Sr. Victoria Zimba, MSHR, SLDI Alumna, Malawi**

*Below: Sr. Dorice Tembo, SLDI Participant, Malawi spends time with her students after teaching catechism.*



*Sisters offer training support groups to the Bembeke community of individuals diagnosed HIV positive. Here a sister demonstrates food preparation using local resources for healthy living.*

## ASEC TRAINING IMPACTS THE MALAWI MARGINALIZED HIV/AIDS COMMUNITY

The Teresian Sisters of Bembeke in Dedza Diocese, Malawi, are tirelessly working with the marginalized as a way of fulfilling their charism of liberation. These sisters work in hospitals, schools, pastoral work, social work and even as administrators throughout Malawi and Zambia. ASEC leadership training has been a key component in helping the sisters realize their Congregation charism of liberation.

In Bembeke, sisters run five support groups reaching a total of more than 200 individuals suffering with HIV/AIDS. The goal is to empower them with skills needed for self-sustainability and happy living.

In September 2017, Teresian Sisters assisted the support group in Kungumbe village in Dedza district by helping to prepare nutritious foods from local resources. This occasion was blessed by seven chiefs from the surrounding areas. More than 40 families benefited from the project. The group village headman of Kungumbe thought the project was so beneficial that he asked the sisters to train all the villages in his locality. Now, the Bembeke community is calling upon the religious community to help fulfill this project.

The sisters involved in this service to the marginalized see themselves as the channels by which ASEC indirectly reaches the underprivileged. Thanks to ASEC, those bound in the slavery of poverty through the HIV/AIDS pandemic are now empowered, and they can live a healthy life in accord with the UN Sustainable Development Goals of Zero Hunger (SDG 2) and Good Health and Well Being (SDG 3).

**Sr. Teresa Mulenga, TS, ASEC Programs Coordinator – Malawi**





SLDI Administration II Participants in Malawi pose for a group photo with their new laptops.

**"...TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING FAST AND IT IS AFFECTING THE SISTERS IN MALAWI. NOW, BECAUSE OF SLDI I AM ABLE TO USE THE COMPUTER AND INTERNET WITHOUT ANY CHALLENGE. I AM ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS HOW TO OPERATE THE COMPUTER. OUR SISTERS ARE BECOMING MORE ADVANCED IN TECHNOLOGY."**

*Sr. Jacqueline Mollen, SLDI Participant, Malawi*

## **MALAWI ALUMNAE PLANT TREES TO HELP CONSERVE THE ENVIRONMENT**

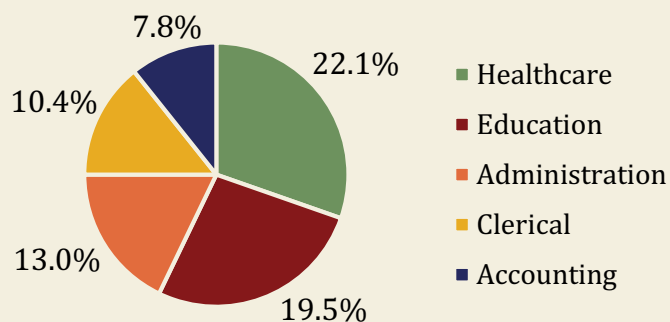
It is the duty of human beings to protect the earth and ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations, as such human beings are placed with the responsibility to understand the mystery of creation and lead all creation back to God. (#67).

With this small gesture, Malawian sisters invite others to look for ways to preserve our forests. This will help us to avoid catastrophic soil erosion and prevent our rivers and lakes from drying up. We are called to examine how we live in harmony with the rest of the created order; how we use and share the goods of the earth and finally what we pass on to the future generation.

"Peoples' perceptions have been that the place of a religious sister is the chapel. However, today Malawi alumnae planted trees with the view of conserving the environment which really surprised a lot of people. There is need to place more emphasis on conservation farming," says ASEC Malawi Programs Coordinator Sr. Teresa Mulenga.

*Malawi alumnae plant trees with the view of conserving the environment, contradicting popular perceptions about the work of religious sisters (February 2017).*

**Top Ministries Among 2017 SLDI Participants in Malawi (N=77)**



## **SPOTLIGHT: SR. MARY CHIMALIZENI, DW**

SLDI Phase III, Administration track

**TOTAL FUNDING SECURED: \$36,078**

- Beit Trust, \$11,118 - Drill borehole for water for students and community.
- Solon Foundation, \$11,170, \$8,267 by fundraising, and \$5,523 in donations to create a library extension to provide a larger space and an electronic library for students at St. Mary's Secondary School.
- Leadership Achievement: Vice Chair of Association of Women Religious Institutes in Malawi (AWRIM).



SLDI participants working on their laptops.



## SLDI STUDENT RESPONSES

### WHAT IMPACT HAS THE ASEC-SLDI PROGRAM MADE IN YOUR LIFE? HOW WILL YOU USE IT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF OTHERS?

SLDI Administration track participants in Nigeria were asked this question. Here are their responses:

"I came as an apprentice, but I am going home with more skills to work at the Vocational Centre and in my community. I now have more knowledge and wisdom to help groups, societies and organizations to draw up their strategic plan and project proposal. I am going away with much joy and contentment." - Sr. Francoise Ndayo, IJ

"The ASEC-SLDI Program has opened my eyes, mind and intellect. It has built me up with tools of how to be a good mentor, how to lead, and how to effectively manage with vision, a mission, goals and objectives. Therefore, I will use this knowledge which I have acquired to mentor, lead, and teach." - Sr. Regina Ojakere, HHCJ

"I will use this knowledge to restructure the administrative system in any young school. I will make use of PowerPoint and other computer skills in my pastoral activities." - Sr. Rachel, CSSP

"It has been a very enriching period... it has enabled me to see some mistakes I have made as a leader and has equipped me with the necessary skills to be better." - Sr. Chinyere Nwosu, MSHR

"I will now be able to do administrative work better. The presentation of my reports will be more enriching and attractive with my new knowledge. This will encourage understanding from my Sisters and staff." - Sr. Gloria Akeme, OSF



*Sisters from Nigeria and Ghana received their laptops during HESA online orientation. Here they are posing with Sr. Clementina Obembe, OSF ASEC Regional Director – West Africa (left), Sr. Clare Abisola Adelakun, DHS, ASEC Programs Coordinator – Nigeria (right), Sr. Lisa Olivieri, SSJ, CHC Instructor (center) and Mr. Ernest Ntiamoah, CHC Backup Instructor.*



*SLDI Administration I Workshop participants in Nigeria take an educational field trip to Tenti Green Farm, Vom, Plateau State and the National Institute of Political and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), in Kuru, Plateau State.*



*Sisters participate in a group discussion during the alumnae meeting held in Nigeria (January 2017)*



## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE ONLINE CLASS DISCUSSION BOARD

I love traveling as a child. I love packing suitcases and putting everything I thought would be needed in it. I cherished the horns of a car. I feel happy seeing the trees. It seems they are the ones rushing by. I love being with other passengers in a car. I thought that was fun. I thought that was adventure. I thought that was companionship. That was what I believed. **As a religious, leaving my family to join the congregation seems to be an adventure.** I was happy meeting other people. I got to share other cultures and beliefs. I learn new ways of doing things. Witnessing becomes a daily journey.

When we were introduced to the use of the Discussion Board it changed my idea of companionship. I moved from just meeting people to taking part in their lives. I got to know them better.

### **I GOT COURAGE TO CAST MY NET INTO THE DEEP SIDE OF PEOPLE'S LIVES.**

Through the discussions and sharing together on the board, I have come to know the meaning of companionship.

I counted on their ideas and opinions for assignments. I look forward to reading their replies to my work. I always feel richer. My suitcase of knowledge increases. I find myself doing more than replying to a question. I enter into their world. I am part of a group. I take time to enter into the encounter. I tread gently into the space because it is sacred. Companions are to move together.

Months passed since I have come to share my knowledge freely. I have learned not to hoard. I was able to unlock my suitcase of wisdom. I have invited others to come and pick whatever they need.

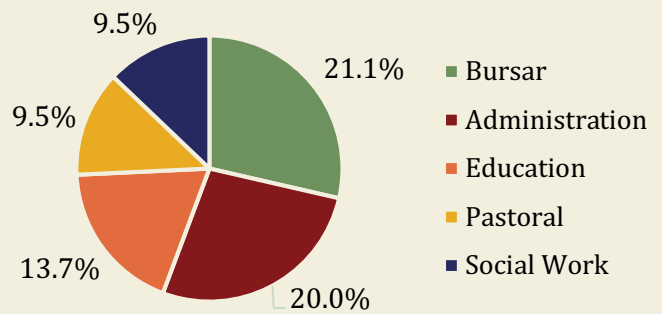
### **THE DISCUSSION BOARD HAS BECOME MY NEW ADVENTURE, A PLACE I LOVE TO TRAVEL TO.**

I have learned a great lesson, never to look down on anybody. Welcome everybody with open arms. Being a part of a group with a common goal has changed my ideas. Companionship is more than family ties. It means to share my true self with others.



**Sr. Babalola Tolulope Elizabeth, DHS**  
**Nigerian HESA Student at Chestnut Hill College**

## Top Ministries Among 2017 SLDI Participants in Nigeria (N=95)



## SPOTLIGHT: SR. GRACE UZOAMAKA ONAH, MSHR

SLDI Phase III, Administration track

**TOTAL FUNDING SECURED: \$84,791**

- Christian Human Service Foundation (grant) \$10,000 & Hilton Fund for Sisters (grant) \$15,000— School equipment and children's library.
- Loyola Foundation (grant) \$ 10,000— Purchase of used school bus for our school.
- NLW (grant) \$28,421 & World Mercy Fund (grant) \$21,370— Completion of 2nd floor of the school building.

## IN APPRECIATION

by Sr Catherine Adelegan, SSL, SLDI Alumna

This letter comes to say THANK YOU to Sr. Clementina Obembe, OSF (ASEC Regional Director, West Africa) for who you are and for what you have been to all of us at SLDI. I am aware that you took up the appointment as a job but you turned it to humanitarian work for all of us religious sisters in Africa. You have performed your work with diligence, love and mercy. You keep going beyond yourself to see that we have dignity, education and skills to help us grow, to know our rights and to stand and be counted as women. Dear sister, the more I reflect on your work with us the more I marvel at the energy with which you plunge yourself to it. You are simply wonderful! You are not SLDI yet you have done so much for us. We are so grateful.

# CATHOLIC SISTERS, BEACONS OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE IN SOUTH SUDAN



*The school is a sign of hope that peace will reign in South Sudan. Institutions such as school are places where values and appreciation of each others culture will be permeated (December 2016).*

In the midst of human suffering, spirituality seems to be the best means to cope with trauma and difficult situations. It is a dynamic and fundamental way for us to connect with something bigger than ourselves, helping us to have meaning and purpose in life, as well as hope for a tomorrow.

Catholic sisters are planting the seeds of faith, hope and love as they walk with the people of South Sudan—the youngest country in Africa—one step at a time. Recently, I had the opportunity to travel to Juba, South Sudan and see the effects of ASEC. Since 2014, ASEC has supported Catholic Sisters in South Sudan through higher education and training in leadership development.

In Juba I met with two ASEC partners, the Catholic University of South Sudan and the Religious Superiors Association of South Sudan (RASS). The visit provided me with new perspectives, understanding, and hope for the future in spite of uncertainty.

I also met with Catholic sisters and people who are tirelessly working to transform South Sudan into a place of hope aptly symbolized by the river Nile flowing through the city of Juba.

**BUT DESPITE FRESH WATER PROVIDED BY THE RIVER NILE, MANY ARE STARVING.**

I thought of global newscasts providing, time and time again, details of the issues facing South Sudan. But the

sisters are working on the margins of society, creating schools, hospitals, social and pastoral care centers.

In 2016, for the first time, 34 Catholic Sisters working in South Sudan, including some congregational leaders, participated in two four-week training sessions through the Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI). In prior years, sisters had to travel to either Kenya or Uganda for this; now they have training on their own soil. It is a dream that has come true, and a hope I always had for South Sudan.

On this trip I learned that to rebuild a nation, the first step of the long journey of the healing process is to have faith in those living and serving there; this has yet to occur in South Sudan. But the sisters' presence is a sign of faith and hope for the future!

Both local and missionary sisters are serving hand in hand, building people's faith and hope for the future yet to be



*Sr. Lina, Sr. Rose Jane, and Sr. Jane meet with the Archbishop of Juba, South Sudan, Paulina Lukudu Lolo (December 2016).*





*An SLDI Finance Workshop was conducted from Aug 27-Sept 23, 2017 in Good Shepherd Center Kit- Juba, South Sudan*

realized. Trauma is one of the challenges they face each day as they support the communities there.

I keep wondering what keeps these sisters ministering in South Sudan amidst challenging uncertainties, but the answer is simple; love. It is easy for people who live in peaceful circumstances to tell others living in volatile and vulnerable regions to “just leave;” but for those working in those regions, providing essential services to the sick, poor, children, women, and elderly is a priority.

**DESPITE THE FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT, WALKING OUT AND LEAVING THOSE WHO HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO CALL HOME IS NOT AN OPTION.**

We have a duty not only to pray but also to be active for these people—for the women, the girls, the boys, and the elderly in this troubled country. Peace is indispensable for sustainable human development in South Sudan; and there is a dire need for humanitarian assistance! The need for trauma healing cannot be underestimated. It is essential to develop mutual trust and to impart positive values to the next generation. The road to recovery is long and precarious, but we must not lose faith and hope; the people there are depending on us! Are you ready to walk with us?

*Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSE, ASEC Advisory Board Member  
Article written for the Global Sisters Report*

## SPOTLIGHT: SR. MARY FAIDA

SLDI Phase III, Administration track

**TOTAL FUNDING SECURED: \$72,913**

Aid to the Church in Need, \$31,213 - Received a vehicle from for use in her congregation

Koch Foundation, \$9,000, Comboni Missionaries, \$7,000 and \$5000 in donations— Develop & provide trauma-informed formation to sisters in South Sudan who experienced the civil war. Donations will help sustain the program into the future.

Various Religious Institutes, \$12,000— Donations were intended to cover the costs for a sister in need of a kidney transplant.

Catholic Relief Services South Sudan, \$8700— Repair of the congregation's solar power system.

## SR. ROSE JANE ADIERO, ASEC DIRECTOR- SOUTH SUDAN, LAID TO REST

*by Sr. Mary Germina Keneema, MSMMC  
ASEC Director – Uganda*



Sr. Rose, ASEC's Director of South Sudan, was laid to rest in Juba, on March 30, 2017.

Sr. Rose was born on 17th January 1960 in Kampala

Uganda. She joined the Sacred Heart sisters in 1978, had her formation and made her first profession on 1st January 1986 in Moyo in Uganda. She made her perpetual profession on 1 January 1992 in the Archdiocese of Khartoum in Sudan.

Sr. Rose had a BA and MA in Education from Catholic University of Eastern Africa. She spent most of her years teaching and ministering the youth. From 2013-2016 she was Provincial Superior of the Sacred Heart Sisters in both South Sudan and Sudan.

ASEC was represented at the funeral by Sr. Lina Wanjiku, ASEC East African Director and Sr. Mary Germina Keneema the ASEC Uganda Director. In a speech they wrote, they described Sr. Rose as a hardworking and very diligent Sister.

**"AS ASEC FAMILY, WE ARE VERY SAD BECAUSE WE HAVE LOST AN IMPLEMENTER AND VISIONARY LEADER."**

“Every day she worked as it was her last day. The growing ASEC Programs in South Sudan really needed somebody creative and selfless, like Sr. Rose, so as ASEC Family, we are very sad because we have lost an implementer and visionary Leader. Sr. Rose was very instrumental in rolling out ASEC new programs in South Sudan,” they said.

They added that “Sr. Rose had ASEC at heart and passionately served the sisters in South Sudan. She always had solutions to various issues and she could wrestle with challenges until they were solved.”

Please join us in prayer for the friends and family of Sr. Rose. May she rest in eternal peace.



*ASEC Alumna Sr. Philipina Ignas Kibua poses with children at the Mgorole Orphanage Center (January 2017).*



*Sr. Prisca, Headmistress of the Sacred Heart Primary School, stands in front of her students. ASEC staff visited Sacred Heart Primary School during a site visit (January 2017).*

## WOMEN'S EQUALITY

There many challenges still facing women of Tanzania such as psychological violence, lack of decision making, harassment, domestic and intimate partner violence, emotional abuse and many others. But, in spite of gender inequality and violence faced by many women in Tanzania, much of the economic development in rural and urban areas is led by women. Particularly in rural areas, agriculture and industrial production relies heavily on Tanzanian women.

We need to reject discrimination and violence against women and instead create the spirit of self determination, self awareness, self-reliance and implementation of capacity building.

*Sr. Maria Telesphora, COLU  
ASEC Programs Coordinator – Tanzania*

## SPOTLIGHT: SR. ASSINTA MASSAWE, CFS

SLDI Phase I, Project Directors track

**TOTAL FUNDING SECURED: \$174,610**

- Missio Aachen, \$16,220— Sunflower press--Help people who are producing sunflower to press the seeds for oil for them and prepare for sale.
- Sticking Porticus (grant) \$20,126— Catechist Education Paris project: Educate catechists in Parish level; 53 Catechists; 9 teachers.
- Dorothea Sisters in Holland (grant) \$117,409— Construction of classrooms.
- Missio Aachen (grant) \$20,855— Subsidy for running a catechetical center.

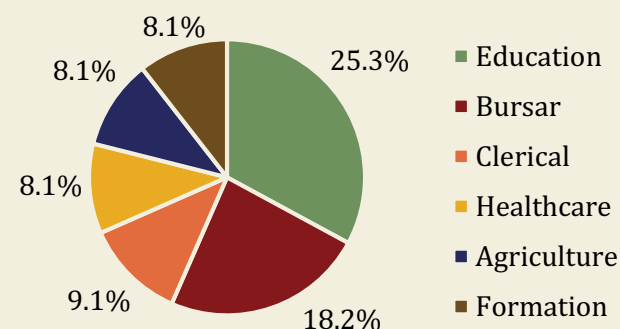
## THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

Religious women provide hope to vulnerable people. The work of nuns in child development, promotion of peace, justice and love can be observed in all of their mission activities. The Catholic Church and other good wisher institutions focus on promoting quality education opportunities from early childhood to adulthood. Catholic women religious teach social norms and provide high quality education.

One good example is Mkombozi Montessori Pre and Primary School, located at Mbagala Chamazi—Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Run by the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Redeemer, this young school is growing very fast due to the high quality of education it provides. Today the school encompasses over 200 students in three levels of kindergarten as well as Standards I through III. Each year our institution has been expanding in order to accommodate more and more students who join our program.

*Sr. Veronika Francis Timalias, CSR  
SLDI Alumna, 2015 - Tanzania*

### Top Ministries Among 2017 SLDI Participants in Tanzania (N=99)





**"I THANK GOD FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY. I THANK THE WHOLE TEAM OF ASEC... I THANK OUR MOTHER SUPERIORS IN TCAS FOR SENDING US TO THESE WORKSHOPS. I THANK OUR FACILITATORS FOR THEIR CREATIVITY IN INSTRUCTING US. AND, I THANK MY CLASSMATES WHO MADE THE WORKSHOP ENJOYABLE THROUGH MUTUAL SUPPORT.**

- Sr. Constansia Maria Adolph Mosha, RA  
SLDI Participant, Finance Track - Tanzania



*Sr. Constansia Maria Mosha, R.A. (in front) during the SLDI Finance Track II field trip to Bigwa Seminary Secondary School in Morogoro, Tanzania.*

*Youth Day Celebration Aug 12 in Morogoro, Tanzania. Sisters played fun social games with young girls in the community.*

## **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY**

In commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the founding of Corpus Christi Parish (Mwili na Damu Azizi ya Yesu) in Morogoro, Tanzania, the church hosted a Youth Day celebration in conjunction with the International Youth Day held annually throughout the world on August 12.

"Sharing Love of Christ" became the motto for this event which focused on increasing love, peace and character-building. These goals were accomplished through sports and social interactions. The youth participated in football, netball, running, and tug-o'-war. They were encouraged to cheer each other on without regard for tribe, ethnicity, religion or employment, recognizing that they are all sons and daughters of the same God.

Education and character-building of youth is urgently needed now in the developing countries of Africa. In times of hunger and poverty, life has been further complicated by the presence of armed forces. Without access to good education the dreams of youth go unfulfilled.



One of the advantages of sponsoring a day like this is to empower each other to work toward building a strong future generation of leaders. Strong foundations in quality education, adequate health care, practicing decision-making and genuine love are crucial. The goal must be the pursuit of the positives dreams of youth!

**Sr. Maria Telesphora, COLU,  
ASEC Programs Coordinator – Tanzania**

**"IN ONE YEAR, I AM WORKING WITHOUT STRESS BECAUSE I AM ABLE TO USE A COMPUTER TO SIMPLIFY MY WORK AS A BURSAR. BEFORE, I WAS DOING IT MANUALLY AND MAKING MANY ERRORS."**

Sr. Rose Alex Massawe, CP, SLDI  
Participant, Finance Track -  
Tanzania



*ASEC Programs Coordinator Sr. Maria Telesphora, COLU explains the importance of education to a group of children Sumbawanga, Tanzania.*





*Sr. Betty, Head teacher of St. Matia Mulumba, Kiganda RC Primary, addresses her pupils.*

## SUCCESS FROM RECEIVING MY BACHELOR'S DEGREE

***Sr. Betty Namatovu, HESA Alumna - Uganda***

After my graduation with a BA in Education in May 2017 from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), my congregational superiors appointed me as a Head teacher of St. Matia Mulumba, Kiganda RC Primary; a government-aided primary school in Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese, Mubende District in Uganda. I am confident in all that I do. The knowledge and skills I attained help me a lot in whatever I am doing now. For example, I am the chairperson of all catholic schools in the parish where I am working. I grew spiritually, socially, physically, technologically and morally because I was able to fit in with people of different personalities.

**"I FEEL CONFIDENT AND EMPOWERED FOR MY RESPONSIBILITIES BECAUSE OF THE EDUCATION ATTAINED THROUGH HESA."**

***Sr. Betty Namatovu, HESA Alumna - Uganda***



*Sr. Florence had a 3-month internship at Cottolengo Children's home in Kenya.*

## GRATEFUL FOR MY SOCIAL WORK DEGREE

***Sr. Florence Asiimwe, HESA Alumna (CUEA 2014-16), Uganda***

My community members and I are grateful to have received the scholarship of ASEC through the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Completing my Bachelors in Social Science, Social Work option, is of great value because it helps me live the virtues of honesty, purity, patience, generosity, service, forgiveness, responsibility, faithfulness and courage. I have gained more skills in restoring social functioning of the individual, group and helping communities get the resources they need.

My experience includes working in children service and in food and water security for three months each. I am determined to work for the transformation of the world and reach out to the people in need of service, to help them achieve radiant health and graceful living through the golden years of their life.

Talent only prevails when it is combined with commitment. May God always remain the central mystery of our lives.

*Below: Coordinator Sr. Irene Lucy Onyai and Facilitator Mr. Ndawula join the Uganda sisters in celebrating the joy of their new laptops during HESA orientation (July 2017).*



*SLDI Finance I participants in Uganda carrying their new laptops (July 2017).*





*Sr. Irene hands out a card to a young girl at the annual Princess Conference, an annual conference in Uganda held to empower young women and girls (March 2017).*

## PRINCESS CONFERENCE EMPOWERS YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS IN UGANDA

Bishop Sanctus Lino Wanok of Nebbi Catholic Diocese has stressed the need for action on domestic violence and has extended the same call to the sisters. He asked sisters to help prepare the young girls who are heading for marriage in hopes of reducing domestic violence issues.

More than 250 young women ages 12 to 35 years attended the annual Princess Conference, held in Nebbi Town Secondary School from January 15-22, 2017. The theme of the Conference was “Be Merciful as your Heavenly Father” Lk:6:36.

The girls were taught about how to effectively manage their roles within the family such as preparing meals, hygiene and discipline, to name a few.

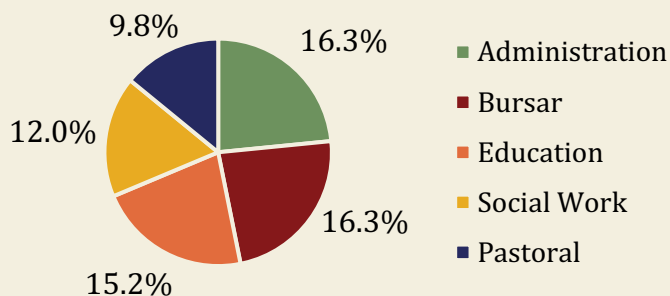
The issues that are addressed during these conferences include God’s love for each individual girl, womanhood, sexual purity, the importance of education, financial freedom and many others.

The Princess Conference began in 2013 by Rev. Sr. Irene Lucy Onyai, LSMIG, ASEC Programs Coordinator – Uganda. Since then, the girls’ conference has touched the lives of many young women and is spreading like wildfire.

After attending these conferences over 2000 girls have committed their lives freely to live a chaste life. Others returned back to sacramental life. More than 10 girls have joined religious institutes. Other girls have become good managers of their finances, have initiated small income generating activities and are funding their own basic needs.

*Sr. Immaculate Jennifer Wambojo Agul*

## Top Ministries Among 2017 SLDI Participants in Uganda (N=92)



## SPOTLIGHT: SR. MARY LILIAN BAITWAKAKYE, OLG

SLDI Phase I, Project Director Track

**TOTAL FUNDING SECURED: \$289,232**

- Stitching Porticus (grant) \$46,061 & Sisters of Breda, Holland (grant) \$42,112— OLG Chapel and Dormitory Construction/Renovation: 3 block dormitories, 6 latrines, 10 shower rooms and a laboratory block.
- **St. Antonius Sticking, Netherlands (grant)** \$9,211— OLG Construction of Dining Hall.
- **Caritas Switzerland (grants)**
  - \$92,283— Boni Consilii Girls’ Vocational Secondary School: Construction of 2 classroom blocks, water tank, construction of assembly hall and Administration block.
  - \$58,185— School fees for children served by HIV/AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable children project
  - \$10,000— Workshop for sisters to better serve orphans with HIV/AIDS.
- **Hilton Fund for Sisters (grants)**
  - \$10,000— Workshops held within the HIV/AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable children project.
  - 8,000— Boni Consilii Home Construction/renovation.
  - \$6,800— Fruit project/farming.
- **Stitching Amsterdam (grant)** \$6,580— Workshop for sisters.



*Uganda alumni workshop participants (January 2017)*





## ZAMBIA



## SLDI FIELD TRIP TO THE KASISI FARM TRAINING CENTRE, ZAMBIA

### CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION VISITS SLDI PARTICIPANTS IN ZAMBIA DURING FINANCE TRAINING

Sisters in Zambia express gratitude to ASEC and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for the love and support they show to African Sisters.

Sr. Jane Wakahiu, former ASEC Executive Director and current Interim Director for the Hilton Foundation Catholic Sisters Program, visited sisters at the Kalundu Study Centre, in Lusaka, Zambia during an SLDI Finance I training in June 2017. She was accompanied by Tarra McNally, a Health Evaluator.

Workshop participant, Sr. Chrisencia Mkume, expresses, "...we are not at the same level we were when we came here. We can now confidently handle a cash book, ledgers and bank statements, to mention a few." She continues on to say,

**"YOUR INITIATIVE HAS ENABLED MANY OF US TO GAIN SKILLS THAT WILL BENEFIT US, OUR MINISTRIES AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES WE TOUCH."**



*Sr. Jane Wakahiu, Interim Director for the Hilton Foundation Catholic Sisters Program, addresses the SLDI students in Zambia.*

Please extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Hilton Foundation and other donors. We know they are making big sacrifices to make ASEC programs a success. We thank them for their financial, spiritual, moral and material support.

The need for such trainings cannot be over emphasized. We ask that you continue to empower us in similar and other ways. There is a saying, "when you educate a woman you have educated the whole world." We wish to translate this to our context, "when you educate one religious woman you have educated the whole Church."

*Zambia SLDI Administration Workshop participants Sisters Helen, Clare and Hedwig work together (April 2017).*

*Zambia SLDI Administration Workshop participants Sisters Prima, Clarina, Helen and Biatar during group discussion.*







## TRAINING SISTERS TO USE TECHNOLOGY

*Instructor Ben Mporokoso (standing, left), poses for a photo with the SLDI Finance Track I 2017 participants in Zambia.*

I thank God for all the blessings, time and friendships I have made while working with ASEC's programs in Zambia. Over the last six years I have trained close to 300 sisters in Zambia and Malawi for the SLDI programs.

My journey began in 2011, when I was asked by my colleague Fr. Roy Thaden, S.J, Chaplain at the University of Zambia (UNZA) to help facilitate a technology discussion for a group of sisters. Shortly after, my relationship with ASEC began through a meeting with Sr. Maureen Malashya, the former ASEC Country Coordinator for Zambia. Sr. Maureen asked me to facilitate a course in Basic Technology. I had recently started a company, Global Telecom, so this was an opportunity to provide computer maintenance, internet and training services for the SLDI programs.

After a few meetings with ASEC staff, we successfully held the first few SLDI courses in Zambia. We even had sisters from Lesotho and Malawi in attendance! I was honored to be a part of evaluating the curriculum for the next cycle of SLDI courses, which were in Basic Technology and Web Design. It was a wonderful experience and I am proud of the achievements we made to revise this curriculum.

I have attended many graduation ceremonies and it has always been a pleasure to see sisters graduate from the SLDI and HESA programs. I still delight in getting messages from former students.

Much work and effort by many people goes into managing and organizing the courses in the various countries. I am certainly happy to be a part of this exciting and wonderful program. We all have to thank God for such a satisfactory experience.

**Ben Mporokoso, SLDI & HESA Instructor - Zambia**

## SPOTLIGHT: SR. EULALIA CAPDEVILA ENRIQUEZ, CMS

SLDI Phase III, Finance Track

**TOTAL FUNDING SECURED: \$261,109**

All grants and donations were for the Mother Earth Project, which promotes resilience of the local people through skills training, agriculture, environmental stewardship and sanitation improvements.

Sr. Eulalia and others are now considering applying to the Hilton Foundation for a second phase of the project in which funding would be needed for equipment in the Moringa factory and laboratory. She is also considering the construction of a simple training center for sustainable agriculture.

*Below: Moringa Farmers at Mother Earth Centre*





# ASEC PARTNERS IN AFRICA AND USA



Conrad N. Hilton  
FOUNDATION  
Agoura Hills, CA



The Catholic University of Malawi  
Association of Women in Religious Institutes  
of Malawi  
Management and Organization Development  
Resources

Monze Registered Nurse and Midwife  
Program  
Zambia Catholic University  
Zambia Association of Sisterhoods  
Global Telecom

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa  
Chemchemi Ya Uzima Institute  
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Advisory Trust  
Enterprise Management Development Center  
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Catholic University of South Sudan  
Religious Superiors Association of South  
Sudan

Catholic University of Health and Allied  
Sciences  
Mwenge Catholic University  
Saint Augustine University of Tanzania  
Tanzania Catholic Association of Sisters  
Water and Environment Management  
Consultants

St. Francis Nsambya Hospital Training School  
University of Kisubi  
Uganda Martyrs University  
Association of Religious in Uganda

National University of Lesotho  
Conference of Major Superiors, Lesotho

Catholic University of Cameroon Bamenda  
Conference of English-Speaking Religious  
Pan-African Institute for Development-West  
Africa

Catholic University College of Ghana  
Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training  
College Berekum  
Ghanaian Conference of Religious

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Veritas University Abuja  
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Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia,  
Philadelphia, PA  
Marywood University, Scranton, PA  
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