

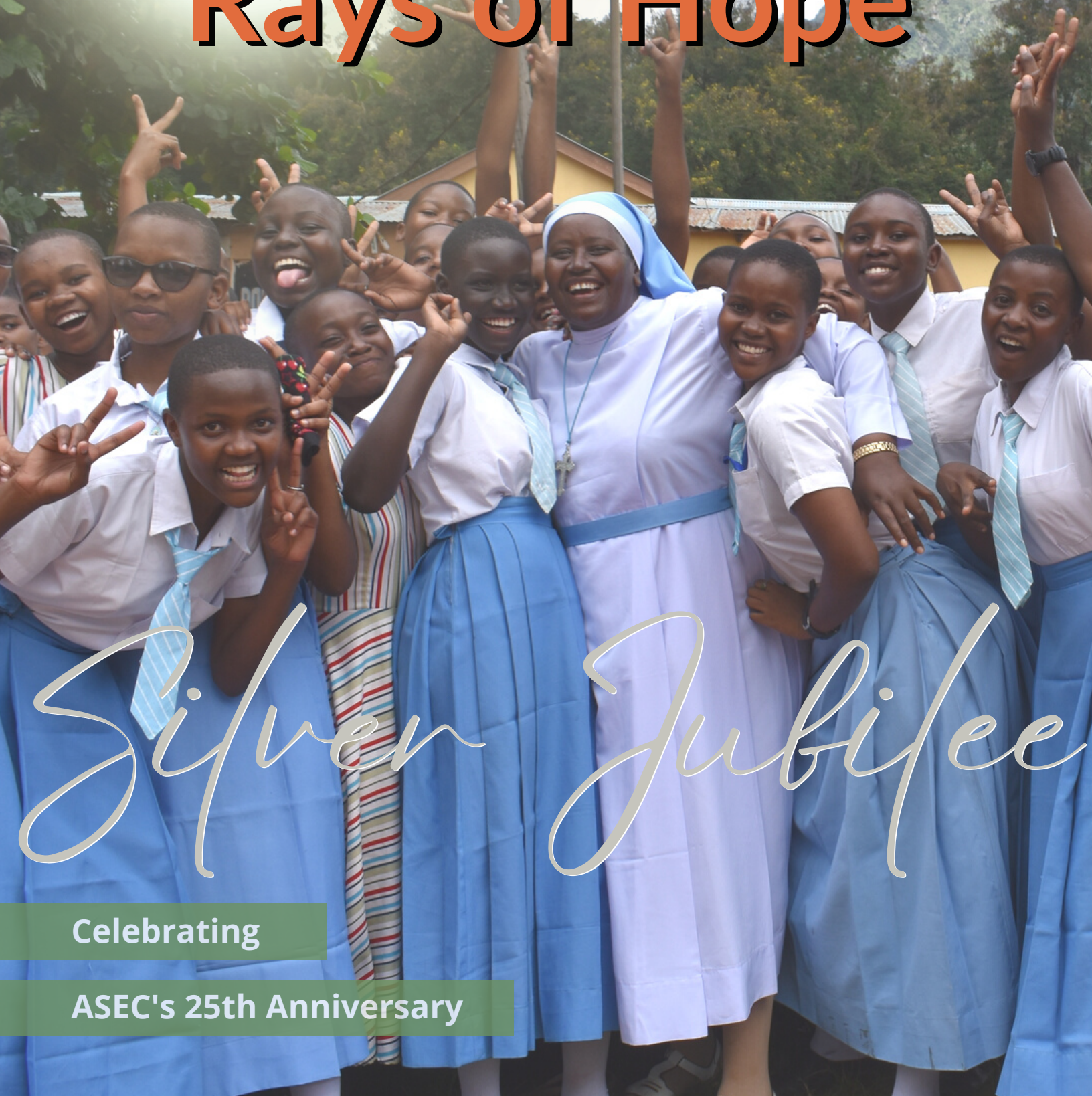
ASEC



AFRICAN
SISTERS
EDUCATION
COLLABORATIVE

December 2023

Rays of Hope



Silver Jubilee

Celebrating

ASEC's 25th Anniversary

The Path to Prophetic Collaboration

By Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia, LSMIG, PhD, ASEC Executive Director



ASEC is at a threshold of 25 years of collaboration per excellence! With over 9,000 alumni spread across the globe, ASEC has incredibly impacted global human development through the ministries of Catholic sisters and service to the people of Africa. It is time to pause and look back in time with gratitude for what has made ASEC a gem over the years: ASEC's Founding Mothers, Corporate and Associate Members, Board of Directors, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, donors, benefactors, staff, and friends of ASEC.

ASEC's story is a story of collaborative dreaming, daring, hoping, responding, and acting. ASEC's Founding Mothers are the "wind beneath the wings" of ASEC's phenomenal global success. These Catholic women religious intertwined their wisdom and courage with personal and collaborative dreams, experiences, vision, history, and mission to bring forth ASEC. The foundation and history of ASEC brings to life the prophecy:

I will pour out my Spirit on all people; your children will prophesy, your youth will see visions, your old men and women will dream dreams.
Joel 3:1

While every individual has an unlimited potential to dream, pinning down a dream into a reality calls for a unique wisdom and courage to dive into the unknown for a bigger catch and impactful realization. Like a single huge tree that has grown, anchored firmly on several strong roots (ASEC's Founding Mothers) with branches stretching to Africa, and far reaching global impact, ASEC is indeed a collaborative gem. **We are eternally grateful to each and every contributor that has brought ASEC to where we are today!**

This festive season we are reminded of important movements. One significant movement is that of the Three

Kings, who did not hesitate to set out on a journey, with individually packaged gifts, under the guidance of a single star that revealed Christ to the world and changed the course of history. Similarly, the courageous movement of ASEC's Founding Mothers did not only blend the charisms of women religious in the U.S. and Africa, but strengthened the most desired global sisterhood for the last 25 years. The foresight of the ASEC Founding Mothers anticipated and pre-checked all the boxes of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 21 years before the SDGs took effect on the global stage in 2016.

The vision and mission of ASEC have inspired tremendous support, network, and partnerships with far reaching impact in Africa and globally!

The 2023 issue of *Rays of Hope* is a retelling of ASEC's founding and creates an opportunity to share ASEC's achievements, but most importantly, the local and global impact ASEC has made over the last 25 years. Uncovering and documenting the history of ASEC from the perspective of its Founding Mothers and the institutions they represent, the 2023 issue of *Rays of Hope* is intentional in telling the success and impact story of the collaborative organization, ASEC.

You are cordially invited to celebrate and be counted with our Founding Mothers as we put ASEC on the Path to Sustainability, where every donation to ASEC in 2023-2024 will be matched 1.5 times by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. This is a great opportunity to strengthen ASEC to continue its extraordinary mission to "educate Catholic women religious in Africa to strengthen their leadership capacity to provide services that address local and global challenges" of the most vulnerable people who live in the margins of society. **Together we will strive to make the world a better place for all, especially those in the margins.**



ASEC's 25th Anniversary

In this special edition of *Rays of Hope*, we **celebrate ASEC's 25th Anniversary and Silver Jubilee** by honoring our past and looking forward to the future.

On December 13, 1999, a group of women religious, representing the congregations and colleges/universities that would become ASEC's corporate members, formally met for the first time to begin planning for a project to educate African sisters. Twenty-five years later, that dream is now a reality. With 9,000 individuals directly served through ASEC programming and over 2.4 million people benefitting from the efforts of our alumnae, we appreciate this milestone and are prepared to usher in the years to come.



SLDI Basic Technology participants in Uganda.

ASEC Programs

Our fight against extreme poverty happens in the **most vulnerable communities across Africa**. Sisters serve in areas that are geographically difficult to reach, lack an adequate infrastructure, and suffer from harsh climates, war, natural disasters, disease, and violence. Catholic sisters courageously **seek out the often overlooked and advocate for the underserved**. They are called to go to the hard places. We are called to give them the tools to make a bigger impact.

Programs of the African Sisters Education Collaborative, or ASEC, are always evolving; **molding to meet the specific needs of sisters** serving in the rural and poor communities of sub-Saharan Africa.

Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI)*

SLDI provides sisters with technology, administration, and finance training through three one-month workshops over three years. Through SLDI, sisters gain the practical skills and confidence to build strong networks and take up leadership roles in their congregations and communities. Since 2007.

Institutional Capacity Building (ICB)*

Housed under SLDI, ICB supports the internal strength and the external service of national conferences/associations and congregations in Africa as they strive to positively impact human development. The goal of ICB is to strengthen systems and improve the vitality and vibrancy of African women religious. Since 2019.

Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)*

HESA provides opportunities for sisters to access higher education (diploma, undergraduate, and master's degrees). HESA is delivered through partnerships with higher education institutions in Africa and online in the U.S. Since 2013.

The Scholarship Program

The Scholarship Program bridges the gap to higher education for sisters by providing scholarships to complete secondary school or higher education credentials relevant to their ministries. Many of our scholarship recipients continue their education through the HESA program. Since 2012.

Service Learning

Students and sisters from ASEC corporate member institutions participate in annual service trips to Africa. Accompanied by mentors, U.S. participants travel to Africa for three weeks and are immersed in a wide range of volunteer opportunities, serving side-by-side with African sisters. Since 2008.

Research Initiative*

The Research Initiative aims to promote research on Catholic sisters in Africa, increase African women religious' research skills, provide opportunities for them to engage in research projects, and develop ASEC as a central repository of data related to women religious in Africa. Since 2010.

**Made possible by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.*

How Far We Have Come!

By **Brigid Blake, MA, LLD**, ASEC Board of Directors, Chair 2020-2023



The soil was fertile.

A seed was planted.

The yield was prodigious.

This is what ASEC discovered after taking the courageous and risky step 25 years ago to launch an organization that would provide educational opportunities for Catholic women religious in Africa, and that today is having a gigantic impact across the continent. Passionate about alleviating problems related to profound poverty, lack of education, and access to healthcare, and seeing African sisters as the instruments of remediation, the leaders of four congregations of religious women in the United States, together with the colleges and universities they sponsor, made the crucial decision to take action.

The sisters in Africa were already engaged in serving the most vulnerable, providing social and spiritual services to the impoverished, neglected, and needy in their communities and advocating on their behalf. The problem, however, was that they lacked the higher education credentials and skills that would allow them to take their work to a higher level and improve the quality of their services, as well as tools for the technology they would need to sustain their work in the 21st century. Their governments, moreover, were beginning to require higher level qualifications for many of their occupations.

The path ASEC needed to take was clear, beginning with technological skills and supplying laptop computers. ASEC invited congregational superiors to come to the U.S. for brainstorming and technology training, gifting each one with a laptop. The implementation of SLDI followed soon afterwards.

I was privileged to facilitate some of the first SLDI Administration Workshops in Uganda, Kenya, and when ASEC expanded its reach, in Zambia and Malawi. It was a great joy to work with such committed and eager students who could see a useful application for virtually every component of the program.

SLDI was very successful. But the sisters in Africa made it clear that their need for university degrees was of paramount importance. Meeting this need, however, was also part of the dream of ASEC's founders. They saw that sisters in Africa were in the same situation many of them had been in in the 1950's—struggling to maintain ministries, especially in

healthcare and education, without having the education or credentials they needed. Sisters in the U.S. are now highly educated, and in coming together, ASEC's founders wanted to pay that gain forward to their sisters in Africa. Planning was already under way by this time to facilitate their access to higher education—through diploma, bachelor, master, and ultimately doctoral degree programs. The seeds of the HESA program had been planted.

I have been involved with ASEC since 2004 and a member of the Board of Directors for 12 years. It has been exciting to watch the growth and stellar achievements over the years of its existence. ASEC now runs programs in ten countries, serving sisters in those and surrounding countries.

Women religious are the frontline workforce of the Catholic Church, serving in the poorest and most rural parts of the world. They work at the epicenter of global problems that resonate far and wide—poverty, disease, food insecurity, climate change, environmental degradation, migration, human trafficking.

Sisters are courageous and resilient, facing situations every day like floods, drought, epidemics, that most of us might run from. They are steadfast and resourceful.

ASEC alumnae of the SLDI and HESA programs are now in leadership positions in the national and multi-national associations of sisters in Africa, in their congregations, and in local communities. They are CEOs of schools, hospitals, clinics, and many non-governmental organizations that they themselves have founded. They create jobs, win grant awards, and empower women. Since completing ASEC sponsored programs, alumnae have raised nearly \$29 million in funding for community sustainability and improvement projects; created almost 5,000 jobs; and served almost 2.5 million people in poor, rural communities where help is needed most. Education has been a key factor in these successes, and the impact has been staggering.

Research for a Brighter Future

By Tara M. Lopatofsky, PhD, CCLS, ASEC Senior Program Manager, Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E)



Conducting rigorous research has been a central activity at ASEC since its inception. Thorough investigation into the educational needs of Catholic sisters in Africa is the driving force behind the implementation of each of ASEC's programs. Historical records consistently demonstrate ASEC's desire to gather evidence for program planning through research. References to initial data collection and documentation of ASEC's activities can be traced back to 1999—with focus group discussions, religious superior surveys, and fact finding tours throughout Africa. **Twenty-five years later, these initial research activities have become the foundation upon which ASEC's Research Initiative was built.**

Today, ASEC's Research Initiative continues to promote research on Catholic sisters in Africa. The Initiative is designed to increase African women religious' research skills, provide opportunities for them to engage in research projects, and develop ASEC as a central repository of data related to women religious in Africa.

Through the Research Initiative, ASEC strives to increase the academic literature available on Catholic women religious in Africa and develop sisters as critical investigators. Equipped with investigative skills, sisters will be capable of conducting rigorous research that will strengthen the capacity of their congregations and positively impact human development.

Sharing ASEC's Story

In 2023, the Research Initiative put forth a renewed effort to share ASEC's story and impact at in-person academic conferences and events. Greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, participation in these types of events was limited in recent years. However, in 2023 ASEC staff were able to present at the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities Annual Meeting, Marywood University Research Day, the 2023 HESA Partners Conference, the International Consultative Research (ICR) Conference, and an Alliance for Catholic Education event.

Visiting Scholar Fellowship

ASEC continued to strengthen its partnership with the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University through the delivery of the Visiting Scholar Fellowship.

The ninth visiting scholar was selected from India in January 2023, Sr. Mini Joseph of the Sisters of Jesus Mary Joseph (JMJJ). Sr. Mini visited ASEC U.S. Headquarters from May 8-13, 2023. The tenth visiting scholar was selected from Malawi in 2023, Sr. Gloria Maluwasa of the Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary (SBVM).

As part of the Visiting Scholar partnership, ASEC collaborated with CARA to host the second ICR Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, June 18-22, 2023. In total, 27 participants attended the conference including past visiting scholars, directors of religious life research centers from around the globe, and representatives from the

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, CARA, and ASEC. The conference provided an opportunity to discuss possible future collaborative research projects and plan a research publication related to the outcomes of the Visiting Scholar Fellowship.

ASEC's Database Development

Lastly, ASEC has fully integrated all program participant data into a customized organization-wide database. The database allows ASEC to discover new insights into participation trends and has streamlined evaluation processes. ASEC is currently exploring additional ways in which the data can be used to improve program performance and planning.



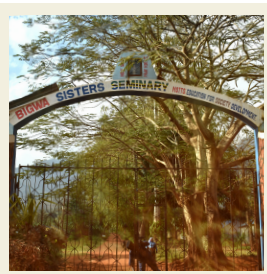
CARA-ASEC Visiting Scholar from India tours tulip field during stay at ASEC Headquarters in Scranton, PA, U.S.

Twenty-Five Years of CHANGE

Since 1999, ASEC has worked to fulfill its mission to facilitate access to education for Catholic sisters in Africa. By continually assessing the needs of those it serves, ASEC ensures that its program offerings strengthen, through education and empowerment, the unique potential of women religious in Africa. Today, ASEC alumnae have been proven to effectively promote human development, spiritual growth, and transformation of the lives of the people they joyfully serve.



ASEC agrees to support the **Bigwa Secondary School** in Tanzania in their advancement from "O" to "A" level, needed to prepare Catholic sisters for higher education. Fundraising to assist the school in training faculty and constructing adequate facilities begins.



1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010



ASEC hosts **Women Religious Bridge the Gap: Collaborative Education for Service Conference** in Philadelphia, PA, U.S. for 18 African sisters to create a collaborative partnership that will result in making available higher education to women religious in Africa via local and distance learning.

ASEC **Service Learning** Program is initiated, 15 students attend the first service trip to the Bigwa Secondary School in Morogoro, Tanzania.



At the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) Annual Meeting, **55 congregational leaders from East and West Africa meet with Founding Mothers** to ensure joint planning and collaboration. Group identifies as an independent entity, calling themselves the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC).



Sr. Anne Munley, IHM, PhD, is appointed ASEC's first Executive Director. ASEC Headquarters is established at Marywood University in Scranton, PA, U.S. and organization achieves 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status.



Neylan Commission Region II (DC, MD, NJ, PA, VA) meets to explore potential collaborative outreach projects. Based on needs assessments, the group determines that education for sisters in Africa is a priority. **Many of these sisters become ASEC's "Founding Mothers."**

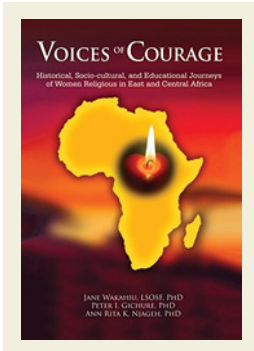


ASEC is awarded \$2 million grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to launch SLDI Phase I. SLDI Phase I will train 304 sisters from five countries (Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Tanzania, Nigeria) over three years. **Sr. Jacquelyn Ernster, OSB, PhD**, is appointed ASEC's second Executive Director.



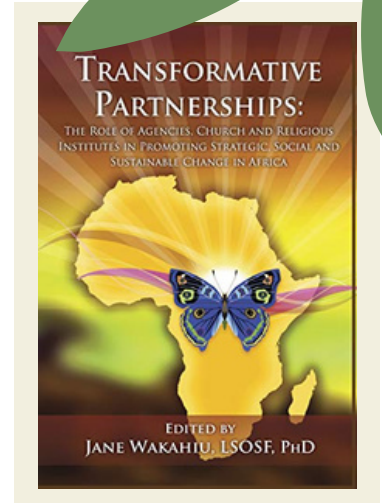


ASEC Scholarship Program, specifically for attending the Bigwa Secondary School at Form V and VI levels, is established. **Sr. Jane Wakahui, LSOSF, PhD**, is appointed ASEC's third Executive Director.



ASEC's first book *Voices of Courage: Historical, Socio-cultural, and Educational Journeys of Women Religious in East and Central Africa* is published.

Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia, LSMIG, PhD, is appointed ASEC's fourth Executive Director.



ASEC's second book *Transformative Partnerships: Role of Agencies, Foundations, Institutions in Promoting Strategic Social and Sustainable Change for Women Religious in Africa* is published. ASEC pilots **ICB Project** under SLDI Phase V in Ghana.

2011 2012 **2013** 2014 **2015** 2016 **2017** 2018 **2019** 2020 2021 2022 **2023**

ASEC receives **HESA Phase I** grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for \$3.85 million. To deliver HESA, ASEC begins to establish partnerships with 11 higher education institutions across 9 countries.



ASEC begins development of **Strategic Plan for 2028** and makes preparations for celebration of **ASEC's 25th Silver Jubilee Anniversary**.



Looking to the Future

In remembering the events of the past, ASEC is also planning for the future. Going forward, ASEC will continue to strengthen the capacity of women religious in Africa to enable them to provide services that address global challenges. ASEC will ensure that its programming adapts to meet these challenges, and that the organization is poised for growth and vitality in the years to come.

SLDI

2023 Year in Review



SLDI participants left to right: Sr. Teresa Mulenga, TS, with water project participants in Malawi, Basic Technology Workshop participants in Uganda, Sr. Nancy Njari, RA, with students in Kenya.

Sisters Leadership Development Initiative

By *Nicole Vilogi-DiPietro, MBA, ASEC Program Manager, Programs & Sneh Akruvala, PhD, ASEC Program Manager, M & E*

The Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) was developed in collaboration with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation in 2005. ASEC and the Hilton Foundation recognized their joint vision to provide leadership development and competency building for Catholic sisters in Africa. After much assessment and planning, SLDI Phase I was piloted in 2007 to serve an initial 304 sisters in 5 countries, becoming ASEC's first major program. Today, SLDI provides sisters the opportunity to enhance their leadership competencies and professional skills in the areas of administration, finance, and technology.

Since the program's inception in 2007, SLDI has grown to serve 4,238 sisters in 10 countries, empowering them to become more effective in their congregations and apostolates. An additional 1,687 beneficiaries have been served through other program activities, such as Superior and Partner Workshops, **totaling 5,925 individuals served by SLDI.**

SLDI Phase VI, Year 1 began in April 2022 and concluded in March 2023. In SLDI Phase VI, Year 1, 700 sisters participated in 36 Technology Workshops—

618 in Basic Technology and 82 in Introduction to Web Design. SLDI Year 1 workshops focus exclusively on building participants' technology capacities, as many participants view technology skills as a vital component of leadership.

SLDI alumnae have shown incredible levels of success once given the gift of education. Graduates of the program go on to demonstrate positive impact on their communities in tangible and effective ways.



94% of SLDI alumnae report effectively using the skills they learned to benefit their ministries.



SLDI alumnae have **served over 2.4 million people**, mostly in rural areas where help is needed the most.



SLDI alumnae have secured **\$28.6+ million for human development projects**, like building hospitals & improving schools.

New Phase VI Program Components

April 2022 marked the start of a new three-year phase of SLDI, Phase VI. The beginning of each phase of SLDI provides an opportunity to improve programming and enhance the SLDI curriculum to meet the current needs of Catholic sisters in Africa. Several SLDI program improvements were implemented in Phase VI.

French-Speaking Cohort

One programming enhancement enacted in Phase VI was the pilot of a French-speaking SLDI cohort in Cameroon. ASEC has continuously received requests to offer SLDI Workshops in French due to the high number of French-speaking sisters in Cameroon. To meet this need, ASEC piloted the first French Basic Technology Workshop in Year 1. Sisters who participated in the pilot French speaking cohort will continue on to complete the Finance Track in Years 2-3.

Web Design Leadership Track

Another programmatic change in Phase VI was the introduction of Web Design as a two-year leadership track offered in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Tanzania. The new Web Design Track gives sisters the opportunity to learn web design software, website building, and website management in tandem with other traditional SLDI subject areas of project management, social entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Social Entrepreneurship

Also notable in Phase VI is the integration of social entrepreneurship into the SLDI curriculum. The intention of social entrepreneurship incorporation is to equip sisters with skills and knowledge that will enable them to set up viable social ventures that embody their congregations' charisms.

Institutional Capacity Building

Initiated in 2019, ASEC's Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) project supports both the internal strength and external service of national conferences/associations and congregations of women religious as they strive to positively impact human development. ICB is a subset of programming housed within SLDI.

In the ICB project, ASEC recognizes the existing capacity of institutions of women religious in Africa and collaborates to strengthen their internal systems and improve their vitality and vibrancy. The second phase of the ICB project began in 2023 under SLDI Phase VI. In the last year, much progress has been achieved including:

- The **intensive national conference/ association and congregation capacity building** process continued in Uganda and was initiated in Malawi.
- **ICB National Conference Training Workshops** focused on project cycle management and leadership development were held in Malawi and Uganda in June 2023.
- In 2023, 8 **ICB Congregational Leaders Workshops**, also known as Superior Workshops, will be completed.



SLDI Finance Track participants in Malawi.

ASEC Alumnae Impact

Annual ASEC Alumnae Workshops present an opportunity to assess the impact program graduates are having on their communities. The ASEC Alumnae Survey is administered each year at the workshops, collecting data on the tremendous ways in which the SLDI and/or HESA graduates are using the knowledge and skills they gained to make positive and measurable impact within the communities and among the people they serve.



96% of ASEC alumnae report effectively **using the skills they learned to benefit their congregation.**



83% of ASEC alumnae have taken on a leadership role within their ministry.



83% of ASEC alumnae are mentoring others in the skills they learned.



ASEC alumnae learn the entrepreneurial skill of making flower pots at the 2023 Alumnae Workshop in Tanzania.

ASEC Alumnae Network

Upon completion of the SLDI and/or HESA programs, sisters enter into the ASEC alumnae network. ASEC organizes annual Alumnae Workshops in each of its 10 countries of operation, which provide sisters with continued professional development and networking opportunities.

In 2023, over 1,200 SLDI and HESA alumnae attended an ASEC Alumnae Workshop. While SLDI Alumnae Workshop attendance saw a slight decrease in 2023 in comparison to 2022 (-4%), HESA alumnae attendance greatly improved (+30%). Overall, 35% of all SLDI and/or HESA alumnae attended an ASEC Alumnae Workshop in 2023.

A total of 15 Alumnae Workshops were held from November 2022 to February 2023. The majority of workshops were held online and several countries offered more than one workshop given the large number of alumnae they serve. Workshops varied in length depending on the content and method of delivery. Topics covered in 2023 included, amongst others, sustaining identity and charisms in institutions, dealing with youth gangs in community schools, entrepreneurship, synodality and Earth care, and mission in a technology driven society.

Overall, the Alumnae Workshops were highly rated in satisfaction. ASEC alumnae most commonly provided the feedback that the Alumnae Workshops were enriching and practical.

HESA

2023 Year in Review



HESA students left to right: Sr. Catherine Etyang, SMK, Sr. Maureen Chepkemoi, SMI, & Sr. Irene Wawira Njeru, FMA, serving in Kenyan ministries.

Higher Education for Sisters in Africa

By Rosemary Shaver, EdD, ASEC Senior Program Manager, Programs & Tara M. Lopatofsky, PhD, ASEC Senior Program Manager, M & E

The Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA) program facilitates access to post-secondary education for Catholic sisters in Africa. More than 2,096 sisters have participated in HESA since 2012, representing 274 unique congregations. Through HESA, sisters are studying for college diplomas, bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees at ASEC's 24 partner higher education institutions in 10 African countries and online in the U.S.

HESA emerged in 2012 to address the call for access to degree-bearing educational programs for sisters in Africa, which was supported by SLDI program evaluation and conversations with partners in Africa. In 2012, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation provided a pilot grant through SLDI for ASEC to support a first cohort of 18 SLDI alumnae to study education online for one year at Marywood University.

Building on the success of the pilot, the Hilton Foundation provided the first HESA grant to ASEC in 2013. HESA Phase I provided funding for nearly 300 student sisters to study for undergraduate degrees through partnerships with colleges and universities in Africa and the U.S. This included the first cohort of 18 sisters, who transferred to complete their

degrees at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Kenya, forming ASEC's first higher education partnership in Africa. Since 2012, the HESA program has expanded to include options for online-onsite hybrid and onsite programs with 24 higher education partners in Africa and the U.S., options for master's degrees, and opportunities for continued learning through Alumnae Workshops.

The design of HESA recognizes that Catholic sisters are adult learners with unique educational needs. Sisters typically join HESA from ministry work and having been out of school for many years. To facilitate networks and support structures, HESA students participate in cohorts of sisters at partner higher education institutions and receive technological and academic support to ensure their success as students, scholars, and women religious including Orientation and annual Reflective Learning Workshops.

After ten years of implementation, findings from evaluation data and alumnae success stories demonstrate that **HESA positions Catholic sisters as leaders of vital ministries, congregations, and communities who address sustainable development in Africa.**

Enrollments

As of July 1, 2023, approximately 1,010 sisters were actively enrolled in HESA at partner higher education institutions in 10 countries in Africa. In the 2022-2023 grant year, HESA welcomed approximately 351 new students who participated in Orientation in preparation for their studies and formed cohort networks at partner institutions.

In Phases I-III, the majority of HESA sisters studied for bachelor's degrees. Master's degrees were added as a study option in Phase II.



*Includes 1 certificate

Sisters participating in the HESA program are highly motivated and academically successful. Sister students actively engaged in student life, provide spiritual enrichment through campus ministries, and average a B grade point average, with 77% receiving a B average or higher. In addition, the program maintains a comprehensive 96% retention rate.

Graduations

More than 1,144 sisters have graduated from HESA with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. During the 2022-2023 year, 286 sisters graduated from HESA. More than 125 graduates in 22-23 reported receiving honors and other special awards. Notable recognitions include:

- Sr. Paschazia Kokwenda Damianus, STG, graduated from Saint Augustine University (SAUT), Tanzania, in December 2022. She was awarded Best Student in the School of Education and received a scholarship to continue her studies at DHBW-Heidenheim in Germany.
- Sr. Gifty Saah, SVI, graduated from Catholic University of Ghana (CUG) in October 2022 with a Bachelor of Education as the Overall Best Graduating Student. She also received recognition as Best Graduating Student in Education Faculty, Best Graduating Female Student, and Financial Secretary for Pax Romana.

- Sr. Mary Eke Okoro, SJGS, graduated from CUG in October 2022 with a Bachelor of Science in General Nursing as the Overall Best Graduating Student in School of Nursing and Midwifery.
- Sr. Christabel Chileshe Chibwe, SOM, graduated from Monze School of Nursing, Zambia, in November 2022, with a Diploma in Midwifery and Nursing as the Best Graduating Student in Neonatology.

Partnerships

ASEC continues to maintain 24 partnership agreements with higher education partners in the U.S. and Africa to deliver HESA. Since July 1, 2022, HESA renewed agreements with:

- Jordan University College (Tanzania)
- Catholic University of South Sudan
- Saint Augustine University (Tanzania)
- University of Kisubi (Uganda)
- Rosemont College and University of Kisubi
- Catholic University of Ghana

In February 2023, ASEC also signed a new partnership agreement with DMI-St. Eugene University to expand the implementation of the HESA program in Zambia.

2023 Reflective Learning Workshops, clockwise from the top: Sr. Esther Okorie, MSDP, & Sr. Bernardine Sembe, ICM, in Cameroon, students in Zambia, and students in Uganda.



Partnerships Rooted in Collaboration

By Rosemary Shaver, EdD, ASEC Senior Program Manager, Programs



Collaboration was instrumental in the founding of ASEC 25 years ago and is central to our mission. Foundationally, ASEC is a collaborative organization. ASEC was formed by four congregations of women religious in the U.S. and the higher education institutions they sponsor. Sparked by networking among women religious in the U.S. and Africa, the idea of ASEC exemplifies the notion of a global sisterhood among women religious around the world.

So central is collaboration to ASEC that it is represented among our core values.



*ASEC nurtures multi-layered partnerships that further its mission in accordance with the gospel call to unity and solidarity. Recognizing the shared goal of furthering educational opportunities for women religious in Africa, ASEC works together with partners in the **spirit of global sisterhood** to support the personal and spiritual growth of sisters in Africa.*

Partnership is central to ASEC's commitment to collaboration. ASEC is supported by its eight corporate member institutions, seven associate members, three friends of ASEC, partners for the Research Initiative, and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, which sponsors SLDI and HESA. In ASEC's ten countries of operation in Africa, ASEC partners with national conferences of religious to implement its programs. The national conferences in Africa are, in most cases, the home to ASEC's Africa country offices.

Together with our partners, ASEC is also supported by hundreds of individual donors who generously contribute to the work of ASEC.

2023 HESA Partners Conference

To effectively deliver the HESA program, ASEC partners with the Hilton Foundation and 24 colleges and universities in Africa and the U.S. HESA partners share common values and goals with ASEC, as well as an underlying commitment to education for women religious in Africa and knowledge of the reality that to educate a sister is to educate her community and improve society.

In June 2023, ASEC held the 2023 HESA Partners Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, focusing on *The Mission of a Catholic University in the 21st Century*. Once per grant phase,

the HESA Partners Conference gathers representatives from ASEC's 24 partner colleges and universities in Africa and the U.S. for networking and learning.

Nearly 70 representatives from ASEC's partner colleges and universities, including vice chancellors, academic deans, HESA liaisons, and ASEC staff attended the conference. Rev. Dennis Holtschneider, CM, EdD, President of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, and Michael James, PhD, Lecturer of Educational Leadership and Higher Education and Director of the Institute for Administrators in Catholic Higher Education, Boston College, facilitated sessions around the theme.

Participants highly rated their experience at the conference and were invigorated by the discussion around topics including the purposes and challenges of Catholic higher education in Africa. In the months since the conference, participants reported the development of initiatives inspired by the activities and networking during the conference.

"I have been empowered to clarify my mission and university mission," one partner participant shared. Another participant explained, "With commitment dialogue and networking, we can help each other and our students understand the purpose of Catholic higher education, bring change to society, and strengthen Church teachings."

University leaders present at the conference also spoke of the role HESA students as Catholic sisters play in the culture of their institutions. More than 90% of partner representatives reported that HESA students contributed to a more vibrant Catholic identity at their institutions.

"The presence of the HESA sisters on campus has tremendously shaped the spiritual tone of the campus. As a result, we have an increased number of students joining religious life."

-HESA Partner Representative

ASEC staff in the U.S. and Kenya, worked to develop the conference in collaboration with the facilitators and global partners for the HESA program. ASEC is grateful to the staff, facilitators, and partners who made the 2023 HESA Partners Conference a success.

ASEC's Path to Sustainability

By Sr. Nancy Kamau, LSOSF, ASEC Development Director



Why Catholic Sisters?

Catholic sisters across the globe have been involved in education, healthcare, social, and pastoral ministries for many years. Many people today attribute their success to the education they received at the hands and hearts of sisters in Catholic schools. ASEC is one example of an outstanding sister success story.

Over the years, we have learned that educating a religious sister creates a ripple effect. In Africa, the sisters are transforming the lives of millions of people who live in the margins of society; especially those in rural villages and poor urban areas where the majority of the sisters provide services. These sisters are shining *Rays of Hope* in their societies. The stories of impact, shared through our website (ASEC-SLDI.org) and social media, tell how sisters in Africa utilize, innovatively and creatively, the skills they learned through ASEC programs to serve the needs of their people, especially the most vulnerable and the marginalized in rural villages, where social services are limited. Catholic sisters are the unsung heroes who continue to serve with zeal and unwavering commitment to improve the conditions of millions of people in their communities.

Clockwise from the top left: Sr. Innocentia Ndikum, SOM, at poultry raising project in Cameroon, Sr. Immaculata Rugumila, FDCC, with scout children at Canossa Primary School in Tanzania, Sr. Harriet Baker, IHMR, cares for patient in Uganda.



Path to Sustainability Initiative

ASEC is at a critical point in its existence. Recognizing that the sustainability of ASEC is a priority, and increasingly so in recent times, ASEC launched the Path to Sustainability Initiative to secure the future of this great organization that provides life-changing skills to Catholic sisters in Africa through education and leadership programs. ASEC relies heavily on charitable donations and contributions, annual appeals, grant funding, mission appeals, fundraising events, and other sources of income to support the training and education of Catholic sisters in Africa.

Our priority is to create a sustainable solution through diversified avenues. I am pleased to share great news about a matching challenge grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation! For every \$1.00 we raise the Hilton Foundation has agreed to match it with \$1.50 for 3 years (2022-2024). ASEC's board members and staff are leading the way and have set up strategies to accomplish these goals. We began by setting up structures and building prospect donor relationships through gatherings and events, social media platforms, and networking to tell our story. However, we need your support to help us increase our revenue and secure these matching funds.

Will You Be A Ray of Hope?

I invite you to join us and be part of our mission. We are seeking collaborators, especially as we strive to meet the goals set for the matching challenge grant for the future sustainability of our programs. As we approach **ASEC's 25th anniversary** in 2024, it is our sincere hope to continue engaging you and all who have an interest in our mission to secure ASEC's life-changing work of educating Catholic sisters in Africa. Your contribution will make a huge difference and impact the lives of so many people that the sisters in Africa serve. Thank you very much for your support. Be assured of our prayers always.

Make an online donation through our secure system by visiting:

asec-sldi.org/donate

Or, mail checks made payable to:

**African Sisters Education Collaborative
2300 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA 18509**

A Letter from the Mission Advancement Office

My name is Jim Tidaback and I am the new Director of Mission Advancement at ASEC. I wanted to introduce myself and share a little about me and the work I will be doing here. As the Director of Mission Advancement, I am excited to work alongside Sr. Draru and the wonderful ASEC staff. On a daily basis, I will oversee all aspects of development and fundraising including major and planned giving, appeals, events, marketing, and communications, along with our digital footprint on social media.

While I was going through the interview process, it was evident to me that ASEC would be a wonderful place to work. The mission-focused staff, along with the leadership of the organization, made it an easy decision to come and work here.

My background is in Catholic fundraising, and I have worked at the Diocese of Joliet and Our Sunday Visitor. At the Diocese of Joliet, I was responsible for major donors, The Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal, along with stewardship programs for 130 parishes and missions. At Our Sunday Visitor, I was a consultant helping parishes and dioceses reach their true stewardship potential.

On a personal note, my wife of 34 years, Julie, and I live in Plainfield, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. We have two adult children and one grandchild. When not working, we love to travel, spend time with the kids, cook, and relax in our backyard. I love to play golf and play music in a local band.

I am truly excited about taking ASEC to the next level. The next few years are going to be very exciting. I would like to thank you for your association with ASEC and I certainly look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Peace and God's blessings to you and your families,



Jim Tidaback

ASEC Director of Mission Advancement



Sr. Gwendoline Kukiya, SUSD, an SLDI participant with students in Eastern Cameroon.

A Return to Africa

By Nicole Vilogi-DiPietro, MBA, ASEC Program Manager, Programs & Sneh Akruvala, PhD, ASEC Program Manager, M & E

The ASEC Service Learning Program was reestablished in 2023 after a pause due to COVID-19-related travel restrictions. **Fifteen students from Chestnut Hill College and Marywood University traveled to the West-African nation of Ghana in May and returned after a three-week stay.**

Accompanying the students were sisters from two of ASEC's corporate member congregations—Sr. Sheila Kennedy, SSJ, PhD, Sr. Kathleen Lunsmann, IHM, and Sr. Lisa Olivieri, SSJ, PhD.

During the Service Learning trip, participants served at four sites:

- **St. Elizabeth, Padre Pio Rehabilitation Center, Ahotokrom**, a center for children and adults with physical and mental disabilities
- **Mary Queen of Peace School**, a nursery and primary school
- **Cornelia Connelly School of the Holy Child Jesus**, a nursery and primary school
- **Infant Jesus Catholic Preparatory School, Twifo Praso**, a nursery and primary school

In preparation for their trip, participants took a three-credit course, fundraised for their travel expenses, and collected supplies to be donated to the host ministry sites. On-site in Ghana, they served with sisters in their ministries. The group also engaged in cultural immersion activities, including a visit to the Assin Manso Ancestral Slave River Site and Elmina Castle, a heritage site associated with the slave trade, where they laid a wreath in memory of the enslaved people who passed through the site.

Mentors for the trip were Yerodin Lucas, PhD, Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Equity and Inclusion and Title IX Coordinator, Marywood University, and Lauren M. Barrow, PhD, Chair of the Center for Education, Advocacy, and Social Justice and Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, Chestnut Hill College. Sr. Francisca Damoah, SIJ, ASEC Regional Director-West Africa and Country Director-Ghana, was invaluable in assisting with trip planning, offered local guidance for the implementation of the program, and concluded the trip successfully.

The students attending the trip were studying for degrees in biology, criminal justice, communication, education, human services, international affairs, music therapy, psychology, and human development; all useful fields for the volunteer opportunities available on this trip.



2023 Service Learning participants at service sites in Ghana.





A Little Nun

A Poem By Sr. Esther Koros, OSF
SLDI Administration Track Alum

There was a little nun at the periphery of the Church,
Unskilled and unschooled giving little for her charge.
Standing by, at the beck and call of the priest,
Waiting and hoping for a better day, a miracle in the least.
And then the miracle came enshrined in ASEC.

The little nun at the periphery, witnessed a sunrise,
A new dawn ambushed her with a miraculous high-rise.
Sprouting taller than her wildest, suppressed dreams,
So that her face shone brighter than the sun beams.
Thank God for the magnificent miracle of ASEC.

The little nun at the periphery located the centre,
She went to school and gained knowledge, such a venture!
She vigorously learned and won accolades, such a genius!
She found ways of earning money, so ingenious!
She found a voice to tell her story, such a raconteur!
She learnt a way to cope with pain, solid character.
Not fish a day, but a fishing net forever, thank you ASEC.

So, the little nun at the periphery, amidst the naysaying fraternity,
Has made many little strides, on the journey to modernity.
The little nun at the periphery stands tall at the centre.
Grasps the amplifier, commands the world, from the centre.
Because she found a miracle enshrined in ASEC.

Now, at 25, the little nun at the periphery,
Cannot stop her tears of joy, beating her past jittery,
Looking at the impossibilities she has conquered,
Musing over the dignity she's now accorded.

The little nun at the periphery, is the gigantic woman,
Feeding the children, treating the sick, changing the plan,
The little nun at the periphery is every woman religious,
Who looks back at the many perilous years past,
And can't help but loudly broadcast;
Thank you Mother ASEC for drying my tears!



Scholarship

2023 Year in Review



Sr. Given Chibesakunda, CSJB, Scholarship recipient in Zambia holds newborn twins.

ASEC Scholarship Program

By Tara D'Amico, ASEC Program Coordinator, Programs, Rosemary Shaver, EdD, ASEC Senior Program Manager, Programs, & Tara M. Lopatofsky, PhD, ASEC Senior Program Manager, M & E

Since 2012, ASEC's Scholarship Program has been bridging the gap to higher education for sisters by providing scholarships to complete secondary school or higher education credentials relevant to sisters' ministries. The program was initially founded to address the specific educational needs of sisters in Tanzania, where 65% of women religious lack secondary education. However, since its founding, the ASEC Scholarship Program has expanded to serve sisters in six additional countries.

From 2012-2023, more than 790 sisters received scholarships through the program. Sisters in the Scholarship Program have studied at over 160 educational institutions and represent 119 distinct congregations of women religious.

A 97% retention rate reaffirms that sisters who receive a scholarship successfully complete their programs of study.



In 2022-2023, more than 160 new and 70 continuing students received ASEC scholarships.



Most students study at the secondary/form-level: 380 secondary/form-level credentials and 418 college/university level credentials.



More than 490 ASEC-sponsored sisters and women have graduated from their programs of study.



Scholarship recipients at Orientation in Tanzania, March 2023.

Awarding Scholarships

Sisters apply to the program and, depending on the support of people like you, ASEC awards scholarships to the best applicants. Unfortunately, not all sisters that apply receive a scholarship. ASEC chooses the top applicants to receive scholarships based on merit and available funding. Scholarships are usually awarded for the full length of time it will take a sister to complete her studies, mostly commonly 2-3 years.

Doctoral Level Scholarships

In 2020, ASEC launched doctoral level scholarships under its Scholarship Program to support women religious in Africa pursuing doctoral degrees at ASEC partner institutions in Kenya. The doctoral scholarship supports sisters through their education and research requirements for a doctoral degree, as well as engages them in professional and learning opportunities. To date, four women religious have participated in this level of the program.

Sr. Janet Christine Kiden of the Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (MSBVM) was the first doctoral graduate, earning her PhD in Educational Administration and Planning from CUEA in October 2021.

Sr. Esther Wambui Gitee of the Assumption Sisters of Nairobi (ASN) is pursuing a PhD in Financial Management at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). In addition to her current studies, Sr. Esther teaches business studies and Catholic religious education classes at Maryhill Girls High School in Thika, Kenya; she also serves as their business coordinator. Further, she is an adjunct finance lecturer at CUEA.

Sr. Christine John O. Amaa of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (SHS) is studying for a PhD in Social Transformation at Tangaza University College's Institute for Social Transformation. Her research focus is sustainable livelihoods and coping strategies among rural men.

Sr. Georgette Sidbewindin Sawadogo of the Donum Dei Missionary Sisters (DDS) graduated from the HESA program in November of 2022 with a Master of Science in Social Transformation. Currently enrolled as ASEC's fourth doctoral level scholarship student, she is pursuing a PhD in Social Entrepreneurship at Tangaza University College. In addition, Sr. Georgette serves as director of her mission at Sr. Therese Vocational Training Centre and Roussel House in Nairobi, Kenya.

Expansion to Cameroon

In 2023, ASEC expanded the Scholarship Program to its seventh country, Cameroon. An ASEC sponsored survey of congregational leaders in 2020 revealed that the lowest percentage of sisters with post-secondary education reside in Cameroon. ASEC hopes to improve this statistic by increasing sisters' readiness to enter higher education through scholarships that support sisters at the secondary/form-level. Recruitment to the Scholarship Program in Cameroon is ongoing.

ASEC scholarship recipients, clockwise from the top: Sr. Constantine Gema, FSMC, at graduation, Sr. Christine Amaa, SHS, and Sr. Georgette Sawadogo, DDS serving in ministries.



Mission Advancement

2022-2023 Year in Review



Clockwise from top left:
Sr. Kathryn Clauss, IHM, presents at ASEC's Night of Storytelling, Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia, LSMIG, networks at ACCU Annual Meeting, ASEC staff visits the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

ASEC Mission Advancement & Development

By Sr. Nancy Kamau, LSOSF, ASEC Development Director

The year 2023 began with great enthusiasm as we all strived to go back to “normal” after enduring the effects of a global pandemic. However, new challenges emerged as we faced the uncertainties of war and high inflation that affected the global economy. Looking back, we see how, building on the trend of resilience through experiences, the sisters in Africa continued to use their training and innovation to offer services in their societies amidst these emerging challenges. It is that resilience and determination that motivates us at ASEC to work even harder to provide the sisters in Africa with opportunities for training and education that will enable them to gain the skills they most need to provide quality services in their societies.

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, ASEC made great strides towards mission advancement. As part of our Path to Sustainability Initiative, efforts were made to share our story to new and varied audiences. ASEC hosted five networking events with attendees from across the country. In addition, ASEC presented at the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities' (ACCU) Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., U.S. We also held our first “Night of Storytelling” event, where four African Catholic sisters were able to share their

compelling stories with many individuals that had never before heard about the amazing work Catholic sisters are doing for the people of Africa.

ASEC will celebrate its 25th Anniversary in 2024. This offers us an opportunity for reflection on our history in light of our mission and vision, **as we look back at the beginnings, the accomplishments, the challenges, and the resilience of ASEC's programs and celebrate this milestone.** It is a great time to recognize ASEC's corporate members, tell our story, and celebrate our achievements over the last 25 years.

Thank you for your generosity and support for ASEC's mission. YOU are a part of ASEC! Because of you, ASEC is able to continue to serve sisters in Africa, enhancing their ministries and allowing them to serve with confidence.

For more information, please visit our website at **ASEC-SLDI.org** and find us on social media.



Thank you to all of our amazing supporters!

In August 2023, ASEC gratefully participated in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) in Dallas, TX, U.S.



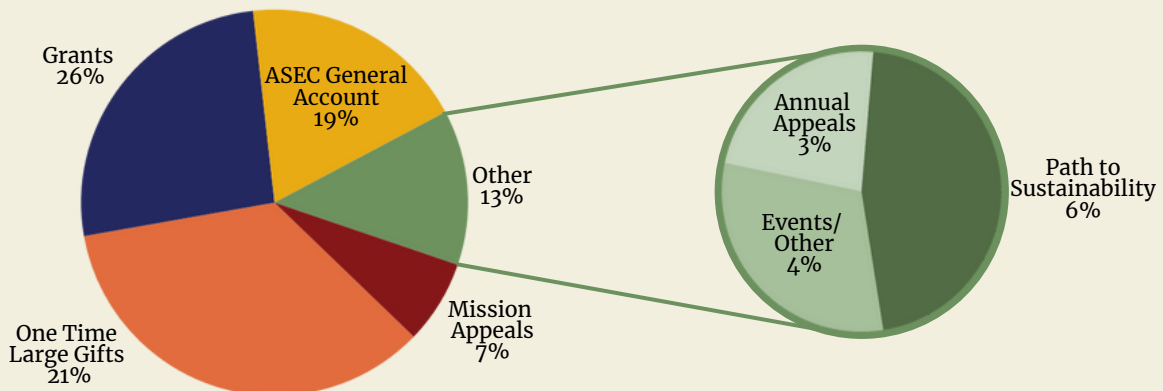
Director of Development, Sr. Nancy Kamau, LSOSE, and ASEC Executive Director, Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia, LSMIG, share the mission of ASEC at LCWR.



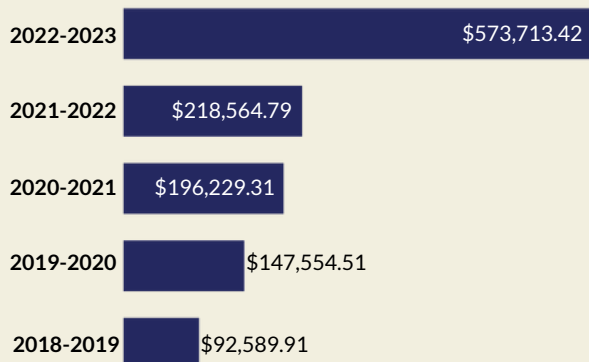
This year's LCWR theme was Drawn by Sacred Mystery: A Journey into Hope. ASEC networked with sisters from across the U.S.

Mission Advancement Efforts Analysis

Mission Advancement Efforts 2022-2023



Annual Total Contributions



Path to Sustainability Events



Because of YOU, our annual contributions have continued to increase gradually, enabling us to support many more sisters in Africa with the training they need to offer quality services. Thank you for your generous support!

Meet the

FOUNDING MOTHERS

of ASEC

Sr. Anne Munley, IHM, PhD

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Sr. Anne Munley, IHM, PhD's involvement in ASEC's founding began in the early 1990s in her position as President of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary congregation and United States Delegate to the International Union of Superiors General, Rome, Italy. Sr. Anne also served as ASEC's first Executive Director from 2006 to 2007. In the Fall of 2007, she was inaugurated as the 11th President of Marywood University, holding the position until she retired in 2016. Sr. Anne continued to serve on ASEC's Board of Directors until 2016 when she moved to San Antonio, TX and resumed work with religious congregations and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.



Sr. Kathryn Miller, SSJ, PhD

Sisters of Saint Joseph

In 1999, Sr. Kathryn Miller, SSJ, PhD, served as the Assistant to the President of Chestnut Hill College. In this capacity, she was integral to ASEC's founding, recognized as Coordinator of ASEC activities until 2006. Sr. Kathryn is still very much involved with ASEC and is currently an Emerita Charter Member of ASEC's Board of Directors.

Sr. Marcia Sichol, SHCJ, PhD

Society of the Holy Child Jesus

In 1999, Sr. Marcia Sichol, SHCJ, PhD, then the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ) American Province Leader, was one of the founding members of ASEC. In 2005, working as a consultant to the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, she and Sr. Anne Munley, IHM, were instrumental in preparing the original SLDI grant proposal. She also served as ASEC's Interim Executive Director in 2017. Sr. Marcia is still actively involved with ASEC and is currently a Charter Member of the ASEC Board of Directors.



In 1999, seven women religious in the United States dreamed of a way to meet the educational needs of Catholic sisters in Africa, these women have come to be known as ASEC's Founding Mothers. ASEC's Founding Mothers are the first to tell you that they did not embark on this journey alone. From the beginning, they collaborated with the institutions they represented, other key stakeholders, and most importantly the sisters in Africa. Although there are many others who have made ASEC what it is today, the seven Founding Mothers are recognized below for their inspiring contributions at ASEC's inception.



Sr. Carol Jean Vale, SSJ, PhD

Chestnut Hill College

In 1999, Sr. Carol Jean Vale, SSJ, PhD, was in her second term as President of Chestnut Hill College, a position she continued to hold for 30 years, retiring in 2022. Sr. Carol was the founding Chair of ASEC, a position she held for over ten years and in more recent years served as Vice Chair and Chair of ASEC's Board of Directors. Sr. Carol has continued her service to ASEC as a member of the Sustainability Committee.

Sr. Mary Reap, IHM, PhD

Marywood University

Sr. Mary Reap, IHM, PhD, became involved in ASEC's founding in 1999 as President of Marywood University, where she served from 1988 to 2007. Prior to her tenure as President, she taught at elementary, secondary, and college levels. From 2009 to 2017 she served as President of Our Lady of the Elms College in Chicopee, MA.



Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF

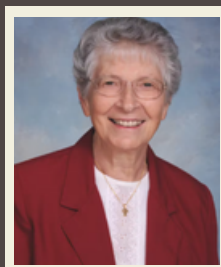
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF, became involved with ASEC's founding in 1999 as the Congregational Minister for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. After completing her time as Congregational Minister, she served for eight years as Director of Mission and Advocacy for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. In 2011, Sr. Marie began working for the Franciscan Action Network as Director of Advocacy and later Associate Director. As a longtime advocate for peace and social justice, she continues to be an active supporter of ASEC's mission today.

Sr. Anita Cattafesta, OSF

Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Sr. Anita Cattafesta, OSF, became involved with ASEC's founding in 1999 as the Director of Sponsorship for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia (OSF). Sr. Anita also served in various positions of administration at Neumann University for 14 years. Sr. Anita had particular interest in serving African Catholic sisters and spent five years in Kabwe, Zambia teaching at St. Augustine's Major Seminary. Sr. Anita passed away on October 6, 2022 at the age of 91.



ASEC Board of Directors

CORPORATE MEMBERS:

William W. Latimer, PhD, MPH
Sr. Maureen Erdlen, SSJ, MSS, MLSP, MBA
Sr. Mary Persico, IHM, EdD
Sr. Kathryn Clauss, IHM, PhD
(Vice Chair)
Chris Domes, EdD
Sr. Theresa Marie Firenze, OSF, MS
Jim Cawley, JD
Sr. Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ

DIRECTORS:

Sr. Barbara Spears, SNJM
(Board Chair)
Mary L. Gautier, PhD
(Board Secretary)
Sr. Kathleen Lunsmann, IHM, MPA, CFRE
(Board Treasurer)
Brigid Blake, MA, LLD
Susan E. Gibbs
Sr. Florence Hee, OSF, PhD
Sara P. Marks, MA
Donald R. McCrabb, DMin
Sr. Regina M. O'Neill, OSF, JD
Jacqueline C. Reich, PhD
Kevin Reynolds, EdD
Sr. Rosalia Sakatombo, SHS
Sr. Marcia Sichol, SHCJ, PhD
Sr. Regina Zoot, MSN, BSN, RN, SHCJ



The ASEC Board of Directors held a retreat to consider and discuss ASEC's next Strategic Plan in Fogelsville, PA, U.S., August 2023.

EMERITA DIRECTOR:

Sr. Kathryn Miller, SSJ, PhD

ASEC REPRESENTATIVE:

Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia, LSMIG, PhD

ASEC ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

Edward Dadez, PhD
(Representative to the Board of Directors)
Sr. Ellen Marvel, CSR
(Representative to the Board of Directors)
Sr. Victoria Trinita Anyanwu, SC
Sr. Joan Mary Hartigan, CSJ
Sr. Linda Haydock, SNJM
Sr. LaDonna Manternach, BVM
Sr. Michele Bisailon, DHS
Robert L. Manuel, PhD

ASEC ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS:

Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia, LSMIG, PhD
Sr. Mary Persico, IHM, EdD
Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, PhD
Angelique Mutombo, MA
Sr. Patricia Bombard, BVM, DMin
Susanne Dumbleton, PhD
Diane Keller, PhD, LSW
Sr. Lisa Olivieri, SSJ, PhD
Sr. Elaine Martin, OSF, PhD
Sr. Ellen Marvel, CSR
Yerodin Lucas, PhD
James Sullivan, MArch, RA, AIA
April Fowlkes, MS
E. Jay Kolick, MS, MBA, FAC, CCJP
Edward Dadez, PhD

ASEC Board of Directors meet during April of 2023. Some members participated via Zoom.



Thank You To Our Amazing Supporters

Our gratitude goes out to you, our generous partners, donors, and friends. What we do is not possible without you. Every single dollar you've given makes such a big difference.

You are always in our thoughts and prayers.

Donors Between 9/1/2022 and 8/31/2023

Adrienne Castellon
Alan & Elizabeth Vincelette
Alexia Kelley
Amy Fedele
Andrea V Grimes
Angelique Mutombo
Ann E Sweeney
Anne Waweru
Antoine Reid
Barbara & Don McCrabb
Barbara Spears
Benedictine Sisters of Mount Scholastica, Archinon
Betsy Hartshorn
Billy Martinez
Brigid Blake & Robert Ryan
Carmelite Sisters of Baltimore
Carol & James Fitzgerald
Catherine Walker
Cheryl Spager
Chris Lowney
Congregation of the Humility of Mary
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Corpus Christi Monastery
Dante F & Adela G Hinojosa
Daughters of the Holy Spirit
Debbie Adams
Denise Ferro
Dennis & Pamela Lucey
Diane Keller
Dominican Sisters of Peace, Inc.
Elaine & Vincent Fedele
Elaine Packhem
Elliot & Patricia Sklar
Emily Roche
Evelyn Havelka
Fitzgerald Brothers Foundation, Inc
Franciscan Sisters of Chicago
Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Genevieve Torres
Geoffrey Elterich
Guy O'Connell
Hon. James J. Fitzgerald, III, RET
Jacqueline C Reich, PhD
James & Maria Glenn
James Sullivan
Jane Farr
John & Elizabeth Stapleton
John & Dorris McQuade
John & Theresa Rollins
John Kelly
Jonathon Wiggins
Kathleen Curran
Kathryn Kanis & Constance Murphy
Kathryn Windels
Kevin Reynolds
Lauren Mills
Mark & Colleen Dolaghan
Mary Adamson
Mary L Gautier

Mary & Daniel Roche
Matthew Kennedy
Michael Briglia
Michael F Dunleavy
Mount St. Francis- Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque
Nancy Kamau, LSOSF
Nancy Wiedemer
Nicole Blackman
Notre Dame Sisters
Patricia Laws-Locicero
Paul & Sandra Montrone
Paul Harvey
Presentation Sisters of Aberdeen
Ricardo Perry
Richard MacGregor & Dr. Mary Jo Gunning MacGregor
Robert & Elizabeth Olson
Robert & Vicky Pauly
Robin Anne Casalta
Rochelle & Jimmy Rasberry
Sara Marks
Sean D'Antonio
Sharon Kestler
Sinsinawa Dominicans
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, SCL
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, SCN
Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross
Sisters of Providence Inc.
Sisters of St. Benedict
Sisters of St. Casimir
Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin, Ohio
Sisters of St. Joseph - Villa Resident, Fourtown
Sisters of St. Joseph in California
Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange
Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament
Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth
Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood
Sisters of the Presentation
Sneh Akruvala
Sr. Amelia Stenger
Sr. Barbara Spears, SNJM
Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia, LSMIG
Sr. Florence Hee, OSF
Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF
Sr. Kathleen Burns, IHM
Sr. Kathryn Clauss, IHM
Sr. Kathryn Miller, SSJ
Sr. Linda Haydock, SNJM
Sr. Lisa Olivieri, SSJ
Sr. Regina McCalla, SSJ
Sr. Rita Funning, CSFN
St. Joseph's Fem Ursuline Academy Inc.
St. Mary's Institute of O'Fallon
St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Vietnamese Congregation
Susan Gibbs
Susanne Dumbleton
The Ancilla Domini Sisters
The Haverford Trust Company - Mary Hanna
Thomas Gaunt
Timothy Fox

Special Gratitude

ASEC Corporate Members

Chestnut Hill College & the Sisters of St. Joseph, SSJ, Philadelphia, PA
Marywood University & the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, IHM, Scranton, PA
Neumann University & the Sisters of St. Francis, OSF, Philadelphia, PA
Rosemont College & the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, SHCJ, Rosemont, PA

ASEC Associate Members

DePaul University, Chicago, IL
Sisters of the Holy Redeemer, CSR, Meadowbrook, PA
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, CSJ, Albany, NY
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, SC, Mt. St. Joseph, OH
St. Leo University, Saint Leo, FL
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Quebec, Canada
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, BVM, Dubuque, IA
Daughters of the Holy Spirit, DHS (US Province), Putnam, CT

Special Thanks

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Inc., Agoura Hills, CA
Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, FSC, Lemont, IL
Sisters of St. Casimir, SSC, Chicago, IL
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, BVM, Dubuque, IA
National Catholic Community Foundation, NCCF
National Philanthropic Trust
KOCH Foundation Inc.
Archdiocese of New York, NY
Archdiocese of Philadelphia, PA
Archdiocese of Boston, MA
Archdiocese of Newark, NJ
Diocese of Scranton, PA
Diocese of Hamilton, CAN
Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, ME
Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, CARA, Washington, D.C.
ASEC Board Members
ASEC Partners in Africa



Want your name listed here?

Become a Friend of ASEC by making a donation today at: asec-sldi.org/donate

News & Updates

Thank You For Your Service

You have given so much of yourself to ASEC during your time of service. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you:

- Pius Ojara, PhD, Board of Directors
- Sr. Carroll Juliano, SHCJ, MS, Corporate Member, Board of Directors
- Sr. Marge Kloos, SC, Associate Member
- Sr. Gertrude Lanouette, DHS, Associate Member
- Sr. Esther Jeruto Koros, OSF, Programs Coordinator, Kenya
- Monica Simon, Web Content Manager, United States



Thank You to All Who Made A Night of Storytelling a Success!

On April 26, 2023, ASEC hosted its inaugural fundraiser “A Night of Storytelling” at Marywood University. Guests were inspired and invigorated by the stories of four African Catholic sisters, who shared their experiences in five-minute personal narratives.

Welcome to the Team

ASEC is thrilled to welcome new members to the team this year:

- Sr. Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ, Corporate Member
- Susan E. Gibbs, Board of Directors
- Donald R. McCrabb, DMin, Board of Directors
- Kevin Reynolds, EdD, Board of Directors
- Sr. Rosalia Sakatambo, SHS, Board of Directors
- Sr. Victoria Trinita Anyanwu, SC, Associate Member
- Sr. Michele Bisaillon, DHS, Associate Member
- Jim Tidback, Director, Mission Advancement, United States
- Sr. Suzzana Livinus Didam, SSL, Programs Coordinator, Nigeria
- Sr. Jeniffer Wangari Wanjiku, DOJGS, Programs Coordinator, Kenya



Sr. Sonia Azafack, SDBI, in Cameroon collects wood with local children for the elderly in honor of the Lenten Season.



Sr. Idda Gabriel Uiss, HSS, (6/2/2021) first ASEC supported sister to earn a bachelor's degree.

In Loving Memory of Sr. Idda Gabriel Uiss, HSS

ASEC received notification that the first ASEC supported sister to earn a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from Chestnut Hill College (2009-2013) passed away on June 2, 2021 from complications related to COVID-19.

After obtaining her degree, Sr. Idda Gabriel Uiss, HSS, provided many years of service at secondary schools in Tanzania, including the Bigwa Secondary School. May she rest in eternal peace.



ASEC PARTNERS IN AFRICA AND USA

CONRAD N.



FOUNDATION



The Catholic University of Malawi
Association of Women in Religious Institutes
of Malawi (AWRIM)

DMI-St. Eugene University
Monze School of Nursing and Midwifery
Zambia Association of Sisterhoods (ZAS)
Zambia Catholic University

Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (AOSK)
Chemchemi Ya Uzima College
Tangaza University College
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa
(CUEA)

Catholic University of South Sudan
Religious Superiors Association of South
Sudan (RSASS)

Catholic University of Health and Allied
Sciences (CUHAS)
Jordan University College (JUCO)
Mwenge Catholic University
Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT)
Tanzania Catholic Association of Sisters
(TCAS)

Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU)
St. Francis Nsambya Hospital Training School
Uganda Martyrs University
University of Kisubi (UniK)

Leadership Conference of Consecrated Life in
Lesotho (LCCLL)
National University of Lesotho

Catholic University Institute of Buea (CUIB)
Catholic University of Cameroon Bamenda
Conference of English-Speaking Religious
(CESR)

Catholic University of Ghana
Conference of Major Superiors of the
Religious in Ghana (CMSR-G)
Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training
College Berekum

Nigeria Conference of Women Religious
(NCWR)
Veritas University Abuja

Associate Member Charter Member Research

DePaul University, Chicago, IL
Saint Leo University, Saint Leo, FL
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Dubuque, IA
Sisters of Sr. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany, NY
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary,
US/Ontario Province
Sisters of the Redeemer, Meadowbrook, PA
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, SC, Mt. St.
Joseph, OH
Daughters of the Holy Spirit, DHS (US
Province), Putnam, CT

Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, PA
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia, PA
Marywood University, Scranton, PA
Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of
Mary, Scranton, PA
Neumann University, Aston, PA
Sisters of Saint Francis of Philadelphia, Aston,
PA
Rosemont College, Rosemont, PA
The Society of the Holy Child Jesus,
Rosemont, PA

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
(CARA), Georgetown University,
Washington, DC

Why Donate to ASEC?



ASEC is an organization with a proven capacity to strengthen, through education and empowerment, the unique potential of women religious in Africa to live in fulfillment of Christ's mission.

Education enables sisters to

effectively promote human development, spiritual growth, and transformation of the lives of the people they joyfully serve in accordance with the charisms of their institutes and the needs of their ministries.



The impact of your donation:

\$3 provides **one day** of education
for a Catholic sister
\$20 = **one week** of education
\$85 = **one month** of education
\$250 = **three months** of education
\$500 = **six months** of education
\$1,000 = **one year** of education

Donations support ASEC's Scholarship Program, which bridges the gap to higher education for African sisters in Cameroon, Kenya, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia by providing scholarships to complete secondary school or receive higher education credentials relevant to their ministries.

Will you become a *Ray of Hope* and help educate women who are serving the poor communities across Africa?

We are committed to alleviating poverty in Africa through the education of Catholic sisters... sisters who are already working where help is needed most. Will you join us? Donate today and make a big difference for years to come. Your impact is a great blessing!

Make an online donation through our secure system by visiting:

asec-sldi.org/donate



Or, mail checks made payable to:
African Sisters Education Collaborative
2300 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA 18509

