



ASEC-SLDI Educational Insights

Together we are making a difference in the lives of women religious in Africa!



Eleven Sisters awarded a two-year scholarship to study at Bigwa Secondary School.

Archives Workshop Benefits 55 Women Religious in Africa

As the numbers of missionaries who have served Africa in the last century continue to dwindle, more and more African sisters are taking on responsibilities to fill the shoes of the missionaries who were well qualified to administer schools, hospitals, social welfare homes, and pastoral care institutions before them.

Congregations started by these missionaries are reaching silver, golden and platinum jubilees and archiving their histories is becoming increasingly important. In May of 2012, ASEC sponsored an Archives Workshop in Kenya. The workshop was delivered by certified archivists, Sister Mary Maher and Sister Mary Sebarcki. It was attended by 55 participants from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia.

Thank you and Welcome to ASEC Board of Directors

The ASEC board sends best wishes to Sister Nora Sweeney, SHCJ, who has served so dedicatedly on ASEC's board for six years. Sr. Nora has moved on to serve in Cape Coast, Ghana. The ASEC Board welcomes Sister Mary Ann Knight, SHCJ, who takes the place of Sr. Nora on the Board. Sr. Mary Ann brings a wealth of skills after serving for years in Africa.

Welcome to New ASEC Staff

ASEC is growing and expanding initiatives in order to meet the educational needs of women religious in Africa. Join me in welcoming Christina McDonald, HESA Program Coordinator. Christina joined ASEC in August, 2012. She brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in working with international organizations. We also welcome Sister Maureen Murashya, SHS. Sr. Maureen is the Coordinator of the SLDI Program in Zambia. She is a beneficiary of the SLDI program, and she is making full use of the skills she has gained through that program.



Top image: Calf from a cow bought with the \$1,000 donated by a student. There are four cows now, making a difference for Bigwa School students' diet.

Bottom image: With certificates in hand, sisters rejoice after their successful graduation, reaching a meaningful milestone in life.



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

The African Sisters Education Collaborative continues to provide increased access to education for women religious in Africa.

As we come close to the end of 2012, my heart is filled with gratitude for significant milestones attained this year. We have journeyed together to achieve the ASEC mission. Thank you for your passion, time, gifts and services that you have donated to ASEC this year. Your help has created educational opportunities for women religious in sub-Saharan Africa, support of the church in Africa, and the people these women so willingly serve.

I am grateful to the very dedicated ASEC staff in the USA and Africa, who tirelessly gives of their time without counting the cost. I would like to share with you some of the accomplishments and milestones we attained together.

Thank you!
ASEC, Executive Director

Empowerment and Change: SLDI
254 Women Religious



September 15, 2012, 38 sisters graduated in Financial Management and Administrative Leadership Cape Coast, Ghana

Through the auspices of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) Program continues to offer the much needed skills and competencies to women religious in Africa. Catholic sisters in Africa continue to dedicate their lives to serve and improve the course of the lives of their people by helping where the needs are greatest and by giving visible witness to the most marginalized. In the face of desperate needs in Africa, sisters continue to emerge as a solid source of hope for the future of the church and society. Sister beneficiaries of the SLDI program continue to engage in programs that alleviate the plight of their people, providing human, social, and pastoral services at schools, hospitals, and dispensaries in rural outreach programs and healthcare facilities, and in programs for HIV/AIDS patients, unwed mothers, youth, street children, and orphans.



August 25, 2012 in Jos, Nigeria, the jubilation of 45 sisters graduated after successfully completing a three-year SLDI program.

A total of 254 women religious from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia successfully completed a three-year SLDI program and graduated after gaining competencies in leadership, human resource management, financial management, and basic technology skills. These women are actively engaged in bringing change to their ministries. It was all jubilation at the graduation ceremonies in each of these countries.

We are grateful to the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for their support. The Foundation’s support enables these women to make a difference in the lives of millions of people in Africa. The SLDI alumnae have raised over \$2.6 million to support their ministries. SLDI alumnae and their mentees serve a population of 1,436,422. Many incredible success stories are shared by the sisters and their beneficiaries.

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation SLDI
Site-Visit to Kenya

The miracle of “Feeding the Multitude” at Kibagare Slum, Nairobi, Kenya. In July-August, 2012 a delegation from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation visited with the SLDI alumnae in Nairobi, Kenya. The purpose of the visit was to assess and witnesses the impact of the SLDI program initiated by Mr. Steven M. Hilton to benefit the sisters in Africa.

The delegation witnessed first-hand the work that the SLDI graduates have done in their communities, as well as among the people they serve. The team was led by Mr. Steven M. Hilton,



Children hold conversations as they enjoy a hot meal at Saint Martins, Kibagare.

President & CEO, Edmund J. Cain, Vice President, Shaheen Kassim-Lakha, Director, International Programs, and Brad Myers, Program Officer. Also present were Sr. Anne Munley, IHM, President of Marywood University and ASEC, Vice Chair and Sister Jane Wakahiu, LSOSE, ASEC Executive Director. The team visited more than 10 different projects run by the sisters among the poor people of Kenya.

Among the many very touching stories, I will share with you about our visit to the Kibagare slums where the Assumption Sisters of Nairobi run a feeding center for underserved children. The Kibagare slum is situated at the western part of the city of Nairobi and is home to over 10,000 people. This slum, like many others across the city, developed as a source of temporary shelter for poorly paid families, unwed mothers, the widowed, and those with other social and economic problems.

The feeding program was started in 1980. Today Kibagare is a place where over 1,500 children trek from within a 5 to 10 kilometer radius to get a hot meal. The Center comprises of a nursery school that caters to children from the age of 4, a primary school that currently holds 625 pupils and an all-girls secondary school with 250 students. Sister Catherine K. Ndereba, a beneficiary of the SLDI Administration Track, took her studies seriously



Top image: Smiles radiate in the face of the children at Saint Martins, Kibagare Center despite the poverty they experience.

Middle image: The CNHF donated food to the Street Children at Saint Francis Rehabilitation Center, Kasarani, Nairobi. It was all joy for these boys.

Bottom image: The Hilton Delegation, and with the Executive Committee of the Association of Consecrated Women in East and Central Africa (ACWECA) representing nine sub-Saharan Countries.

and turned her learning into a mentorship that benefited three of her community members who have gone on to replicate the learning in different places. Phenomenal growth was evident in the motivation among the staff at Kibagare, with so little they are giving new life to these children. Moreover, Catherine went full throttle in project management, wrote proposals to numerous potential partners, and the response resulted in partnerships with organizations such as the Christian Fund for Children – Africa (CFCA), Good News Committee Holland, and I&M bank. She also forged partnerships with well-to-do schools in Nairobi like the Strathmore School, Saint Mary’s School, and the Saint Nicholas and Waridi nursery school. The advocacy and networking skills that Sister Catherine learned enabled her to lobby the parents and guardians of the children to contribute directly to the education of their children by contributing at least Ksh. 1,600 (\$20) for each child and physically turning up to volunteer at the school. These efforts have gone a long way in promoting the growth and development of the Center and gradually the sisters have built good will across the society. The delegation also held meetings with stakeholders and partners including the Association of Sisterhood of Kenya (AOSK); the Association of

Consecrated Women in East and Central Africa (ACWECA); Deans at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and Tangaza College, respectively. They also met with the instructors who have been teaching in the SLDI program. Visit asecc-sldi.org/home/sldi/ for more information.

New Partnerships

ASEC recognizes the power of working together to provide the much needed skills to the Sisters. As a result, ASEC has initiated partnerships. On August 1, 2012 ASEC’s Marywood University entered into a partnership with the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). Similar partnerships are being pursued between Chestnut Hill College and the Catholic University College of Ghana (CUCG). Sr. Anne Munley, IHM, Ph.D. together with Reverend Dr. Pius Rutechura, Vice Chancellor of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), signed the Memorandum of Understanding between Marywood University and CUEA, on August 1, 2012.

Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)

ASEC has inaugurated a new initiative – the Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA) to continue providing relevant credentials for SLDI alumnae who show promise of leadership. HESA offers access to a high quality, four-year bachelor’s degree university program for Catholic sisters in the countries where ASEC is active.

Through innovative design and institutional partnership, HESA overcomes the limitations of geography, cost, and impacted African universities. HESA offers sisters two years of undergraduate study via distance learning with a U.S. institution, which prepares sisters with skills with which to undertake studies in person at a partner African University; partnership guarantees sisters’ a spot at the African university, while completion of their degrees there ensures they meet professional requirements in their home countries so that sisters can best serve their communities and ministries. The HESA program is timely; governments in Africa are requiring individuals working in educational, healthcare and social services to have relevant credentials.

There are several benefits of such partnerships. Through this partnership, the Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA) program is becoming a reality for sisters to acquire the dream of higher education. The HESA program offers the unique opportunity to sisters that include:

- Access to international faculty, the best teaching materials, and the most up-to-date library resources;
- A global experience and interaction with students from abroad;
- Opportunity to matriculate at a university for sisters who otherwise would not have the chance;
- Technological expertise by sharpening software skills and computer use; and,
- Preparation to meet professional qualifications in their home countries.

Scholarship Program for Women Religious

According to the Tanzania Catholic Association of Sisters (TCAS) there are 11,000 women religious serving in that country. Over 4,000 entered religious congregations having completed primary education and then spent time in initial formation and in ministry before starting secondary education. Specific recommendations have been made to meet the needs of the sisters. ASEC is committed to supporting the Bigwa Sisters Secondary School in Tanzania in order to help provide secondary education for several hundred sisters. ASEC has initiated a scholarship program to support the education of these sisters. In 2012 ASEC awarded eleven, two-year scholarships for sisters to acquire a high school diploma. One of the sister-students who is 49 years old said, “it has been my dream to gain education ... my desire is becoming a reality. I want to be a nurse to bring healing to the people in the remote regions.” When these sisters complete their secondary studies they will be eligible for higher education.

Service Learning Program

ASEC believes in providing global experience to students. Between May- June, 2012 thirteen students and three faculty chaperones spent two weeks at the Bigwa Secondary school in Morogoro, Tanzania tutoring students in English and visiting an orphanage. Upon their return, the students reported a life changing experience that was academically, professionally, and personally enriching. One student said, “We were able to grow in understanding diverse cultures and communities.” It was an opportunity to learn about social issues and their root causes and to improve on their ability to handle ambiguity and be open to change, as well as becoming more flexible. This was true when they did not have water for two days; they adjusted accordingly to life situations.

Sister Margaret Gannon, IHM, PhD, the lead chaperone, expressed gratitude for all the financial support received from congregations, colleges, and universities. Upon their return to the USA students took action to educate their colleagues. One of the students donated \$1,000 to purchase a cow so that the students at Bigwa School can benefit. The headmistress and students at the Bigwa School continue to express gratitude for the support provided to them through tutoring and for the gift of cows. Students have plenty of milk.

The provision of water has been a great challenge at the Bigwa Secondary School. Through the support of the GHR foundation, a borehole well was drilled in March, 2012. Now there is plenty of water to serve the needs of the students and community. A fish pond has been erected; fish raised here will be used to improve the students’ diet. Thank you to our funders and partners. Support of the GHR Foundation helped us to make a difference – a science laboratory with three well equipped labs, a full-time teacher, Mr. Nevil Kasivu, a borehole, textbooks and a tutoring program to support students learn English, have all been accomplished to support the students at the Bigwa School.



The first HESA cohort of 18 sisters gather at Chemi Chemi ya Uzima, Nairobi, November-December, 2012 for orientation.

Standing from left: Angelina Kathike, Rebecca Makungu, Lydia Apili, Susan Nduta, Regina Mwamba, Delfina Luma, Annett Namara, Lilian Ogutu, Adeodata Ahimbisibwe, Maryrose Koech, Margaret Wangeci. Sitting from left: Marie Therese, Elizabeth Ndulu, Petronila Kyomugisha, Margaret Gannon, IHM (Faculty), Catherine Ndereba, Anisia Kitakka and Jane Watenga.

Presenters were Sister Margaret Gannon, IHM, PhD, Marywood University Faculty and Sr. Kathleen Burns, IHM, taught online via WebEx.