

JULY 1, 2025 - JUNE 30, 2026
PHASE IV, YEAR 2

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SISTERS IN AFRICA

Progress Evaluation Report



PREPARED FOR: THE CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION
GRANTEE: MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY
GRANT NUMBER: 24490 (PHASE III) & 31498 (PHASE IV)
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Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the Monitoring & Evaluation Unit within the African Sisters Education Collaborative at Marywood University.

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On the Cover: HESA alum, Sr. Magdalena Petro Leo, LSOSF, with children at the Mama Kevina Center in the Archdiocese of Arusha, Tanzania.

To request a full copy of any of ASEC's evaluation reports, please contact research@asec-sldi.org.

Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)

Program Evaluation Key Outcomes Phase IV, Year 2 (June 2026)



4 OBJECTIVES



Provide opportunities for Catholic sisters to **access & obtain post-secondary education**.



Increase sisters' **competencies & leadership capacities** in their fields to provide transformative service in ministry.



Assist HESA alumni to become lifelong learners, educators, & leaders able to make positive change in their communities.



Disseminate best practices, learnings, & stories of impact of ASEC & the HESA program.

KEY OUTCOME FIGURES

24

Partnerships Maintained

Yr 2 Renewals:

1 MOU

2 FORs

1990

Total HESA Graduates

52% with Honors:

343 First Class

404 Second Class

278 Other

127

Sisters Have Withdrawn

Top 3 Reasons:

1. Left Institute

2. Superior Request

3. Personal Issues

WORKSHOP SUCCESSES

Orientation Attendance Rate (N = 187)

99%

99% (n = 187) of students reported that Orientations in Year 2 met or exceeded their expectations.

Reflective Learning Attendance Rate (N = 567)

97%

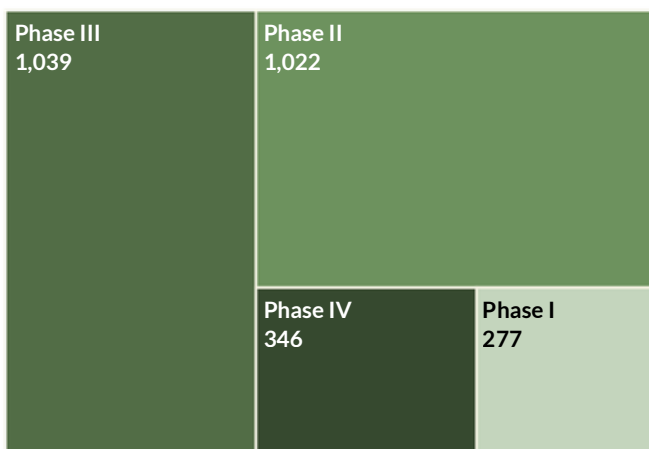
100% (n = 548) of students reported increased competency after completing RL Workshops in Year 2.

Alumni Workshop Attendance Rate (N = 1,616)

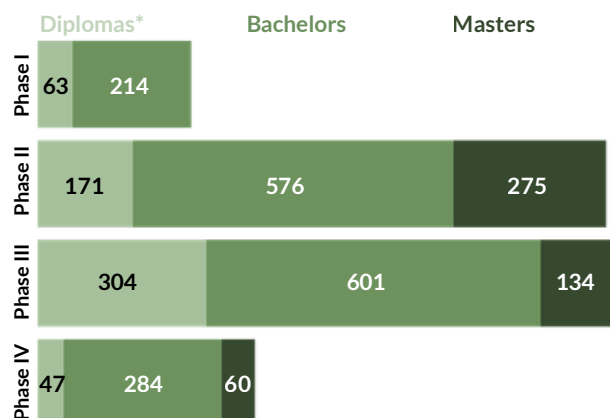
40%

97% (n = 658) of HESA alumni reported that Alumni Workshops in Year 2 met or exceeded their expectations.

In Phases I-IV, sisters have been served a total of **2,684** times by the HESA program—**2,498** unique sisters from **282** distinct congregations. Phase IV enrollment is ongoing.

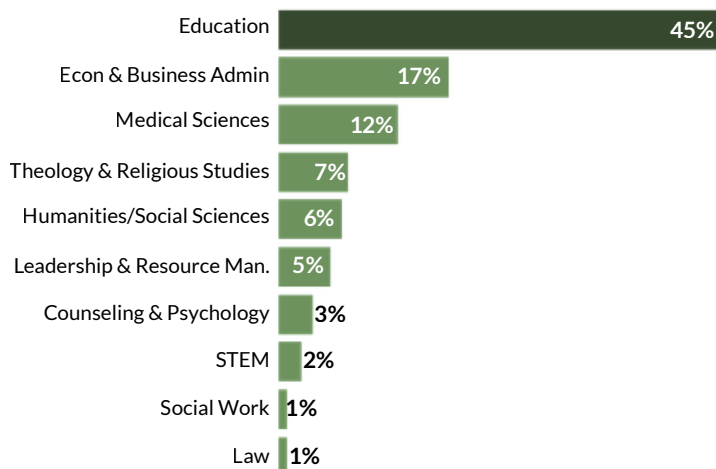


In Phases I-IV, the majority of HESA sisters study for **bachelor's degrees**. Master's degrees were added as a study option in Phase II.

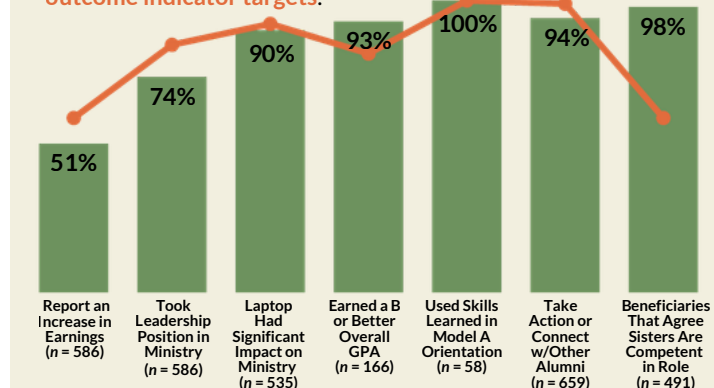


*Includes 1 certificate

In Phases I-IV, 45% (N = 2,684) of sisters are studying in the field of education.



HESA students & alumni made progress toward all **output/ outcome indicator targets**.



Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)

Phase IV, Year 2 Progress Executive Summary



Data collected in Phase IV, Year 2 indicate that **HESA made strong progress toward achieving its intended objectives**, with all output and outcome targets under Objective 1 met and continued progress across the remaining objectives. Although several targets under Objectives 2–4 were not fully achieved, many were intentionally established above baseline and historical performance levels. In most cases, actual results exceeded historical trends despite falling short of ambitious benchmarks. HESA continued to demonstrate meaningful progress in strengthening Catholic sisters' competencies, leadership capacities, alumni engagement, and dissemination of program impact. ASEC will continue to monitor all output and outcome indicators throughout Phase IV to assess long-term achievement of program objectives.

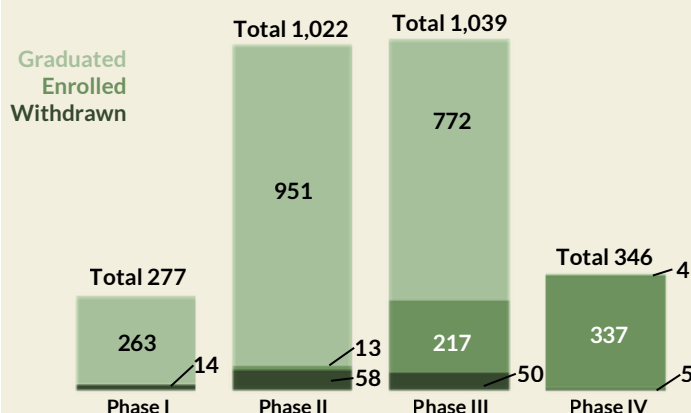
HESA Phase IV Objectives include:

1. To provide opportunities for Catholic sisters in 10 African countries to access and obtain post-secondary education credentials through onsite and online distance learning.
2. To increase sisters in Africa's competencies and leadership capacities in their respective fields of study to provide transformative services in their ministries that address local, regional, and global challenges.
3. To assist HESA alumni to become lifelong learners, educators, and leaders who are able to make positive change in their communities and among the people they serve.
4. To disseminate best practices, learnings, and stories of impact of ASEC and the HESA program.

Since its inception in 2013, HESA has served **2,498 unique Catholic sisters** from 282 religious institutes, representing 2,684 total enrollments across Phases I–IV. As of June 30, 2026, **567 sisters remained enrolled** at 24 partner higher education institutions, while **1,990 diplomas and degrees had been earned**. During Phase IV, Year 2, ASEC recruited **189 new sisters**, exceeding its recruitment target by 48 despite budget limitations. The program also maintained a 99% Phase IV retention rate and a 95% overall retention rate.

Phase IV, Year 2 was marked by several notable accomplishments. Orientation and Reflective Learning

Sisters have been served a total of 2,684 times in HESA Phases I–IV (2,498 unique sisters). In Phase IV, Year 2 alone, 189 sisters were enrolled. Phase IV enrollment is ongoing.



Phase I - IV Enrollments Levels of Study

469 Masters
1,630 Bachelors
584 Diplomas
1 Certificate

95%

Overall Retention Rate

95%

Phase III Retention Rate

99%

Phase IV Retention Rate

PHASE IV, YR 2 WORKSHOPS

14 Orientations held in 10 countries

12 Reflective Learning Workshops held in 10 countries

24 ASEC Alumni Workshops held in 10 countries



253

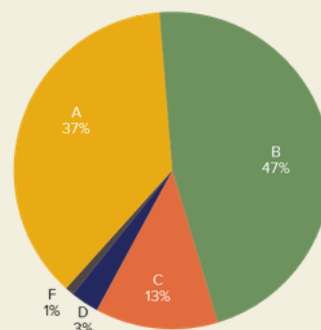
The number of distinct diplomas/degrees Phase I - IV sisters are earning.



88%

Phase I-IV Online to Onsite Transfer Success Rate

The majority of HESA Phase I-IV students averaged a **B letter grade** per semester (N = 6,818 semester grade averages of 1,780 students).



Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)

Phase IV, Year 2 Progress Executive Summary Cont'd



HESA IMPACT PHASE IV, YEAR 2 RESULTS

100%

felt supported and encouraged to continue the program by ASEC/HESA staff (n = 290).

99%

felt ASEC/HESA staff addressed concerns in a timely manner (n = 290).

99%

felt participating in HESA made them a better student (n = 290).

98%

felt more confident as a result of participating in the HESA program (n = 290).

98%

gained specific skills from participating in the HESA program that they otherwise would not have achieved (n = 290).

98%

received a diploma/degree that will help meet the needs of their community (n = 290).

98%

received a diploma/degree that is relevant to their ministry (n = 290).

*Includes data from Phase II, III, & IV graduates

Workshops achieved participation rates of 99% and 97%, respectively, while participant feedback demonstrated high levels of satisfaction and measurable gains in academic and online learning competencies. HESA also strengthened its alumni network through its inaugural Alumni Leaders Workshop, expanded dissemination efforts through outreach events and research presentations, and continued to see growing evidence of leadership, ministry, and institutional impact among alumni.

The program faced several challenges during Year 2. Demand for HESA continued to exceed available funding, preventing admission of many qualified applicants. Political instability in Lesotho, security concerns and public health precautions in Uganda, staffing transitions, and a temporary decline in website traffic following the March 2026 website migration required program adjustments. Despite these challenges, HESA remained responsive and adaptive, maintaining high-quality educational opportunities and positioning the program for continued success throughout the remainder of Phase IV.



**1,025+
academic
awards received**

84% of HESA students average an A or B letter grade



**3
conferences
attended**

Official Partners on Refugees in Our Common Home, Africa



**1,140+
research
contributions**

95 are related to Catholic sisters in Africa

Cultivating Opportunity in Zambia

Sr. Juunza Christabel Mwangani, RSHS

HESA Institution: Zambia Catholic University, Zambia

HESA Credentials: Masters in Business Administration

Graduated: July 2025

Sr. Juunza Christabel Mwangani, RSHS, has expanded her leadership in healthcare and community development, helping grow Zambia's Emerging Farmers Initiative into a model for sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurship, and youth empowerment. Her innovative leadership has created employment opportunities, strengthened food security, and earned international recognition, including the prestigious \$1 million Opus Prize.



ALUM SPOTLIGHT