

**JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025**  
**PHASE IV, YEAR 1**

# **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. Agnes Kachali, SHR, teacher at Kaseye Girls Secondary School, Chitipa District, Malawi with her pupils.

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# Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)

Program Evaluation Key Outcomes Phase IV, Year 1 (June 2025)



## 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 alumnae** 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 1 Renewals:

2 MOUs

2 FORs

**1729**

Total HESA Graduates

51% with Honors:

243 First Class

369 Second Class

66 Other

**110**

Sisters Have Withdrawn

Top 3 Reasons:

1. Left Congregation

2. Superior Request

3. Personal Issues

## WORKSHOP SUCCESSES

Orientation Attendance Rate (N = 155)

**100%**

100% (n = 1,039) of students reported that Orientations in Year 1 met or exceeded their expectations.

Reflective Learning Attendance Rate (N = 1,010)

**86%**

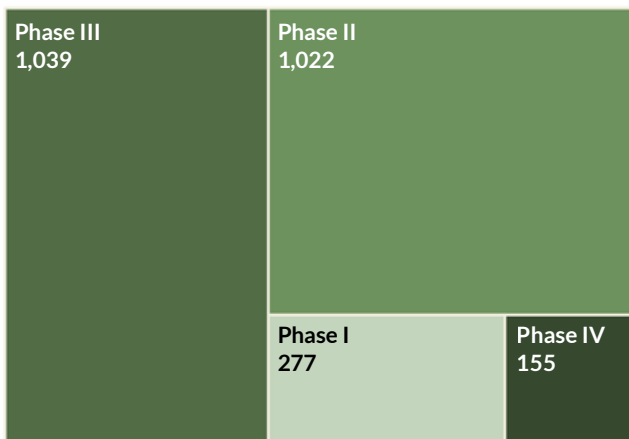
99% (n = 562) of students reported increased competency after completing RL Workshops in Year 1.

Alumnae Workshop Attendance Rate (N = 1,327)

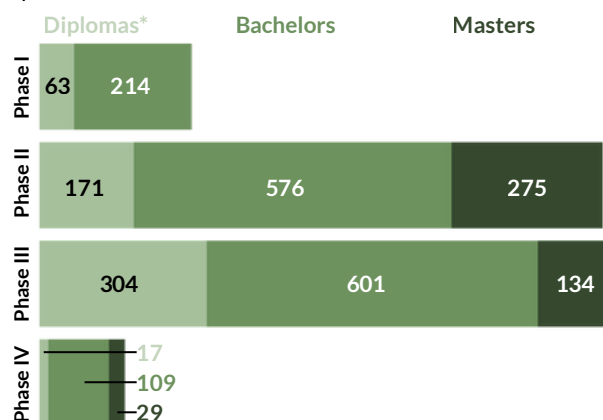
**48%**

98% (n = 630) of HESA alumnae reported that Alumnae Workshops in Year 1 met or exceeded their expectations.

In Phases I-IV, sisters have been served a total of **2,493** times by the HESA program—**2,333** unique sisters from **283** distinct congregations. Phase IV enrollment is ongoing.

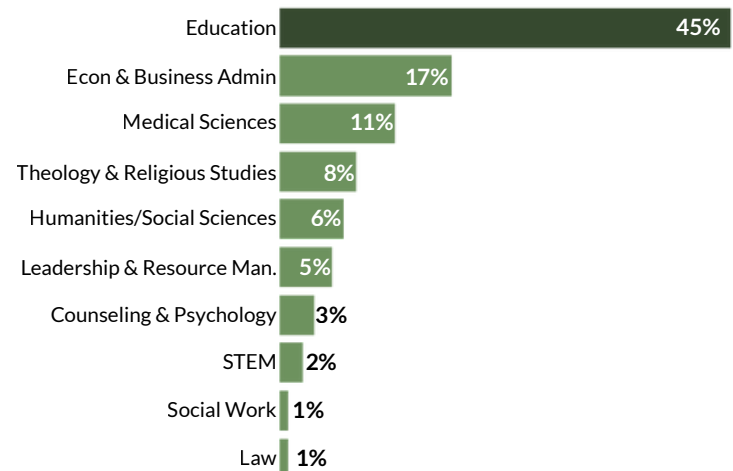


In Phases I-IV, the majority of HESA sisters study for **bachelor's degrees**. Master's degrees were added as a study option in Phase II.

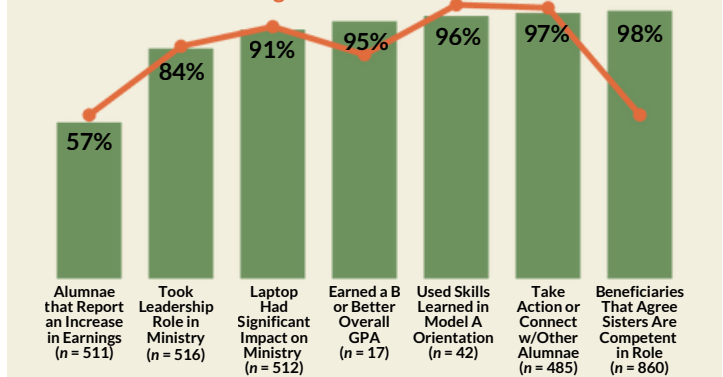


\*Includes 1 certificate

In Phases I-IV, 45% (N = 2,493) of sisters are studying in the field of education.



HESA students & alumnae met or exceeded nearly all **output/outcome indicator targets**.





# Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)

## Phase IV, Year 1 Progress Executive Summary



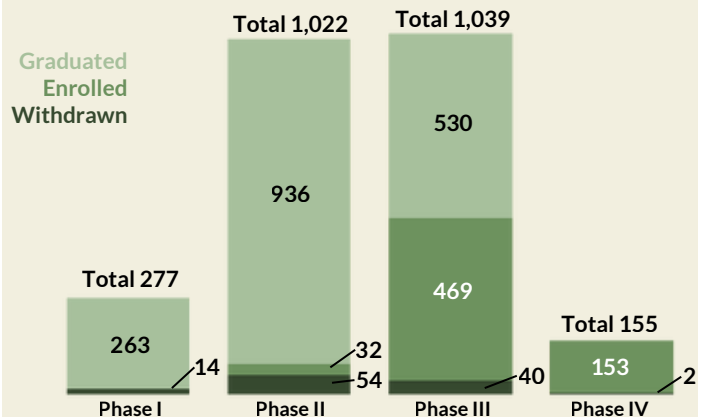
Data collected in Phase IV, Year 1 indicate that **HESA has met or surpassed the majority of output/outcome indicator targets (63%, N = 19)**. Many targets that were not met were set fairly high in relation to historical data trends and actual expectations. HESA has excelled in fulfilling output/outcome indicators under Objective 1, achieving all targets related to providing opportunities for Catholic sisters to access and obtain post-secondary education. The most challenges were seen in relation to long-term impact targets for HESA alumnae under Objective 2—Increase Sisters Competencies and Leadership Capacities. ASEC will continue to monitor all output/outcome indicators to assess ultimate fulfillment by the end of the phase.

### 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 alumnae 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.

HESA has grown to serve **2,333 unique sisters** (Phases I - IV, 2,493 enrollments) from 283 congregations in 10 African countries since its inception in 2012. In Phase IV, Year 1, a total of **155 sisters** were recruited and enrolled in the program. Of the 2,493 total enrollments in the program, **654 sisters are currently enrolled** online or onsite at 24 partner higher education institutions (HEIs) and **1,729 sisters have graduated**. In total, 110 sisters have withdrawn from the program, accounting for an overall (Phase I - IV) retention rate of 96%.

Sisters have been served a total of 2,493 times in HESA Phases I-IV (2,333 unique sisters). In Phase IV, Year 1 alone, 155 sisters were enrolled. Phase IV enrollment is ongoing.



### Phase I - IV Enrollments Levels of Study

438 Masters  
1,500 Bachelors  
554 Diplomas  
1 Certificate

**96%**  
Overall Retention Rate

**96%**  
Phase III Retention Rate

**99%**  
Phase IV Retention Rate

### PHASE IV, YR 1 WORKSHOPS

13 Orientations held in 8 countries

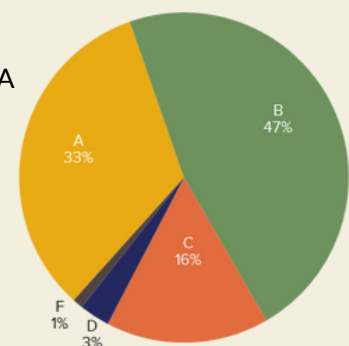
12 Reflective Learning Workshops held in 10 countries

22 ASEC Alumnae Workshops held in 10 countries

**237**  
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 = 5,672 semester grade averages of 1,583 students).



# Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)

## Phase IV, Year 1 Progress Executive Summary Cont'd



### HESA IMPACT PHASE IV, YEAR 1 RESULTS

**98%**

felt supported and encouraged to continue the program by ASEC/HESA staff (n = 312).

**98%**

felt ASEC/HESA staff addressed concerns in a timely manner (n = 312).

**98%**

feel participating in HESA made them a better student (n = 313).

**98%**

feel more confident as a result of participating in the HESA program (n = 313).

**98%**

gained specific skills from participating in the HESA program, that they otherwise would not have achieved (n = 313).

**96%**

received a diploma/degree that will help meet the needs of their community (n = 313).

**96%**

received a diploma/degree that is relevant to their ministry (n = 313).

\*Includes data from Phase II & III graduates

There were many successes during the Phase IV, Year 1 implementation period of HESA. One of the most significant successes included receiving 449 applications to the HESA program in Year 1 alone. Due to budget restrictions, ASEC was only able to accept and enroll 155 but this surpassed the planned recruitment goal by 13 sisters. ASEC received in-kind tuition donations to support sisters' studies from partner HEIs as part of its path to sustainability and silver jubilee fundraising efforts, which helped increase admission totals by six sisters. Phase IV, Year 1 was also a historic year for HESA in terms of the number of graduates completing their studies. Phase IV, Year 1 saw the largest number of graduates from the program in a single year to date, 322.

Phase IV, Year 1 was not without its challenges and ASEC had to make several adjustments to overcome these. Challenges included political crisis in Nigeria, communication issues, continued Phase II graduation delays, high output/outcome indicator rates, and staff turnover.



**670+  
academic  
awards received**

80% of HESA students average an A or B letter grade



**2  
conferences  
attended**

Collaborated on 1 book publication



**790+  
research  
contributions**

58 are related to Catholic sisters in Africa

### Realizing the Dream: Empowering Women

#### Sr. Veronica Takola Biribawa, MCESM

**HESA Institution:** University of Kisubi, Uganda

**HESA Credentials:** Bachelor of Social Work & Management, Graduated 2022

**Ministry:** Masese III Empowerment Initiative (MEI)

**Beneficiary:** Angelina Akoth, HESA Alum Beneficiary, Uganda

Angelina Akoth, a woman in Uganda, has lived a life marked by a series of personal tragedies. Out of desperation, Angelina began stealing mangos and bananas from a nearby convent. This is where Angelina caught the attention of Sr. Veronica Takola Biribawa, MCESM. After an incident of theft, Sr. Veronica followed Angelina back to her village and learned of her story. Sr. Veronica invited Angelina to participate in a training program called the Masese III Empowerment Initiative (MEI), aimed at empowering women to start businesses.

### ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT