Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI)
Phase III, Year 1 Evaluation Report

Reporting Period: March 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014
Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA) included on pages 8-11

Narrative Report

The SLDI bridge grant is in Year I of Phase III of the SLDI project, which is implemented via the partnership of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Marywood University and the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC). The overarching goal for SLDI is to enable sisters in Africa to use leadership, financial and technology skills to improve the education, social and economic conditions of their religious communities and ministries. The purpose of the SLDI bridge grant was to provide basic technology and web design skills to 274 sisters in Africa, to support SLDI alumnae in order to sustain the impact in their ministries and to provide 18 SLDI alumnae the opportunity to earn 24 credits towards a degree in teacher education via online courses at Marywood University. In addition, two-week training was conducted for eight staff in Africa and computer labs in four countries—Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania—were refurbished and equipped with 10 new computers each. The bridge grant project was successfully completed and objectives were attained in a timely manner.

The project objectives and related Bridge Year activities included:
- To increase the technology competencies of the participants
  - Conduct 3-week workshops on basic technology skills
  - Conduct 3-week workshops on web design skills
- To assist SLDI alumnae to become lifelong learners, educators, and leaders
  - Provide 3-day training for alumnae for participants from Phase I and Phase II of the SLDI Program
  - Implement a collaborative project with CUEA for alumnae to acquire an undergraduate degree in education (HESA)
- To support the development and continuation of participant mentoring relationships to broaden the impact of the program
  - Integrate the principles of mentoring into the curriculum for basic technology and web design workshops
  - Provide materials and resources for mentors and mentees online and in class
- To assist participants and alumnae to use acquired skills and knowledge to enhance and sustain their ministries
  - Provide training and resources specific to technology use and web design
- To disseminate best practices and models of innovative access to education
  - Disseminate SLDI newsletters in East and West Africa
  - Provide information regarding project via SLDI website
  - Disseminate findings of program impact at conferences and in professional publications

2013 BRIDGE GRANT ACTIVITIES
In 2013, 12 workshops in basic technology and/or web design were conducted, two in each country including Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. More sisters were served (282) than the initial plan of 274. Total participants by country were as follows: Ghana, 39; Nigeria, 42; Kenya, 57; Uganda, 48; Tanzania, 40; Zambia, 40; Malawi, 16; and South Sudan, 9. Sisters from Malawi participated in Zambia and sisters from South Sudan participated in Kenya and Uganda. Workshops were facilitated by expert faculty from both the US and Africa (***see Attachment A, 2013***

Technology Workshops Participants List by Country, Track and Faculty). Due to varying levels of sisters' computer literacy, additional instructors were provided in some sessions. Three computer science and web design faculty experts from the US universities facilitated basic technology and web design workshops in Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda. All other instructors were from reputable firms in Africa. Basic technology participants were given the textbook *New Perspectives on Microsoft Office 2010, First Course* (Shaffer, 2012), and those in web design were given C*reating a web site: The missing manual* (MacDonald, 2011). Textbooks enabled sisters to continue learning, and to practice the skills they acquired. Four computer labs installed in 2007 were refurbished with ten computers each and a printer. Computer labs are used through the year. Other than SLDI planned workshops, other trainings were provided in the labs: in Tanzania, a three-week workshop for 24 sisters; in Nigeria, a three-week workshop for 19 sisters and five priests; in Kenya, 33 sisters and lay staff use the lab on a monthly basis; in Ghana, a two-week workshop for 14 sisters; and in Zambia, where 12 students in the formation use the lab daily, a three-week workshop for 18 sisters.

A pilot phase of the Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA) program started in 2013. In spring 2013, 18 SLDI alumnae from Kenya and Uganda started online classes and successfully completed 21 credits each by fall 2013. All 18 are continuing with classes at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). Of the 18, four could not attend full time at CUEA because the government could not allow them study leave. All four are enrolled in a school- based model, attending classes on a compressed schedule during holiday months. This model is common in Africa. Sisters reported exciting experiences in online learning and are very grateful for the opportunity to achieve their long-held dreams of acquiring an education. Some difficulties were reported at the initial stage. Given that sisters are not traditional students and have been out of school for many years, they had difficulties adjusting to academic rigor and navigating technology due to low computer literacy.
Nevertheless, HESA staff and faculty in both partner universities provided support and addressed issues amicably.
By the end of the second month of online learning, fewer difficulties were reported ***(see Attachment B, List of Names of HESA Cohort I Students).***

In summer 2013, a three-day reflective learning workshop was conducted for 18 sisters with a goal to mentor and to share their online learning experiences. Sisters evaluated their academic goals and developed improvement plans. The workshop was facilitated by faculty from both Marywood University and CUEA. Sisters acclaimed the workshop; it helped them to prioritize their academic plans to ensure success. As a result, no significant difficulties were reported in the second semester, and all had attained meaningful adjustments ***(see Attachment C, Schedule for Reflective Learning Workshop).***
In order for faculty to share their online teaching experiences, two faculty meetings were held in spring and fall 2013. Faculty shared their experiences, student progress, and challenges encountered in online teaching. Nine faculty and staff attended. One noticeable difficulty shared involved sisters' inability to complete assignments in a timely manner. Faculty talked about the best teaching and learning practices that are suitable for the HESA students. Similar meetings are held each semester. Further, an expert in online distance learning was hired to work with faculty in adjusting online courses, arranging content, and tailoring courses for non-traditional students in order for students to easily navigate the Moodle platform. Engagement with the consultant was helpful for faculty, and has produced beneficial teaching and learning outcomes ***(see Attachment D, HESA Faculty Pilot Cohort)***. Also, partnership with the Catholic University of Eastern Africa has been influential in providing support needed to the students in Africa in a timely manner. Four faculty and staff at CUEA are directly involved in support of HESA students and have been helpful in student monitoring.

Mentoring principles were integrated into the basic technology and web design curricula so as to prepare participants to mentor their staff and colleagues. Resources are provided on the SLDI website for easy access by participants. Basic technology and web design textbooks provided to the Sisters continue to help them during their mentoring sessions. Although reassignments are meant for the good of sisters' ministries, mentors report that mentees' reassignments to far distances often affect mentor and mentee relationships, particularly when large distances mean they can no longer meet. To alleviate the situation, SLDI coordinators shared this challenge with the superiors during conference meetings so that superiors can plan to support SLDI alumnae, mentors and mentees to fulfil their SLDI mentoring requirements.

Staff Development Training

A two-week workshop was conducted for the eight Program Coordinators in Africa from January 6-22, 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya. The goal was to provide participants with an understanding of the expanded program design and implementation plan. Also, participants were provided skills on QuickBooks, grant writing, project monitoring, report writing and spirituality in leadership. The program was facilitated by various presenters from the US and Africa. Sr. Marcia Sichol, SHCJ presented on the monitoring of funded grants; Sr. Anne Munley, IHM presented via Skype on spiritual leadership; and Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF presented on program design, implementation plans, and evaluation, among other programmatic concepts. CORAT Africa presented about QuickBooks, grant writing, and report writing. The program was enriching for the coordinators, who acclaimed it as an opportunity to learn and bond with each other. We also had time together for prayer *(see Attachment E, List of SLDI Coordinators and Facilitators Workshop Schedule)*.

SLDI Site Visit
To ascertain effectiveness in the program implementation, site visits are conducted annually and whenever need arises to monitor and gather information. Site visits provide firsthand information about any challenges; interventions are designed and put in place in a timely manner. During the site visits, meetings are held with partners and collaborators, and opinions are evaluated and integrated into the program plans. In summer 2013, a successful site visit was conducted to four countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania.
Present for the visit were Sr. Rosemarie Nassif, SSND, Ph. D., Director of the Catholic Sisters Initiative at the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, Director of ASEC. Activities included visiting 12 SLDI alumnae projects, four basic technology and web design workshops, meetings with executive leadership of five associations of religious and four university chancellors. The site visit was successful; it provided detailed information about the experiences of alumnae and the milestones they attained via the SLDI program, as well as information about the needs sisters addressed in their ministries. In January 2014, another site visit and SLDI staff workshop were conducted. Present for the site visit were Sr. Marcia Sichol, SCHJ and Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF. Five SLDI alumnae sites were visited in Nairobi. Site visits have been acclaimed by sisters as an encouragement to the alumnae; sisters have expressed gratitude for the recognition of their ministries and their impacts on society.

Resources are provided for alumnae via the SLDI website. The site has been restructured and is updated regularly to share resources and stories about the sisters' experiences, including websites they have created. Further, a three-day workshop was conducted for SLDI Phase I and II alumnae in six countries. Alumnae associations have set infrastructures, with committees that facilitate the planning of activities *(see Attachment F, SLDI Alumnae Infrastructure by Country)*. In addition, alumnae attendance continues to grow since 2012, as shown in Table I.

Table I: Alumnae SLDI Attendance by Year

Country	2012	2013	2014
Ghana	22	11	30
Nigeria	18	28	29
Kenya	30	56	77
Uganda	27	45	53
Tanzania	17	40	31
Zambia	N/A	21	19
Total	**114**	**201**	**239**

Due to prohibitive travel distances, there is low attendance in some countries. Efforts are being made to improve attendance by establishing zones and by promoting one annual meeting. Selected topics engaged attendees in a discussion addressing leadership, societal, community and ministerial issues. The 2013 topic was *Promoting Justice, Peace and Reconciliation for Healthy Communities*. Sub-topics included "*The Role of religious in conflict mitigation and effective communication in community*" and "*The role of technology in disseminating peace and community building*" (**see Attachment G, List of Alumnae Facilitators by Country)**. Further, alumnae associations in each country developed guiding principles to help them operate as a cohesive group *(see Attachment H, SLDI Alumnae Association Principles*

by Country). Moreover, newsletters containing program information and success stories are published and disseminated to alumnae, superiors, and other stakeholders (**see** *Attachment I, 2013 Newsletter*).

PROGRAM EVALUATION FOCUS AND SUMMARY
The program evaluation was an outcomes/objectives-oriented assessment based on the program objectives identified in the proposal submitted to the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. A variety of methods, including standardized tools, researcher-developed surveys, curriculum-based assessments, and a site visit were used to gather information from participants, instructors, coordinators and the project director. The program evaluation has a formative as well as summative purpose, identifying any process or program concerns that may initiate changes in a timely manner as well as assessing attainment of objectives (outputs/outcomes).

RESEARCHER DEVELOPED SURVEYS
Pre- and post-session curriculum-focused measures were developed by the evaluator to be consistent with the syllabus for each session and assess skills and knowledge acquired in the workshops. The Likert-type scales were constructed so that higher scores indicate higher agreement with the presented statements and general concepts. These were administered pre/post each session. A paired sample t-test, a test designed to analyze changes between time one and time two, was used to identify any difference in skill and understanding from pre-session to post-session. Appropriate rephrasing of these statements was used in post- tests. The findings include the mean scores (standard deviation associated with the mean) pre and post and the p value indicating the significance of the change over time. Post-only measures were used to assess workshop satisfaction. The mean scores and the standard deviation are reported for these measures. In addition, open-ended questions were included with each measure.

The narrative report is organized around the activities of the program for clarity. A summary of the outputs/outcomes concludes the report.

PHASE III BRIDGE YEAR 1 EVALUATION FINDINGS

BASIC TECHNOLOGY AND WEB DESIGN WORKSHOPS
Twelve 3-week technology programs were presented in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia for sisters from those countries as well as those from South Sudan and Malawi. One hundred eighty-three sisters attended a basic technology workshop and 99 sisters participated in a workshop in web design.

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOPS
Participant Characteristics
The 282 sisters enrolled were from eight countries and represented 122 congregations. Twenty-eight of them had participated previously in SLDI workshops. They ranged in age from 23-68 with a mean age of 39 years (SD = 9.94). The participants reported various job responsibilities: 20% worked as administrators in their congregations or community settings, 19% worked in the education field, 12% were healthcare workers, 11% provided financial support in their work settings and 10% worked in secretarial positions. The remaining 28% of the participants held positions such as social worker or general laborer, and some were students. The average length of time in their current position was 4.11 years (SD = 5.32), with 77.6% in their present position for five years or fewer.

All participants have the ability to write and speak the English language to some extent; however, 94% stated English as their primary written language, while only 89% of the participants stated English as their primary spoken language.

The educational experience of the sisters varies. Twenty-four percent of the participants have education less than or equivalent to a high school, 26 % have a college certificate (2 yrs.), 30 % have a diploma (3 yrs.), 18% have a bachelor's degree and 2% have a master's degree.

The survey demonstrated that the participants continue to lack personal accessibility to technology, with only 34% having

computer access in their place of residence. Reliable Internet access remains limited, with 20% of the participants reporting the necessity of regular use of Internet cafes.

Participant Skills and Knowledge
Pre- and post-session curriculum-focused measures were developed by the evaluator to be consistent with the syllabus for each session. The Likert-type scales were constructed so that higher scores indicate higher agreement with the presented statements and general concepts. These were administered pre/post each session. Paired sample t-tests, a test designed to analyze changes between time one and time two, were used to identify any difference in skill and understanding from pre-session to post-session.

Basic Technology
The primary focus of the workshop was on using Microsoft Office, email, Internet, typing, and printing. A Likert-type scale with a response set (1-5) prompted participants to indicate level of agreement with statements. The measure explored the participants' self-evaluation of their abilities using questions such as: *I am able to create and navigate a Microsoft Word document; I am able to print a document; I understand how to access and navigate the Internet; I understand how to manage an email account.* Appropriate rephrasing of these statements was used in post-tests.

Country	Workshop	N	Pre Mean	Pre SD	Post Mean	Post SD
Kenya (South Sudan)	#3	26	1.96	0.66	4.58*	0.58
Ghana	#4	20	2.20	0.89	4.25*	0.64
Ghana	#9	19	1.74	0.99	4.42*	0.77
Nigeria	#5	22	2.36	0.79	4.09*	0.61
Tanzania	#6	20	2.45	0.51	4.25*	0.12
Tanzania	#10	20	1.50	0.51	4.80*	0.41
Uganda (South Sudan)	#11	28	2.00	0.67	4.89*	0.32
Zambia (Malawi)	#12	28	2.11	0.74	4.93*	0.26

Note: * indicates significance at $p < 0.001$

Paired-samples t tests were calculated to compare the mean pretest score to the mean posttest score for each basic technology workshop. A statistically significant increase from pretest to post-test was found in all the workshops with significance at $p < 0.001$.

Open-Ended Questions
The survey also included open-ended questions in order to assess the participant's current use of technology and satisfaction with the workshop. Prior to their participation in the workshop, only 32% participants in the basic technology workshops used technology in their ministries. The participants shared that the most difficult issues that they encountered when using technology included: lack of computer and Internet connection in their residence or workplace, attaching documents to emails and printing documents.

Overall, the participants were grateful for the opportunity to take the course and looked forward to using their new technology skills in their ministries as well as teaching computer skills to others. A participant from Nigeria writes, "*It will help me to present better financial accounts, presentable letters and I will be bold enough to teach my students the practical aspects during their computer classes*". From Tanzania, a sister writes, "*After getting this knowledge, I would like to record and to save all patients and treatments in a computer.*"

Participants were also asked to make recommendations for improvement of the workshop. Sisters in seven of the eight workshops recommended the length of the workshop be increased to one month in order to provide more time for practice. In addition, they suggested an advanced technology workshop which they could attend that focused on additional Microsoft Office skills such as Excel and Access.

Web Design
The primary focus of the workshop was on using scanners, the Internet, flash drives, and software pertinent to web designing. A Likert Scale with a response set (1-5) prompted participants to indicate level of agreement with statements. The measure explored the participants' self-evaluation of their abilities using questions such as: *I am able to edit pdf files; I am able to navigate and explore the Internet; I understand how to manage Windows files; I understand how to use website hosting software.* Appropriate rephrasing of these statements was used in posttests.

Country	Workshop	N	Pre Mean	Pre SD	Post Mean	Post SD
Uganda	#1	20	M = 2.35	0.75	M = 3.45*	0.51
Nigeria	#2	20	M = 2.30	0.57	M = 3.60*	0.50
Zambia (Malawi)	#7	28	M = 1.96	0.69	M = 3.82*	0.55
Kenya	#8	31	M = 2.58	.0.72	M = 3.84*	0.37

Note: * indicates significance at $p < .001$

Paired-samples t tests were calculated to compare the mean pretest score to the mean posttest score for each web design technology workshop. A significant increase from pretest to post-test was found in all the workshops with significance at $p < 0.001$.

Prior to their participation in the workshop, 60% of participants stated that they did not use the Internet in their ministries and only 1 participant managed a website for her ministry.
However, after the workshops, 90% of the participants planned to create a website or to improve an existing website. Participants shared that they planned to use their websites for communication, fundraising, education, outreach, advertisement, finance, disseminating information to the community, and evangelization.

Overall, the participants were grateful for the opportunity to take the course. A Kenyan participant stated, *"I thank ASEC for the good work they are doing in empowering us African sisters. I feel empowered, enlightened and nourished as I go back to my congregation, ready to work and to teach others what I have learned from ASEC."*

The participants in all of the web design workshops felt that the length of the workshop was limited. As one participant pointed out, *"The course is very interesting but very wide therefore it needed more time...the weeks were very short for me to learn properly."* Other recommendations included smaller class sizes and continuing technical support as sisters develop their websites.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION
In addition to participant skills assessment, participants, instructors and coordinators evaluate each workshop using a Likert-type scale and responding to open-ended questions.

Participants
A post-session assessment (workshop evaluation) was developed by the evaluator and completed by participants at the end of each workshop. This satisfaction Likert-type scale (5 being the highest rating) focused on the presentation of the material, resource material, impact of the environment on learning, time spent on lessons, and the extent to which the participant understood the material. The mean scores appear below.

Workshop	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Basic Technology	183	4.78	0.44
Web Design	99	4.46	0.46
Overall	282	4.68	0.56

Instructors
A post-session assessment (workshop evaluation) was developed by the evaluator to be completed by each instructor. The Likert-type scale (5 being the highest rating) posed questions related to pre-session arrangements, impact of the site on teaching and learning, and extent of the opportunity to collaborate on the development of the evaluation materials. The workshop evaluation form included questions regarding challenges, successes and recommendations for improvement of the workshops.

The Assessments were completed by seventeen instructors in eight countries for the 12 sessions. The mean score was 4.44 (SD = 1.19) indicating agreement with the positive statements. Though both the quantitative and qualitative analysis was separated by the type of workshop, there were no significant differences based on group, so aggregate findings are presented.

The instructors identified that they were impressed with students' eagerness to learn, their use of new skills, and overall improvement in technology abilities at the conclusion of the workshop. Instructors from both the basic technology workshop and the web design workshop shared that it was difficult to manage their course in the time allotted, and recommended that the time be extended to 4 weeks. In addition, it was recommended that class size be limited to 20 for basic technology and 15 for web design. The varying skills of students made teaching challenging, prompting some instructors to continue to support the need for lab assistants for the courses.

Coordinators
Assessments were completed by the 8 coordinators for the 12 sessions. The mean score on the survey relating to pre-session arrangements, the site and the course content was 4.44 (SD = 1.19) indicating agreement with positive statements.

The coordinators were impressed with the number of participants attending and their eagerness to learn new skills. They felt the course materials were well prepared and presented. They noted that the instructors used visual aids and simple language to explain the content of the workshops.

The coordinators identified challenges similar to those experienced by the instructors. They shared that it was difficult for the instructors to cover the course content in the time allotted, that some participant groups were very large, and that the varying skills of the students made instruction challenging. Unreliable electricity and technology remain issues in some countries.

In addition to extension of course time, the coordinators identified the need for additional equipment in most of the labs, such as printers, scanners and copiers, to allow the participants to practice skills and complete assignments. Upgrading of the computers is a focus of the project during this grant year.

Portfolio Pilot Project
In order to provide an additional method of evaluation of skills acquired in SLDI workshops, portfolio assessment was introduced to complement self-report surveys used by the project. During three basic technology workshops, instructors were asked to guide participants in developing "portfolios" of their work. A rubric was developed for the instructors' use, and the contents of the portfolios were assignments that routinely would be completed in the workshop.

It was recognized that a 3-week period of time is not sufficient for developing a portfolio; however, the focus of the pilot project was to begin to identify any logistical, teaching, or curriculum issues that might arise if portfolios were used as an assessment measure in future leadership workshops.

Though the three instructors who piloted the portfolio reported that using the projects to develop a "portfolio" for assessment did not negatively impact their instruction, and that they understood the rubric and its use (mean score on a 5-point Likert-type scale was 4.33), the rubric was not used consistently by the instructors to assess students' work. Further review with the coordinators revealed that neither they nor the instructors fully understood what was expected. This was addressed by Sr. Jane during the coordinators' training in January and additional materials were developed for the instructors and the coordinators for use in the future.

Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)

The goal of the HESA program is to increase access to higher education for sisters in Africa. The HESA project funded by the Bridge grant provided an opportunity for 18 SLDI alumnae to begin their undergraduate studies in teacher education. Through a partnership between Marywood University and the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, sisters were enrolled as freshmen in Marywood University, earned 21 credits online and then transferred those credits to CUEA in January of 2014 as they began their on-campus experience at CUEA.

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Eighteen African sisters enrolled in the HESA program. The sisters represented 16 congregations from Kenya and Uganda. They ranged in age from 28-57 with a mean age of 41 (SD = 9.55). Fifty percent of the participants work in education, in either congregation or community settings, 22% work in finance or bursar related positions, 22% work at the administrative level and 6% work in medical fields. The average length of time at their position was 4.1 years (SD = 3.14), with 61% in their current position for five years or fewer. The educational experience of the sisters varies. Eleven percent of participants have a high school diploma, 40% report having a 2-year college certificate and 50% report having a diploma. None of the participants have a bachelor's or master's degree.

HESA EVALUATION

Mid-Term Assessment of Online Learning: Spring Semester 2013

A survey was conducted at the mid-point of the spring 2013 semester to assess the students' progress in the online courses and identify any support needed to assist them in being successful. A Likert-type scale with a response set (1-4) prompted the participants to indicate level of agreement with statements and open-ended questions. Some of survey questions included: *I feel confident in my ability to upload an assignment on Moodle; I feel confident in my ability to search the online library database for an article on a specific topic; I feel confident in my ability to format a reference page for a research paper; I feel connected to the instructor and other students, I have an opportunity to provide feedback to instructors in each course.*

Mid Term Assessment Skills	N=12	M=3.23	SD=0.45
Mid Term General Assessment	N=12	M=3.42	SD=0.46

The lowest mean scores were related to searching the library database and developing a well-referenced research paper. This information was shared with instructors and additional support provided.

In response to the question "What has been going well?", students stated they were able to use Moodle and forums to communicate with their instructors, and that they benefited from receiving feedback and encouragement from instructors.

In response to "What are some obstacles you have faced?", students identified the technical/computer problems they faced

as well as their own limited computer skills. A common problem was the effect the "language barrier" had on communication with instructors, particularly in the English course.

Reflecting on the effectiveness of University 102 in preparing them for the online courses, the HESA participants agreed it did prepare them for taking the courses online, but felt the orientation duration should be extended, so that they could have more time to prepare for the courses, and to give them a better foundation on what the expectations are of the courses.

When asked what resources were needed to ensure success in this program, the students identified the following:
- Increased support from other students by way of Skype
- Introduction to course instructors during the orientation process, in order to receive instructions and guidelines for the courses
- Increased technology/computer instruction/support
- Simplification of the language level used in the courses (directions, assignments, procedures, etc.) in order reduce confusion on assignments
- Increased library or instructor support in using the online databases

Student End of Semester Assessment: Spring 2013

The End of Semester Assessment was intended to assess the student's experience at the end of the semester. A Likert-type scale with a response set (1-4) prompted the participants to indicate level of agreement with statements and open-ended questions. The measure explored questions such as: *I feel confident in my ability to save results in a folder and send them by email; Skype has been an effective learning tool for me this past semester; Communicating with ASEC/ HESA staff helped ease my difficulties; I was able to get clarification from my instructor when I needed it; The number of assignments for the course was doable; The language level in this course was appropriate for me and I was able to understand the instructor's expectations for the assignments in this course.*

Student Experience	N=16	M=3.35	SD=.32
General Assessment	N=16	M=3.33	SD=.29
ASEC/HESA Student Support	N=16	M=3.54	SD=.23
PSY 251- Development Psychology Course Assessment	N=16	M=3.63	SD=.59
EDUC 315- Research Methods	N=16	M=3.71	SD=.29
ENG 160- Composition and Rhetoric	N=16	M=2.95	SD=.52
UNIV 102 Orientation	N=16	M=3.43	SD=.40

The highest mean scores were related to using Moodle, a platform that they had not been familiar with at the beginning of the semester.

The open-ended questions indicated that thirteen sisters reported working full-time during the semester. Though encouraged to be successful in their coursework, most commented on the challenge of balancing their ministries and the course load; still, one student commented that it "trained me in balancing the variety of tasks". The students noted that the instructors were able to provide guidance to help get them through the semester. Participants stated that they found the courses challenging and also identified positive outcomes; participants indicated that the experience "Opened my horizon of learning," and that online learning provided a "fantastic, new place to explore."

Students indicated that, as a result of their experience with online learning, their English has improved, and therefore led to improved communication with instructors. They furthermore said that the textbooks are great, and also spoke very highly about the good Internet connection, as well as the clarity of the assignments.

Concerns remaining for the students at the end of the first semester included time management, the challenging workload of the courses, sharing textbooks, difficulty with downloading library materials, and costly Internet charges.

Reflective Learning Workshop
In order to provide an opportunity for the students to assess their higher educational experience to date and re-evaluate their academic goals, a three-day reflective learning workshop was held in Kenya facilitated by faculty from Marywood University and Catholic University of East Africa.

In a post-workshop survey, the HESA participants said that this workshop helped them clarify course requirements, and allowed them to be better equipped to deal with challenges that came up when working through the courses. They also said that this workshop helped them learn more about time management, and they felt support from one another throughout this time. The HESA participants also spoke about the workshop helping to prepare them to better deal with the technological skills involved in the online courses.

Student End of Experience Assessment: Fall 2014
Assessment of Fall Semester and Overall HESA Experience to Date
The focus of the survey included general assessment of online instruction, ASEC/HESA Student Support, and fall courses. A Likert-type scale with a response set (1-4) prompted the participants to indicate level of agreement with statements and open-ended questions.
Some of survey questions included: *Skype has been an effective learning tool for me this past semester; I felt supported and encouraged to continue the program by ASEC/HESA staff; The language level in this course was appropriate for me; I was able to get clarification from my*
instructor when I needed it; I was able to understand the instructor's expectations for the assignments in this course.

General Assessment	N=14	M=3.45	SD=0.35
ASEC/HESA Student Support	N=14	M=3.69	SD=0.19
EDUC 414A- History of Education	N=14	M=3.91	SD=0.17
RST 201- Intro to the Bible	N=14	M=3.83	SD=0.21
EDUC 311 Educational Psychology	N=14	M=3.84	SD=0.28

The lowest mean score indicated continuing technical difficulties with using Skype, and the highest mean score on the scale indicated perceived positive support from faculty and classmates.

The HESA students were asked about the most valuable/satisfying part of this experience as well as the most difficult part. Students were glad to have the experience of the technology aspect of the course work, such as learning more computer skills. They identified that being exposed to challenging things was also rewarding, and they perceived feedback from their instructors as being positive for them during their studies. One sister stated, *"This has encouraged me also to be a teacher in order to share my knowledge with the others as they have been to us."* The difficulties included technical/Internet issues, problems with time management and meeting assignment deadlines. The language barrier remained a concern, but was less of an issue this semester.

An additional question assessed the impact of an online experience in an American university. One student felt that the experience was very stressful, but the other participants provided positive comments: *"They tried to give us the best skills that are required as base to my specialization. The teachers at Marywood University are good and nice to students, thus motivating me to work hard. It enabled me and others to learn from instructors who were well qualified, while still in my own country."* Another said *"I was able to study on my own time"*, and still another reported *"having learned a lot on the academic side, but also about the use of the computer"*.

The online experience was proposed as a way to allow sisters to begin their education while remaining in their ministries. In response to the question "How did being a full-time student impact your work or congregation?" one sister said that the

Superior General *"released me from heavy duties,"* and spoke about having to make adjustments in work and community activities. Another sister stated, *"The fact that I had to be a full-time student leaves a gap to be filled by another worker, to the congregation it is an opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills as well as higher income from the member after completion…The congregation was helped because the knowledge that I received is a betterment of my congregation not personal."*

ALUMNI WORKSHOP 2014
Six countries hosted SLDI Alumni Workshops held during January and February of 2014. A total of 235 participants attended the alumni workshops held in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The topics of the workshops included "Promoting Justice, Peace and Reconciliation for Healthy Communities", "Conflict Management and Resolution", "Role of Religious in Conflict Mitigation", and "Role of Technology in Disseminating Peace and Community Building".

Data has been received from four countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia), with a total of 180 participants reporting that they have mentored 1,043 individuals and presented 452 workshops. Nine of the SLDI alumni secured grants totaling $122,878 during the period of January 2013 – February 2014.

COORDINATORS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
In order to orient new coordinators to ASEC and the SLDI and HESA programs, a two-week workshop was held at the Donum Dei Missionary Guest House in Nairobi, Kenya. The workshop topics included "Effective Report Writing", "Grant Writing", "QuickBooks", "Stewardship, Accountability & Integrity", and "Financial Accountability".

A post-workshop survey was used to assess the participant's experience.   A Likert-type scale with a response set (1-4) prompted the participants to indicate level of agreement with statements.

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
General Evaluation	8	3.96	.07
General Information	8	3.96	.01
Clarity of Instruction	8	3.83	.22
Time	8	3.28	.23
Role/Job Description	8	3.81	.16
Program Components	8	3.73	.23

The highest mean scores were related to "Communicating with ASEC/HESA staff helped ease my difficulties"; "I felt supported and encouraged to continue the program by the ASEC/HESA staff"; and "The ASEC/HESA staff addressed my concerns in a timely manner".

The coordinators/participants were asked the following question: "Did this professional development workshop meet your expectations? Please explain." All respondents answered yes to this question. One coordinator stated, *"Yes, the professional development workshop met my expectations even more than expected."* Others stated that they gained skills and felt empowered to face challenges. In addition, participants said that ASEC and SLDI mission was clearly presented. Participants learned their role as coordinator, learned about QuickBooks and preparing financial reports, and learned report and grant writing.

In response to the question "Are there particular topics/questions that were not addressed? If yes, please explain," a coordinator stated *"A little more explanation on monitoring relationships and portfolio will be appreciated."* In addition, the coordinators identified several resources that may enhance their ability to be efficient and effective in their work: a software package for a database and technical support to use it, and continuation of training in communication skills,

QuickBooks, and effective report writing.

CONCLUSION

The objectives-based assessment demonstrates positive findings in all areas:

- The paired sample t tests demonstrated statistically significant change in technology skills as reported by the participants; in addition, the participants identified future goals for integrating their new skills into their ministries. Technical and facility concerns were addressed by the program.
- The pilot portfolio project was received positively by instructors and participants. However, detailed information, expectations, and procedures will need to be disseminated to the instructors and coordinators if the project is to continue.
- Eighteen SLDI alumnae successfully completed 21 undergraduate credits (online) at Marywood University and have started their second year of undergraduate education at Catholic University of East Africa.
- Eight African program coordinators participated in a two-week professional development training program to enhance their skills in program management and financial management, and to improve their understanding of the ASEC/SLDI/HESA goals and program components. The coordinators provided positive responses to the workshop and identified areas needing continued education and support.
- Best practices and project outcomes continue to be disseminated via SLDI newsletters, ASEC website, professional conference presentations and journal publications.

ONGOING PROGRAM EVALUATION

The program evaluation plan for Phase III, Years Two and Three includes the following components:

> Skills assessment and workshop evaluations during Leadership training workshop Assessment of
> progress of HESA students
> Survey of Phase I and Phase II alumnae who did not attend alumnae workshops Survey of mentees identified by
> Phase II participants
> Survey of major superiors of Phase I and Phase II participants Annual survey of
> program coordinators

Respectfully submitted by:
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SUCCESSES

The SLDI bridge grant explicitly recorded more successes than challenges. Among them are as follows:

- A total of 282 participants benefitted from basic technology and/or web design workshops, versus 274 in the original plan.
- Successful three-day SLDI alumnae meetings were held in six countries, with increased attendance from 201 to **239** in 2014. In addition, each alumnae association has created infrastructure, a committee to plan alumnae activities and guiding principles to organize the group.
- Four computer labs, in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, were refurbished and each equipped with ten new computers and one printer. Sisters commend the labs.
- Participants acclaim the skills acquired in basic technology and web design workshops, and have created ministry websites. See http://www.asec- sldi.org/programs/sldi/events/.
- 18 sisters successfully completed one year of online distance learning classes at Marywood University. All are continuing with their education at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya. They are proud that their long held desire is becoming a reality.
- Sr. Rosemarie and Sr. Jane conducted a successful site visit to four countries in Africa. Altogether, we visited a total of 12 ministries, meeting with chancellors of four universities and five conferences of women religious.

Relationships are flourishing.

- Congregational leaders acclaim SLDI and skills imparted on the sisters are helping to transform their ministries. Significant benefits in their ministries have resulted.
- Partnership with renowned regional universities, firms, and organizations has been incredible in working together to provide training and higher education for the sisters. Expanded collaborations have created meaningful relationships.
- Four additional staff were hired in Africa to support program implementation. A team of eight staff continue to effectively support programs in Africa.
- A successful two-week workshop was held for staff development in Africa. Staff acclaimed the meeting; they shared their experiences as well as learning about program implementation plans.
- Greater self-confidence and ability to navigate and address their ministerial challenges is reported by the sisters; a healthy competitive spirit has emerged regarding enrollment in our programs.
- Using a variety of instructors from both the US and Africa and from recognized and reputable firms has heightened the sisters' interests. In particular, three American university faculty experts in computer science and web designing facilitated basic technology and web designing in Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda.
- Research on the program has been published and presented at national and international conferences, and a newsletter with focus in our programs is published annually to share pertinent experiences.
- Curriculum was updated and harmonized to address emerging needs of the sisters' ministries and tailored to a daily schedule. All instructors will use the updated curriculum in 2014/2015 program.

- SLDI faculty shares their reflection about experiences in teaching in our programs. See http://www.asec-sldi.org/programs/sldi/sldi-faculty-reflection.html.
- Resource materials, such as links to foundations and reading materials, are provided via the ASEC-SLDI website and have been helpful in connecting the sisters.
- SLDI staff acclaims the professional development workshop. It provided them with an understanding of program design and implementation plans.
- Sisters continue to develop competencies to navigate websites, and communicate of their experiences using blogs. See http://www.asec-sldi.org/programs/sldi/success- stories/.
- SLDI website was updated and restructured to provide up-to-date information about our programs. See http://www.asec-sldi.org/programs/.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND RESPONSE

- In Tanzania, the English language continues to be a challenge because sisters did not learn English until high school, making it challenging to teach and learn. We continue to use instructors who are competent in both English and Kiswahili so as to provide the needed language support and translate content where necessary.
- Technology acquisition continues to be a challenge for many sisters and their communities, particularly to practice basic and web designing skills. Provision of computers for SLDI Phase I and III participants will be beneficial and an asset for their communities.
- Electricity concerns continue to be a major issue, particularly in rural areas. Sisters are encouraged to write grants to purchase generators as backups for energy provision for their computers.
- Political upheavals and large distances of travel continue to be a challenge. SLDI alumnae have created zones to make it easier to meet in smaller groups during the year, with one meeting for all alumnae held annually.
- Some HESA students had difficulties navigating technology, academic language and Internet use. Also, time management was an issue at the start of the program.
- Participants continue to recommend a four-week workshop instead of three.

PUBLICATIONS AND DISSEMINATION OF SLDI RESEARCH

To disseminate information on best leadership development practices, research papers have been published in peer

reviewed journals and presentations have been given at regional, national and international conferences (***see Attachment H, SLDI Research Publications and Conference Presentations***), with more research papers in progress. In addition, the newsletter "Educational Insights" was produced to highlight our programs, and was distributed to all our partners and collaborators.

For questions regarding this report, please contact: Jennifer Mudge at Jennifer.Mudge@asec-sldi.org or Tara Lopatofsky at Tara.Lopatofsky@asec-sldi.org