



## Congregational Vitality for Women Religious in Africa

*Congregations of Catholic sisters in Africa are being strengthened from within through ASEC programs.*

Did you know that **Africa saw a 22% increase in the number of women religious** during the past decade, making it and Asia the only regions of the world seeing growth rather than decline in the number of sisters taking their vows?

But growth within congregations comes with its own set of challenges. Most African women's religious communities are active in responding to the needs of their surrounding communities with ministries ranging from social work, health care, education and pastoral work. But beyond these services, the **sisters must also be able to sustain their own growing religious communities.**



Alumnae of ASEC's SLDI and HESA programs obtain the skills and credentials needed to advocate for the most vulnerable and persecuted individuals in the communities they serve.

ASEC's **Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI)** program provides sisters with technology, administration and finance training through 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.

ASEC's **Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA)** program provides opportunities for sisters to access diploma, undergraduate and master's level education. HESA is delivered through partnerships with higher education institutions in Africa and online in the USA.

## How you can strengthen African congregations through education

You can help improve and sustain the vitality of congregations of women religious in Africa by supporting a sister's ASEC-sponsored education now.

Donate: [asec-sldi.org/donate](https://asec-sldi.org/donate)



SLDI alumna **Sr. Josemaria** serves as a Community Superior and a Councilor for her congregation, Holy Family Sisters of the Needy, in Nigeria. Her leadership role allows her to use her education and experience to strengthen systems that will sustain her congregation. In this photo, Sr. Josemaria teaches grant writing to other ASEC alumnae.

### Improvements Made to Internal Systems of Congregations



**62 HESA Alumnae**

Reported making improvements to the internal systems of their congregations.



**72 Improvements Made**

24% Strategic Plan  
29% Financial Plan or System  
28% Human Resources  
19% Other Improvement



**41 Congregations Served**

Number of unique congregations that benefitted from HESA Alumnae improvements.

from ASEC Advisory Board Meeting Presentation (4-27-20)

In Malawi, **Sr. Hellen** used the technology skills she learned in SLDI workshops to create a digital records archive for her congregation, the Little Children of Our Blessed Mary. She's also writing a historical document for her congregation and plans to pursue a course in Archives and Records.

**Sr. Florence**, a Sister of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus (EHJ) in Nigeria, secured funds that provide holistic formation for girls entering the EHJ community. She is an alumna of ASEC's SLDI program and our 2nd Visiting Research Scholar.

Read more: [asec-sldi.org/vitality](https://asec-sldi.org/vitality)

### Sisters use their skills to improve systems and services

**93%** use skills effectively to benefit their ministries  
(n = 478)



**88%** use skills effectively to benefit their congregations  
(n = 510)



**28%** increased their income level  
(n = 485)

