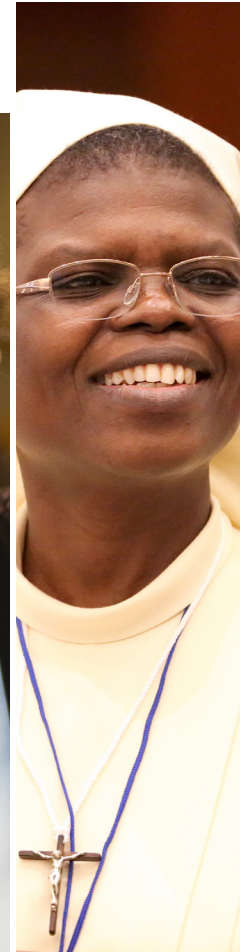
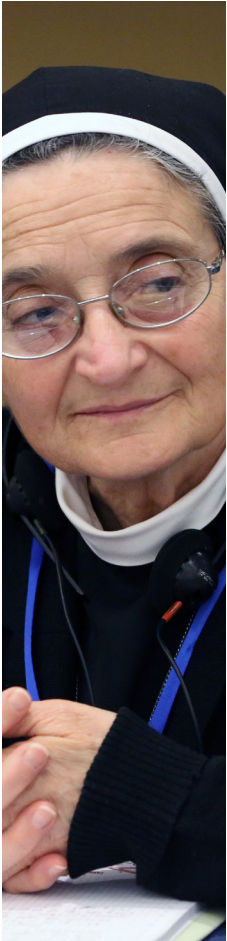


The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Catholic Sisters Initiative In Transition



3rd Annual
Measurement, Evaluation
and Learning Report

“Give aid to... the sisters, who devote their love and life’s work for the good of mankind, for they appeal especially to me as deserving help from the Foundation.... It is my wish... to have the largest part of your benefactions dedicated to the sisters in all parts of the world.”

— Last will and testament of Conrad N. Hilton

THE CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION

Catholic Sisters Initiative **in Transition**

3rd Annual Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Report



Center for Religion and Civic Culture
University of Southern California
April 2018

Contents

3	Introduction	
	The Catholic Sisters Initiative	3
	The Center for Religion and Civic Culture	4
	Reports	
	Presentations	
	Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews	
	Consulting with the Initiative’s Team	
	Videos	
10	Trends and Challenges	
	Trends in Religion	10
	Trends in Religious Life	14
	The Changing Catholic Church	15
	New Development Goals	16
	Challenges for Sisters	18
	Financial Sustainability	
	Human Resources Management	
	Generational Differences	
	Lifetime Formation	
	Interculturality	
	Networking	
	Lack of Data and Research	
	Conclusion	28
30	The Evolving Catholic Sisters Initiative	
	Strategy and Grant Making	30
	Indicators of Success: Cumulative Report Card	36
	Global South: Membership, Leadership, Resources	
	Global North: Membership, Leadership, Resources	
	Other Grantees	
	Relationship and Organizational Capacity Building Grants	
	Awareness Grants	
	Research Grants	
	Challenges with Measuring Success	56
	Conclusion	57
58	Gaps, Opportunities and Strategic Recommendations	
62	Moving Forward	
64	References and Notes	

I.

Introduction



The Catholic Sisters Initiative

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Catholic Sisters Initiative launched a five-year strategy in February 2013 to enhance the vitality of Catholic sisters around the world and to build their capacity to carry out ministries to the vulnerable and the poor. The Sisters Initiative has awarded more than \$105 million in grants to 62 organizations since 2013. The Sisters Initiative currently is at a transition point, as its first five-year strategy comes to a close and its second strategy is under development.

The theme of transition is central to this measurement, evaluation and learning report as it reflects on the evolution not only of the Sisters Initiative, but also of the global Church and religious life. The report illuminates lessons from the first five years of the Sisters Initiative that have helped inform and shape its current direction as well as the next iteration of its strategy. The report provides an overall summation and evaluation of the progress made on the 2013 strategy to date. Some of the grants made under this strategy are ongoing, and the impact of some grants may only be felt over a longer term.

The Foundation launched the Sisters Initiative to address the unique needs of Catholic sisters in the 21st century during a time of significant change in the Catholic Church and religious life. Pope Francis was elected to the papacy shortly after the Foundation's board of directors approved the Sisters Initiative strategy. In the past five years, he has emphasized the Church's prophetic social message and the importance of mercy, service and humility. He also has elevated sisters as the face of the Church in their role as spiritual witnesses serving the vulnerable on the "peripheries."

The election of Pope Francis and the launch of the Sisters Initiative came at a critical moment for sisters and their congregations. In some regions of the world, congregations are facing contraction and reimagining religious life in a time of fewer vocations. In other regions, congregations struggle to meet the financial, educational and ministerial needs of forming new sisters while simultaneously taking care of elderly sisters.

The Sisters Initiative ambitiously sought to address the membership, leadership and resource gaps challenging sisters in a rapidly changing social and religious landscape. In contrast to other initiatives at the Foundation, the Sisters Initiative's investments involved building a new field. Prior to the Sisters Initiative, data on the number of congregations in a country, ministries hosted by congregations, the number of young women in formation or the financial viability of congregations were piecemeal. The Sisters Initiative funded several grants to provide basic information and innovate around unmet needs. Grants highlighted many of the challenges that sisters face, including basic awareness about sisters and their ministries, financial planning of limited resources, educational needs, and congregational vitality and lifetime formation. The first strategy was in many respects an expedition into new territory that needed to be explored and mapped.



The Center for Religion and Civic Culture

The Foundation awarded the Center for Religion and Civic Culture (CRCC) at the University of Southern California a grant in April 2014 to evaluate the effectiveness of the Sisters Initiative's first strategy. As the measurement, evaluation and learning (MEL) partner for the Sisters Initiative, CRCC has analyzed the development of the Sisters Initiative, evaluated the effectiveness of the Foundation's grant-making in meeting the Sisters Initiative's strategic objectives and documented what it has learned from grantees, key informants, experts in the field and Foundation staff. CRCC also has provided a wide range of consultative and research services to the Foundation since the inception of the grant.

Starting in 2017, the third year of the Catholic Sisters Initiative's MEL partnership was a pivotal period of reflection and learning. As the Sisters Initiative went through staffing changes and started moving to the next iteration of its strategy, CRCC's MEL activities increased in intensity and in the number of consultative services provided and commissioned deliverables. CRCC's MEL products included evaluation and research reports, presentations, technical consultations with the Sisters Initiative team, videos and photography, focus groups and individual interviews with key stakeholders, and conceptualization and planning for convenings. The wide range of deliverables reflected the Sisters Initiative team's changing needs during this time of transition.

REPORTS

During the third year of the MEL, CRCC produced eight reports for the Sisters Initiative team, which are summarized here. Many of the themes of these reports are included in Section II on trends and challenges. The reports included:

January 2017

Sisters Serving the World: 2nd Annual Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Report

The second annual MEL report documented the learnings, challenges and opportunities faced by the Sisters Initiative and its grantees. The report also questioned some of the underlying assumptions of the first Sisters Initiative strategy, including its focus on funding for vocations in the United States, its geographic bifurcation of the world into global south and north, and the ability of the Sisters Initiative to measure its impact based on imperfect indicators of success. The report also challenged the Foundation and the Sisters Initiative team to address 10 questions related to priorities and donor intent as they started on the development of the next iteration of the Sisters Initiative strategy. These questions evolved out of CRCC's evaluation of the Sisters Initiative's grant-making successes and challenges and how these played out in the context of changes within the global Catholic Church and religion as a whole.



October 2017

Lessons from the Field: Strategic Analysis Report

The Lessons from the Field report combined data collected over two years from four different survey instruments. Over the two years, 189 respondents participated in the surveys, and 126 discrete organizations were included in this analysis. The data provided a window into grantee experiences related to areas such as Foundation giving and procedures, communications, and program management and evaluation. These surveys were supplemented by on-site interviews with sisters and other grantees at two convenings, along with other interviews and focus groups.



October 2017 & May 2018

Three Case Studies in Africa – Zambia, Uganda and Nigeria

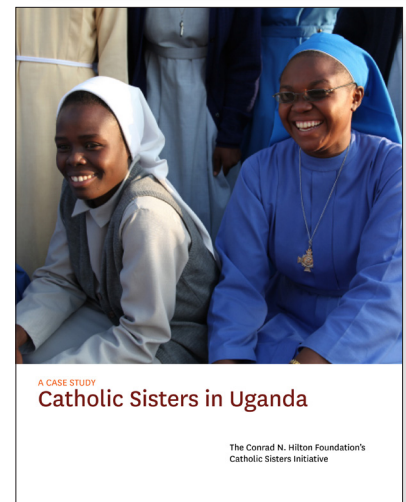
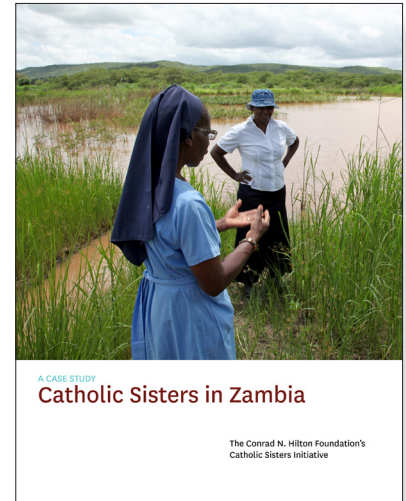
After CRCC presented a country assessment process to the Sisters Initiative team in Spring 2017, the Sisters Initiative requested a series of case studies to assist them in understanding the regional and local needs of sisters in Africa, and to inform the development and implementation of the next strategy. Three countries—Zambia, Uganda and Nigeria—were picked to represent the eastern, southern and western regions of sub-Saharan Africa. Each report focuses on five sectors prioritized by the Sisters Initiative (food security and environment, education, maternal and child health, human trafficking, and entrepreneurship and microfinance), drawing upon key informant interviews, focus group discussions with sisters, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics and government officials, as well as secondary research. The reports also examine the current situation of sisters and their congregations; provide a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis for sisters in each country; and document opportunity areas for the Foundation.

The case study from Zambia identifies food security as the priority issue in the country. It also introduces financial sustainability, human resources, formation, data and research, and networking as key challenges facing congregations and their national religious conference. These challenges are consistent across the three case studies, except that in Nigeria, sisters face an additional challenge of security.

The priority issue in Uganda is more complicated than in Zambia because of Uganda's refugee situation, ineffective central government and rampant national poverty levels. Key informants identified poverty eradication as the top human development concern. All of the five sectors of interest to the Sisters Initiative can be seen as part of poverty reduction.

Likewise, each of the sectors—and poverty eradication more broadly—present great needs in Nigeria. Additionally, an enormous number of people (roughly 2 million) have been internally displaced as a consequence of the conflict with Boko Haram in the northeast. But the most salient challenge for human development work in Nigeria is the country's corrupt and ineffectual government, which squanders revenue from Nigeria's petroleum industry and hampers efforts to improve conditions across the entire spectrum of development sectors.

Congregations' common challenges across countries present opportunities for the Sisters Initiative to bolster data gathering and use, support lifetime formation, strengthen national conferences and enhance sisters' ability to partner with other organizations. The Sisters Initiative can also work to support sisters' holistic approach to development issues. The complexity of the human development situations in Uganda and Nigeria paint a more "typical" picture that may emerge from the Sisters Initiative's future work in sub-Saharan Africa. In many countries, competing human development issues and complex humanitarian needs may necessitate that the Sisters Initiative take a more nuanced, country-specific funding strategy than previously considered.



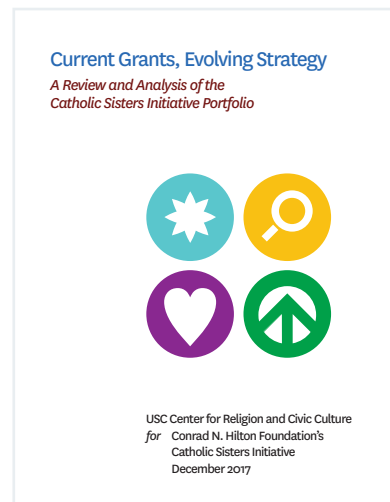
December 2017

Current Grants, Evolving Strategy: A Review and Analysis of the Catholic Sisters Initiative Strategy

The Sisters Initiative requested in Fall 2017 that CRCC help the team understand how existing grants might fit within the next iteration of its strategy. This report presents the results of a preliminary exercise based on interviews with senior staff about each grantee’s performance, communication and potential.

The Sisters Initiative team placed grants in one of four categories: renew, pivot, exit or grey area. CRCC summarized the Sisters Initiative team’s assessment of the assets and potential of the grants in consideration to be renewed or pivoted, including those in the grey area (where there was lack of agreement). Based on CRCC’s evaluation and feedback from the Sisters Initiative’s team, CRCC also took an initial pass at placing these grants into the four future Sisters Initiative portfolios (sisters’ education, human development services, knowledge and innovation) that were approved by the board of directors in November 2017.

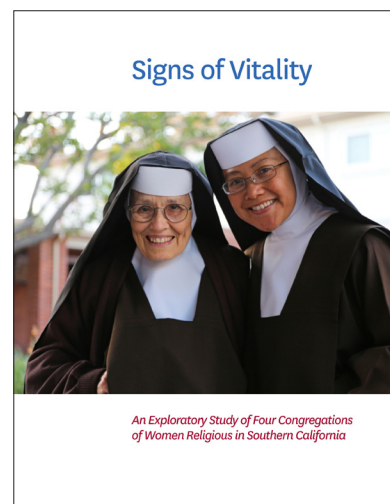
These exercises made it clear that the Sisters Initiative team highly values the relationships developed and the learning garnered since the beginning of the Catholic Sisters Initiative. The challenge in the future might be balancing older grantee relationships that have generated valuable data and outcomes for the Sisters Initiative with future opportunities to develop grants with new grantees that might operate outside the familiar cast of Catholic organizations.



January 2018

Signs of Vitality: An Exploratory Study of Four Congregations of Women Religious in Southern California

In Summer 2017, the Sisters Initiative commissioned an exploratory study of several congregations in Southern California in order to better understand congregational vitality—and how the Sisters Initiative can target its funding—in light of the dominant narrative of decline for sisters in the United States. Southern California offers a unique social laboratory because the Catholic Church in this region is thriving, diverse and adaptive. A central commonality among the four congregations studied is their ability and willingness to adapt and respond to challenges within the bounds of their traditions. This can be seen in how they approach forming the spiritual lives of young women, community life, service and outreach. The study suggests that congregations can continue to attract young women and serve the Church and their community, and that the Sisters Initiative can help congregations research, implement, document and disseminate best practices for doing so.



PRESENTATIONS

November 2016

Presentation at Nairobi convening

August 2017

Presentation at Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Board of Directors Meeting

FOCUS GROUPS AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

CRCC spoke with more than 200 key informants through interviews and focus groups during the last year. This background research for the MEL report and Sisters Initiative team provided CRCC with in-depth contextual knowledge about the changes sisters and key players in and outside the Church are seeing in the Church, congregations and ministries. The interviews and focus groups took place with grantees, sisters from 12 countries and other stakeholders with a vested interest in supporting sisters and their work.

CONSULTING WITH THE INITIATIVE'S TEAM

CRCC has developed a constructive and critical dialogue with the Sisters Initiative team since the beginning of the MEL partnership. Ongoing discussions with the Sisters Initiative team and review of grantee data allow CRCC to understand the culture and operational context of the Sisters Initiative's grant making, ultimately helping CRCC evaluate the Sisters Initiative's first strategy. CRCC's team and the Sisters Initiative team have met at least once a month for the majority of the MEL grant. With the transition to new leadership and development of the second Sisters Initiative strategy, CRCC has ramped up provision of its evaluation and technical consultation services in response to the Sisters Initiative team's requests for data and analysis.

VIDEOS

CRCC produced four videos over this reporting period to add to the overall catalogue of nine videos that it has created for the Sisters Initiative since 2014. Two additional videos are in progress. The videos produced during this period focused on the ministerial work of sisters, connections between their work in human development and the SDGs, and the vitality of congregations. The videos include:

- Catholic Sisters: Champions of Sustainable Development
- Catholic Sisters Create a Model of Economic Empowerment in Zambia
- Catholic Sisters: Vocations in Africa
- Encountering God: A Catholic Sister's Journey
- Sustaining Religious Life (in progress)
- Carmelite Sisters (in progress)

WATCH

To see all of CRCC videos about
Catholic Sisters, visit:

<http://bit.ly/sistervideos>





Trends and Challenges



The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation launched its Catholic Sisters Initiative in an evolving Catholic and global context (see Figure 2). Throughout the MEL process, CRCC has established a foundational understanding of the challenges facing religious institutions broadly and Catholic sisters specifically. This knowledge has been essential in the evaluation of the Sisters Initiative’s strategy and has helped the Sisters Initiative team think critically about how to direct its philanthropy. The Sisters Initiative’s transition to its next stage reflects a growing understanding of the changes underway within culture and religion.

As a cumulative MEL report, the following section summarizes findings shared in previous MEL reports and builds upon them with insights drawn from research projects undertaken in the past year to help the Sisters Initiative think about the next iteration of its strategy.

Trends in Religion

As documented in detail in previous MEL reports, the global trends in religion—and Catholicism in particular—can be summarized as a shift from the global north to the global south. Latin America accounts for the largest Catholic population today, though it has started to decline in the face of competition from evangelical and Pentecostal churches, as well as disaffiliation from religion altogether. Christianity is growing rapidly in Asia, and demographers predict that 40 percent of the world’s Christians will be in sub-Saharan Africa by 2050. In Europe and North America, meanwhile, an increasing number of people are disaffiliated from religious institutions, though immigration from Catholic countries has maintained North America’s Catholic population over the past century.¹

The trend of disaffiliation has been particularly challenging for the American Catholic Church. From 2007 to 2014, the proportion of American adults who identified as Catholic fell from 24 to 20.8 percent. Only 16 percent of Millennials (those born between 1981 and 1997) identify as Catholics.² A significant portion of self-identified Catholics are non-practicing “cultural Catholics.”

It is important to note that broad demographic trends can obfuscate national and regional differences, including signs of vitality, stability and decline of religious communities within local contexts. Based on its global research on religion, however, CRCC has identified three trends influencing the larger shifts. **Globalization** has increased people’s exposure to multiple religions, leading to greater pluralism, exploration, choice in religion, and therefore competition. The **digital revolution** has democratized access to information, allowing individuals to become more active participants in their faith and more discriminating “consumers” of local congregations’ offerings. Advances in information technology have allowed for the **rise of networks and decline of bureaucracies**. People can connect directly with a variety of sources of religious content, and scandals that erode trust become more visible, resulting in declining loyalties to institutions.

While the decline in religious affiliation and practice in the United States is unlikely to reverse, CRCC pointed out in the first MEL report that 40 percent of religiously unaffiliated Americans say that religion is very or somewhat important to

their lives.³ Smaller numbers of individuals remain strongly committed to their religions. Since that first report, CRCC concluded its study on Religious Competition and Creative Innovation. Through that research, CRCC developed a paradigm of “reimagined communities” (Figure 1)—groups that are responding to these global trends and helping people find meaning, community and identity both within and outside of traditional religious organizations. These groups remain **bounded** by their religious traditions, yet find ways to be creative within those boundaries, innovating with forms of **embodied** spirituality that resonate **authentically** with participants. They tend to be **embedded** in a particular place, where they enact an **empathetic** vision for a better world. They are **enfranchised** to act, even within hierarchical organizations, and are more focused on spreading ideas than institutions. They are **networked**, enjoying strong connections to other groups, which strengthens their ability to pursue their mission. Finally, these communities are **adaptive**, responding to new challenges as opportunities for spiritual growth. These qualities can be seen in the four congregations that CRCC studied for its report on vitality in religious life.

Fig 1

Characteristics of Reimagined Communities

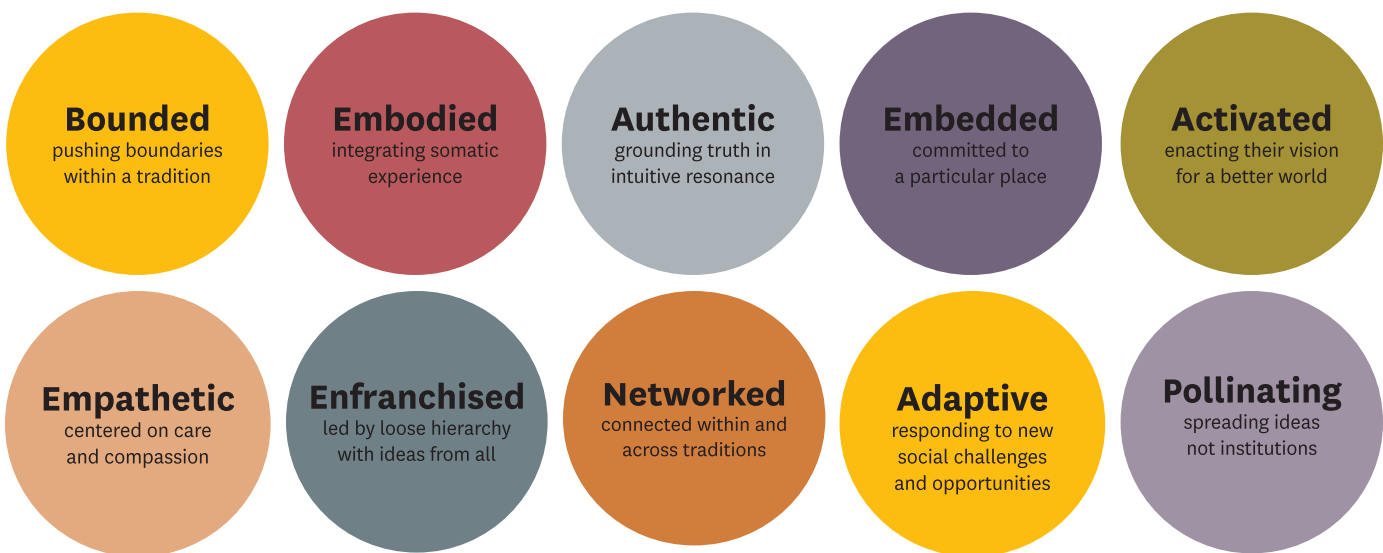


Fig 2

Significant Events and Activities (2013-2018)

	2013	2014	2015	2016
CHURCH	<p>Pope Francis Elected (March 13, 2013)</p> <p><i>Lumen Fidei</i>, encyclical on the Light of Faith, published</p> <p><i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>, apostolic exhortation on The Joy of the Gospel, published</p>	<p>Apostolic Visitation concluded</p> <p>Year of Consecrated Life (Nov. 2014–Nov. 2015)</p>	<p><i>Laudato Si'</i>, encyclical on Care for Our Common Home, published</p> <p>Pope Francis visits the United States</p> <p>Synod on the Family</p>	<p>Year of Mercy (Dec 2015–Nov 2016)</p> <p>UISG Assembly, Vatican City, Vatican</p> <p><i>Amoris laetitia</i>, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family, published</p>
WORLD			<p>Millenium Development Goals End</p> <p>Adoption of Sustainable Development Goals</p>	<p>Donald Trump elected president, affecting funding landscape</p>
HILTON TIMELINE	<p>Strategy Approved</p> <p>Grantee convening</p> <p>Inaugural “National Catholic Sisters Week”</p>	<p>CRCC hired as MEL partner</p> <p>Amsterdam meeting of interested donors</p>	<p>Grantee convening, Pasadena, California</p> <p>“The Nun in the World” Conference, London, United Kingdom</p>	<p>New President and CEO of Hilton Foundation</p> <p>Grantee convening, Nairobi, Kenya</p>
CRCC ACTIVITIES		<p>Trips to Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana with ASEC (through 2015)</p>		<p>Site visits and focus groups in Kenya</p>

	<p>Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development created</p>	<p><i>Gaudete et Exsultate</i>, apostolic exhortation on The Call to Holiness in Today's World, published</p> <p>Synod on Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment</p>
	<p>2017</p>	<p>2018</p>
	<p>New Director of Catholic Sisters Initiative</p> <p>Changing Our World engaged as strategy development partner</p> <p>Approval of directions paper</p>	<p>Catholic Sisters Initiative team retreat</p> <p>Conrad N. Hilton Board of Directors retreat</p> <p>2nd Catholic Sisters Initiative strategy to be submitted to Board of Directors</p> <p>Two Senior Program Officers to join the Catholic Sisters Initiative team</p> <p>US Convening and two convenings in Africa to be held</p>
	<p>Research trips to Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Tanzania</p> <p>CRCC presentation to Board of Directors</p> <p>Vital congregations report</p> <p>Grants Review</p> <p>Strategic Analysis Report</p>	<p>Research trip to Nigeria</p> <p>US human development research</p>

Trends in Religious Life

The demographic shifts in global Christianity can also be seen among Catholic sisters. The number of Catholic sisters in the global north is falling. In the United States, there are currently 47,170 sisters, down from a high point of 180,421 sisters in 1965. Projections documented in the 2017 MEL report show that there will be 16,310 sisters by 2035, 85 percent of whom will be over age 70.

Thirty percent of Catholic sisters globally come from Latin America, with their numbers beginning to decline. Religious life is growing rapidly in Africa and Asia. It is important to note that as with the global trends in religion, these population trends can obscure variations nationally, regionally and even between congregations.

For the most part, African women started becoming sisters in the 1960s and 1970s, with the advent of the Second Vatican Council and the independence of African countries. The first African sisters faced resistance from both orders and their families. Nonetheless, the number of African sisters has increased dramatically. CRCC's interviews with postulants have shown African sisters to be motivated by the examples of other sisters and their desire to serve God

through their care for the poor. There is a concern that the socioeconomic and cultural trends that have driven the downturn in religious vocations in the global north may affect vocations in developing countries. In other words, as women gain more economic options, they may no longer consider becoming sisters. CRCC, however, has not found that African women join religious life only for economic considerations. Other issues are more critical to the retention of African sisters, such as financial support, skill development and spiritual formation as they face increasing demands for their time and labor. The rising number of sisters has not kept up with the growth of the Catholic Church in sub-Saharan Africa, which grew 238 percent from 1980 to 2012.

Reverse mission work also places sisters in ministries in Europe and North America. In fact, the presence of international sisters has helped maintain the vitality of religious life in the United States as the numbers of American-born sisters decline. More than 4,000 international sisters (those born in another country) currently reside in the United States.⁴ New sisters are increasingly coming from immigrant communities as well. For instance, in CRCC's exploratory study on vital congregations, all but four of the 26 sisters interviewed were immigrants or children of immigrants, and a majority identified a first language other than English.



The Changing Catholic Church

As a more than 2,000 year-old institution with 1.1 billion members around the globe, the Catholic Church historically has approached change slowly and cautiously. Shortly after the Hilton Foundation's board approved the Sisters Initiative in 2013, however, the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI and election of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope Francis signaled a significant shift for the Catholic Church.

As the first Latin American pope, Pope Francis represents the Church's demographic shift toward the global south. He also has brought a renewed emphasis on Catholic social teaching and mercy to the Church. He has focused on building a "culture of encounter," in which members of the Church are called to go out to the "peripheries" and accompany vulnerable people who are otherwise disregarded in our "throwaway culture." His 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* ("On Care for Our Common Home") elevated the Church's position on environmental justice, or concern for the impact of climate change and environmental destruction on the poor.

Francis created a new Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development in 2017, bringing together four pontifical councils. He took temporary leadership of the dicastery's work on migration. Francis links migration and human trafficking to climate change, seeing these to be the key issues of the day. This move also was part of a larger effort to reform the Roman Curia, or the administrative units of the Roman Catholic Church, and give more prominence to the Church's social mission within the institutional Church.

The Catholic idea of integral human development, rooted in Catholic social teaching, puts the dignity of the individual person at the center of economic, social, political and spiritual development. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of these system, all of which are needed to support individuals' well-being.

While he has not changed Church doctrine, Francis has opened conversations about divorced and remarried Catholics being able to take communion, the welcome of gay and lesbian Catholics in the Church, and the possibility of ordaining women as deacons. *Amoris Laetitia*, his apostolic



exhortation on the family, presented a pastoral approach for those living in circumstances that the Church defines as "irregular," such as cohabiting, LGBT and divorced and remarried Catholics.

As CRCC wrote in the 2017 MEL report, these changes have brought the official Church in alignment with the work of Catholic sisters around the globe. In some respects, religious women and men have been at the forefront of change in the Church as they "respond to the call of the times" and the needs of the poor. Women Religious provided social services long before the development of state welfare and health care systems. Indeed, integral human development is not only a theoretical concept, but also one that Catholic sisters apply in their holistic approach of helping people at the grassroots level.

Tension has long existed between the clerical culture of the Church and the evangelical and social justice culture of women and men religious. Sisters have gone from being cloistered religious living under significant control of the Church to active women religious living their spiritual witness by serving the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized.

The Catholic Sisters Initiative took shape during an apostolic visitation of institutes of women religious and doctrinal assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Religious communities saw these investigations as an affront to their spiritual witness and ministerial work and a way to reign them in and control them after the reforms of Vatican II. Francis ended both Vatican investigations and has expressed public support for sisters and their work with vulnerable communities.

While Francis has worked to reform the Roman Curia and appoint new bishops and cardinals who embrace his more pastoral approach, CRCC has found that acceptance of these ideas varies widely from country to country and parish to parish. There is strong opposition to Francis from more conservative corners, with worries that he is leading the Catholic Church into schism. Conservative Catholics' desire for a smaller, "purer" Church runs counter to Francis' "big tent" message of acceptance and mercy.

Catholic sisters in the United States have reported resistance from conservative parishioners to the Church addressing "political" issues such as immigration. Meanwhile, sisters in Africa frequently report marginalization by bishops and priests. Even if Rome were to allow women to become deacons, some African sisters told CRCC that local bishops would resist such a move. National and regional religious organizations for women such as the Association for Consecrated Women of East and Central Africa struggled for official recognition because they were women-only religious organizations.

While the Church under Francis aligns with the work and lives of many sisters, the conservative end of the Catholic Church also includes sisters. Because of their pastoral role within the Church, however, CRCC has seen conservative congregations

in the United States embrace Francis' message of evangelization and "encounter." They may be able to serve as a bridge to conservative lay Catholics on social justice issues such as migration and the environment.

New Development Goals

Along with shifts in the Catholic Church, the past five years of the Sisters Initiative has seen the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals and the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 with the aim of ending poverty, fighting inequality and protecting the environment. The SDGs reflect a shift in the international community toward a holistic model of development similar to the approach of the Catholic Church and sisters.

Whereas the MDGs only applied to developing countries, the SDGs are "integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable."⁵ In other words, they can be applied to North America and Europe as well as Africa or Asia. Like the Catholic concept of integral human development, the SDGs "recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection."⁶ Both the Catholic Church and the international community root development in the "inherent dignity" of all people, rather than in economic growth for its own sake. Attention to the individual's spirit is essential to the Catholic concept of human development, making it different from the rationale for the SDGs. But even without a theological underpinning, the international community has developed a framework that aligns well with Catholic social teaching.

The Hilton Foundation has taken a leadership role within the philanthropic world to support the UN SDGs. As such, the Sisters Initiative introduced the concept to major superiors and others participating in its 2016 convening in Nairobi, Kenya. The Sisters Initiative seeks to incorporate the goals into the second iteration of its strategy, helping sisters to become "champions of sustainable development."



Indeed, CRCC’s post-convening survey found that sisters were excited about advancing the UN SDGs, both in terms of raising awareness of the goals as well as advancing new programming and linking existing work to the goals. The survey found a high rate of activity on many of the goals, particularly Goal 4 (quality education), Goal 3 (good health and well-being), Goal 1 (no poverty), Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and Goal 5 (gender equality). Thanks to the alignment of the global framework with Catholic social teaching, Catholic sisters saw the SDGs as relevant and translatable to the goals of the Church.

WATCH

“Catholic Sisters: Champions of Sustainable Development” and other videos on sisters’ ministries

<http://bit.ly/sistervideos>

As the Sisters Initiative has worked on the next iteration of its strategy, CRCC has conducted research about how the Foundation might implement a strategy built in part around the UN SDGs. Based on CRCC’s three case studies on African countries, it is apparent that the interconnectedness of issues—from literacy to health to food security—poses a challenge for implementing a strategy and measuring the impact of sisters on a particular goal. Additionally, while all the SDGs are critical areas in the countries examined, each country has its own development priorities, as well as its own social and political assets and limitations. The Sisters Initiative will have to make difficult decisions about how to focus their funding around human development issues and about how to measure the impact of their interventions in the next iteration of its strategy. Nonetheless, sisters are poised to embrace the UN SDGs and to work to achieve them in their local contexts.

Challenges for Sisters

The above trends present both challenges and opportunities for Catholic sisters, and by association, the Catholic Sisters Initiative. Research and conversations with sisters through the MEL process have revealed commonalities across countries, which are described in the following pages.

It's important to note that CRCC has found that looking at these issues from the level of the congregation, rather than either individual sisters or sisters within a country or region, is most helpful. Although most interventions funded by the Sisters Initiative work with individual sisters, the health of a congregation is a better proxy for measuring the effect of these interventions because ministries are controlled and operated by congregations. Congregations can either amplify or diminish an individual sister's work. Just as other initiatives within the Foundation may measure impact at the district level, the evidence CRCC has collected throughout the first MEL period suggests that the congregation is the appropriate unit of analysis for the Sisters Initiative.

WATCH

“Catholic Sisters Create a Model of Economic Empowerment in Zambia”

“Excel for Sisters: Financial Literacy Training for African Religious Leaders”

<http://bit.ly/sistervideos>

Financial Sustainability

The ability of a congregation to sustain itself financially is essential to its vitality. Through interviews with sisters around the world, CRCC has found that financial sustainability is a common global issue, rather than one that differs in importance across the global north and south.

Traditionally, funding for religious life has come from the global north. During focus groups in Kenya, sisters warned that as vocations fall in the global north, they are receiving fewer resources from European motherhouses for essential activities like formation, education and ministries—which may ultimately have an impact on vocations in Kenya as well. With fewer European sisters working and raising funds from donors, and more sisters needing care as they age, fewer funds are reaching “mission” sites. In fact, some Kenyan sisters reported that their congregations send money back to the global north to help care for aging sisters, and some congregations have moved their motherhouses to Kenya, Nigeria, Mexico or other countries in the global south because of shifts in the populations of sisters and Catholics more broadly. With little reliance on financial support from Europe or North America, local diocesan orders often lack connections for raising funds overseas. While some have matured in terms of fundraising capacity, both locally and nationally, the majority require assistance in creating a fundraising network.

Congregations often earn money from their ministries. Sisters frequently work in ministries outside of their congregations and are paid salaries or stipends, which go to the congregation. As one sister explained, her salary supports herself, a postulant in formation, a sister in school, and one who was sick or retired. Sisters, however, are often under-compensated for their work, which can create an unsustainable cycle. In the United States, sisters were long treated as “cheap labor” in Catholic schools and other

institutions. It was assumed there would always be more young sisters to care for their elderly, so sisters were not paid enough to provide for their long-term care. Nor did sisters pay into the Social Security system. The National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) reported in 2014 that only 40 percent of congregations had adequately funded retirement liabilities. As the number of sisters continues to decline, there are not enough working sisters to support those who have retired. Sisters in Africa fear the same issue will affect the health of their congregations.

The dual desires to serve others and sustain the congregation also can come into conflict. Owning a ministry can provide a sustainable source of income for the congregation, such as through fees collected from hospital patients. At the same time, congregations face difficult decisions about whether to reinvest that income in the ministry or the congregation. A Kenyan sister running a hospital provided an example of this conundrum. She knows that her congregation has invested in her greatly, and she wants to be able to pay herself well enough to compensate the congregation for this investment, since her salary returns to the congregation. At the same time, she wants to put every dollar she can into the hospital and the underpaid lay staff to ensure quality care for patients.

Young sisters in the global north can relate to this challenge. In the vital congregations report, CRCC found that many are attracted to religious life because it is a life of service. They would prefer to be able to volunteer their time to ministries rather than work in a compensated position. Older sisters appreciate their drive, but also see the need to ensure that there are funds to care for sisters into their retirement.

The Sisters Initiative has attempted to address US congregations' crisis of unfunded retirement liabilities. Its grant to NRRO supported the Retirement Fund for Religious and consulting efforts with congregations. Through this grant, approximately 10 percent of women's congregations in the United States saw a significant reduction in their retirement liabilities. NRRO's efforts show the ability of an organization to produce scaled impact on an essential issue. Nonetheless, retirement liabilities remain a significant issue for US congregations.

Not all aging congregations are without assets, however. In particular, congregations that established and later sold US hospital systems have significant assets and often have established foundations through which they continue their charism. Many congregations engage in "impact investing," the practice of using investments to influence companies to be better corporate citizens and to generate social change alongside financial returns. Congregations' assets, however, are beginning to dwindle as they pull money out for retirement. Congregations are also increasingly relying on laypeople to run their impact investment initiatives, which requires those laypeople to understand and act on the congregations' charism. International congregations have tried to involve sisters from the developing world, but have faced differences in opinion about the benefits of investing in and trying to change companies that do harm. Catholic Relief Services has sought to educate African sisters about impact investing as well, in an effort to help congregations find more sustainable sources of income.

A lack of congregational resources also affects the capacity of national and regional leadership councils, which promote collaboration across congregations. These councils are only as strong as their members, so if congregations are struggling to fund themselves, the overarching organizations also will struggle. Congregations prioritize their limited finances to meet basic needs and support their ministries before expending resources on memberships, travel and engagement with national and regional leadership councils.

Through the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC), the Sisters Initiative has also helped African sisters learn grant-writing and financial skills. While some sisters have used these skills to earn money for individual ministries (which ultimately helps the congregation with its assets), perhaps the greatest success stories were when a sister could bring her skills back to the whole congregation and create systemic change. For instance, one sister started a new department that helped the congregation be more strategic about fundraising across ministries. Such efforts highlight how even though a particular intervention might be at the level of the individual sister, the impact can be measured at the level of the congregation.

Human Resources Management

One of the strengths of sisters in human development work is that, because they work as a congregation and not simply as an individual aid worker, they can provide a consistent commitment to a ministry or a community. Applying the concepts of Catholic social teaching and integral human development, they put people first and tackle their challenges holistically.

These strengths are accompanied by significant challenges. In the face of great need, this approach can result in sisters being stretched too thin. Moreover, congregational leadership may move sisters from ministry to ministry as new needs and opportunities arise, resulting in inconsistent personnel on a particular project. When a congregation is under financial duress, its leaders may assign a sister to a ministry that has the potential to generate more income through salary or revenue. If they do so outside of her skill set, the new arrangement can result in low morale. The sister may feel like the congregation is not using or valuing her skills. Congregations are complex organizations, and sisters often do not have the human resources management skills or experience to navigate the challenges of leading such organizations.

In the developing world, congregations shoulder a growing number of ministries. An informal advisor to sisters in Nigeria suggested to CRCC that sisters would ultimately have a greater impact if they were to flip the amounts of time they spend planning and doing—that is, if they were to spend 80 percent of their time networking and building their own capacities, and 20 percent of their time engaged in their ministries and other human development work. Upon hearing this idea, many sisters said such a solution was untenable, yet they agreed that they could spend a more significant portion of their time on planning rather than executing, perhaps dividing their time evenly between those activities. Sisters tend

to say yes to requests—whether from a bishop or community members. Greater planning could allow congregations to be more strategic in their use of human resources and capital so that they could better ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of projects before they undertake them.

Many congregations struggle to find resources to provide sisters with mentorship and training as they take on leadership. The Sisters Initiative has attempted to address the lack of leadership training in Africa through ASEC. Survey data of ASEC alumnae indicate that many sisters are placed in leadership positions in their ministries and congregations after going through the programs. In interviews, alumnae credit the Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) with helping them better deal with communications, staffing, morale and other issues within their roles as leaders.

The success of ASEC's leadership trainings, however, also has resulted in some younger sisters having more training and education than those who lead the congregation. ASEC alumnae reported to CRCC that sisters who are trained are not put into proper positions by leaders. "Older sisters are not open to advice," one young sister said. They also said that there is "no room for dialogue" about matching skill sets to assignments. The combination of increased administrative work and few skilled personnel has resulted in many sisters feeling overworked. Due to financial concerns, sisters may hold both a position within the congregation and an outside ministry. ASEC's training for superiors is a recognition of the importance of ensuring that leaders empower, rather than inhibit, change at a congregational level.

For example, an ASEC alumna was charged with running a school after completing her degree program. Putting her education to use, she made tremendous progress on reforming the school's policies, reaching out to the local community for donations and thereby creating sustainable sources of income in her first six months. The previous sister who had run the school was only there for one and a half years, and the sisters had only two days together for a leadership transition. The ASEC graduate asked her superior for both a longer period at the school so that she could make more progress, as well as a longer transition period so that when she does have to move on to another ministry, all that she has accomplished will not be lost. Because they work at the grassroots

level, sisters acquire in-depth insights about the problems and opportunities shaping a local community. Congregations can be more effective in their human development work if their policies and practices allow sisters to have time to gain these insights, come up with and implement a plan of action, and then share their insights and plans with their successor.

Tensions around human resources management also exist in the United States, though the particulars of the situation are different. Many US congregations face declining membership, which requires leaders to develop creative solutions for managing ministries. Some congregations rely heavily, and sometimes reluctantly, upon their younger members to lead both the congregation and ministries. They may not be afforded the opportunity to gain experience through direct service, and they may lack training for their positions. One young sister expressed her own physical and spiritual exhaustion because she had been constantly moving and changing ministries every couple of years in order to respond to her congregation's needs and to take on work because "older sisters are comfortable and do not want to move."

One strategy for addressing the lack of personnel to lead ministries is to turn to lay associates, employees and volunteers to staff and lead ministries. CRCC found that vital congregations actively engage laypeople in their lives and work. Laypeople can bring professional skills and new networks into sisters' ministries. At the same time, laypeople do not have a deep formation in a congregation's charism. They often have families to support, require larger salaries and cannot dedicate their lives to a ministry in the same way that sisters can. The Sisters Initiative funded the Ministry Leadership Institute, which addresses formation of lay leaders in sisters' health care ministries, but this need extends to other sectors as well.

Generational Differences

Both in the US and Africa, CRCC found that these human resources management and planning challenges result in intergenerational tensions within congregations.

Younger sisters may be hesitant to complain to superiors because of their vow of obedience, but sisters in both contexts have shared with CRCC their frustration at being overworked (serving in a ministry and in congregational leadership, for instance) and of being moved between ministries too quickly. Congregational leadership also may not recognize the contributions younger sisters can make to a congregation or ministry based on their education and skills, particularly in a technologically fast-paced world of smartphones, laptops and social media. Younger sisters can end up feeling unsupported and undervalued in such situations.

At the same time, sisters continue to contribute to their ministries and congregations long after "retirement age." Older sisters have a wealth of experience serving in ministries and navigating Church structures, and their spirituality is deepened by years of prayer and service. Aspirants interviewed for CRCC's exploratory study of four vital congregations said they appreciated seeing the role that older sisters play as mentors and spiritual advisors. A variety of sources—both young and old sisters and laypeople—have expressed to CRCC a desire to capture the stories of older generations of sisters, honor their legacy and learn from their wisdom. More than just honoring them, though, older sisters also need support so that they can continue to live out their charism at all stages of life.

WATCH

**"Catholic Sisters Lead the Way—
Confronting FGM in Kenya"**

**"Educating the Educator: Equipping
Catholic Sisters to Educate in Africa"**

<http://bit.ly/sistervideos>

In Africa, congregations are just beginning to have aging sisters, and many sisters told CRCC they wanted to learn from American and European congregations. But with congregations declining in the US, the generational issues are more acute. Part of the divide comes from differences of experiences around the Second Vatican Council. Older members of congregations went through great turbulence during the years following Vatican II. One member who joined an order in the 1960s said Vatican II “started the unraveling of my dream.... I was put into this world that was only somewhat what I had expected, but then it all just exploded for me.”⁷ Nonetheless, she greatly appreciates how religious life changed in the ensuing years, particularly sisters gaining educational opportunities, no longer serving as “handmaids of the clerical caste” and being able to address structural social issues. Current conservative movements that promote a pre-Vatican II vision of religious life can be disorienting for those who have lived through this history.

Sisters born after Vatican II do not share the same experiences, and therefore, they can be frustrated when those experiences dictate current decisions. An elected leader in her congregation recently wrote about her frustration: “I usually try hard to hold my tongue and not say that I was three years old when that happened, so can we move on already? I am often surprised when I step on a landmine of pain and suffering left over from some long-ago community struggle.”⁸

The Sisters Initiative’s 2013 strategy recognized that it needed to support new generations of sisters. In Africa, ASEC is working on congregations’ management skills among both superiors and young sisters. In the US, Giving Voice became a key hub of generational support and networking for young sisters. This group led to the writing of *In Our Own Words: Religious Life in a Changing World*, a book of contemporary scholarship and reflection addressing the concerns of next-generation Catholic sisters from an intercultural and interdisciplinary perspective, funded through a small grant to the Sisters of St. Francis. The 2013 strategy focuses on the resource needs of aging congregations, but over the past five years, the Sisters Initiative has learned that aging sisters also need emotional and spiritual support.

The intergenerational challenges of understanding and appreciation will continue to be a point of tension within religious life. Older sisters have great wisdom that can benefit the next generations. Their accomplishments and histories deserve recognition. At the same time, younger sisters around the world are embracing uncertainty, building networks, and bringing new knowledge and skills to the table as they respond to the challenges of their times. Young sisters demonstrate hope about the future of religious life and their spiritual witness in this century. Both they and their older counterparts will continue to need support as they navigate a rapidly changing Church and world together.



Lifetime Formation

Management of ministries, questions about personnel and finances, and the day-to-day work with people on the margins of society can create tremendous amounts of stress on women religious. Moreover, a large difference between sisters and lay workers is that sisters do not stop working at the end of the day. They devote their entire lives to serving God through their service to the people around them. Sisters are able to live selflessly for others because of their deep spirituality. Yet, their strength cannot be taken for granted. In interviews with sisters from around the world, CRCC has seen how burnout can hinder sisters' work with the poor and even cause them to leave religious life altogether. For that reason, sisters' access to continued formation—opportunities for personal and spiritual development—across their lives is essential to helping them to continue their ministries.

A woman's journey to religious life typically starts through her own family. A Catholic upbringing, however, is not enough to lead a woman to religious life. Most of the young sisters and postulants CRCC spoke with for its exploratory study of vital congregations were raised as practicing Catholics, but their discernment of a calling to religious life began with a "conversion experience" in which they became more devoted to their faith. These women embedded themselves within a broad network of relationships and ties associated with the Catholic faith, with mentors and peer groups becoming as influential, if not more so, than their own family. CRCC also found that vital congregations are cognizant of the spiritual journey that young women undertake toward religious life today. They actively reach out to women religious on that journey through retreats, youth programs, mentorship and through schools, campus ministries and parishes. Similarly, postulants across a variety of African countries and

congregations reported that seeing and meeting sisters in their ministries inspired them to want to follow in their footsteps and to serve God by serving the poor.

A sister's formal formation begins with a period of aspirancy, which CRCC's study of congregational vitality in Southern California found to be a critical time for young women to adjust to a new way of communal life. Spiritual formation programs for postulants and novices give young sisters a solid foundation in Catholic theology as well as the charism of their congregations. While women joining religious life in the United States often have college degrees, in Africa and other parts of the developing world, women often pursue post-secondary education after they join an order.

There is a concern that young women in developing countries join religious life in order to receive their post-secondary education. During interviews in Zambia, Uganda and Nigeria, CRCC heard that some sisters have left religious life after receiving a degree, although further investigation is necessary to understand how widespread the trend is. Many sisters describe this problem as an issue with formation, saying that young sisters need a deeper grounding in spirituality to help them work through internal and external pressures. CRCC found that both recently graduated sisters and middle-aged sisters face pressure to support their families, which may include orphaned nephews and nieces. Family pressures combined with the strains of long hours working on difficult social problems can lead to burnout. Sisters repeatedly said that their education was essential to their work, but that education alone was not enough. They needed time and space reserved for prayer, retreats, sabbaticals and training programs to sustain their work.

Sisters around the world make the same request. The four vital congregations in Southern California all emphasized the importance of communal living and prayer to sustaining their work. Living as a community, rather than isolated from one another, and having prayer interspersed throughout the day allow for the self-cultivation of the pious virtues of contemplation, surrender and obedience. Even those orders that organize retreats for laypeople hold time away from their regular, income-generating programs to go through retreats for their own spiritual renewal.

In conversations in both African countries and the United States, sisters spoke of lifetime formation as a challenge that congregations could address together. Leaders of congregations and national religious conferences recognize that inter-congregational formation programs could save resources. Congregations' ability to provide effective formation often hinges on resources. The Sisters Initiative has intentionally supported organizations that cross congregations. ASEC, for instance, provides an inter-congregational space that has allowed sisters to come together to gain practical skills. Many graduates told CRCC that the programs also were formative experiences, helping them grow as individuals as they learned about their personalities and leadership styles. In the United States, young sisters have come together through Giving Voice, even across traditionally liberal and conservative orders that were unlikely to collaborate in past generations. Young women who join religious life in the United States today are unlikely to have a large cohort going through the same experiences. They may be isolated by age and culture from their older sisters within their congregation and find it easier to relate to peers in other orders. Projects and social events, such as Sisters Initiative-funded campus ministries at UCLA and USC or even simply a dinner and movie night in Los Angeles, allow sisters of all ages to connect with peers and support each other across congregations. Shared formation is one solution to the challenges of lifetime formation, and it will continue to be an area of opportunity across the world.

WATCH

“Catholic Sisters: Vocations in Africa”

“Encountering God: A Catholic Sister’s Journey”

“Sustaining Religious Life”

<http://bit.ly/sistervideos>

Interculturality

As the Catholic Church becomes more diverse, one of the new areas for formation that sisters are grappling with around the world is *interculturality*, or members of different cultures interacting with and enriching each other. Many sisters have embraced this idea over the more neutral concept of multiculturalism in recent years. Multiculturalism implies a passive coexistence, in which members of different cultures simply work in the same organization. Interculturality is a more active idea, in which exchanges between cultural “others” enhance the individual flourishing and social impact of the entire group.⁹

The concept of interculturality challenges many of the dominant paradigms found in the Church and Western society. The Church and sisters still struggle with vestiges of colonialism and racism. In the United States, there was a history of discrimination against African-American women entering congregations until the mid-20th century. In response to discrimination by white congregations, African-American women formed their own religious communities. The Oblate Sisters of Providence, founded in 1829, were the first of approximately nine predominantly black religious communities formed in the United States.¹⁰

Likewise, many orders in Africa did not allow African women to join religious communities until the mid-20th century. Because they are now numerous, African sisters, along with sisters from Asia and Latin America, may serve in the US and Europe on “reverse mission.” They still encounter racism, with priests, bishops and even their fellow sisters seeing them as servants or caregivers rather than equals. With the decline of religious life in the global north, CRCC also has seen a significant number of connections between sisters from Africa, Asia and Latin America that circumvent previous power structures.

This mix of cultures brings numerous challenges. A recent GHR Foundation-sponsored study of international sisters in the United States found that “five in ten (54 percent) are at least ‘somewhat’ concerned about a sense of belonging, and six in ten (59 percent) are at least somewhat concerned about their ability to participate in the life of their own congregations.”¹¹

US congregations rooted in European cultures are challenged to cultivate a culture of encounter between young women and communities that are unfamiliar to them. Younger sisters—those who identify with Generations X and Y—often come from diverse backgrounds or have intercultural knowledge because of their life experiences. They are leading the way in shaping congregations and bridging their interpersonal and spiritual challenges. For example, in CRCC’s study of congregational vitality in Southern California, one young sister said that she joined a Vietnamese congregation rather than a predominantly Caucasian community because the Vietnamese sisters understood the importance of family in her culture. Sisters in her order, she reported, can spend more time with their parents, visit during special times like the Vietnamese New Year and are allowed to care for their parents before their deaths, whereas some other orders only allow sisters to go home for two weeks every five years. Orders that understand and accommodate familial expectations may be able to better attract women from immigrant communities and relieve a significant strain on sisters.

In Our Own Words: Religious Life in a Changing World, the recently published group of essays by young women religious in the United States mentioned previously, documents the challenges that young sisters face when they enter primarily European and US congregations, along with the strategies that these sisters use to address them. A Latina sister wrote:

Even in the most open comunidades, this process of cultural bridging is more challenging for the minority than the majority. Everything was nuevo, as I was in constant transition learning about the culture of la vida religiosa and the culture of the Midwest all while being evaluated as a novice. I felt vulnerable most of the time and lonely some of the time, especially when misunderstandings occurred.¹²

A 2017 meeting of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) in Manila, Philippines, focused on “building community in an intercultural world.” At the meeting, UISG President Sr. Carmen Sammut said, “Communities in Europe, America and Australia are shrinking, with more younger members coming from Africa and Asia. Cultural differences with resultant misunderstandings often arise.” Congregations with members from the same country are often made up of different ethnic groups, “and sometimes it is more difficult to live together from one country than from many,” Sammut continued. “These difficulties often turn around money, power, ethnic superiority — topics we are often ashamed to speak about and so remain unspoken. In the meantime, there is much suffering and unevangelical behavior.”¹³

The Sisters Initiative has encouraged sisters and their congregations to embrace interculturality through several grants. A pilot program run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet helps congregations cultivate more welcoming and hospitable environments for new sisters and candidates to religious life from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The Sisters Initiative also funded *Engaging Our Diversity: Interculturality and Consecrated Life* through the Catholic Theological Union, to build the capacity of religious congregations in the United States to adapt to and embrace an intercultural environment within their own religious communities and religious life as a whole.

As the Church becomes more interconnected and sisters become more diverse in terms of their age, ethnic backgrounds and cultures, congregations will continue to be challenged to meet sisters’ needs and build strong communication and support networks, both internally and externally, to help sisters thrive. The demand for interculturality programs and education for sisters will increase. Current grantees (Catholic Theological Union, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, UISG, Giving Voice, Global Sisters Report) and other stakeholders (Asociación de Religiosas Hispanas en los Estados Unidos, GHR Foundation) can help the Sisters Initiative better understand the opportunity areas for weaving interculturality into its strategy and supporting effective programming.

Networking

Whether it is through formation or working on the UN SDGs, congregations increasingly understand the benefits of collaborating with each other in all aspects of their missions. Sisters are forming networks across congregations to build relationships and share resources (e.g., knowledge and best practices) as well as coalitions that come together for particular actions. By working together across congregations, sisters represent a powerful force within their local communities and countries. The opportunities for network and coalition building transcend inter-congregational relationships, but reaching other partners beyond the Catholic world has been a challenge.

Inter-congregational networking allows for the efficient use of resources and personnel. In the United States, where the number of Catholic sisters is falling, CRCC has observed a number of inter-congregational coalitions and ministries focused on social issues of great concern. Some coalitions, such as Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants in Chicago, have naturally formed out of the local work of various congregations. Others are national networks but may be less formal, such as Sisters of Earth, which hosts a national conference every other year. The issue of human trafficking may have prompted the most developed network—the US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is part of the international network, Talitha Kum. As a transnational issue, human trafficking has spurred collaborations both on the local scale and the international scale, such as between sisters in Nigeria and Italy, a destination country for many trafficked Nigerian women.

Networking can allow for the creation of ministries that no one congregation could lead on its own. For instance, a number of US congregations collaborate to support houses of hospitality for immigrants who are released from detention. Similarly, UISG created Migrants Projects/Sicily as “an intercongregational, international and intercultural community,” with ten sisters from different congregations working together to respond to the refugee crisis in Southern Italy.¹⁴ Perhaps the most significant international collaboration among orders has been Solidarity with South Sudan, composed of 31 clergy, religious and laypeople from 18 countries and 19 congregations.¹⁵

In addition to creating ministries, networking has led to the formation of coalitions that push for systemic change. Savvy sisters know that their voices, images and presences can bring light to key social issues, change policies or hold the powers-that-be accountable. Some examples of this work in the United States include inter-congregational coalitions that engage in impact investing, Network: The Catholic Social Justice Lobby and Network’s Nuns on the Bus tour. In Nigeria, sisters have held local government officials accountable for their failure to deliver basic services such as electricity or functioning roads to their communities. In many countries, sisters have played a significant role in the writing of laws against human trafficking, to ensure that perpetrators are held responsible and survivors are not punished. UISG also has representatives posted at the United Nations.

In order to create systemic social change, sisters’ networks must expand beyond the Catholic world to engage government, NGOs, foundations and other key players. In US human development work, sisters often have strong relationships with other stakeholders within their particular fields, such as immigration law. The three case studies in Africa found that sisters working in fields such as health care want to be connected both to each other and to the other key players working in the same sectors, but they often lack the organizational and personal capacities needed to form partnerships. NGOs and sisters alike also have misperceptions of each other that hinder collaboration. NGOs often see sisters as service providers and workers rather than leaders of programs with essential knowledge of their communities, while sisters may see NGOs as sources of finance rather than as partners.

The Sisters Initiative’s approach of funding organizations that work across congregations has already contributed to inter-congregational collaboration. In Zambia, sisters lauded Catholic Relief Services’ SCORE-ECD (Strengthening the Capacity of Women Religious in Early Childhood Education) for bringing together a new network and allowing sisters and congregations to share information, thus becoming more effective in their work. ASEC provides a space for inter-congregational learning, and could also help sisters develop the skills needed to collaborate with non-Catholic entities. Moving forward, the Sisters Initiative’s funding can encourage new partnerships and ensure that sisters are treated as leaders who set agendas and direct strategy rather than only workers. In doing so, the Sisters Initiative can help sisters create stronger networks and magnify the impact of their work.

Lack of Data and Research

Perhaps one of the most consistent challenges found across the globe is the lack of data and research on Catholic sisters and the impact of their work. The lack of data prevents the Sisters Initiative—and CRCC as its MEL partner—from measuring the impact of interventions in sisters’ work and the impact of sisters on human development issues more generally. While qualitative and quantitative information is essential to understanding the challenges of religious life, the information currently available about both sisters’ lives and their ministries is not comprehensive.

The Vatican’s annual yearbook provides numbers of Catholic Sisters in every country, but it contains no disaggregated data on sisters (e.g., number of postulants versus fully vowed sisters) comparable to its detailed numbers for seminarians, diocesan clergy and bishops, and the methods used to obtain this data are unclear. Sisters have called some of the numbers into question because they are unsure how information on them was obtained.

In Zambia, for instance, the Zambian Association of Sisterhoods did not know how many congregations were based in the country. Even their member congregations are reluctant to share information. In a survey sent to members, only 19 of 42 congregations responded. More detailed information about sisters at various stages of religious life (e.g., postulants, fully formed sisters, retired sisters, those who leave religious life) could help congregations and national religious conferences invest in key periods of sisters’ lives where intervention and support are most needed to ensure that sisters are able to continue serving vulnerable populations.



The Sisters Initiative has funded research projects to try to create a more complete picture of religious life. Research on vitality in religious life as well as data from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University have helped create a better picture of religious life across the globe. As a research center at a university, CRCC has been able to fill in some of the holes in this larger story through qualitative research and interviews. As the Sisters Initiative transitions into the next iteration of its strategy, it also plans to emphasize the collection and analysis of data. The Sisters Initiative can accomplish this not only through specific data-gathering and research grants, but also by encouraging all partners to collect and report information about how their activities fit into the larger picture that the Sisters Initiative hopes to influence.

Data can provide congregations, organizations that work with sisters and ultimately the Sisters Initiative with opportunities for greater learning. Moreover, turning congregations into learning organizations will open them to insights that can lead to opportunities for innovation and elevate sisters' leadership.

Conclusion

The trends described above help to contextualize the key achievements and challenges of the Sisters Initiative's first strategy. The Sisters Initiative faced the challenge of building a field of philanthropy while simultaneously making effective grants that supported sisters' vitality as well as their ability to continue missions that serve vulnerable communities. In the face of significant changes in global culture, religion and the Catholic Church, the Sisters Initiative's work necessarily involved learning and relationship-building.

Perhaps the most significant challenge that the Sisters Initiative faced was navigating the culture of the Catholic Church and its hierarchy. Over the past five years, the Sisters Initiative sought to engage a wide spectrum of stakeholders, from the Vatican to national religious conferences and local congregations. This holistic approach was necessary because of the lack of data on sisters, their ministries and the organizations that supported them. It has allowed the Sisters Initiative team to identify and influence key organizations that can effect change and help support sisters, particularly after the election of Pope Francis.



On a global level, the Sisters Initiative engaged the Holy See through multiple avenues, including the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), the new Dicastery for Integral Human Development, and the International Union of Superiors General (UISG). The Initiative supported activities for the Year of Consecrated Life, fundraising for ministries and to highlight the role of sisters in international human development. Such efforts helped open closed doors and raise the voices of sisters so that they can influence the policies and culture of the Institutional Church, gaining respect, visibility and power where they have historically lacked it.

The Sisters Initiative also engaged with organizations that act nationally and regionally within the Church. While it is certainly possible to identify global trends that affect sisters, congregations of women religious each have their own cultures, norms and charisms, and operate within unique local contexts. In reviewing the 62 organizations that the Sisters Initiative has funded since 2013, it is clear that the Sisters Initiative was trying to balance a variety of challenges that are distinct to the Catholic Church and sisters, as well as global and local issues, conservative and progressive politics, education and vocation needs, awareness and networking challenges, and research and knowledge gaps.

Such efforts were useful in revealing common challenges that sisters face in their lives and work, and in building collaborative networks dedicated to responding to these challenges. As described above, the Sisters Initiative has funded grants that address the trends CRCC has identified as affecting sisters worldwide. The Sisters Initiative has built relationships with key players and helped bring them together over common challenges. The needs of sister and those they serve are great, however, and the Sisters Initiative's work has just begun. By bringing its relationships and learnings into the next iteration of its strategy, the Sisters Initiative will be better poised to help sisters as they advance human development.





The Evolving Catholic Sisters Initiative



Strategy and Grant Making

The Catholic Sisters Initiative has awarded 92 grants to 62 organizations, totaling \$105 million in funding since its launch in 2013 (Figure 4).¹⁶

The following section covers the Sisters Initiative's grant making and results for its five-year strategy covering 2013-2018. This strategy focuses on partnering with organizations to build the capacity of congregations of women religious in the areas of leadership, membership and resources, with the purpose of enabling sisters to advance human development (Figure 3). The Sisters Initiative's strategy works on these three capacities in the global north and south, defining them as follows:

MEMBERSHIP: The capacity to attract, form, educate and retain members

LEADERSHIP: The capacity to exercise leadership effectively and develop new leaders

RESOURCES: The capacity to attract and steward resources (defined broadly to include not only physical assets and financial capital, but also social capital and knowledge)

The Sisters Initiative’s portfolio has expanded rapidly since 2013. The largest growth period occurred during the ramp up of the portfolio in 2013 with the distribution of more than \$30 million in grants. Another significant amount of funding occurred from 2015 to 2016. The Sisters Initiative awarded more than \$48 million in grants during this period, with a shift toward more global funding efforts (see Figures 5-8).

The Sisters Initiative evolved as it developed partnerships and built a base of knowledge about the needs of Catholic sisters and their congregations around the world. Findings from grantees have challenged some of the underlying assumptions in the Sisters Initiative strategy, including the geographic split between global north and south, and the ability of the Sisters Initiative to measure its effect on the number of new vocations in the global north.

One of the major weaknesses with the strategy is that it lacks a guiding theory of change that explains the dynamics of building the capacity of congregations and the possible drivers through which change might arise. The lack of a theory of change to frame the strategy and grant making is

partially the product of having insufficient information on sisters and their work prior to the development of the strategy. This dearth of information and understanding of the underlying processes driving change in sisters’ congregations also clouded the development of measures that could realistically capture the impact of the Sisters Initiative on the capacity of congregations and their human development ministries. The strategy does not clearly define inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

The final reporting period for the five-year strategy was a period of transition, marked by reflection, limited grant making, significant changes in staffing and leadership, and the development of a new five-year strategy. From September 2016 to January 2018, the Sisters Initiative added \$14 million in grants, including seven new grantees (highlighted in red in Figure 4). Some of the grants made during this period and the Foundation’s decision to engage new leadership in 2017 reflect what the Sisters Initiative’s has learned since its inception. It also is clear that the Sisters Initiative has incorporated learnings and opportunity areas from the previous five years into the next iteration of Sisters Initiative strategy.

fig. 3
The Catholic Sisters Initiative Strategy

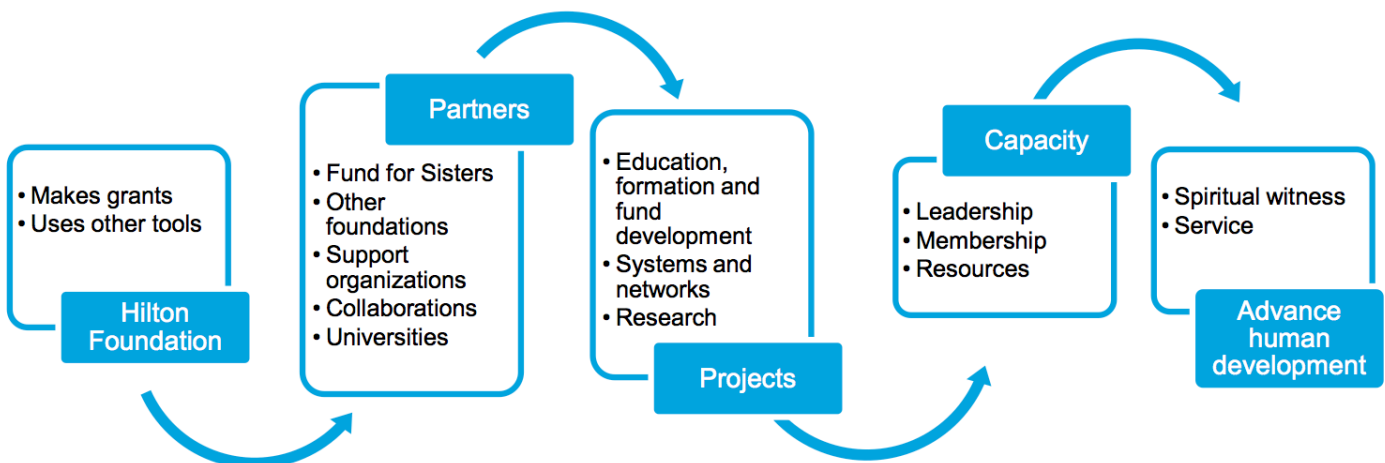


fig. 4

Grantees from 2013–2018

Grants listed in order that they were awarded.
Red highlight indicates new grantees in last reporting period.

Total **\$105,045,000**

	GRANTS	AWARD (USD)
2013	Marywood University (ASEC)	\$ 980,000
	Ministry Leadership Center	1,000,000
	Catholic Church Extension Society of USA	3,000,000
	Marywood University (ASEC)	4,500,000
	Marywood University (ASEC)	3,850,000
	National Catholic Reporter Publishing Company	2,300,000
	A Nun's Life Ministry	525,000
	St. Catherine University	3,300,000
	Leadership Conference of Women Religious	500,000
	African Sisters Education Collaborative	50,000
	National Religious Vocation Conference	2,550,000
	Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate	150,000
	Catholic Volunteer Network	1,700,000
	National Religious Retirement Office	2,500,000
	Catholic Relief Services	3,500,000
2014	Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose	15,000
	University of Southern California	2,500,000
	Support Our Aging Religious, Inc.	250,000
	Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose	750,000
	National Religious Vocation Conference	2,000,000
	Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters	500,000
	Laboure Society	250,000
	Institute for Global Engagement	150,000
	African Sisters Education Collaborative	45,000
	International Union of Superiors General	700,000
	Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious	1,350,000
	DePaul University School for New Learning	990,000
	Catholic Theological Union at Chicago	1,000,000
	Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities	40,000
	Medicines for Humanity	400,000
	African Sisters Education Collaborative	575,000
	Loyola Institute for Ministry	900,000
	Sisters of Mercy of the Americas	1,000,000
	Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University	750,000
	Holy See	750,000
Georgetown University	750,000	
Anderson Robbins Research LLC	300,000	
Communicators for Women Religious	70,000	
2015	Catholic Theological Union at Chicago	100,000
	Faith in Public Life, Inc.	50,000
	Religious Formation Conference	30,000
	Zambia Association of Sisterhoods	375,000
	Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet	830,000
	University of Southern California	105,000
	National Catholic Reporter Publishing Company	2,980,000
	Society for the Propagation of the Faith	450,000

GRANTS		AWARD (USD)
2015	Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit	\$ 390,000
	A Nun's Life Ministry	900,000
	Laboure Society	2,000,000
	Marywood University	8,500,000
	Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland	300,000
	Catholic Health Association of India	875,000
	Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa	300,000
	Communicators for Women Religious	1,500,000
	The North American Foundation for the University of Durham, Inc.	985,000
	Catholic Church Extension Society of USA	2,000,000
	Our Savior Parish and USC Caruso Catholic Center	500,000
	Vocations Ireland	290,000
2016	Oblate School of Theology	340,000
	Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	500,000
	Sisters of St. Francis	45,000
	Marywood University (ASEC)	15,300,000
	Healey International Relief Foundation Inc.	525,000
	School Sisters of Notre Dame	225,000
	Alverno College	2,750,000
	LifeNet International	900,000
	Medicines for Humanity	250,000
	Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate	240,000
	Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities	80,000
	Catholic Medical Mission Board, Inc.	165,000
	National Association of Vocation and Formation Directors	90,000
	Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters	500,000
	Saint Leo University	420,000
	Catholic Volunteer Network	1,700,000
	Leadership Conference of Women Religious	780,000
Catholic Theological Union at Chicago	360,000	
International Union of Superiors General	200,000	
Hofstra University	25,000	
2017	Institute for Global Engagement	160,000
	Africa Faith and Justice Network	360,000
	School Sisters of Notre Dame	15,000
	Sisters of Mercy of the Americas	840,000
	Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate	35,000
	School Sisters of Notre Dame	1,500,000
	Catholic Relief Services	2,730,000
	Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose	1,000,000
	Our Savior Parish and USC Caruso Catholic Center	45,000
	Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland	750,000
	Georgetown University	990,000
	Loyola Institute for Ministry	600,000
	Ministry Leadership Center	650,000
Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation	75,000	

fig. 5

Grantees by Region

GLOBAL NORTH	Anderson Robbins A Nun's Life Ministry Catholic Extension Catholic Theological Union Catholic Volunteer Network Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate Communicators for Women Religious Council of Mother Superiors of Women Religious Duquesne University Faith in Public Life Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities Giving Voice Labouré Society Leadership Council of Women Religious Loyola Institute for Ministry Ministry Leadership Center National Catholic Sisters Week National Religious Retirement Office National Religious Vocations Conference Our Savior Parish & USC Caruso Catholic Center Religious Formation Conference Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation Sisters of Charity Foundation Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Sisters of St. Francis Support our Aging Religious (SOAR!) Vocations Ireland	AFRICA	Africa Faith and Justice Network Association of Consecrated Women of Central and West Africa Catholic Relief Services Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters DePaul University Georgetown University Institute of Reproductive Health Healey International Relief Foundation LifeNet International Loyola Institute for Ministry* Marywood University/African Sisters Education Collaborative Saint Leo University Zambia Association of Sisterhoods
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Catholic Extension Medicines for Humanity Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose	ASIA	Catholic Health Association of India Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University
		GLOBAL	Catholic Medical Mission Board, Inc. Global Sisters Report/National Catholic Reporter Hofstra University Holy See International Union of Superiors General Oblate School of Theology School Sisters of Notre Dame Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Society for the Propagation of the Faith (Global/Africa) Durham University/Heythrop College/ Margaret Beaufort Institute (Europe/Africa) USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture

*prior grant is a global north grant so they appear in 2 regions

fig. 6

Funding by Region 2013-2018

Africa	Global North	LAC	Asia	Global
\$ 47,690,000	\$ 33,885,000	\$ 7,415,000	\$ 1,625,000	\$ 14,430,000

fig. 7

Annual Trends in Initiative Funding by Region

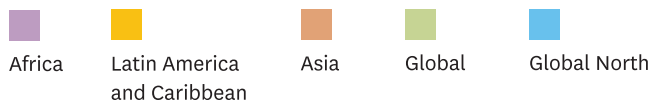
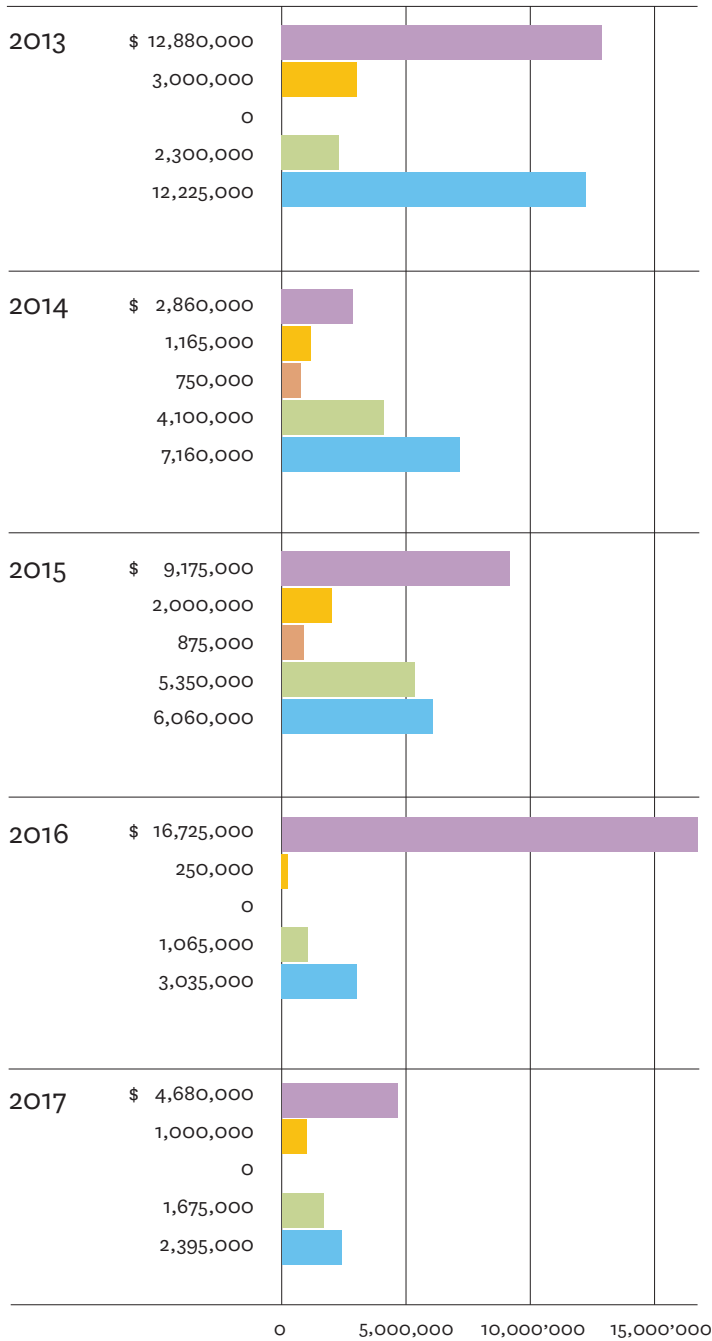
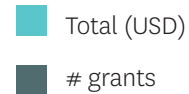
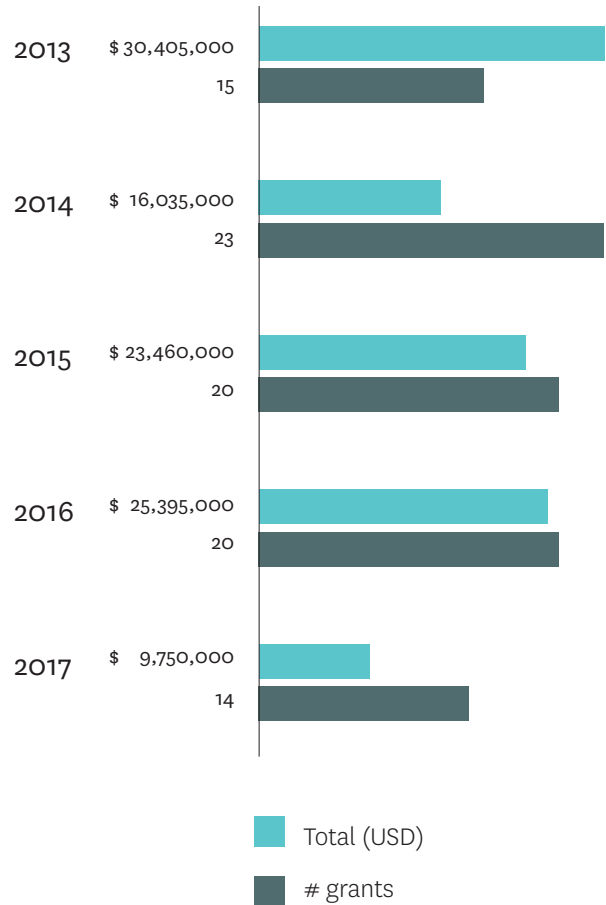


fig. 8

Grant Making Over Time



**Indicators of Success:
Cumulative Report Card**

Prior to developing the 2013 strategy, the Sisters Initiative team conducted a landscape analysis of the global needs of sisters. The strategy’s six indicators of success (Figure 9) reflect the major gaps identified in this analysis. These include postsecondary education, leadership and effective financial stewardship of congregations in the global south, and the fostering of religious vocations, nurturing young leadership in congregations and managing retirement liabilities in the global north. This section documents the Sisters Initiative’s cumulative work on the current indicators of success over the past five years. Some grants are ongoing, and other grants may have results over a longer term than five years. Understanding the full impact of the Sisters Initiative’s funding is also restricted by the challenges that the indicators have created for the Sisters Initiative. CRCC concludes this section with suggestions for future indicators and reporting mechanisms.



fig. 9

Indicators of success

	<i>Global South</i>	<i>Global North</i>
MEMBERSHIP	Increase number of sisters with postsecondary credentials	Increase number of women who enter religious life
LEADERSHIP	High percentage of sisters with leadership training assume leadership positions	Increase number of qualified leaders under 60
RESOURCES	More congregations engage in effective financial planning	Higher percentage of congregations are more than 60 percent funded in retirement liability

Global South

The three indicators of success for the global south present a mixed picture of success for the Sisters Initiative's current strategy. They also offer opportunity areas for the next iteration of the strategy. The most successful and robust indicator is the global south goal for membership: increasing the number of sisters with postsecondary credentials. A wide range of data from many grantees fits under this indicator. The successes under this indicator are a credit to the Sisters Initiative, its grantee partners and the ability to develop programs that could capture progress on this measure.

The other two indicators of success—a higher percentage of sisters with leadership training that assume leadership positions, and more congregations engaged in effective financial planning—are largely measured through the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC). It would be beneficial to have data from multiple grantees on each indicator, in order to have a clear picture of the success or challenges grantees face in achieving change.

MEMBERSHIP

More sisters with post-secondary credentials that prepare them for ministry

The largest and most successful portion of the Sisters Initiative's portfolio is reflected in the global south membership indicator. A broad range of grantees support sisters' educational programs, from placement at universities for advanced degrees to diploma and certificate programs through training initiatives and colleges. The number of sisters with credentials does not fully capture the full scope of postsecondary training activities. For instance, Lifenet International provides in-service training to sisters working in the Ugandan health sector to increase the quality of their services to patients. CRCC has included in-service training under this indicator regardless of whether sisters earn credentials through these programs.

Although the target of this indicator has been successfully "met," CRCC's case studies show a continued need for education and training that prepare sisters for human development work. Furthermore, the number of sisters with post-secondary credentials does not capture the larger impact of these trainings (e.g., the behavioral changes within a community that such trainings support). Interviews with ASEC graduates give evidence that training can help sisters improve their ministries and sometimes their congregations' operations. Health care grantees such as Lifenet International and Medicines for Humanity have linked their training programs to increased access to maternal and child health services and better health outcomes. For example, Medicines for Humanity has done extensive training on integrated management of childhood illnesses, nutrition and maternal and child health care for sisters, lay medical staff and community health workers at the Little Sisters' Rivière Froide clinic in Haiti. During this period the number of clinical consultations for pregnant/postnatal women and children under five have increased from 1,000 visits in 2014 to 2,695 visits in 2017. The local community has also seen a dramatic decrease in maternal deaths, from nine in 2015 to none in 2017, and a decrease in deaths of children under 5, from 26 in 2015 to 21 in 2017. The next iteration of the Sisters Initiative's strategy could encourage grantees to move beyond measures of outputs and begin to capture the impact of their work, as Medicines for Humanity has done. Such an effort would allow the Sisters Initiative and its grantees to understand the short- and long-term effects of these educational efforts on sisters, their ministries and the communities they serve, and develop more specific targets. Measuring the impact of these educational efforts could be built into new grants or funded through post-project evaluations.

fig. 10

Membership—Global South

Grants	Metrics 2013–2018
<p>African Sisters Education Collaborative/ Marywood University Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) Higher Education for Sisters in Africa</p> <p>GRANT: \$33,800,000</p>	<p>SLDI Phase III (2013-2015):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1064 sisters servedNumber of leadership workshops increased from 24 (in Phase II) to 32Workshops held in 2 additional countries: Cameroon and MalawiTechnology workshops increased in length from 2 to 3 weeks <p>SLDI Phase IV (2016-2018):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1,474 sisters served (technology, leadership & superior general workshops) <p>HESA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">772 sisters have participated in degree or diploma program608 sisters enrolled in coursework131 sisters graduated
<p>Catholic Church Extension Society</p> <p>GRANT: \$5,000,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">34 Sisters from Latin American congregations serving in the US dioceses trained at the Mexican American Catholic College and participated in ongoing pastoral ministry education at Barry University and Boston College, worth 6 credit hours2 sisters completed G.E.D.1 sister completed Bachelor's Degree3 sisters completed a one-year intensive English course at Central Washington University
<p>Catholic Health Association of India</p> <p>GRANT: \$875,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">172 sister-nurses trained as community health activists24 religious congregations, representing 128 Provinces (with a total of 30,217 sisters including 6,329 sister-nurses and 310 sister-doctors), attended consultation workshops. These include 112 Provincials/Superior Generals.
<p>Catholic Relief Services</p> <p>GRANT: \$6,230,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">96 Early Childhood Development Master Trainers from 48 congregations trained, accompanied and mentored 2,720 sisters and reached more than 10,000 caregivers across Zambia, Kenya and Malawi

<p>DePaul University/Tangaza University College GRANT: \$990,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36 congregational leaders completed the three modules of Faith and Praxis Certificate in the Practice of Organizational Leadership (CPOL) program 5 sisters who took the program for credit graduated <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Leadership module</td> <td>4 (A)</td> <td>5 (A)</td> <td>4 (B)</td> <td>5 (B)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Participants</td> <td>16</td> <td>16</td> <td>33</td> <td>32</td> </tr> </table>	Leadership module	4 (A)	5 (A)	4 (B)	5 (B)	Participants	16	16	33	32
Leadership module	4 (A)	5 (A)	4 (B)	5 (B)							
Participants	16	16	33	32							
<p>Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose (SLDI - América Latina) GRANT: \$1,750,000</p>	<p>35 sisters graduated with a university diploma</p>										
<p>Healey Relief International GRANT: \$525,000</p>	<p>15 sisters enrolled in university programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 at domestic (Sierra Leone) universities 3 in US universities 2 at other African universities (Ghana and South Africa) 										
<p>Lifenet International GRANT: \$900,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 96 training sessions with 31 sisters to strengthen and improve the function of the health system in Uganda through sister-led health facilities 10 sister-led facilities served (exceeding goal of 8) Improved care for 130,860 patient visits, including 2,834 deliveries, at 10 facilities 										
<p>Loyola Institute for Ministry GRANT: \$1,500,000</p>	<p>Communicating Charism Grant (2014 – 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38 total students completed either the Graduate or Continuing Education Certificate in Theology and Ministry, each worth 18 credits Students took an additional 75 courses in Summer 2017-Spring 2018 towards 36-credit credentials 										
<p>Medicines for Humanity GRANT: \$650,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 sisters trained as traditional birth attendant trainers 43 sisters, 47 lay staff and 32 community health workers trained and certified on Integrated Management of Childhood Illness 56 sisters trained on healthcare management 										
<p>Saint Leo University GRANT: \$420,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed Human Trafficking and Project Planning courses Identified five African countries (South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and Madagascar) for instruction 										

Society for the Propagation of the Faith

GRANT: \$450,000

- 18 sisters were supported in studies for an Agricultural MBA

Note: this data only includes the Agricultural MBA portion of the grant.

Women of Wisdom and Action Initiative/ Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University

GRANT: \$750,000

- 12 sisters from China, India, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam graduated through WWA/JST

LEADERSHIP

High percentage of sisters with leadership training assume leadership positions

Data for the leadership indicator in the global south comes solely from ASEC. This information is drawn from surveys of SLDI alumnae during different grant phases of the program. These surveys give a brief snapshot of sisters' roles in their congregations and ministries after receiving training through SLDI. Close to half of SLDI alumnae that participated in these surveys reported receiving promotions and were asked to

participate in leadership activities. From CRCC's interviews and focus groups with congregational leaders, the SLDI program is clearly valued and participants are viewed as skilled potential leaders in their congregations.

If the Sisters Initiative continues with its focus on developing leaders in the next iteration of its strategy, it could require its grantees to capture the effect of leadership training on sisters and their congregations. This might involve long-term follow-up with participants to see how their leadership roles evolve over time as well as interviews with their congregational leaders, fellow sisters and lay colleagues.

fig. 11

Leadership—Global South

Grants

African Sisters Education Collaborative/ Marywood University *Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) Higher Education for Sisters in Africa*

GRANT: \$33,800,000

Metrics 2013–2018

SLDI Phase III Participants (N=386)

- Received a promotion: 39%
- Asked to participate in other leadership activities: 46%

SLDI Phase IV Participants (N=255)

- Received a leadership role/promotion in her ministry: 82%
- Received a leadership role/promotion outside her ministry: 53%

Note: For both leadership and resources, CRCC is using ASEC survey data from the final year of SLDI Phase III, which ran from 2013 to 2015, and the most recent year of the ongoing Phase IV (2017). Questions were phrased differently between surveys. N is the total number of respondents to each question.

RESOURCES

More congregations engage in effective financial planning

ASEC’s SLDI alumnae surveys provide the only data on the resources indicator in the global south. While these surveys show that sisters’ participation in workshops can have an impact on the congregation, they do not provide a comprehensive picture of how such efforts affect congregational financial planning. Measuring improvements in congregation financial planning and financial health requires grantees in the future to focus on long-term qualitative and quantitative measures that simultaneously capture the process of improving financial outcomes and how a sister’s training helps her influence the congregation’s long-term financial planning. For example, post-training surveys of alumnae might be complemented by more in-depth interviews, record and policy reviews and case studies of congregations to document changes in their financial planning and outcomes over time. Understanding the steps toward a congregation’s financial improvement is critical to improving training programs and building congregational capacity.

Through interviews with ASEC graduates, CRCC has collected initial information about the impact of ASEC’s trainings on congregations’ financial planning. As covered in the “Trends and Challenges” section, Catholic sisters in Africa are worried about the financial sustainability of their congregations and see their local sustainability as interconnected with the fate of religious life internationally. Sisters who have gone through ASEC’s leadership and financial literacy trainings, or have received a diploma or degree through HESA, are able to implement best practices within their ministries and congregations. Many sisters have used grant-writing skills learned through ASEC to raise funds for specific ministries, which in turn support their congregations. A few sisters reported starting development work on the congregational level, allowing them to have a greater impact on the financial sustainability of the entire congregation rather than of individual ministries.

Young ASEC alumnae also report that they need their superiors’ support to best utilize their new skills. Human resources management is closely related to effective financial planning. While ASEC’s workshops for superiors have helped address this, CRCC found a generational divide in sisters’ embrace of planning. In addition to giving sisters the skills to raise money, it is also essential that congregational leaders are able to plan how to best utilize their personnel and resources to ensure that congregations remain strong well into the future.

fig. 12

Resources—Global South

Grants	Metrics 2013–2018
<p>African Sisters Education Collaborative/ Marywood University Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) Higher Education for Sisters in Africa</p> <p>GRANT: \$33,800,000</p>	<p>SLDI Phase III Participants (N=343)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Implemented both a strategic plan and financial plan for their congregation: 17%■ Implemented a strategic plan: 13%■ Implemented a financial plan: 15% <p>SLDI Phase IV Participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Implemented a strategic plan: 36% (N=248)■ Implemented a financial plan: 35% (N=238)

Global North

The focus of grants in the global north has been on nurturing a culture of vocations to religious life and raising awareness about sisters and their ministries. Raising awareness of sisters originally was part of the indicator for increasing membership in the global north, but as the Sisters Initiative has evolved, it began to recognize that awareness is woven into all the global north and south indicators.

The availability of data on all these indicators has been an issue. There is little data to gauge success in meeting the membership indicator. There has been some targeted success with training young leaders under 60, but one of the lessons of these grants is that training does not ensure that these younger sisters are “qualified” and able to meet the increasing demands of their congregations and ministries. Similarly, the data indicate a modest degree of success in ensuring that a higher percentage of congregations are above 60 percent fully funded in terms of retirement liabilities.

MEMBERSHIP

More women enter religious life

A woman’s decision to join a congregation is the result of many factors, including a strong call to religious life, support of family and community members, the ability to manage student debt and acceptance by a religious congregation. The process of discernment takes place over many years, then a woman may spend significant time as an aspirant before starting formation as a postulant and eventually a novice. Research commissioned by the Sisters Initiative determined that 95 women become sisters in the United States every year. It is unclear whether the Sisters Initiative has affected this baseline number at this time.

The closest proxy measure that the Sisters Initiative can use to gauge its success at increasing membership is the data from the two grantees that together helped 21 aspirants alleviate their student debt and enter religious life. Most congregations will not accept a woman as a member until she has cleared her debt. The beneficiaries of these programs already made a choice to pursue a religious vocation, had identified their chosen congregations and had worked through all the other social and spiritual challenges of entering religious life. Student debt was their last major obstacle. The Sisters Initiative’s funding, therefore, proved to be a tipping point for these aspirants’ entrance into congregations.

Other grantees aim to encourage women to start their journey of discernment. For instance, the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious held a highly successful discernment conference in 2016. These grants, however, do not track what happens to young women in their programs and religious congregations. Post-program data is needed in order to measure whether such programs are correlated with an increase in the number of vocations. The measures in Figure 13 indicate outputs of their programming rather than outcomes (e.g., women entering religious life). In the future, the Sisters Initiative could require these programs to provide some measurement of post-program success, which may include tracking women on their discernment journey. This may necessitate additional funding and technical expertise.

Finally, the Sisters Initiative developed grants under this indicator that aimed to increase vocations by increasing awareness of religious life in the global north. CRCC left these “awareness” grants out of this indicator because grantee data does not link these grants to vocations, and it would be nearly impossible to attribute an increase in vocations to these grants. Furthermore, through the MEL process, CRCC found the outcomes and impact of these awareness grants are not captured under the current set of indicators.



fig. 13

Membership—Global North

Grants	Metrics 2013–2018
<p>Catholic Volunteer Network GRANT: \$3,400,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 31 congregations start volunteer programs for women ■ 10 retreats for 122 people discerning religious vocations
<p>Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious GRANT: \$1,350,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 93% of GIVEN Conference attendee survey respondents plan to stay in contact with religious sisters by phone, email, visiting, or other means ■ 69% of attendee survey respondents either became more open to religious life because of their interaction with sisters at GIVEN or were already open to religious life <p>Note: Total number of survey respondents was not provided; no follow-up data for interactions between sisters and attendees.</p>
<p>Labouré Society GRANT: \$2,250,000</p>	<p>7 women entered religious congregations</p>

**National Religious Vocations Conference/
National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations**

GRANT: \$2,550,000

14 candidates entered religious congregations
(1 postponed her entry because of illness)

**Our Savior Parish and
USC Caruso Catholic Center**

GRANT: \$545,000

USC

- 7 women visited and learned about four local women's religious communities
- 6 women attended silent retreat
- 5 students participated in discernment day
- 25 students attend sister speech on prayer
- 35 students and staff participated in Nun Run 5k
- 12 women went on Serving with Sisters Alternate Spring Break Trip
- 2,735 meaningful conversations with students, including 633 with Vocations Alive Team
- 827 vocation conversations with students, including 91 with Vocations Alive Team
- 22 Communities and 125 individual women and men religious visited
- 60 women and men at various stages of discernment to religious life

UCLA

- Know Love Serve discernment group
- 1,700 intentional conversations with students (5 full-time staff and 4 FOCUS missionaries)
- 220 vocation conversations with female students (staff and FOCUS)
- 162 vocation conversations with male students (staff and FOCUS)
- 20 religious communities (11 women, 9 men) and LA Archdiocese; 33 student helpers at Vocations Fair
- Vocations Panel
- Kino Border Mission Trip

Vocations Ireland

GRANT: \$290,000

- 60 congregations have benefited from professional upskilling, including 6 missionary congregations
- 2,300 discerners from Ireland have logged into vocation match
- Development of eight discernment groups across the country and Northern Ireland (10-15 women per group)

LEADERSHIP

More qualified leaders under 60

The Sisters Initiative has made slight progress toward meeting the indicator target under leadership. Most of this progress comes out of one grant: the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Collaborative Leadership Development Program. Two other grants related to leadership in the global north have funded Giving Voice, an organization that supports sisters under 50 in the United States, and an offshoot book project that documents younger sisters' experiences and spiritual witness. This book project reveals opportunities for future funding by providing evidence of areas in which younger sisters need support. With its second grant, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious is updating and expanding its Leadership Pathways training modules for use with younger members who are not currently in elected leadership. This grant does not provide measures that contribute to this leadership indicator at this point so it is included in another section of the report.



As discussed in the “Trends and Challenges” section, the needs of younger sisters in the global north and south often overlap as they take on the mantle of leadership in their congregations and ministries.

fig. 14

Leadership—Global North

Grants	Metrics 2013–2018
Giving Voice/Catholic Theological Union GRANT: \$1,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 6 retreats for sisters (4 for sisters in their 20s and 30s; 2 for sisters in their 40s)■ National gathering■ Training in Peer Spirit Circle Process
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas GRANT: \$1,840,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 160 sisters under 60 years graduated from the Collaborative Leadership Development Program■ 23 participants to graduate in November 2018
Sisters of St. Francis GRANT: \$45,000	Young sisters produced a book of contemporary scholarship and reflection addressing the concerns of next-generation sisters from an intercultural and interdisciplinary perspective.

RESOURCES

Higher percentage of congregations are above 60 percent fully funded in terms of retirement liabilities

The Sisters Initiative has made some modest progress toward assisting congregations in managing and funding their retirement liabilities. More could be done in the future to assist both NRRO and SOAR! in their work. The Sisters Initiative might consider providing additional funding to these or other organizations that assist congregations with retirement liability issues and help them provide substantial grants to congregations that are struggling to meet the high costs of ongoing medical services and elder care. The average SOAR! grant to a congregation is only \$18,000, and the congregation must use it to meet an “immediate retirement need,” such as therapeutic and medical equipment and facility improvements to help aging religious.

One of the significant lessons from the past five years has been the transnational nature of issues affecting sisters and their congregations. Issues such as retirement liabilities were originally designated as a “global north” problem, but sisters in several countries in the global north and south identified aging and retirement liabilities as global challenges that congregations are facing everywhere. Sisters in the global south want to learn from the challenges sisters in the global north have faced in addressing long-term financial planning for retirement. In the United States, some congregations, especially those that built health care systems that they later sold off, are set up to meet their retirement needs, while those who were rooted in educational ministries find themselves struggling to meet the needs of their aging sisters.

In response to the Sisters Initiative’s request, CRCC will be working on a landscape study of the challenges of aging and funding retirement in women’s religious congregations over the summer of 2018. It is hoped this study will aid the Sisters Initiative in identifying innovative ways to support congregations in planning for their long-term retirement needs and supporting elderly sisters.

fig. 15

Resources—Global North

Grants	Metrics 2013–2018
<p>National Religious Retirement Office GRANT: \$2,500,000</p>	<p>Approximately 10% of women’s congregations in the United States saw a significant reduction in their retirement liabilities.</p>
<p>Support Our Aging Religious (SOAR!) GRANT: \$250,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Online donations have increased from 118 to 708 (2014–2017) ■ Total giving by sustainers in June 2017 was \$4,728.91, a 60% increase from the same period in June 2014



Other Grantees

The indicators of success incorporate 24 of the 62 organizations (39 percent) that have received funding from the Sisters Initiative. Because the Hilton Foundation was building a new philanthropic field when it launched its Catholic Sisters Initiative, these indicators do not provide a comprehensive picture of the Sisters Initiative's activities or its successes. In past MEL reports, CRCC has attempted to re-categorize grants by the areas in which the organizations work, including strategic development, research/field-building, education and leadership development, and communications and media (or awareness).

For this cumulative MEL report, CRCC highlights in this section the grantee organizations that do not have data that feed into the Sisters Initiative's indicators of success but represent learning opportunities for areas of importance that have emerged over the years since the launch of the first strategy. These are listed, along with the metrics that they provided as a measure of success, in three categories below: relationship and organizational capacity-building grants; awareness grants; and research grants.

The inability to fit these grantees' projects and metrics into the indicators of success shows the importance of ensuring that grants fit the strategy and that grantee organizations provide measurements that feed into the larger strategy.

RELATIONSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING GRANTS

When the Foundation launched the Catholic Sisters Initiative, it entered a Catholic world in which it was a new player. As described in the "Trends and Challenges" section, a significant accomplishment of the past five years was engaging a wide array of stakeholders and identifying and influencing key organizations that could effect change and help support sisters. The following grants broadly encompass the Sisters Initiative's work building organizational capacity and building relationships. Their metrics vary greatly and include hosting events, creating publications and funding sisters' leadership within the Church. Leadership activities under these grants, however, could not fit under either the global south or global north leadership indicators of success.

fig. 16

Relationship and Organizational Capacity-Building Grants

Grants	Metrics 2013–2018
Association of Consecrated Women of East and Central Africa GRANT: \$300,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ \$150,000 in construction debt cleared■ Financial systems and audit set up■ Development of formation and leadership framework and Leadership for Mission Program■ Zimbabwe Conference of Women Religious Superiors added as associates
Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters GRANT: \$1,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 11 SLDI graduates awarded grants in Ghana (3); Kenya (2); Nigeria (1); Tanzania (2); Uganda (2); Zambia (1)■ Gravity water supply project (Tanzania) benefited 8,600 people in the region■ Funded regional leadership conferences meetings, including the August 2017 Association of Consecrated Women of East and Central Africa Plenary Assemblies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA) GRANT: \$40,000	Study of studies report: <i>Understanding US Catholic Sisters Today</i>
Holy See Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL) GRANT: \$750,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Multiple sub-grants to regional religious conferences in Africa, Latin America and Caribbean and Asia for Year of Consecrated Life activities■ Defray the cost for 30 sisters representing each of the continents to travel to Rome to attend 4 global events
Institute for Global Engagement GRANT: \$310,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 10 Center for Women, Faith and Leadership Fellows including 2 sisters■ Fellows invited to major global conferences, including a Vatican-sponsored human trafficking conference■ Fellows appointed to advanced leadership positions and published extensively

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

GRANT: \$1,280,000

Grant I:

- 60 women religious representing 76 congregations participated in Leadership Pathways initiative
- 14 mentors served as facilitators and discussion leaders for Leadership Pathways modules
- 200 women religious participated in the revised New Leaders Workshop

Note: Data was not disaggregated by age.

Grant II:

- Updating the Leadership Pathways modules; adapting for use with younger members not currently in elected leadership
- “The Well of Grief and the Fountain of Life” workshop developed and presented to members of LCWR Region 3, with approximately 35 members participating
- 11 Deepening Groups with approximately 5 members per group formed and supported

Ministry Leadership Center

GRANT: \$1,650,000

- Published 5,000 copies of *Tradition on the Move*, used extensively in global formation community
- 4 think-tank meetings with thought-leaders in 4 ministry sectors
- 2 summits on leadership formation with a broader group of participants, including several international attendees
- *Advancing Ministry Formation* report

Oblate School of Theology/ Mission Project Service (MPS)

GRANT: \$340,000

- Publication of 9th edition Funding Guide for missionaries
- Approximately 200 individual memberships
- Approximately 120 memberships via MPS workshops

Religious Formation Conference

GRANT: \$30,000

A series of meetings for religious during the Year of Consecrated Life

International Union of Superiors General (UISG)

GRANT: \$900,000

- Increased visibility for UISG within the Vatican, governments (through their Embassies to the Holy See), international organizations and 2,000 congregations of women religious worldwide
- Canon law council established and consultations offered to leaders of congregations worldwide
- Canon law workshops offered in Rome, Nairobi and Vienna
- Strengthening of UISG's communication capacity
- Increased visibility for UISG projects: Migrants and Refugees (Sicily Project and international desk) and Talitha Kum (anti-trafficking worldwide network)
- UISG Plenary

School Sisters of Notre Dame (RUN: Religious at the United Nations)

GRANT: \$1,740,000

Formation of Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR) to promote collaboration on UN SDGs, with 17 RUN congregations as founding members

Zambia Association of Sisterhoods (ZAS)

GRANT: \$375,000

- Training of 28 trainers from 7 provinces on the Care for Mother Earth Our Common Home module
- 23,800 brochures in 6 languages on caring for the environment printed and distributed
- Revision of the course programming of Kalundu Study Centre completed
- Office utility vehicle purchased
- ZAS workplace policies finalized and printed
- 40 participants attended an administration, management and organizational skills workshop



AWARENESS GRANTS

The awareness grants evolved out of the idea in the strategy that the Foundation would “encourage vocations to religious life by supporting programs that make religious life more widely known.”¹⁷ Awareness grants—such as the Global Sisters Report, National Catholic Sisters Project (formerly National Catholic Sisters Week) and A Nun’s Life Ministry—have been fruitful in giving sisters a voice and sharing their witness and ministries to other sisters and the public. It may be possible that by increasing awareness of religious life, more women choose that path, but it is nearly impossible to measure the impact of these grants on vocations. It would be difficult to disaggregate the effects of awareness from all of the other factors that influence a woman’s decision to enter religious life. Nor have grantees asked the questions or gathered the data required to attempt to establish a relationship between awareness and vocations.

Awareness provides additional benefits beyond the possibility of vocations. These include sisters’ ability to mobilize resources and raise funds from supporters, and to exercise leadership, share best practices and shape public opinion on human development issues. Increasing visibility among sisters can give sisters a greater sense of connection to a global network, allowing them build solidarity and resilience in their lives and work.

The following chart includes each grantee’s own measures of success. These metrics include both what the grantees did with the money as well as information on how many people were reached through those efforts. Such metrics, however, do not measure the impact of increased awareness. Measuring the impact of “awareness,” whether on vocations or sisters’ fund raising and leadership, is a challenge that the Sisters Initiative must grapple with if awareness is to be part of the next iteration of the strategy.

fig. 17

Awareness Grants

Grants	Metrics 2013–2018
<p>Catholic Theological Union GRANT: \$460,000</p>	<p>Grant I: Year of Consecrated life activities in the United States</p> <p>Grant II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 21 congregations (17 women’s congregations) participated in a 30-month train the trainer program on building interculturality in congregations and religious life ■ 89 total participants (69 women and 20 men) representing 17 countries ■ Four-day conference on interculturality
<p>Communicators for Women Religion GRANT: \$1,570,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 14 onsite visits with members / regional gatherings ■ 11 exhibits and presentations at meetings and conferences ■ Lynda.com use increased from 79.5% in 2016 to 92% by the end of 2017 ■ Conference attendance: Year 1 (FY2016) 144, Year 2 (FY2017) 148 ■ Increased collaboration with a wide range of Catholic stakeholders including UISG, NRVC, Giving Voice, NCSP, LCWR and Global Sisters Report

Faith in Public Life

GRANT: \$50,000

Strategic communication training for US women religious during the Year of Consecrated Life in collaboration with LCWR

Global Sisters Report/National Catholic Reporter

GRANT: \$5,280,000

- Website analytics (cumulative)
- Website sessions: 2,293,058 (26% increase over 2016)
- Page views: 3,669,606
- Website visitors: 1,084,093
- Returning visitors: 52.7%

Email subscribers

- 11,957 individuals receive a twice-weekly email digest (10% over the 2016 report)
- 9,738 individuals receive the Horizons column email on Fridays
- 10,538 individuals receive Notes from the Field blog updates from Catholic Volunteer Network writers
- GSR email subscribers open their mail an average of 32% of the time, with a click-through rate to the articles 27% of the time. Industry averages are 22% and 5%

Social media

- 2,383 Twitter followers (16% increase over 2016)
- 15,925 Facebook page likes (9 % increase over 2016)
- Instagram account launched in 2017 with 249 followers
- WhatsApp group "GSR: Africa Connect": 148 participants from 17 countries (Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Malawi, Lesotho, Uganda, Rwanda, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Israel, USA and Ireland)

Hofstra University

GRANT: \$25,000

Research and participation in the papal commission exploring women in the diaconate

**National Catholic Sisters Project
(Alverno College, formerly
St. Catherine's University)**

GRANT: St. Catherine's: \$3,300,000

GRANT: Alverno College: \$2,750,000

Grant I:

- 111,486 page views, 80,138 unique visitors to *nationalcatholicsistersweek.org*
- 188,158 page views, 144,017 unique visitors to *sisterstory.org*
- Produced over 162 podcast episodes with over 19,000 unique listeners
- Media efforts reached over 10 million individuals via traditional television, print and web media, with over 232 known articles/newscasts
- 160 oral histories
- Developed and promoted NCSW mini-grants

Grant II:

- 67 NCSW mini-grants awarded:
 - 104 events held
 - 10,834 attendees
 - 6 million people reached through mini-grant and other NCSW digital and "in person" efforts
- Launch of the new SisterStory website: 76,496 page views, 56,617 unique visitors
- 45,328 page views, 32,551 unique visitors to *nationalcatholicsistersweek.org*
- Introductory curriculum unit focused on the lives and ministries of women religious

**National Religious Vocations Conference
(non-NFCRV grant)**

GRANT: \$2,000,000

- NRVC/CARA Study on *The Role of Family in Nurturing Vocations to Religious Life and Priesthood*
- Institution of the NRVC Misericordia Fund
- Over five years, increased resource revenue by 76 percent (from \$2,800 to \$12,000)
- Coordinated the Vocaciones sin Fronteras en un Mundo Cambiante (Vocations without Boards in a Changing World) workshop for 62 participants

A Nun's Life Ministry

GRANT: \$1,425,000

- Instagram followers: 1,129
- Email newsletter subscribers: 3,426. The year-end open rate in 2017 was 25.2% (industry average = 21.8%) click rate was 2.8% (industry average = 2.4%)
- Video training pilot program for 16 sisters from 14 congregations
- 16 #nunday videos produced
- 6 thematic videos on religious life produced
- Live discernment chats
- Motherhouse road trip podcasts
- Prayer podcasts

Salt and Light Media

GRANT: \$75,000

N/A - new grantee

RESEARCH GRANTS

Due to the lack of information on women religious when the Sisters Initiative first developed its strategy, the Sisters Initiative had to fund grantees who could further the understanding of sisters and the state of their congregations and ministries. The Sisters Initiative did so through a series of research-related grants, including multiple reports from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Durham University/Heythrop College/Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology collaborative vitality studies, and Anderson Robbins market research. While many of the other grants contained elements of primary research, these grants are solely focused on generating information about Catholic sisters. They help form the basis for the MEL process and for the next iteration of the Sisters Initiative strategy.



fig. 18

Research Grants

<i>Grants</i>	<i>Metrics 2013–2018</i>
Anderson Robbins Research GRANT: \$300,000	Research and full report on understanding the general public’s attitudes, opinions and experiences with Catholic sisters in the United States.
Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate GRANT: \$425,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Multiple research reports on Catholic sisters in the United States■ Support for the ongoing research projects developed by three African sisters who are visiting scholars

Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit

GRANT: \$390,000

- Translation of English Survey and English Life Satisfaction Scale for Apostolic Women Religious (LSSAWR) into Spanish
- Creation and distribution of congregational reports from the LSSAWR
- Analyses run for reliability and validity for English LSSAWR manual and initial data captured for the abbreviated Spanish manual version
- Research publication in peer-reviewed journals

Durham University/Heythrop College/ Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology collaborative (North American Foundation for Durham University)

GRANT: \$985,000

United Kingdom and Ireland (Grants I & II)

- An increased understanding of the contemporary landscape of women religious in the United Kingdom and Ireland
- A documented shift in understanding of religious life that goes beyond vows to encompass the witness of each congregational charism in associates and laity
- The central importance of communion, community and a shared common life in contemporary religious life
- The development and implementation of a survey of vocational enquirers and entrants to orders with UK, Irish, or combined UK-Irish Province since 2000
- 67 women have made contact; 16 have been sent questionnaires and 41 have been interviewed

Africa (Grant II):

- Four PSAs appointed in Uganda, Kenya, Zambia and Malawi
- 57 congregations registered for Stage 1 research across 5 countries. 508 sisters enrolled and 217 responses have been received
- Strengthening of local and regional discourse on religious life

Georgetown University

GRANT: \$1,740,000

- An implementation model for cross-sector collaboration where sisters create linkages between government and communities
- 300 stakeholders participating in the project
- 5 congregations trained on cross-sector collaboration
- 3 congregations co-developed Kayayei project strategy
- A block (10-20 latrine seats) of latrines installed by the project
- 4 blocks installed by local sanitation businesses, creating local sustainability
- An estimated \$50,000 in ongoing, increasing support from the Accra municipal government, Catholic Sisters' organizations and community

Challenges with Measuring Success

When they were set in 2013, the indicators of success represented an effort by the new Sisters Initiative to address sisters' membership, leadership and resource needs and to measure the impact of the Foundation's investments toward meeting those needs. As measures, however, the indicators are flawed. They are not tied to a clear theory of change; are not specific enough in terms of their definitions and parameters of measurable change; and are based on problematic assumptions around attribution (e.g., cause and effect). Additionally, no baseline data existed when the indicators were drafted, making it impossible to measure changes to that data. The Sisters Initiative was, in effect, trying to build a bridge while crossing it.

The membership goal of encouraging more women to enter religious life in the global north illustrates some of the challenges of measuring the success of the Sisters Initiative's strategy. One of the underlying assumptions for this indicator was that if young Catholic women in the global north were exposed to sisters and their ministries, they might become sisters. CRCC's study on vital congregations found that awareness was one of many factors that play into a woman's journey to religious life, including her culture and family background, peer group, mentors and experiences with community life and service. Micro-targeted awareness efforts could introduce the idea of religious life to women with other predispositions. While broader awareness efforts may improve sisters' visibility, it would be difficult at best to tease out the impact of general public awareness from other variables in order to understand its impact on vocations to religious life.

A more successful and targeted idea under this indicator was that the Foundation would encourage vocations to religious life by "addressing educational debt of potential candidates to religious life."¹⁸ CRCC has documented through interviews with aspirants, congregations and grantees that educational debt is one of many significant obstacles to aspirants' entry into congregations. The Sisters Initiative invested into two grantees aiming to address this issue with women who had already discerned that they wanted to enter specific congregations. The Labouré Society had a promising model of

empowering aspirants with fund-raising and leadership skills while they got rid of their debt. With its second \$2 million grant, however, the Labouré Society scaled up too rapidly and burned through its budget, jeopardizing the organization and its mission. Ultimately, it only helped seven aspirants enter their congregations. The National Religious Vocations Conference/National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations allows member congregations to apply for funds to alleviate the debts of aspirants on an annual basis. This approach has allowed 14 aspirants to enter congregations. The Sisters Initiative's investments in debt reduction provide measurable results for this indicator because the interventions were specific and targeted.

The leadership indicator in the global south illustrates another challenge. The indicator states that the Sisters Initiative's investments will result in a "high percentage of sisters with leadership training assum[ing] leadership positions." Success for this indicator is very broadly defined: What is a high percentage? What types of leadership positions qualify?

The other challenge with this indicator is that the only data relating to the measure comes from one grantee: ASEC. In the development and implementation of the next iteration of the strategy, it would be beneficial for the Sisters Initiative team to ensure that more than one grantee is capturing data on a specific indicator. This would allow for a clearer picture of the successes or challenges grantees face in achieving change in strategic areas of interest for the Sisters Initiative. Finally, the percent of sisters with leadership training assuming leadership positions does not aid the Sisters Initiative in understanding the impact of these sisters in their leadership positions. A more complete indicator might aim to capture how new leadership positions affect their congregations and ministries. For instance, congregations may gain better human resources management, resulting in policy changes, or a trained sister taking on leadership of a school may result in better educational scores at the school. As the Sisters Initiative develops the next iteration of its strategy, it can develop indicators that speak in a more targeted way to its goals.

A broader challenge with these indicators is in the Sisters Initiative's implementation of its strategy. The Sisters Initiative team did not require all grantees to report back data that was relevant to the indicators. Some grantees' annual reports involved long narratives with spotty data. For instance, they might provide percentages but no overall sample number, or they might not disaggregate the age or gender of beneficiaries. Many grantees reported back on what they did with their grants (e.g., built the capacity of their organizations, hosted conferences and meetings) rather than on what they accomplished in either outputs or outcomes. Many grantees seemed to confuse outputs (e.g., numbers of sisters trained in leadership) and outcomes (e.g., trained sisters take up leadership positions). Only a few grantees began to address the question of the impact of their grants, or the indirect effect of an intervention (e.g., maternal and child health measures improving in an area where sisters have received training).

The Sisters Initiative also struggled to link some grants to these indicators. As the Sisters Initiative evolved, it began to identify needs that could be included in the membership, leadership and resource categories but were not tied directly to the indicators that the Sisters Initiative wanted to measure. Such grants reflect the Sisters Initiative team's ability to learn and adapt as they attempted to fulfill the broader mission of the strategy, without being tied to insufficient indicators. Many of these grants are highly valued by the team.

In order to develop better indicators in the next iteration of its strategy, the Sisters Initiative will need to develop measures that are grounded in an overall theory of change and are well defined and specific. It is also important that the Sisters Initiative team be diligent about requiring grantees to capture and share information that allows the Foundation to gauge whether its investments are making a difference for sisters and their human development ministries. Because the evaluation of the larger strategy is enhanced by data from individual grantees, their capacity to gather and report data is an important building block of future grant making.

Conclusion

The Sisters Initiative has made some progress in meeting the indicators of success for the 2013 strategy, especially in educating sisters and assisting congregations in managing their retirement liabilities. Unfortunately, poorly developed indicators and the lack of relevant grantee reporting hindered greater progress on these indicators—as well as CRCC's ability to report on such progress. The Sisters Initiative team's capacity to manage a large portfolio with a tremendous amount of information also limited its ability to digest and synthesize this information. Some funding investments paid incredibly good dividends (e.g., ASEC, CHAI, Global Sisters Report) while others were good in theory but poorly executed (e.g., Labouré Society).

The Sisters Initiative has a lot to build upon from its successes and challenges in addressing the membership, leadership, and resource needs of sisters and measuring the effect of its investments. The Sisters Initiative was launched at a time of deep transition and change for sisters, the Catholic Church and religion as a whole. Its ability to find needs and adapt to them, even if funded grants did not fit neatly within the indicators of success, is a definite strength. These learnings can be incorporated into the next iteration of its strategy so that grantees are measuring against a common set of indicators with a clear impact.

In particular, the new strategy might take into consideration how it will measure "awareness," a central feature of many grants that does not directly fall under one of the indicators in the current strategy. The importance of awareness has been a cornerstone of learning and networking in this strategy. It has fostered connections between organizations (e.g., A Nun's Life Ministry, National Catholic Sisters Project, Communicators for Women Religious) and given witness to sisters' work inside and outside the Church (e.g., UISG, Global Sisters Report).

The initial \$105 million investment in sisters developed a more tightly connected and aware global sisterhood that now stands much stronger and better equipped to meet the challenges it faces in providing spiritual witness to the world and serving the vulnerable and poor.

IV.

Gaps, Opportunities and Strategic Recommendations



In the first MEL report, CRCC identified four gaps and opportunities for the Sisters Initiative to consider as it made grants and thought about how to best support sisters' vitality and ministries advancing human development. As part of the report on the Sisters Initiative's first strategy, the following pages summarize and update these four areas.

GAP 1

If people do not see sisters, they are less likely to become or support a sister.

OPPORTUNITY

Elevate awareness as a central part of the Sisters Initiative's strategy.

UPDATE

The idea of awareness was initially part of the Sisters Initiative's efforts in the global north to increase the number of women answering the call to religious life. It soon became clear to the Sisters Initiative that awareness is a critical element across its strategy, permeating all of its indicators of success. Although it's unclear whether "awareness" grants have resulted in more vocations, it is critical for a woman to see and know sisters in order to consider religious life as an option for her future. Individuals and foundations also need to be aware of sisters' ministries (e.g., through a *Global Sisters Report* article) in order to support a congregation financially. When sisters are visible, they can provide leadership within their community, country and the institutional Church. Sisters' awareness of each other can lead to collaboration. The development of basic data about women religious, as well as information about their ministries, is an essential piece of building awareness. Especially as sisters' visibility and influence wanes in some parts of the world, now is a critical time to capture older sisters' stories, document their institutional knowledge and help them pass on the mantle of responsibility to the next generations of sisters, so that they can reimagine religious life in the 21st century.

The Sisters Initiative's work on raising the profile of sisters both internally in the Church and externally to the world is perhaps the greatest, if somewhat intangible, outcome of its strategy. The influence of the Foundation in raising the awareness of sisters through its grantee partners in terms of research, journalism, advocacy and programmatic work should not be underestimated. CRCC recommended in the 2017 MEL report that awareness could become a foundational concept in the next iteration of its strategy. As the Sisters Initiative transitions to this new strategy, it also may want to consider how it tracks awareness and the impact of grants that focus on building awareness of sisters and their ministries.



GAP 2

If the Catholic Church hierarchy does not demonstrate that it values the work of sisters, then sisters will not flourish.

OPPORTUNITY

Leverage the Sisters Initiative's influence within the Church hierarchy to create more visible and tangible support for sisters.

UPDATE

The Sisters Initiative has been strategic in engaging the Church hierarchy and capitalizing on Pope Francis' support of sisters. The Sisters Initiative supported CICLSAL's Year of Consecrated life activities around the world and is funding their upcoming religious life conference in May 2018. It has funded the Pontifical Mission Societies' work through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and it has recently engaged in dialogue around the UN SDGs with the Dicastery for Integral Human Development. Beyond the Holy See, the Sisters Initiative has also made a marked effort to engage with local bishops and national and regional episcopal conferences to form partnerships around supporting sisters and their work.

The International Union of Superiors General (UISG) is one of the Sisters Initiative's most influential global partners. UISG has been instrumental in bridging the world of the Holy See and sisters, and in engaging the worldwide leadership of congregations. It champions women religious and highlights their evangelizing power and prophetic witness. UISG has been a critical partner for the Sisters Initiative in building the Canon Law capacity of sisters to help adjudicate contractual obligations between local bishops and congregations and land disputes between dioceses and congregations.

The Sisters Initiative still faces many obstacles to its advocacy for women religious in the Church. In 2017 the Church denied constitutional recognition of the Association for Consecrated Women in East and Central Africa, a major regional organization representing nine African countries, because the organization only has sisters. As stated in previous MEL reports, the Sisters Initiative can continue to chip away at the roadblocks to sisters by empowering them as leaders and their advocates at the highest level of the Church.

GAP 3

If sisters do not have networks of support for themselves, they may face burnout or dropout.

OPPORTUNITY

Adapt a “lifetime formation” approach and foster supportive networks of sisters.

UPDATE

Congregations in both the global north and south face significant challenges in meeting the spiritual, educational and physical needs of their sisters. Through interviews, focus groups and reviews of other data sources, CRCC has documented the constant struggle that congregations face in meeting the needs of their sisters while responding to the “call of the times” and serving the poor and vulnerable in their ministries.

The Sisters Initiative has made significant investments under its “membership” work by fostering vocations through awareness and student debt relief, and building sisters’ capacity through postsecondary education. As the Sisters Initiative transitions to the second iteration of its strategy, CRCC continues to recommend that the Sisters Initiative take a lifetime formation approach to supporting sisters and target key points in a sister’s lifetime (e.g., postulancy and early formation, midlife support and formation, retirement) where spiritual and mental support are especially needed. This support could take the form of grants to congregations or national religious conferences to develop cross-congregational formation programs that foster spiritual and interpersonal connections between sisters. Funding might also support the ability of sisters to go on spiritual retreats or attend conferences to build their professional networks.

GAP 4

If Catholic sisters do not listen to the cultural sensibilities of different generations and populations, the global sisterhood suffers.

OPPORTUNITY

Incorporate a more nuanced view of geographic and cultural similarities and differences into the Sisters Initiative strategy.

UPDATE

Like much of the world, congregations are becoming more diverse and interconnected. Sisters from Ecuador work in Kenya and sisters from Brazil work in Mozambique. Sisters move south to south, north to south, and south to north. This global network of women religious has been growing for several centuries, but the pace of growth has increased rapidly over the last several decades with the changing demographics of the Church and religious congregations.

The Sisters Initiative has been at the forefront of supporting efforts to foster inter- and intra-congregational understanding of ethnic and generational differences at the global (e.g., Sisters of St. Joseph Carondelet) and regional (e.g., Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Giving Voice) levels. As the migration of sisters continues across borders and younger, frequently more technologically savvy sisters face tensions as they interact with older sisters, there will be an increased need for new programs that address these challenges.

CRCC has recommended that the next iteration of the Sisters Initiative strategy consider the global needs of sisters. Through the case studies conducted in three African countries, it became clear that sisters face common challenges, even while each country may have slightly different priorities for sustainable development. As the Sisters Initiative transitions into the next iteration of its strategy, it will have

to consider where and how it works to effect change. While it cannot work everywhere, the Sisters Initiative can increase the impact of programs that address the cultural sensitivities of different generations and populations by sharing and disseminating information. The Sisters Initiative could play a major role in bringing together key stakeholders that work to bridge divides and misunderstandings among sisters so that they can share knowledge, develop networks and potentially collaborate on new programs.

Operational Opportunities

In past MEL reports, CRCC has also highlighted areas in the Sisters Initiative’s operations that could help advance the Initiative’s goals. CRCC has recommended that the Sisters Initiative create a culture of learning and documentation, apply best practices in grant management, clearly communicate the Sisters Initiative’s vision and accomplishments, serve as a “hub” for grantees and collaborate with the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters.

Progress on these recommendations depends in part on structures and processes within the Foundation as a whole, as well as on the future staffing of the Sisters Initiative. Under new leadership, the Foundation has set a new philanthropic approach and bolstered its internal measurement, evaluation and learning capacity. Though the Sisters Initiative has become quieter throughout its transition period, it has made efforts to stay in communication with grantees. The Fund for Sisters provided data to CRCC that may help the Sisters Initiative develop the next iteration of its strategy. CRCC also produced a white paper on opportunities for collaboration with the Fund for Sisters, as well as other funders with an interest in the work of Catholic sisters. These recommendations will carry forward into future, as the Sisters Initiative team begins to implement the next iteration of its strategy.

Conclusion

Both on tactical issues and on the larger issues presented in the gaps and opportunities, it is clear that the Catholic Sisters Initiative has taken what it has learned over the past five years seriously. To the extent that they can under the 2013 strategy, the team has incorporated their learnings into their current grant making and the development of the Sisters Initiative’s future direction.



V.

Moving Forward



The Catholic Sisters Initiative is at an important period of transition, as it concludes its five-year strategy launched in 2013 and develops the next iteration of its strategy. The team has taken seriously the lessons of the past five years of grant making and has a dynamic new director with a deep knowledge of sisters, the Catholic tradition and the continent of Africa, which is one of the priority areas of the Foundation. CRCC's MEL report points to many specific recommendations that can guide the Sisters Initiative.

More broadly, as the Sisters Initiative moves forward, it also is very important that it be aligned with the Hilton Foundation's Philanthropic Approach, which focuses on solutions, systems and knowledge development. Likewise, it is imperative that the Initiative's MEL partner evaluates the success of the Sisters Initiative in light of the Foundation's approach to grant making. This means that the next strategy for the Sisters Initiative needs to take seriously the challenge of designing programs that are solution oriented, attack problems at a systemic level and are based on research and evaluation that contribute to knowledge regarding the role that sisters can play in addressing challenges faced by vulnerable people.

Future grants must be based on a well-developed theory of change that addresses the answers to these questions: What are the assets of sisters? How can the Foundation maximize these assets? What evaluation measures and strategies can be built into the structure of grants so that the impact of the Foundation's philanthropy is well documented? How can information gained from its grant making be disseminated appropriately?

Sisters have multiple assets that are underappreciated by potential partners. The 2013 strategy was concerned about the decline in the number of sisters and invested heavily in communicating to the Catholic world the multiple ways in which sisters are addressing poverty, human trafficking and a host of other social issues. The Sisters Initiative has begun to elevate sisters' leadership within the Catholic Church, although they remain undervalued. An additional challenge for the future is to communicate the assets of sisters to secular NGOs, government agencies and organizations with whom they can partner. This will require the Sisters Initiative

to move beyond the exclusive orbit of Catholic institutions, forming relationships and earning the right to be at the tables where significant policy decisions are being made.

The role of sisters related to education and health care is well known. However, sisters often do not work at a systemic level in addressing the challenges of society, which is the goal of the Hilton Foundation. In order to achieve this level of intervention, it is important that sisters be encouraged by their congregations to work in institutions that enable them to be change makers, moving beyond charitable work, although that is also important. To maximize their impact, sisters must have excellent formation; their congregations need to be strong organizationally; and they need to be educated. In addition, the Foundation can play an important role in developing networks that communicate best practice models, current research on issues and ways to leverage resources.

Part of knowledge development is creating structures at the Foundation level that will enable the Sisters Initiative to document the impact of its grant making. This means developing proposal forms that clearly distinguish between outputs, outcomes and impact—both short-term and long-term. Rather than being an “add-on” paragraph at the end of a proposal, grant-making processes can encourage grantees to think creatively about how they are going to document the productive use of Foundation funding and how this relates to their organization’s theory of change. The MEL partner could potentially work with grantees at the proposal development stage; alternatively, grantees might partner with a local evaluator if they do not have internal capacity in this area. The Foundation can play an important catalytic role building the capacity of congregations so that sisters move beyond simply cataloging the “outputs” of a grant (e.g., number of conferences, events or people served) to thinking systemically about indicators of change within their organization, community or society at large.

Requiring grantees to think systemically means that the Initiative’s team must also consider their grant making in structural terms. What are the problems that sisters have the capacity to address? What are systemic solutions to these problems? What research needs to be done prior to making a grant? And how can the Sisters Initiative work with their MEL partner to continually learn what works and what might be done to make more effective use of Foundation money?

As the Sisters Initiative develops the next iteration of its strategy, it will need to work closely with the senior management of the Foundation to decide how narrow or expansive their mandate should be. For example, do they work in only a few select countries and on one or two issues, which would enable them to be more precise in documenting the impact of their funding? Or should the Initiative work more broadly, developing the capacity of multiple congregations across entire continents? And as suggested previously, is the unit of measurement and evaluation individual sisters or is it the vitality of a congregation, or a collaboration of congregations, around a particular issue or set of issues?

The theme of this report has been the Sisters Initiative at a time of transition, within the Catholic Church, within society and within the leadership of the Initiative itself. This is an exciting moment, one filled with great promise and possibility. It is also a time to think clearly about the assets of sisters and their role within the Hilton Foundation. Conrad Hilton saw sisters’ value in improving the lives of vulnerable people, making certain that no one is left behind. He did not foresee the changing demographics of sisters, though as an astute businessman he would have adapted his vision to take account of these changes. What is unchanging is sisters’ belief in transcendent values, their commitment to consecrated life and their dedication to worship and service.

References

De George, Gail. "International sisters' group addresses interculturality as essential to religious life." *Global Sisters Report*. November 20, 2017. <http://globalsistersreport.org/news/trends/international-sisters-group-addresses-interculturality-essential-religious-life-50421>

Francois, Susan Rose. "Religious Life in a Time of Fog." *In Our Own Words: Religious Life in a Changing World*, edited by Juliet Mousseau and Sarah Kohles, Liturgical Press, 2018, 182-203.

"From piety to politics: The Evolution of an American sisters." *U.S. Catholic*. January 2014. Accessed April 11, 2018. <http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201312/piety-politics-evolution-american-sister-28279>.

"The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050." Pew Research Center. April 2, 2015. <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050>.

Johnson, Sister Mary, et al. *International Sisters in the United States*. Washington D.C.: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and Trinity Washington University, 2017.

Kandil, Caitlin Yoshiko. "Want to see the Catholic Church's future? Go to Mass in the fast-growing Diocese of Orange." *Los Angeles Times/Daily Pilot*. October 5, 2017. <http://www.latimes.com/socal/daily-pilot/entertainment/tn-wknd-et-catholic-diocese-20171005-story.html>

"Migrants." International Union of Superiors General. Accessed February 4, 2018. <http://www.internationalunionsuperiorsgeneral.org/mission/migrants>.

Nassif, Rosemarie, et al. *Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Catholic Sisters Initiative*. Agoura Hills: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, 2013.

Nelson, Andrew. "International sisters' group addresses interculturality as essential to religious life." *Catholic News Service*. August 18, 2016.

Parra, Christa. "The Bridges I Cross and Las Hermanas Who Built Them." *In Our Own Words: Religious Life in a Changing World*, edited by Juliet Mousseau and Sarah Kohles, Liturgical Press, 2018, 128-146.

"The Sustainable Development Agenda." United Nations. Accessed February 22, 2018. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda>.

"Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," United Nations. Accessed February 22, 2018. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

"Who We Are." Solidarity with South Sudan. Accessed February 4, 2018. <https://www.solidarityssudan.org/origin-and-general-definition/>.

Notes

- ¹ "Future of World Religions."
- ² "America's Changing Religious Landscape."
- ³ "America's Changing Religious Landscape."
- ⁴ Johnson, et.al., *International Sisters*, 3.
- ⁵ "Transforming our world."
- ⁶ "Sustainable Development Agenda"
- ⁷ "From Piety to Politics."
- ⁸ Francois, "Religious Life in a Time of Fog."
- ⁹ DeGeorge, "International sisters."
- ¹⁰ Nelson, "Racism."
- ¹¹ Johnson, et.al., *International Sisters*, 13.
- ¹² Parra, "The Bridges."
- ¹³ DeGeorge, "International sisters."
- ¹⁴ "Migrants," International Union of Superiors General.
- ¹⁵ "Who We Are," Solidarity with South Sudan.
- ¹⁶ National Catholic Sisters Project is counted as two since different institutions (St Catherine University and Alverno College) were awarded the grants.
- ¹⁷ Nassif, et.al., *Strategy Proposal*, 18.
- ¹⁸ Ibid

Figures

1	Characteristics of Reimagined Communities	page 11
2	Significant Events and Activities	pages 12-13
3	The Catholic Sisters Initiative Strategy	page 31
4	Grantees from 2013-2018	pages 32-33
5	Grantees by Region	page 34
6	Funding by Region 2013-2018	page 34
7	Annual Trends in Initiative Funding by Region	page 35
8	Grant Making Over Time	page 35
9	Indicators of Success	page 36
10	Membership—Global South	pages 38-39
11	Leadership—Global South	page 40
12	Resources—Global South	page 41
13	Membership—Global North	pages 43-44
14	Leadership—Global North	page 45
15	Resources—Global North	page 46
16	Relationship and Organizational Capacity-Building Grants	pages 48-50
17	Awareness Grants	pages 51-53
18	Research Grants	pages 54-55

CRCC TEAM

Hebah Farrag

Richard Flory

Nalika Gajaweera

Brie Loskota

Tarra McNally

Donald E. Miller

Nick Street

Megan Sweas

INTERN

Helen Hyesoo Lee

CONSULTANTS

Margi Denton, graphic designer

Daniela Hinsch, video editor

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Catholic Extension

Donald E. Miller

National Catholic Sisters Project

John Pham, TruStudios

Verbum Dei Missionaries

USCDornsife
*Center for Religion
and Civic Culture*

Center for Religion and Civic Culture
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0520

PHONE (213) 743-1624

FAX (213) 743-1644

EMAIL crcc@usc.edu

CONRAD N.



FOUNDATION

30440 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

PHONE (818) 851-3700