

The global Catholic sisterhood is a vibrant network of more than 700,000 vowed women religious rooted in their profound faith and belief in the dignity of the human person. Catholic sisters are committed leaders and advocates for the communities they serve to foster peace, equity and justice. Through their hands-on ministries and local, national and global partnerships, Catholic sisters transform the lives of children, youth, families and communities around the world, particularly those suffering from extreme disadvantage. Conrad N. Hilton had deep respect and admiration for the work of Catholic sisters. The Catholic Sisters Initiative enthusiastically continues his legacy by supporting strong and sustainable congregations, effective services and collaboration among Catholic sisters worldwide.

Ideal state

The global Catholic sisterhood is a network of local, national and international leaders. Their lives offer prophetic witness as they lift up the value of human dignity and advocate for the poor and underserved through strong and sustainable congregations.

Through their ministries and partnerships, sisters help to transform the lives of children, youth and families living in disadvantaged conditions so they are on the path to self-sufficiency and independence, contributing to the vibrancy of their local communities.

History and background

Since 1944, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has supported Catholic sisters at home and abroad. Phase I of the Catholic Sisters Initiative (2013- 2017) addressed the membership, leadership and resource gaps that sisters face by increasing their capacity to form and educate effective leaders, as well as to attract and steward human and financial resources. The Phase I Strategy laid a strong education and training foundation for sisters around the globe by supporting 190 sisters to graduate with an advanced degree (640 enrolled during the strategy); 1,900 sisters to achieve a post-secondary training certificate; and 1,300 sisters to receive technical training for their ministries.

Phase II (2018-2020) of the Initiative reinforced the internal capacity and vitality of Catholic sisters and their congregations. The Foundation supported their work to deliver human development services to youth in the areas of education, food security, health care, anti-human trafficking and entrepreneurship. The strategy saw significant progress made across its four portfolios and cross-cutting activities, including 3,800 sisters trained in finance management or a ministry-related technical area; 490 sisters awarded advanced degrees; 35,700 youth reached through human development services run by sisters; and 4,200 students and their families from low-income households reached in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The success of the Phase II Strategy is a testament to the sisters' strength and ingenuity, since a significant portion of program activities were undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategy25 (2021-2025) builds upon the successes of Phases I and II by continuing to bolster sisters' formation and education while strengthening their partnerships with the Church, key networks and other entities. The Initiative will continue to support sisters' efforts to foster human development and support children, youth and families living in disadvantaged conditions on their pathways to self-sufficiency.

Five-year goals

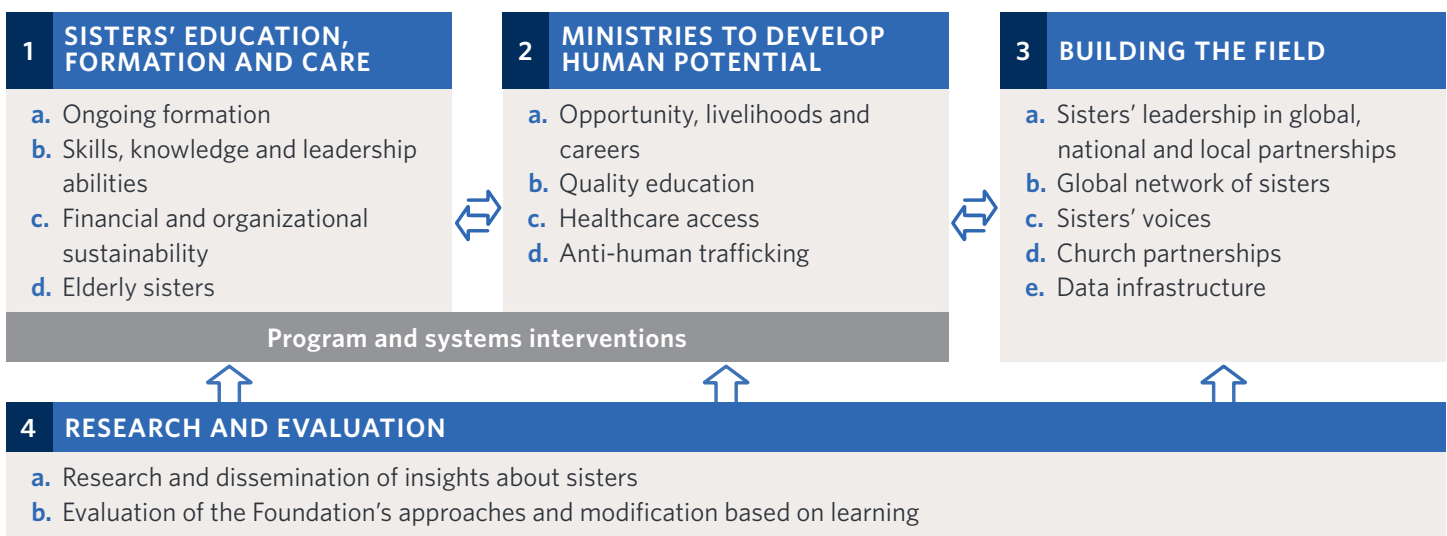
63,000 sisters increase their professional skills, improve their leadership capacity and deepen their spiritual commitment, with at least 25 sisters in meaningful leadership positions on high-level church committees and other organizations

25 national or regional networks are created and/or activated to support sisters' service delivery. An additional 10 existing networks are strengthened

3.42 million individuals experiencing disadvantage receive basic education, medical care, job training and other supports that put them on pathways to healthy, self-sufficient lives

1,000 at-risk youth and survivors of human trafficking are supported to safety, while receiving training in financial and job skills that lead to meaningful employment

Strategy architecture



WHERE WE WORK

POPULATION SERVED



- = **High engagement** (six countries)
- = **Moderate engagement** (five countries)
- = **Partnership with Hilton Fund for Sisters** (86 countries)
- = **Indirect engagement with UISG** (worldwide)
- = **Work along the U.S.-Mexico border**

The Catholic Sisters Initiative operates worldwide. This map shows its focus areas for Strategy Area 2: Ministries to Develop Human Potential

Catholic sisters, including efforts to:

- Ensure sisters have equitable access to education, spiritual formation, resources and leadership opportunities
- Support sisters and their congregations to ensure sisters age with dignity and have a high-quality life after a lifetime of service
- Support sisters' ministries in serving children, youth and families who live in deeply disadvantaged situations
- Fund local congregations and networks, in addition to large international congregations and organizations

OTHER KEY METRICS

- Build mechanisms to lift sisters' voices
- Leverage new funding sources to support elderly sisters and the financial sustainability of congregations
- Expand partnerships throughout the Church to create opportunities for sisters' leadership on critical issues of human development

PROGRAM COSTS



**Phase I
(2012-2017):**
\$107,625,000

**Phase II
(2018-2020):**
\$52,400,000

**Strategy25
(2021-2025):**
Est. \$270,000,000

CHALLENGES



- Overcoming the lack of reliable data about sisters and their ministries
- Balancing the goals of building the institutional capacity of sisters, while funding their outreach ministries and projects
- Understanding and operating within complex demographic, socio-cultural and geo-political contexts

OPPORTUNITIES



- Exploring a global retirement fund for elderly sisters to age with dignity
- Partnering with the Vatican and other key stakeholders to strengthen the voices and leadership of sisters
- Supporting congregations' and conferences' efforts to increase financial and organizational sustainability
- Expanding support for ministries in India, which has the highest number of Catholic sisters in the world