



Pilot Project Charter

Mothers of Courage - Kpomasse, Benin

Pilot project fully funded by the founders of RefugeRoot
Preliminary phase for a larger training and economic empowerment program for 100 widows in the
Commune of Kpomasse

Document prepared as a technical annex and proof of concept

Promoter	RefugeRoot Foundation Canada
Project nature	Founder-funded pilot project
Intervention area	Commune of Kpomasse, Benin
Pilot beneficiaries	20 widows selected in the Commune of Kpomasse
Scale-up perspective	Structured training and economic empowerment program for 100 widows
Pilot duration	6 months - May 1, 2026 to October 31, 2026
Pilot budget	3,995,500 FCFA - fully funded by RefugeRoot founders

Reviewed version - May 3, 2026

0. Framing Note

Strategic positioning

Mothers of Courage is a pilot project already financially supported by the founders of RefugeRoot. The pilot is not framed as an activity dependent on grant approval. It is presented as a proof of concept, a learning mechanism, a community validation process, a data collection exercise, and a risk-reduction phase before deploying a larger program for the training and economic empowerment of 100 widows in the Commune of Kpomasse.

Purpose of this charter

- Formalize the 20-widow pilot using a professional project management logic.
- Demonstrate the initial financial commitment of RefugeRoot founders and the organization's ability to act before grant funding is secured.
- Transform pilot results into evidence to support a funding request for scaling the program to 100 widows.
- Clarify governance, deliverables, indicators, risks, budget, monitoring and evaluation, and scale-up mechanisms.

1. Executive Summary

Mothers of Courage is an economic and social empowerment initiative led by RefugeRoot Foundation Canada in the Commune of Kpomasse, Benin. The project responds to the vulnerability affecting many widows and their children, including income loss, household fragility, social isolation, and limited access to education, nutrition, and stable family conditions.

The first phase is designed as a six-month pilot project for twenty (20) widows. It is fully funded by the founders of RefugeRoot. This decision allows the organization to launch the intervention rapidly, test the approach, document results, adjust tools, and demonstrate operational feasibility before requesting support for scale-up.

The pilot combines community-based selection, theoretical training, practical skills development, entrepreneurship support, start-up capital for income-generating activities, field coaching, monitoring and evaluation, and documentation of lessons learned. The results from the pilot will serve as a technical and evidence-based foundation for a second phase targeting one hundred (100) widows in the Commune of Kpomasse.

For a grant application, this charter presents the pilot as RefugeRoot's initial investment and as a demonstration of local implementation capacity. The proposed scale-up phase aligns with inclusive growth, women's economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, human dignity, and support for vulnerable populations.

2. Pilot Project Identification

Element	Information
Project name	Mothers of Courage - Pilot Project for the Economic Empowerment of Widows
Promoter	RefugeRoot Foundation Canada
Pilot funding status	Fully funded by the founders of RefugeRoot
Strategic purpose	Prepare a structured scale-up phase for 100 widows in the Commune of Kpomasse
Proposed project managers team	Fatou N'Diaye, Senior Project Manager Theodorie AISSI, Project Manager
Implementation area	Commune of Kpomasse, Benin
Pilot duration	6 months
Planned period	May 1, 2026 to October 31, 2026
Direct pilot beneficiaries	20 widows selected according to vulnerability, motivation, availability, and economic feasibility criteria
Indirect beneficiaries	Children and households of participating widows, the local community, and nearby economic actors
Planned next phase	Training, coaching, and economic empowerment of 100 widows in the Commune of Kpomasse
Pilot budget	3,995,500 FCFA, funded by RefugeRoot founders
Local non-monetary contribution	Potential provision of a training room and community facilitation by the Municipality of Kpomasse, subject to local availability and agreements

3. Rationale and Theory of Change

The vulnerability of widows in the Commune of Kpomasse is not only an individual challenge. It affects the entire household, especially children, and can create an intergenerational cycle of poverty. A widow without stable income may be unable to maintain consistent access to food, school expenses, healthcare, and basic household needs.

The pilot is based on the assumption that targeted training, practical economic skills, modest start-up support, and structured coaching can increase women's ability to generate income and manage small income-generating activities. By combining training and follow-up, RefugeRoot seeks to reduce the risk that start-up capital is misused or that activities are abandoned after the initial launch.

Theory of change

If vulnerable widows receive relevant training, practical income-generation skills, modest start-up capital, and regular field coaching, then they will be better positioned to launch or strengthen small economic activities, improve household resilience, and support their children more sustainably. The pilot will test this model before scaling it to 100 widows.

Strategic value of the pilot

- Validate beneficiary selection criteria in the local context.
- Test training modules before deployment to a larger cohort.
- Identify viable income-generating activities with low start-up capital requirements.
- Measure real implementation costs and operational constraints.
- Generate evidence, stories, data, and lessons for the scale-up phase.
- Demonstrate RefugeRoot's commitment by investing its own founders' resources before requesting institutional funding.

4. Alignment with Grant Priorities

Grant Priority	Alignment of Mothers of Courage
Growth that works for everyone	The project supports women's economic rights, decent livelihoods, small entrepreneurship, and investment in vulnerable women.
Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls	The project directly targets widows, strengthens their economic agency, and supports their role in household decision-making.
Human dignity	Improved income can indirectly support access to education, nutrition, and household stability for widows and their children.
Inclusive governance and community participation	The pilot engages local authorities, community actors, and beneficiaries through transparent selection, monitoring, and feedback mechanisms.
Local development impact	The model uses local training, local suppliers, community facilitation, and practical economic activities adapted to Kpomasse.

5. Project Objectives

Overall objective of the pilot

To test, document, and validate an integrated model for the training, coaching, and economic empowerment of twenty (20) widows in the Commune of Kpomasse, in order to prepare a structured scale-up phase targeting one hundred (100) widows.

SMART Specific Objective	Measurement Indicator	Deadline
SO1 - Identify and select 20 widows through a transparent, documented, and locally validated process.	Final list, identification forms, applied selection criteria, and consent records available.	Month 1
SO2 - Train beneficiaries in entrepreneurship, basic management, personal development, and context-appropriate income-generating activities.	Participation rate >= 95%; end-of-training assessments; training materials archived.	Months 1-2
SO3 - Support the launch of realistic microprojects compatible with available start-up capital.	At least 90% of beneficiaries launch an income-generating activity.	Months 2-3
SO4 - Conduct monthly field coaching to strengthen management, address difficulties, and document the evolution of activities.	100% of beneficiaries receive at least one documented monthly visit.	Months 3-6

SMART Specific Objective	Measurement Indicator	Deadline
SO5 - Produce a database, learning report, and recommendations for the 100-widow phase.	Consolidated database, final report, operational and budget recommendations.	Month 6

6. Pilot Scope and Scale-Up Scope

Pilot project scope - 20 widows

- Community mobilization and initial communication with local authorities, community leaders, and potential beneficiaries.
- Selection of 20 widows using documented criteria: vulnerability, motivation, availability, feasibility of the proposed microproject, and commitment to follow-up.
- Theoretical training in basic management, budgeting, pricing, savings, recordkeeping, sales, customer relations, and financial responsibility.
- Practical training in low-capital income-generating activities based on local opportunities.
- Start-up support through supervised seed capital, signed commitments, and evidence of use.
- Monthly field coaching, performance monitoring, and problem-solving support.
- Monitoring and evaluation and production of evidence for the scale-up phase.

Expected scale-up scope - 100 widows

- Adapt the model validated through the pilot to a larger cohort of 100 widows.
- Organize the scale-up into successive cohorts if needed to preserve training quality and individual coaching.
- Strengthen the field team, monitoring tools, financial management, and reporting capacity.
- Structure local partnerships for training, marketing, community support, and post-training follow-up.
- Integrate pilot lessons into modules, budget, selection criteria, and risk management.

Scope exclusions

- Direct management of beneficiaries' economic activities after launch.
- Creation of a formal microcredit or debt mechanism.
- Full family support for health, schooling, housing, or food costs.
- Guaranteed sale of products or services produced by beneficiaries.
- Expansion to other communes without a new strategic, budgetary, and operational validation.

7. Deliverables, Acceptance Criteria, and Milestones

Deliverable Package	Expected Deliverables	Acceptance Criteria
D1 - Mobilization and selection	Mobilization plan; candidate forms; selection grid; final list of 20 widows.	Criteria applied; full documentation available; validation by RefugeRoot and local team.
D2 - Training and capacity building	Modules, materials, attendance sheets, assessments, authorized photos.	Participation rate $\geq 95\%$; modules delivered; evidence archived.
D3 - Microprojects and start-up capital	Validated microprojects, signed commitments, evidence of purchase or use.	Distribution compliant; traceability available; use aligned with approved microproject.
D4 - Coaching and field follow-up	Visit calendar, monitoring forms, coaching notes, individual action plans.	At least one documented monthly visit for each beneficiary.
D5 - Monitoring, evaluation, and learning	Dashboard, database, analysis of results, gaps, and corrective actions.	Consolidated data; recommendations usable for the 100-widow scale-up.
D6 - Pilot closure	Narrative report, internal financial report, lessons learned, scale-up file.	Report approved by RefugeRoot; evidence archived; scale-up decision documented.

Main pilot milestones

Period	Milestone	Expected Result
Month 1	Launch, mobilization, and selection	20 beneficiaries identified, validated, and registered.
Months 1-2	Final design and training	Modules delivered and learning outcomes assessed.
Months 2-3	Microproject validation and start-up support	Economic activities launched.
Months 3-6	Monthly coaching and field follow-up	Progress documented and corrective actions applied.
Month 6	Evaluation, closure, and scale-up file	Final report and adjusted model for 100 widows.

8. Work Breakdown Structure - WBS

WBS Code	Work Package	Main Activities	Link to 100-Widow Phase
1.0	Mobilization and selection	Awareness, identification, applications, analysis, validation.	Test targeting criteria and tools.
2.0	Training design	Needs assessment, modules, content validation, schedule.	Stabilize a replicable curriculum.
3.0	Kits and resources	Material needs, procurement, materials, logistics.	Assess unit costs and cohort needs.
4.0	Theoretical training	Management, personal development, calculation, sales, budgeting.	Identify modules to strengthen.
5.0	Practical training	Demonstrations, practical work, coaching, assessment.	Determine the most viable economic activities.
6.0	Start-up capital	Microproject validation, allocation, commitments, evidence.	Assess the optimal amount and controls.
7.0	Field coaching	Monthly visits, mentoring, problem solving, follow-up.	Size the team needed for 100 beneficiaries.
8.0	Monitoring and evaluation	Data collection, analysis, indicators, adjustments.	Build the evidence base for the grant file.
9.0	Communication and visibility	Authorized photos, testimonials, content, validated dissemination.	Prepare evidence and human stories for advocacy.
10.0	Closure and scale-up	Final report, lessons learned, recommendations, phase 2 budget.	Produce the operational plan for 100 widows.

9. Governance, Responsibilities, and Control Mechanisms

The pilot governance must demonstrate RefugeRoot's capacity to manage funds, beneficiaries, partners, and evidence of results with transparency. Although the pilot is funded by the founders, it must be managed with the same rigor expected under institutional funding in order to prepare the 100-widow phase.

Entity / Role	Responsibilities
RefugeRoot founders	Pilot funding, strategic supervision, validation of major orientations, budget arbitration.
RefugeRoot leadership / coordination	Overall coordination, compliance, partner and donor relations, validation of reports.
Project manager	Planning, execution, field coordination, risk management, deliverable tracking, and reporting.
Local implementation team	Mobilization, training, coaching, data collection, and documentation of evidence.
Administrative and finance lead	Budget tracking, supporting documents, expenditure traceability, archiving.
Municipality / local authorities	Community facilitation, institutional support, and potential provision of a training space.
Beneficiaries	Active participation, compliant use of capital, simple recordkeeping, and collaboration during follow-up visits.

Simplified RACI matrix

Key Activity	Founders	RefugeRoot Coordination	Project Manager	Field Team	Beneficiaries	Local Authorities
Pilot validation	A	R	C	I	I	C
Mobilization and selection	I	A	R	R	C	C
Training design	I	A	R	R	I	C
Training delivery	I	C	A	R	R	I
Start-up capital distribution	A	C	R	C	R	I
Field coaching	I	C	A	R	R	I
Monitoring and evaluation	I	A	R	R	C	I
Final report and scale-up	A	R	R	C	I	C

R = Responsible | A = Accountable / Approval authority | C = Consulted | I = Informed

10. Stakeholders and Engagement Strategy

Stakeholder	Role / Contribution	Influence	Interest	Engagement Strategy
RefugeRoot founders	Full funding of the pilot, supervision, and arbitration.	High	High	Internal reports, dashboard, validation of major decisions.
RefugeRoot Foundation Canada	Institutional promoter, coordination, compliance, and resource mobilization.	High	High	Steering meetings, archiving, documentation of results.
Widow beneficiaries	Participation, learning, launch, and management of activities.	Medium	High	Clear communication, coaching, and feedback mechanism.
Local team / trainers	Training, coaching, follow-up, and data collection.	Medium	High	Weekly meetings, standardized tools, field supervision.
Municipality of Kpomasse	Local facilitation, institutional support, and potential provision of space.	Medium	Medium	Regular information, local collaboration, respect for municipal procedures.
Community	Social acceptance, referral, and support of beneficiaries.	Low to medium	Medium	Awareness, transparency on criteria, expectation management.
Donors	Potential donor for the scale-up phase.	High	High	Present pilot as proof of concept; provide results file and 100-widow plan.
Local suppliers	Kits, inputs, logistical services, and materials.	Low	Medium	Price requests, verified delivery, supporting documents.

11. Pilot Resources and Budget

Budget principle

The pilot budget is fully funded by RefugeRoot founders. It must be documented rigorously to demonstrate the organization's initial contribution, management capacity, and the real costs required for a potential scale-up to 100 widows.

Human resources

Role	Main Responsibilities	Quantity	Availability
Project managers	Planning, coordination, reporting, risk management, and quality follow-up.	2	Full pilot duration
Trainers / field technicians	Theoretical and practical modules, mentoring, learning assessments.	2	Training and technical support
Field follow-up team	Monthly coaching, follow-up forms, evidence collection, beneficiary support.	2	Months 3 to 6
Administration / finance	Budget follow-up, supporting documents, archiving, transparency.	1	Full pilot duration
Communication / documentation	Authorized photos, testimonials, visibility content, narrative reporting.	2	According to schedule

Estimated pilot budget - founders' funding

Budget Line	Calculation Basis	Amount FCFA
Mobilization and selection	Community awareness, targeting, and selection in Kpomasse	215,000
Training design and facilitation	Cross-cutting modules and technical training for one pilot cohort	630,000
Consumables and training kits	Demonstration inputs, printed materials, and stationery	305,000
Women's participation support	Local transportation, water, and refreshments during training	420,000
Field logistics and coordination	Team travel, transportation of materials, coordination	345,000
Start-up capital	20 participants x 50,000 FCFA	1,000,000
Six-month field coaching	Monthly visits, individual mentoring, and problem-solving	490,000
Monitoring, evaluation, and final report	Monitoring tools, results consolidation, and final report	150,000
Communication and visibility	Photo documentation, testimonials, and communication materials	75,000
Project management, safeguarding, and compliance	Steering, institutional coordination, and quality assurance	175,000

Budget Line	Calculation Basis	Amount FCFA
Contingency provision	Safety margin for field adjustments	190,500
TOTAL PILOT	Fully funded by RefugeRoot founders	3,995,500

Strategic use of the pilot budget for the 100-widow phase

- Establish the real cost per beneficiary and per cohort.
- Compare fixed and variable budget lines before scaling up.
- Adjust the start-up capital amount and control procedures.
- Assess the team's ability to follow a larger number of beneficiaries effectively.
- Prepare a realistic phase 2 budget justified by field data and compliant with donor expectations.

12. Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Proof of Concept

Monitoring and evaluation is not limited to measuring results among the first 20 beneficiaries. It is the core of the proof of concept intended to demonstrate to partners and donors that the model can be scaled to 100 widows with controlled adjustments.

Key Indicator	Pilot Target	Usefulness for the 100-Widow Phase
Training participation rate	>= 95%	Measure whether the schedule, format, and mobilization approach are appropriate.
Rate of income-generating activity launch	>= 90%	Assess the real feasibility of the proposed economic model.
Rate of activities still active after 6 months	>= 80%	Measure viability and guide coaching improvements.
Increase in declared income	>= 30% after 6 months, when measurable	Estimate economic impact and adjust phase 2 indicators.
Documented monthly visits	100% of beneficiaries	Size the follow-up team for a cohort of 100 widows.
Participant satisfaction	>= 85%	Adapt modules and training format.
Quality of financial and operational evidence	100% of expenses documented	Demonstrate compliance and reporting capacity.

Recommended monitoring tools

- Beneficiary identification form.
- Microproject form and start-up capital use plan.
- Attendance sheets and training assessments.
- Monthly visit forms and coaching log.
- Simplified register of sales, expenses, and profits for beneficiaries.
- Consolidated dashboard on monday.com or an equivalent platform.
- Evidence file: authorized photos, receipts, testimonials, field notes, and reports.

13. Risk Management

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Dropout or low attendance among participants	Medium	High	Rigorous selection, prior sensitization, adapted schedule, rapid individual follow-up.
Misuse of start-up capital	Medium	High	Prior validation of microproject, signed commitment, purchase evidence, field visits.
Low profitability of economic activities	Medium	High	Simple local market analysis, coaching, business model adjustment, diversification.
Family or community pressure on income	Medium	Medium to high	Awareness, personal development, basic psychosocial support, expectation management.
Insufficient documentation for grant application	Medium	High	Systematic evidence collection, reporting calendar, centralized archiving.
Logistical delay or unavailability of training room	Low to medium	Medium	Prior planning, local alternatives, coordination with the municipality.
Pilot budget overrun	Low to medium	Medium	Weekly budget tracking, expenditure validation, contingency provision.
Difficulty scaling from 20 to 100 beneficiaries	Medium	High	Successive cohorts, team strengthening, adapted tools, realistic budget.

14. Quality, Procurement, Communication, and Compliance

Quality assurance

- Validate training modules before delivery.
- Control attendance sheets and assessments.
- Conduct field verification of start-up capital use.
- Review indicators and variances monthly.
- Archive all documents and evidence in a standardized manner.

Procurement and financial management

- Request prices or quotations when possible for significant purchases.
- Document expenses with receipts, invoices, distribution lists, or locally acceptable alternative evidence.
- Separate expenses related to management, training, start-up capital, communication, and monitoring and evaluation.
- Maintain full traceability to prepare for the compliance requirements of future institutional funding.

Communication and visibility

- Obtain beneficiary consent before using any photo, video, or named testimonial.
- Preserve the dignity of participants and avoid communications that portray them only through vulnerability.
- Present the pilot as a local empowerment initiative rather than one-time assistance.
- Validate any donor-related visibility once an institutional funding phase is approved.

15. Scale-Up Strategy Toward 100 Widows

The scale-up phase must not be a mechanical multiplication of the pilot by five. It must rely on real field data, observed costs, coaching capacity, the most promising income-generating activities, and the difficulties encountered by participants.

Dimension	Decision to Make After the Pilot	Consequence for the 100-Widow Phase
Cohort model	Train the 100 widows in one cohort or in successive cohorts.	Preserve pedagogical quality and individualized follow-up.
Start-up capital	Confirm the appropriate amount per beneficiary and the control procedures.	Limit misuse and maximize economic effect.
Field team	Determine the optimal ratio of coaches to beneficiaries.	Ensure credible monthly follow-up for 100 widows.
Economic activities	Identify the most viable activities according to pilot results.	Focus training on truly profitable options.
Local partnerships	Formalize support from municipality, trainers, suppliers, and other actors.	Reduce costs, strengthen local legitimacy, and facilitate deployment.
Data system	Standardize forms, dashboards, evidence, and reports.	Meet the requirements of an institutional donor.
Phase 2 budget	Calculate the real cost per beneficiary and economies of scale.	Present a realistic and defensible grant request.

Scale-up readiness conditions

- At least 90% of pilot participants effectively launch an economic activity.
- At least 80% of activities are still active at the end of the pilot follow-up period.
- Selection, training, coaching, and reporting tools are considered functional.
- Unit costs are documented and allow a realistic budget for 100 widows.
- Major identified risks have clear mitigation measures.
- The municipality or local partners confirm their availability to support an expanded phase.

16. Sustainability, Gradual Exit, and Expected Benefits

The sustainability of the project depends on beneficiaries' ability to maintain and develop their economic activities beyond the initial support. RefugeRoot's role is to act as a catalyst through training, start-up capital, coaching, and structured management practices. The success of the pilot should support a shift from assistance to capacity-building and autonomy.

Benefit Level	Expected Result
Beneficiaries	Improved ability to generate income, manage a small activity, make economic decisions, and support their household.
Children and households	Indirect improvement in food, schooling, and family stability through increased income.
Community	Greater recognition of widows' economic role, reduced stigma, and stronger local solidarity.
RefugeRoot	Operational model tested, documented, and adaptable to other cohorts or communes.

Benefit Level	Expected Result
Potential donor	Opportunity to invest in an expanded phase supported by real data and a pilot already funded by the founders.

17. Change Management and Pilot Closure

Change management

- Any significant change to scope, budget, or number of beneficiaries must be documented and validated by RefugeRoot coordination.
- Minor field adjustments may be approved by the project manager when their budgetary and operational impact remains limited.
- Changes affecting the 100-widow phase must be recorded in the lessons learned register.

Closure criteria

- Planned training sessions are completed and documented.
- Start-up capital is allocated according to procedures and available evidence.
- Coaching visits are completed or variances are justified.
- The indicator dashboard is consolidated.
- The pilot final report is validated.
- A formal recommendation is produced for the 100-widow phase.

18. Approval

Role	Name / Organization	Signature	Date
Promoter / founders	RefugeRoot Foundation Canada		
Project coordination	RefugeRoot Foundation Canada		
Project managers	Fatou N'Diaye/Theodorie AISSI		05/05/2026
Local representation / facilitation	To be completed according to the local agreement		

Annex A. Summary Logical Framework

Level	Description	Indicators	Means of Verification
Impact	Strengthened economic resilience of widows and their households in Kpomasse.	Improved income; activity stability; increased management capacity.	Final report, interviews, follow-up forms, testimonials.
Outcome	20 widows have skills and support to launch or consolidate an income-generating activity.	90% launch an activity; 80% remain active after 6 months.	Coaching forms, photos, registers, activity evidence.
Outputs	Training completed, capital distributed, monthly coaching and data collected.	Participation rate; number of visits; number of microprojects.	Attendance sheets, microproject forms, dashboard.
Activities	Mobilization, selection, training, start-up support, monitoring, and closure.	Activities implemented according to schedule.	Work plan, monthly reports, supporting documents.

Annex B. Learning Register for the 100-Widow Phase

Learning Question	Data to Collect During the Pilot	Expected Decision for Phase 2
Which selection criteria identify the most committed beneficiaries?	Profile, attendance, motivation, progress, microproject success.	Adjust the selection grid for the 100 widows.
Which training modules are most useful?	Assessments, trainer observations, participant feedback.	Strengthen or simplify the curriculum.
What level of start-up capital is truly effective?	Use of funds, activity type, profitability, additional needs.	Define a start-up budget per beneficiary.
What field follow-up ratio is realistic?	Visit duration, frequency, problems encountered, workload.	Size the team for 100 widows.
Which economic activities have the best potential?	Sales, margins, local demand, supply obstacles.	Prioritize the most viable sectors.
Which risks must be anticipated at larger scale?	Incidents, delays, dropouts, conflicts, misuse of funds.	Strengthen the risk plan and controls.