Integrated Protection and Empowerment of Vulnerable Women and Children in Bobo-Dioulasso

Full Proposal for Fondazione FIDINAM

1. Project Summary

Item	Description
Project Title	Integrated Protection and Empowerment of Vulnerable Women and Children in Bobo-Dioulasso
Country	Burkina Faso
Location	Bobo-Dioulasso
Project Duration	12 months
Total Project Budget	EUR 42,000
Requested Contribution from FIDINAM	EUR 25,000
Direct Beneficiaries	65 vulnerable women and girls, 15 at-risk children
Indirect Beneficiaries	Approximately 350 family and community members

2. Background on the Organization

The Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd is an international religious congregation founded by Saint Mary Euphrasia in 1835 in Angers, France. Today, the congregation is present in more than 68 countries across five continents.

Guided by a mission of compassion and mercy, the Sisters work mainly with vulnerable women, girls, and children affected by violence, extreme poverty, sexual exploitation, forced displacement, family rejection, and other forms of abuse.

Since the establishment of the mission in Burkina Faso in 2011, the Sisters have worked closely with the Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF) and local partners to support vulnerable women and children through food security and livelihood activities, psychosocial accompaniment, educational support, awareness sessions, emergency assistance, and protection services.

Since the beginning of the mission, more than 1,000 women, girls, and children in Bobo-Dioulasso have benefited from these activities, helping them improve their living conditions, strengthen their confidence, improve household stability and food security, and rebuild safer and more stable lives.

3. Local Context and Main Challenges

Burkina Faso continues to face a major humanitarian and protection crisis linked to insecurity, forced displacement, food insecurity, and weakened social services. More than 2 million people are internally displaced in the country, with women and children being the most affected. Many displaced families move toward safer urban centres in search of protection, income opportunities, schooling for children, and access to basic services.

Bobo-Dioulasso, located in the Hauts-Bassins region, is Burkina Faso's second largest city and one of the country's main urban and economic centres. According to the 2019 national census, the commune of Bobo-Dioulasso had around 904,920 inhabitants, confirming its important demographic and economic role and its attractiveness for families seeking safety, income opportunities, education, and access to services.

The wider Hauts-Bassins region is one of the most urbanised regions of Burkina Faso. The concentration of population in and around Bobo-Dioulasso has increased pressure on housing, schools, livelihoods, food access, health services, and local social support systems, especially in poor urban areas such as Sector 22. According to UNICEF, based on the latest data from Burkina Faso's Ministry of Education, 5,336 schools were closed due to insecurity as of the end of February 2024, representing 21% of all schools in the country (*UNICEF 2026 HAC appeal*).

Food insecurity in Bobo-Dioulasso is mainly linked to access and affordability rather than food availability. Food is generally available in local markets, but poor households often struggle to buy enough diverse and nutritious food because their income is low, unstable, or dependent on informal work. This situation particularly affects vulnerable women, children, and displaced families living in fragile urban conditions.

Women and girls are especially exposed to economic hardship, family separation, exploitation, violence, and social exclusion. Displaced women arriving in Bobo-Dioulasso often lack stable income or support networks, making it difficult to ensure food security and adequate care for their children. Children living in vulnerable households face increased risks of school dropout, neglect, unsafe environments, and poor nutrition.

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd regularly receive requests for support from women and households facing food insecurity, psychological distress, unstable livelihoods, and difficulties caring for children.

4. Why This Project Is Needed

This project was developed in response to the needs observed by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd among vulnerable families living in Bobo-Dioulasso.

Women and children supported by the Sisters are often affected by displacement, poverty, unstable livelihoods, food insecurity, violence, family separation, and lack of educational opportunities. These difficulties are closely connected. When households do not have stable income or regular access to sufficient and nutritious food, family situations become more fragile, children are more likely to leave school, and women and girls become more exposed to exploitation, violence, and emotional distress.

Thanks to the proposed intervention, the project will offer an intensive accompaniment to vulnerable households selected based on vulnerability criteria such as internal displacement, food insecurity and extreme poverty, unstable livelihoods and lack of income opportunities, exposure to violence, exploitation or forced marriage, family separation and social exclusion, as well as difficulties accessing education and basic services. A limited number of direct beneficiaries will be initially involved. This will ensure close follow-up and sustainable results.

5. Project Goal and Objectives

Goal

To strengthen the resilience, well-being, and protection of vulnerable women and children in Bobo-Dioulasso through integrated food security, livelihood, psychosocial, educational, and community support activities.

Specific Objective

To improve the food security, economic stability, psychosocial well-being, and protection of vulnerable women and children in Bobo-Dioulasso through integrated agro-pastoral, livelihood, educational, and accompaniment activities.

6. Beneficiary Groups

The project will directly support 65 vulnerable women and girls and 15 at-risk children. Most women, girls, and children supported are between 10 and 35 years old, with some exceptional cases involving older women up to 60 years old.

The women beneficiaries include internally displaced women, women facing family separation or social exclusion, adolescent mothers, widows, women with unstable livelihoods or limited income opportunities, and women affected by violence, exploitation, or severe economic hardship. Some beneficiaries fled insecurity and violence in northern and eastern regions of Burkina Faso.

The women and families supported by the project often face food insecurity, economic hardship, violence, or difficulties accessing education and basic services. Many survive through unstable informal activities and struggle to provide sufficient food and stable living conditions for their children.

Beneficiaries are oriented toward different activities according to their situation, needs, and level of vulnerability. Internally displaced women with interest in food production participate in the agro-pastoral activities. Women facing serious economic difficulties but able to manage small income-generating activities are supported through micro-credit and entrepreneurship activities. Women and girls in highly vulnerable situations, including those affected by violence, exploitation, family rejection, or severe emotional distress, receive psychosocial accompaniment and protection support.

The Sisters and the local team identify and orient beneficiaries based on criteria such as food insecurity, unstable livelihoods, internal displacement, exposure to violence or exploitation, family situation, and access to education or basic services.

The 15 children supported by the project are mainly children of the women beneficiaries, together with some other vulnerable children identified by the Sisters and the local team. These children live in households affected by food insecurity, interrupted schooling, unstable family situations, displacement, or economic hardship.

Indirectly, around 350 community members will benefit from awareness sessions, strengthened family support, improved household stability, and increased awareness on nutrition and food security.

7. Main Activities

The following activities will be implemented:

7.1 Agro-pastoral Activities for Food Security and Nutrition

At least 15 internally displaced and vulnerable women will participate in vegetable production and small poultry activities on land made available by the Sisters. Beneficiaries will be selected according to vulnerability criteria including displacement, food insecurity, unstable livelihoods, and family vulnerability.

The activities will include:

- cultivation of vegetables and local crops;
- distribution of seeds and basic agricultural tools;
- small-scale poultry activities to improve access to eggs and protein-rich food;
- practical training in agroecological farming and poultry management;
- regular technical accompaniment by agricultural and poultry technicians.

7.2 Small Business and Livelihood Support Activities

35 vulnerable women will receive small business and livelihood support according to their skills, needs, and economic situation.
Support includes:

- small start-up kits;
- limited micro-credit support;
- savings and group accompaniment activities;
- basic training in small business management.

The women will be supported to strengthen or start small income-generating activities such as petty trade, food processing, sewing, soap-making, catering, and other small livelihood activities. Regular follow-up visits and accompaniment sessions will be carried out by the Sisters and the project team.

7.3 Psychosocial Support and Protection

At least 15 women and girls in highly vulnerable situations will benefit from psychosocial accompaniment and protection support.

Activities will include:

- individual and group counselling sessions;
- home visits;
- emotional support and accompaniment;
- referral to specialized services when needed.

The support will be coordinated by the Sisters together with a psychologist and a social worker, with regular follow-up adapted to beneficiaries' needs.

7.4 Educational Support for Vulnerable Children

At least 15 vulnerable children from highly vulnerable households will participate in weekly remedial education and educational accompaniment activities.
Support will include:

- tutoring and homework support;
- educational accompaniment;
- recreational learning activities;
- provision of basic educational materials when needed.

7.5 Community Awareness and Family Support Sessions

Community awareness sessions will be organized every 2 months for vulnerable families and community members.
The sessions will address:

- nutrition and food security;
- family well-being;
- violence prevention;
- children's rights and protection;
- peaceful coexistence and community support.

The activities aim to strengthen knowledge, awareness, and protection of vulnerable women and children within the community.

8. Expected Results and Planned Impact

Result 1 – Vulnerable families have better access to nutritious food

Result 2 – Vulnerable women strengthen their economic resilience and income-generating capacities

Result 3 –Vulnerable women, girls, and children improve their psychosocial well-being, protection, and educational support.

Result 4 – Families and community members strengthen awareness and improve knowledge on nutrition, child protection, and family well-being.

9. Monitoring and Follow-up

Regular monitoring and follow-up activities will be carried out throughout the project to ensure effective implementation, close accompaniment of beneficiaries, and accountability. The MDO Project Officer will coordinate the overall monitoring process with support from the Sisters, technical staff, facilitators, teachers, and other staff involved in the implementation of activities.

For the agro-pastoral activities, regular field visits will monitor participation, food production, poultry activities, and the application of agroecological practices. Means of verification will include attendance sheets, field visit reports, production records, poultry monitoring records, photographs, and beneficiary testimonies. Monitoring activities will be carried out by the Project Officer together with the Sisters in charge of the activity, the technicians, and the farm guard supporting the activities on the field.

For the micro-credit and entrepreneurship support activities, monthly meetings and follow-up visits will assess participation in group activities, the use of start-up support and micro-credits, and the progress of income-generating activities. Means of verification will include attendance records, meeting reports, micro-credit records, activity reports, and beneficiary testimonies. Monitoring will be conducted by the Project Officer, the Sisters, trainers, and the women's coordination committee.

For educational support activities, monitoring will focus on children's attendance, participation, learning progress, and school retention. Means of verification will include attendance sheets, school reports, teachers' follow-up reports, and beneficiary feedback. Monitoring activities will involve the Project Officer, the Sister responsible for education activities, teachers, and youth educators supporting the children.

For psychosocial support and protection activities, monitoring will assess beneficiaries' participation, well-being, and access to accompaniment and referral services. Means of verification will include counselling reports, attendance sheets, referral records, home visit reports, and beneficiary testimonies. Monitoring activities will be carried out by the Sisters, the psychologist, the social worker, and the Project Officer.

For community awareness activities, monitoring will assess participation and community engagement in sensitization sessions related to nutrition, family well-being, violence prevention, children's rights, and support for vulnerable groups. Means of verification will include attendance lists, activity reports, photographs, and participant feedback. Monitoring will involve the Project Officer, Sisters coordinating the sessions, facilitators, and community resource persons.

Regular coordination meetings, home visits, communication with beneficiaries, and activity reports will support the overall monitoring, accountability, and evaluation of the project.