Harrison Makenga Masila
Noah's Ark Mission Church and Prayer Centre
1650 Howard Ave, Windsor,
ON N8X 3T7, Canada.

13th October, 2026

**The Grants Committee,**
**(Put Address Here)**

**Subject**: Request for Academic Grant: Master of Counselling Psychology at Yorkville University

Dear Sir/Madam,

**1. Introduction and Purpose of the Application**

I respectfully submit this application for financial assistance to enable me to complete my Master of Counselling Psychology at Yorkville University in Canada. My request arises from both my personal financial circumstances and my longstanding commitment to supporting vulnerable individuals, immigrants, refugees, and families through pastoral care and community development.

I am the founder and a volunteer pastor at Noah Ark Mission Church and Prayer Center, a registered nonprofit organization in Windsor, Ontario. My wife, Solene Uwimana, and I established the ministry in July 2024 after identifying a significant need for community, spiritual guidance, and practical support among newcomers, particularly African immigrants and refugees adjusting to life in Canada.

Since establishing the ministry, we have invested our personal savings, time, and resources in creating a welcoming environment where people can develop meaningful relationships, receive pastoral guidance, and feel a sense of belonging. Our work has grown from small beginnings into a community involving people from several East and Central African countries.

However, financing the ministry and my education from personal resources has created substantial financial pressure. I have been unable to clear my outstanding university fees, resulting in my dismissal from my current semester until the balance is paid. With approximately one year remaining before I can complete my program, I am seeking assistance to overcome this financial barrier.

I therefore request educational sponsorship towards my outstanding tuition fees, with any approved funds paid directly to Yorkville University. This assistance would enable me to resume my studies and continue developing the professional knowledge and skills needed to serve individuals and communities more effectively.

**2. Educational Background and Experience in Community Service**

My commitment to community service is anchored in years of pastoral leadership, counselling, education, and community engagement.

I hold a Master's degree in Community Development and Social Innovation from VID University in Oslo, Norway, and a Bachelor's degree in Theology from MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society in Oslo. My educational background has equipped me with knowledge of community development, social inclusion, pastoral care, leadership, and the social factors that influence individual and collective wellbeing. I have also served as a pastor, church leader, and counsellor in Europe, where I had opportunities to engage with people from different backgrounds and participate in various community and service activities. One particularly significant part of my experience was leading a Norwegian church for eleven years. This period strengthened my understanding of community leadership, pastoral responsibility, and the importance of creating welcoming environments where people can find support and connection.

My experience in ministry and community engagement has exposed me to individuals dealing with loneliness, family difficulties, emotional distress, displacement, and social exclusion. It has also taught me that people need more than occasional assistance: they need relationships, consistent support, opportunities to participate, and access to appropriate services.

After moving to Canada, I recognized that these needs were particularly evident among some newcomers and refugees who were rebuilding their lives in an unfamiliar environment. My

wife and I responded by establishing Noah Ark Mission Church and Prayer Center, through which we could continue our service in Windsor.

I am currently pursuing a Master of Counselling Psychology at Yorkville University and completing a Diploma in Mental Health and Addictions at Canadian College of Health Sciences in Windsor. I have also undertaken the HLLQP insurance course, having passed three of its four papers and awaiting the remaining results. This additional training reflects my interest in helping community members develop financial literacy and make informed decisions about their financial wellbeing.

**3. Establishment and Development of Noah Ark Mission Church and Prayer Center**

Noah Ark Mission Church and Prayer Center began in July 2024 through the initiative of my wife and me. We established the ministry because we saw the need for a welcoming community where newcomers could develop social connections, receive spiritual guidance, and find encouragement while adjusting to life in Canada.

Before renting a venue, I visited refugees staying in hotels in Windsor. Many were experiencing uncertainty and had limited opportunities for meaningful social engagement. I approached a community representative and invited people to attend our church gatherings. Some began attending, and our initial activities gradually developed into a wider community initiative.

In 2024, my wife and I personally purchased food and refreshments and hosted a gathering attended by more than sixty people. Photographs documenting this activity and other subsequent community initiatives are available as supporting evidence. For more than a year, we continued financing church activities from our personal resources, including the purchase of musical instruments and other necessities. Recognizing the transportation challenges experienced by many members, we also acquired an eight-seat van to help bring people to church on Sundays.

The community has continued to grow. Some members now contribute offerings and assist with church activities and events. This participation is encouraging because it demonstrates a growing sense of ownership and shared responsibility. Nevertheless, the main financial burden continues to rest with my wife and me as the founders.

The organization was officially registered as a nonprofit in Ontario in 2026. My wife and I are the founders and board members, and the church maintains a separate bank account. Financial accountability is supported by a group of four people, including my wife and three other church members, who help oversee and manage the funds received. This structure reflects our commitment to responsible stewardship, transparency, and the sustainable development of the organization.

**4. Community Impact and the People We Serve**

Our community includes people from Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi, among other backgrounds. Shared languages and cultural experiences often make it easier for members to communicate, form relationships, and support one another.

Many newcomers in Canada face challenges associated with adjusting to a new society, including loneliness, separation from family, unfamiliar systems, and difficulty establishing social networks. Refugees and asylum seekers often carry the effects of traumatic experiences, rejection, or persecution in their countries of origin.

Some individuals, including LGBTQ+ refugees from countries where their identities may expose them to discrimination, violence, or rejection, can face additional challenges in finding safe and accepting communities. Our church seeks to offer a welcoming environment where people are treated with dignity, included in community life, and supported without prejudice.

Through regular gatherings, pastoral guidance, social activities, and opportunities to build friendships, we have observed people becoming more connected and less isolated. Members have found a community where they can share experiences, receive encouragement, and develop a sense of belonging, in other words, have the experience of a home away from home. We also support international students from the region who may arrive in Canada without established social networks. By welcoming them into the community, we help create opportunities for friendship, mutual support, and participation in local social life.

Another initiative is celebrating students who complete their studies but cannot have their parents travel to Canada for graduation. The church organizes graduation celebrations to

recognize their achievements and ensure that they have people around them to share and celebrate these important milestones.
We also organize outdoor activities, including barbecues and visits to local beaches, particularly for younger members. These activities create informal opportunities for interaction and friendship beyond regular worship services. Additionally, we have held successful women's and young women's conferences, including inviting a female bishop to speak and encourage participants. We also hold monthly men's meetings that provide opportunities for fellowship, discussion, and mutual encouragement.

Photographs documenting our gatherings, food-sharing activities, conferences, and other community initiatives accompany this application. They demonstrate that our work is ongoing and practical rather than merely a proposed future project.

**5. Why Professional Counselling Education Is Essential to My Work**
My experience as a pastor and community leader has helped me understand the importance of emotional support, social inclusion, and appropriate guidance. However, it has also shown me that some challenges require specialized psychological knowledge and professional intervention beyond the scope of pastoral support alone.

I therefore enrolled in the Master of Counselling Psychology program at Yorkville University to develop a stronger foundation in psychological theory, counselling methods, ethical practice, and evidence-informed approaches to supporting people experiencing distress.
My particular interests include trauma, anxiety, depression, family difficulties, addiction-related challenges, and the psychological effects of displacement and social exclusion. I also want to improve my understanding of how culture, migration, identity, and past experiences influence people's wellbeing and willingness to seek help.

My complementary studies in mental health and addictions are intended to deepen this preparation. Together, these programs will help me to more competently recognize people’s needs, understand the limits of my competence, and identify when referral to qualified professionals or other appropriate services is necessary.

My goal is not to replace the established mental-health services, but to become better equipped to contribute responsibly, work collaboratively where appropriate, and help community members to connect with suitable support.
Completing the Master of Counselling Psychology would therefore be a significant step in my professional development and my ability to serve the wider community in Canada, subject to the relevant academic, supervised-practice, and professional requirements.

**6. Financial Need and the Request for Educational Sponsorship**

The principal difficulty I am facing is the cost of continuing my studies while sustaining the community work that we established here in Windsor.
My wife and I have used personal savings to finance the church's activities, including venue rental, transportation, food, equipment, and community events. Although the members have begun contributing towards some activities, the organization is still in a development stage and cannot yet independently meet all its operating costs.

At the same time, my tuition obligations have become increasingly difficult to manage. I applied for Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) funding but did not obtain sufficient assistance for my studies. My understanding is that the funding available to me was limited because Yorkville University is outside Ontario's publicly assisted university system. I can provide the relevant funding information if required.

As a result, I have an outstanding tuition balance that prevented me from continuing in my current semester. I have been dismissed from the semester pending clearance of the balance. This has been particularly difficult because I have completed one academic year and have approximately one year remaining before I can finish the program, subject to the university confirming my academic standing and remaining requirements.

I am therefore requesting financial assistance towards the outstanding tuition balance and the cost of resuming and completing my studies.
I specifically request that any approved educational grant be paid **directly to Yorkville University** and credited to my student account. I am willing to provide an official tuition statement, my student details, confirmation of my academic status, and the university's appropriate payment contact information so that the sponsor can verify the amount and

arrange payment directly. I would also welcome reasonable follow-up or confirmation requirements to ensure that the funds are applied to their intended purpose.

**7. The Church's Future Vision and Sustainability**

While my immediate request is for educational sponsorship, the development of Noah Ark Mission Church and Prayer Center provides important context for the work this education is intended to strengthen.

We currently rent a venue for limited periods: approximately two and a half hours on Sundays, one hour on Mondays, one hour on Wednesdays, and one and a half hours on Saturdays. These restrictions limit our ability to hold extended gatherings, provide additional community activities, and allow members to socialize after services. We frequently meet at my home when the rented venue is unavailable.

Our long-term vision is to secure a permanent community space in Windsor where the congregation can gather consistently, strengthen social connections, and develop more structured community-support activities. A real estate agent has indicated that a suitable location may require approximately CAD $2,500 per month in rent, although the actual cost would depend on the actual property and lease terms.

We recognize that establishing a permanent facility will require a separate and sustainable funding plan. Our current priorities include building the membership's capacity to contribute, strengthening financial accountability, and exploring appropriate grants, donations, and partnerships.

Completing my counselling education would complement this vision by strengthening my ability to understand community needs and contribute to initiatives that promote emotional wellbeing, social inclusion, and appropriate access to support.

**8. Accountability and Supporting Evidence**

I am committed to transparency in the use of any sponsorship awarded. The church maintains a separate bank account and has an internal arrangement involving four people who help oversee its finances. We are continuing to develop the administrative and financial practices required for responsible nonprofit management.

I can provide the following documents in support of this application:

1. Photographs of community activities undertaken since July 2024, with descriptions and dates where available.
2. Proof of registration of Noah Ark Mission Church and Prayer Center as a nonprofit organization in Ontario.
3. My curriculum vitae and academic qualifications.
4. Proof of enrolment and available academic records from Yorkville University.
5. An official statement showing my outstanding tuition balance and the requirements for resuming my studies.
6. Available documentation concerning my Diploma in Mental Health and Addictions and HLLQP course progress.
7. Additional information or references requested by the grants committee.

Photographs and other evidence involving community members will be shared with due regard for privacy, dignity, and consent, particularly where individuals may be refugees or have experienced discrimination or trauma.

**9. Conclusion**

I respectfully ask the grants committee to consider supporting my educational journey through a grant towards my outstanding Master of Counselling Psychology tuition fees.

For many years, I have devoted myself to pastoral leadership, counselling, and community service. Since July 2024, my wife and I have continued this commitment in Windsor through Noah Ark Mission Church and Prayer Center, building a community that welcomes newcomers, supports refugees, encourages international students, and creates opportunities for people to connect and belong. The financial demands of sustaining this ministry have affected my ability to meet my university fees. With approximately one year remaining in my program, educational sponsorship would help me overcome a significant obstacle and continue towards a qualification that is directly relevant to the needs I encounter in the community.

I am not asking for the sponsor to take over the financial responsibilities of the church. Rather, I am requesting a practical investment in my education and professional development, with the grant paid directly to Yorkville University and supported by verifiable documentation. I believe that strengthening my counselling knowledge and professional competence will complement my existing experience and help me contribute more effectively to individuals, families, and communities in Canada.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application. I would be grateful for the opportunity to provide further information or clarification in support of this request.

Yours faithfully,
Harrison Makenga Masila
Founder and Volunteer Pastor
Noah Ark Mission Church and Prayer Center
1650 Howard Ave, Windsor, ON N8X 3T7, Canada