

# Improving access to education in Burkina Faso: a major condition for benefiting from the demographic dividend

December 2020 – No. 11 | UE-AFD Research Facility on Inequalities

### PITCH

The large share of children, teenagers, and young people within the Burkinabe population requires strong actions and considerable investments now to offer this segment of the population life skills (knowledge, soft skills, and know-how), through quality education and training, in order to benefit from the demographic dividend.

### CONTEXT

Burkina Faso is a country with a fast population growth. The general population census of 2006 puts the growth rate of the Burkinabe population at 3.1% per year, and demographic projections estimate this rate at 2.8% in 2020. The Burkinabe

population is estimated at 21,510,181 inhabitants in 2020, with 51.7% of women.

One of the major characteristics of this population is its youth, with over one in four inhabitants (27.4%) aged 15 to 29 in 2020. Children aged 6 to 15, the target population for basic education, make up 28% of the total population, and teenagers aged 16-19, who are concerned by secondary education, are estimated at 9%. The country is therefore facing a huge potential demand for schooling.

Taking advantage of the demographic dividend implies that children, teenagers, and young people be well prepared in terms of knowledge and life skills to enter the labor market and contribute to the production of national wealth.

### RESULTS

The study of inequalities in Burkina Faso<sup>1</sup> has revealed that efforts have been made to improve access to primary education.

The implementation of the Ten-Year Basic Education Development Plan (PDDEB) between 2002 and 2011 and the Basic Education Strategic Development Program (PDSEB) since 2012 has contributed to this progress.

The study has also shown a decrease in gender inequalities in access to primary education. In addition, girls have gradually been catching up in post-primary (lower secondary) education, even though they are still not as numerous as boys in secondary education.

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**Key words** Population growth, youth, quality education, employability, demographic dividend, Burkina Faso

**Geography** Burkina Faso

**Themes** Demographics, Education, Demographic dividend

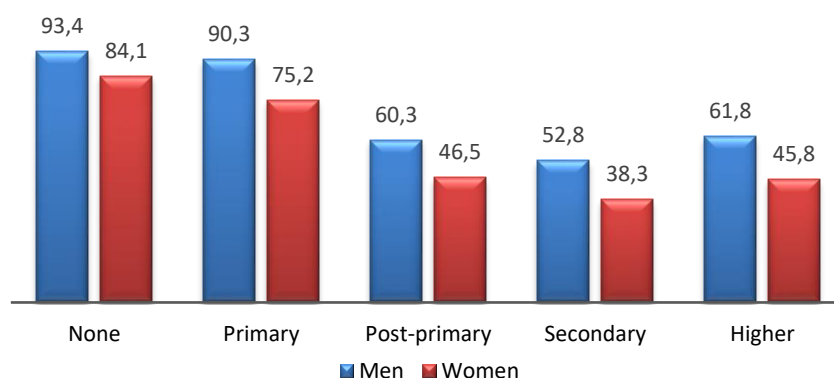
**Find out more about this project:** <https://www.afd.fr/en/carte-des-projets/analyzing-inequalities-perspective-health-education-and-employment-trajectories>

However, considerable challenges remain in access to quality post-primary and secondary education.

The quality of post-primary and secondary education is not sufficient to enable those graduating from these levels to access decent jobs and contribute to national production. In fact, the study of inequalities in Burkina Faso has shown that the employment rate is low for post-primary and secondary school leavers regardless of gender (Figure 1).

Specific priority should be given to rural areas and vulnerable populations, which are disadvantaged in terms of access to education at all levels. In primary

Figure 1. Employment rate by gender and level of education (Source : INSD (2016, p.17))



education, while gender inequalities have been decreasing, the gap between urban and rural areas remains high, to the detriment of the latter (Figure 1). In 2014, the gross primary school enrollment rate in urban areas was almost double that

observed in rural areas. Regarding access to education by social category, the study has identified inequalities in participation to the disadvantage of the children of the poor, of uneducated parents, and of divorced or separated parents.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study on inequalities in Burkina Faso, four major recommendations can be made for the Ministry of National Education, Literacy, and the Promotion of National Languages:

- ▶ Adequately endowing regions with school infrastructure and stimulating demand for schooling.
- ▶ Despite the progress achieved in primary education, two regions deserve special attention with regard to access to education: the Sahel and the East. While the gross enrollment rate reached 91% in 2018, it appears that in the Sahel and the East, respectively one in two children and fewer than two in three children attended school.
- ▶ Implementing or strengthening specific strategies for girls. Huge progress has been made in reducing gender inequalities in access to primary education. However, specific strategies for girls must be put into place or strengthened to improve their access and retention beyond primary education (post-primary and secondary).
- ▶ Implementing and strengthening existing policies for the access of vulnerable groups to education, especially children and teenagers from the poorest social categories and from households whose heads are uneducated. Despite the progress observed in access to education, economic (household income) and cultural (family's educational capital) factors still constitute huge barriers to schooling. Children, teenagers, and young people from the poorest social groups and those whose household heads are uneducated are less likely to access and be successful in school.
- ▶ Making access to post-primary and secondary education a priority in rural areas through the massive and adequate allocation of school infrastructure, equipment, and staff.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.afd.fr/fr/ressources/etat-des-lieux-des-inegalites-multi-dimensionnelles-au-burkina-faso>