



# Burkina Faso Deep Dive Report

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Getting to parity: Burkina Faso's Journey  
Towards Closing the Gender Gap

*March 2022*

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# ACRONYMS

Acronyms	Definitions
CBHWS	CBHW – Community based health workers
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPS	Gender Parity Scores
HCD	Human Capital Development
HCI	Human Capital Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
ILO	International Labor Organization
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
NDHS	National Demographic Health Survey
NGO	Non-Profit Organization
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNCS	National Community Health Strategy
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics
SWEDD	Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WMSMES	Women in Management, Business and Public Service

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Despite political instability and security threats, Burkina Faso has managed to rank as a rising Human Capital Development (HCD) star.** Over the past decade, Burkina Faso has improved its Human Capital Index (HCI) Score from 0.32 in 2010 to 0.38 in 2020<sup>1</sup>, and reduced the gender parity gap, particularly in health and education, enabling women to take a larger part in the country's sociopolitical and economic development.

**Overall, health and education have improved thanks to strong investment in supply-side to expand access to basic services.** On the health side, the construction of health infrastructure and training of health professionals have increased, particularly in remote areas. Additionally, a free healthcare policy for pregnant women and children under five was put in place, all leading to a decrease in maternal mortality ratio, from 331 per 100,000 live births in 2016 to 309 per 100,000 live births pre COVID-19 pandemic. In education, substantial investments have enabled Burkina Faso to close the gender gap at both primary and secondary levels. Furthermore, initiatives designed to re-integrate out of school children have also contributed to an increase in female literacy rates from 0.82 in 2016 to 0.88 in 2020.

**However, persistent gender-biased social norms are keeping women away from fully taking advantage of these efforts.** Despite greater availability of family planning tools and information, women are not empowered to use them. With 1 in 2 girls married before the age of 18, child marriage remains prevalent, keeping fertility rates amongst the highest in its cluster and the region (5.04 compared to 4.43 in the region and 4.74 in its cluster). These issues, coupled with unpaid care work and the preference for investing in boys' education over girls, few girls are able to complete secondary school, affecting their ability to enter the formal job market and/or secure high paying jobs.

**While relatively in better health, and better schooled, women on average have less resources to turn that human capital into productive livelihood opportunities.** Despite laws in place to facilitate access to land, customary law, still largely apply in rural areas, preventing women from securing land. This situation later affects female entrepreneurs' ability to access loans. While the authorities have developed mechanisms to stimulate female entrepreneurship, government-funds are poorly tailored to their needs and the skills gap remains unaddressed. Moreover, social norms play a role here again as women continue to be discriminated against in traditionally male-dominated fields, and gender biases impact their self-confidence. They tend to be more discriminated against in access to credit lines and support schemes, including in fields where they account for the majority of workers, like agriculture (2.11% of women compared to 8.79% of men have access to agricultural credit and only 6% of women in the field enjoy a technical assistance compared to 19.11% of men). The gender digital divide also impacts women, who face less access to and usage of digital tools which could serve as a powerful tool to improve productivity as well as access to market, credit, and resources.

**The unique security situation faced by the country also creates a particularly vulnerable segment of women who make up the majority of Internally Displaced People (IDPs).** The security crisis has led to an increase in the number of IDPs. Women, who account for 65% of displaced people are left more vulnerable to gender-based violence and more at risk of food insecurity. This insecurity is also negatively affecting women and girls more broadly, as schools and health infrastructures are regularly targeted.

**Finally, despite efforts led by civil society organizations, women's representation on the political landscape remains low.** While a 30% quota law was adopted, its poor enforcement limits the

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, Burkina Faso Human Capital Index, 2020

intended impact and women's representation on the local political scene is low. Gender stereotypes affect their willingness to enter the political arena, secure funding, and thrive in this environment.

**While Burkina Faso has made great strides towards greater gender parity and equality, some key areas need to be addressed to build on the progress made so far and enable women to play a greater role in the country's economic development.** Investment in infrastructure and human resources as well as accrued partnership with local communities have led to significant improvements in women's health and education outcomes. Several areas however remain to be addressed to reach full gender parity and equality. These include addressing harmful gender biases, continue investing in innovative solutions, creating an inclusive legal framework, and encouraging greater synergy of actions between the various stakeholders.

This report is positioned as one of six country reports within the overall study assessing ECOWAS member states gender parity performance, through their gender parity scores (GPS) on key indicators across education, health, economic participation and political empowerment dimensions. The report is primarily based on data analysis used to complete a modeling exercise to quantify the economic impact of closing the parity gap in West Africa. Detailed results from the modeling scenarios will be outlined in the final regional report. This country report includes current GPS performance comparison at the country, cluster and regional levels based on indicators projections through 2020. Additionally, the report is complemented by stakeholder interviews conducted in Burkina Faso to understand persistent barriers to greater gender parity, identify lessons learned and formulate recommendations to close the parity gap.

## A. CONTEXT

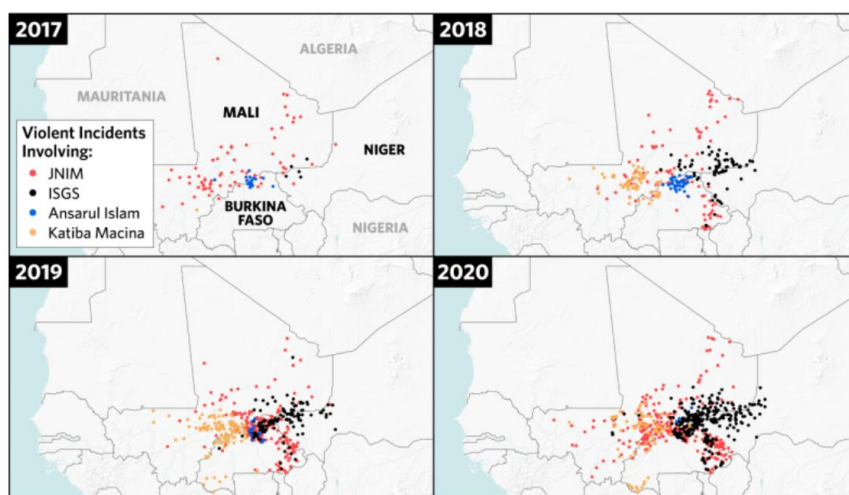
### A1. Landscape analysis

**Burkina Faso has a young and ethnically diverse population.** In 2020, the country's total population was estimated at 20,9 million people, half of them women and 44% young people under the age of 15<sup>2</sup>. Burkina Faso is made up of 60 ethnic groups dominated by the Mossi (52%)<sup>3</sup>, and the majority of the country's population is Muslim (63.2%)<sup>4</sup>.

**Burkina Faso has been marked by difficult political transitions.** Since gaining independence in 1960, the country has experienced 7 military coups as recently as 2022. Following a transition marked by an attempted coup in December 2015, the country's first civilian president was elected and assumed office in a context of pressing social demands. The 2014 uprising empowered dissenting voices in Burkina Faso, and demonstrations have continued, urging the president to appeal for less protests. Several public administration branches including the judiciary also organized strikes, further reducing overall government effectiveness, already diminished by an inefficient bureaucracy. In January 2022, one year after his re-election, the president was overthrown by a military coup amid a deepening security crisis.

**Since 2015, Burkina Faso is facing a security crisis, impacting mostly women who make up the majority of the Internationally Displaced Population (IDP).** The country has been the target of attacks from various terrorist groups, including in the capital city of Ouagadougou. In 2021, a deterioration of the security situation and intensification of incidents targeting both civilians and armed forces was observed. Fueled by armed groups, intercommunal tensions have also escalated, as the targeting of members of the Fulani group encourages continued cycles of violence. As of August 31<sup>st</sup> 2021, the number of Internally Displaced Individuals (IDPs) averaged 1,4 million people, majority women and children.<sup>5</sup>

*Figure 1: Mapping of jihadist activity in the region <sup>6</sup>*



**Despite the security situation and the COVID-19 pandemic, the macroeconomic landscape in Burkina Faso has remained relatively stable.** In 2021, the country's GDP growth averaged 6,7%

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, Database

<sup>3</sup> Global Edge, [Burkina Faso](#), 2020

<sup>4</sup> Global Edge, [Burkina Faso](#), 2020

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, Country report 2021

<sup>6</sup> ACLED, 2021



compared to 1,9%<sup>7</sup> the previous year, indicating a post-pandemic recovery. This growth is driven by the primary (e.g. cotton) and secondary sectors (e.g. gold) whose high production levels and turnarounds have offset the slowdown in activities in trade, transport, tourism, and hotels, hard hit by the measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19. The services sector is nevertheless expected to recover in 2022. An economic recovery could however reverse the current trend and increase the current account deficit, which had narrowed down thanks to the rise in gold exports and drop in oil imports. Despite positive outlooks, the country's inflation, however rose from -3,2% pre COVID-19 to 3% in 2021, mainly driven up by higher food prices<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the increase in public investment to stimulate post-COVID-19 economic recovery and defense spending continue to deepen the budget deficit. Finally, with a debt ratio estimated at 50.1% of its GDP<sup>9</sup>, Burkina Faso's debt burden remains at risk.

**Figure 2 : Key economic trends**<sup>10</sup>



## A2. Objectives of the country deep dive

This deep dive analysis aims to provide an overview of Burkina Faso's gender parity performance as well as identify key interventions to close the gap and ultimately drive economic growth. The study will seek to identify underlying drivers of gender inequalities and binding constraints preventing further progress in Burkina Faso. While not an exhaustive list, this report is based on a set of selected gender indicators to consistently track the country's gender parity performance over time. Additionally, gender-focused recommendations to address remaining constraints to closing the parity gap will then be formulated.

<sup>7</sup> IMF, Database

<sup>8</sup> IMF, Database

<sup>9</sup> African Development Bank, 2021 Country overview

<sup>10</sup> IMF, Database

### **The ECOWAS region could generate up to \$105B by fully closing the gender gap by 2030**

**One of the study's key objectives is to assess the impact of achieving gender parity on the ECOWAS region's economy.** A scenario analysis tested the hypothesis that the region is incurring an economic and societal loss by not reaching full gender parity. This best-case scenario measures the economic impact of reaching full parity in the ECOWAS region. Using the region's 2020 GDP as a baseline, the projected regional GDP value was estimated under the assumption that all Member States gender parity scores for the indicators selected for this study reach full parity (increase to 1).

**Reaching full gender parity in education and workforce participation were determined to have the most significant impact on ECOWAS' GDP growth.** Literacy rate (+1.53%), primary school enrollment rate (+1.54%), secondary school enrollment rate (+1.44%), tertiary school enrollment rate (+1.09%), and labor force participation (+1.62%). This finding implies that to optimize the economic impact of gender parity interventions, priority should be given to girls' education, from primary to tertiary education, and to helping women enter the labor force. These gender-related interventions will most likely have the highest return on investment.

**While health and political empowerment indicators were not found to have a direct impact on the region's GDP growth, they contribute to women's ability to thrive both at school and in the workplace.** Greater gender parity in health service provision and political positions were not found to have a direct impact on ECOWAS GDP growth. However, these indicators nonetheless showed a correlation with the five significant indicators mentioned above. For instance, increasing young women tertiary school enrolment results in the higher likelihood of more women holding ministerial positions across the region, while improvements in literacy rates can significantly improve women's maternal mortality ratio.

**Burkina Faso is on track to reap the economic benefits of greater gender parity.** The country has already closed the gender parity gap in primary and secondary education. However, additional efforts will be required for Burkina Faso to close the gender gap both in women's tertiary enrolment, literacy rates and labor force participation by 2030.

## B. THE CURRENT STATE

### B1. Gender Parity Performance Overview

**Burkina Faso has made progress in accessibility and quality of its health services offer.** The construction of hospitals at all levels of the pyramid, the training of health workers including Community-Based Health Workers (CBHWs) and the introduction of the free healthcare policy for pregnant women have enabled the country to reduce its maternal mortality ratio from 331 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2016 to 309/100,000 in 2019, despite a peak to 323/100,000 in 2020, possibly due to movement restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic and fears of catching the virus in hospitals that has led to an overall decrease in hospital visits. Access to modern family planning methods was also improved as a result of the extension of the free healthcare coverage, although fertility rate has remained high (5.05 compared to a regional average of 4.43), due to women's limited independence regarding their sexual and reproductive health. Climate change and conflicts have also increased women and girls' vulnerabilities. Finally, despite initiatives by the authorities, technical partners and civil society organizations, gender-based violence and particularly child marriage remains prevalent, with 51.2% of girls married before the age of 18.

**On education, Burkina Faso has achieved parity at both primary (1.01) and secondary (1.06) levels, thanks to a holistic approach.** Investments in infrastructure, human resources, and changes to the curricula greatly contributed to this success. The country has also narrowed the gender gap in literacy rates (0.88 gender parity score), attributed to creative programs to reach out-of-school children. Women remain however poorly represented at the tertiary level (0.55 lower than the 0.67 regional average score).

**Women's participation in the formal workforce has also increased with a gender parity score averaging 0.84 in 2020 from 0.78 in 2016.** They nonetheless face pay discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Despite measures taken to improve female entrepreneurs' conditions, access to finance continues to be difficult.

**Finally, women's representation on the political scene remains low due to a poorly implemented quota law voted to boost their visibility.** In 2020, the country parity score for number of seats in Parliament averaged 0.07 and 0.18 for ministerial roles compared to a regional average of 0.20 and 0.23 respectively.

### B2. Health & Nutrition

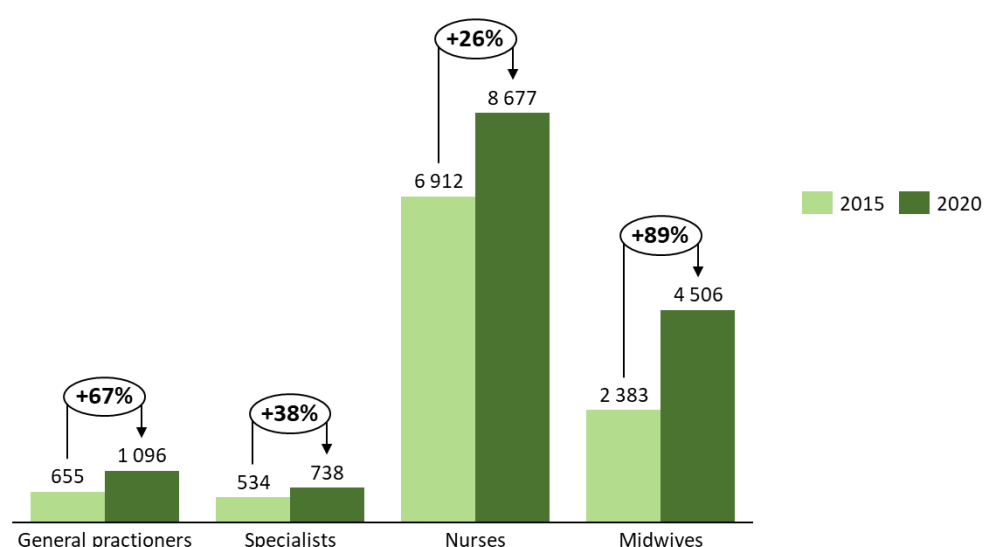
#### Sexual and reproductive health

**Improved access to health services, especially in rural areas, has helped reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rates but the security context disrupted program delivery.** Since 2015, the creation of new health centers and the rehabilitation of existing centers at all levels of the health pyramid (i.e Health and social promotion centers, medical centers, medical centers with a surgery wing, regional health centers, university hospitals) has improved reach from 6.7 km in 2015 to 6.3 km in 2020. Although still below World Health Organization's 5km recommendation, these investments have contributed to increasing access to primary health services, particularly in remote areas.

**Additionally, the quality of health services provided was improved through an increased supply of medical professionals.** A marked increase in terms of human resources was observed, with a boost

in the number of midwives (+89%) and general practitioners (+67%) between 2015 and 2020<sup>11</sup>. Some jobs (i.e., state birth attendants) are also now exclusively reserved to women, in a bid to improve the provision of care for women. Efforts were also made to expand the pool of specialists with the provision of local and international scholarships in priority areas. Additionally, community-based health workers (CBHWs), who are an instrumental component of primary healthcare provision in remote areas, were further integrated into the formal healthcare system in 2016, with the hiring of 17,668 paid CBHWs nationwide. In 2019, the authorities validated the 2019-2023 National Community Health Strategy (SNSC) which focuses on integrated and fast impact packages of community-level interventions.

**Figure 3: Evolution of the number of medical and nursing staff between 2015-2020<sup>12</sup>**



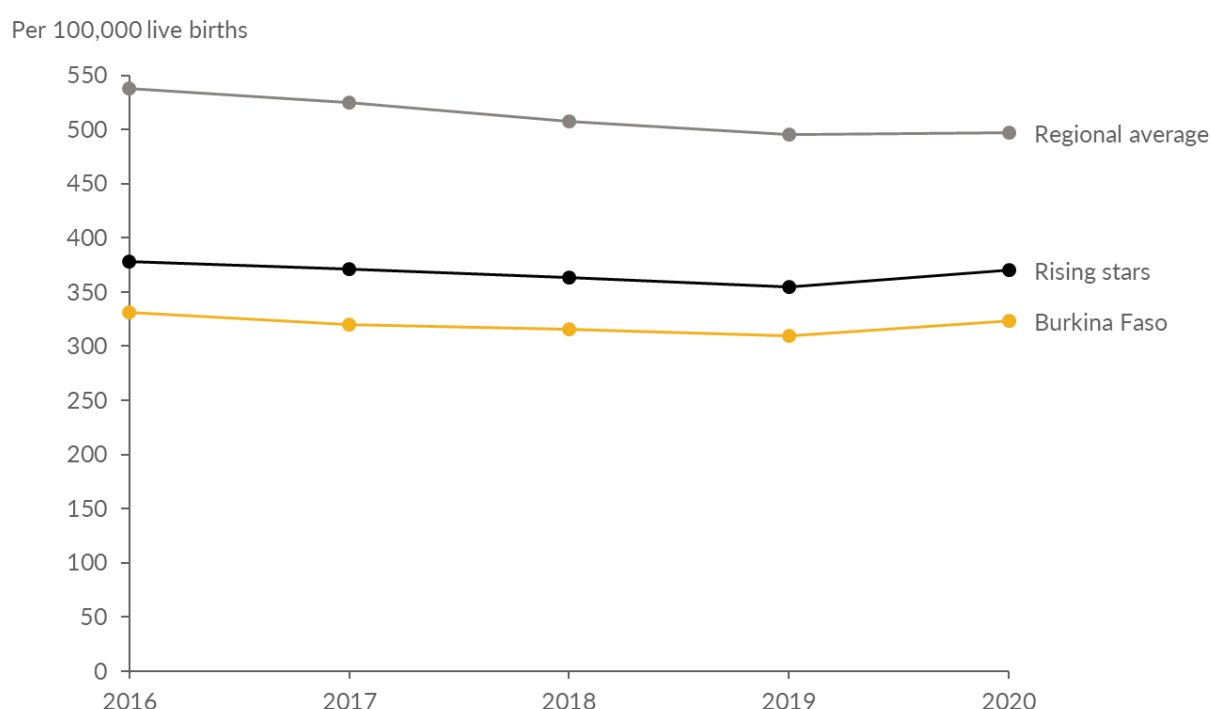
**Flagship programs were also implemented by the authorities to improve women's access to health services.** The introduction in 2016 of free healthcare for pregnant women and children under five, which covers maternity costs including caesarian sections, examinations and care for children below 5 years old, has helped boost the use of health services, increase the number of assisted childbirths, therefore, reducing maternal and child mortality rates. These changes have helped the country reduce its maternal mortality ratio from 343 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2016 down to 323 in 2020, despite an increase that year, potentially resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Those gains are threatened by the rapid deterioration of the security situation which affects health workers and infrastructure. As of 2021, 6 of the country's 13 regions were declared humanitarian zones. Consequently, 273 health facilities in those regions were operating at minimum capacity while 83 had been closed, further limiting access to quality maternal and child healthcare services.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> MoH Burkina Faso

<sup>12</sup> MoH Burkina Faso

<sup>13</sup> Relief Web, [UNICEF Burkina Faso Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4: 1 July to 30 September 2021](#), 2021

**Figure 4: Maternal mortality ratio (MMR)- Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2016-2020)<sup>14</sup> - (per 100,000 live births)**



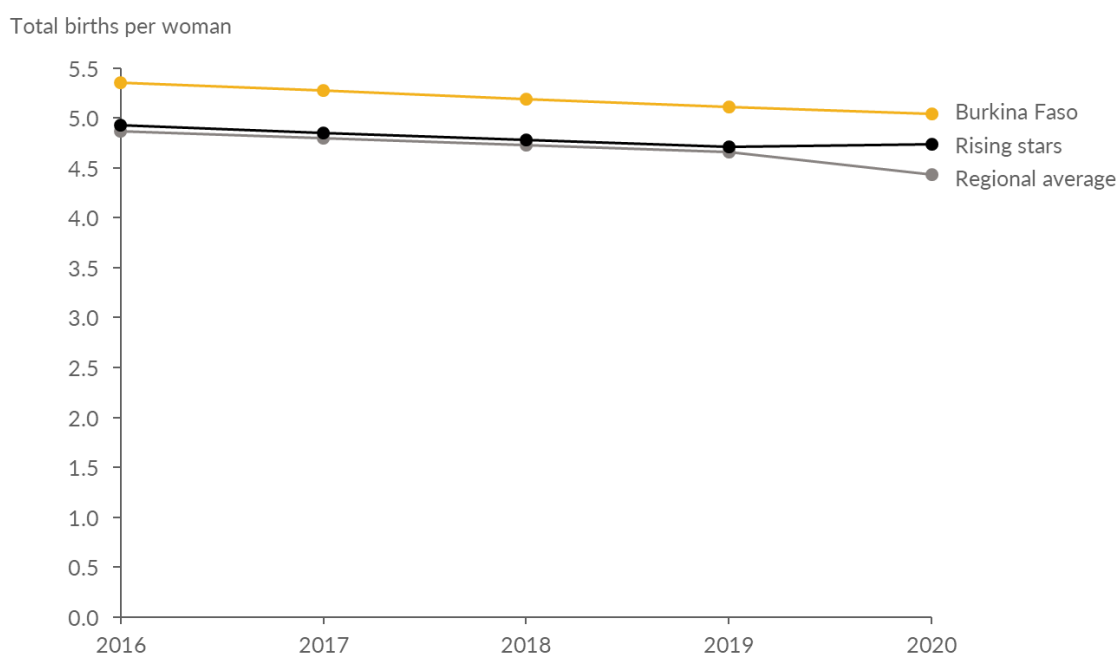
**While easier access to contraceptives has facilitated women's family planning decision-making power, religious considerations and sociocultural stigma continue to hinder their access to services, particularly in rural areas.** The extension of the free healthcare policy to pregnant women and children under 5 contributed to the increase in contraceptive use from 16% in 2013 to 30% in 2020, higher than Togo (24%) and Benin (16%) in 2020<sup>15</sup>. It also resulted in a drop in the fertility rate from 5.11 in 2019 to 5.04 in 2020. Additionally, community-based interventions involving men like the Husbands and Future Husbands School, were organized by the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) and aimed to create gender champions within the community to challenge social norms and stigma towards family planning. The pilot resulted in an increase in modern contraceptive use and antenatal consultations, resulting in a decrease in maternal mortality in the village. The integration of sexual and reproductive health modules into curricula for students as young as 10 years old, has also helped slightly reduce teenage pregnancy rates from 26.8 % of women aged 19-24 who have had children or were pregnant in 2014 down to 25% in 2018.<sup>16</sup> Still, religious, and cultural stigma, limited access to information, poor sexual education, as well as the limited accessibility of family planning facilities, continue to hinder women's access to sexual and reproductive health tools and services, particularly in remote areas. Furthermore, while abortion is legally restricted in Burkina Faso and only allowed in certain cases, the same barriers prevent women, from accessing this service.

<sup>14</sup> Due to missing data, regional average is excluding Guinea Bissau

<sup>15</sup> World Bank, Database

<sup>16</sup> World Bank, Database

**Figure 5: Fertility rate - Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2016-2020)<sup>17</sup> - (total births per woman)**



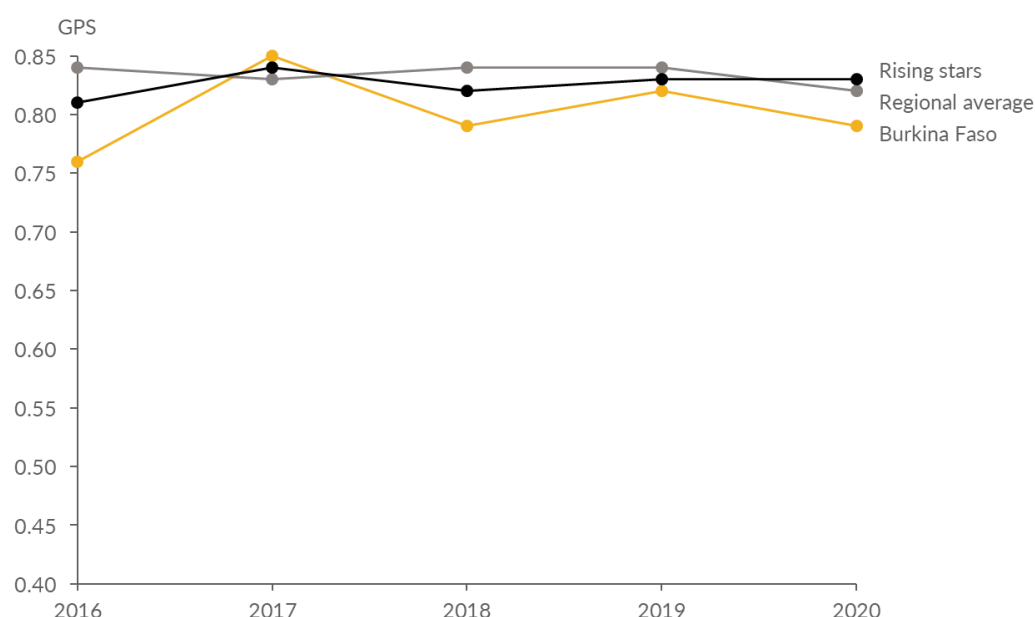
## Women and food security

**The burkinabè authorities have made efforts to improve women and children's nutritional status, successfully reducing the prevalence of stunting in height.** While progress has been slow, in 2020 the prevalence of stunting in height score was the lowest both in its cluster and at the regional level (0.79 in Burkina against a regional average of 0.82 and 0.83 average in its cluster). The national prevalence of stunting in female children under five years old has improved from 32% in 2009 to 21.3% a decade later.<sup>18</sup> This situation is the result of coordinated actions concerning the screening process to detect malnutrition cases, the management of critical cases, and the promotion of good nutritional practices, implemented in recent years by the authorities and partners like the World Food Programme. These include (i) the extension of the Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (PCIMA) to all health regions, (ii) the creation of learning and monitoring groups for infant and young child feeding practices (ANJE), and (iii) increased efforts in the fight against micronutrient deficiencies, strengthened through the inclusion of screening and supplementation campaigns for children under 5 and pregnant women in the routine activities of the CBHWs. In 2020, the 2020-2025 Presidential Initiative "Ensuring at least one balanced meal a day for every school-age child" was also launched. The USD 830,577 program seeks to improve the nutritional status and enhance the educational achievement of children aged 3 to 12.

<sup>17</sup> Due to missing data, regional average is excluding Guinea Bissau

<sup>18</sup> World Bank, Database

**Figure 6: Prevalence of stunting for height – Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2016-2020)<sup>19</sup>**  
**- Gender parity scores (0-1)**



**Despite initiatives to promote better nutritional practices, food insecurity continues to be a concern, particularly with the security and climate change crises.** Malnutrition remains a concern and an estimated 631,787 children below the age of 6 and 128,672 pregnant and breastfeeding women were estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2021<sup>20</sup>. Additionally, children born to teenage mothers, often victims of early marriages, are 33% more likely to suffer from chronic malnutrition<sup>21</sup>. This is largely due the lack of education about a diversified and balanced diet and limited access to resources. Internally displaced women and girls living in camps also left particularly vulnerable, as they face food access constraints forcing them to be dependent on aid. In 2021, the sex for food aid scandal, which found community leaders guilty of exploiting internally displaced women, demanding sex or money in return for food aid further exposed the situation they are confronted to.

**Finally, climate change is also adding to women's food challenges.** Climate change negatively impacts women, particularly in rural communities where they often practice subsistence farming and are responsible for collecting water and other household energy. Desertification and decreased access to water compels them to travel further to find water, increasing their vulnerability to attacks; The negative impact on their crop and livestock production hampers their ability to feed their families. They are, as a result, often compelled to leave for less affected regions, putting additional strain on the host communities' resources.

### Harmful practices against women

**Despite the revision of the legal framework, gender-based violence incidents and child marriage remain highly prevalent.** Women still represent at least two-thirds of the victims of violence of all kinds and more than one in three women (37%) has been a victim of domestic violence in her lifetime<sup>22</sup>. Burkina Faso ranks second-poorest performer on a regional scale after Niger. 51.5%<sup>23</sup> (1

<sup>19</sup> Due to missing data, regional average is excluding Guinee Bissau

<sup>20</sup> Relief Web, Burkina Faso Acute Malnutrition, 2021

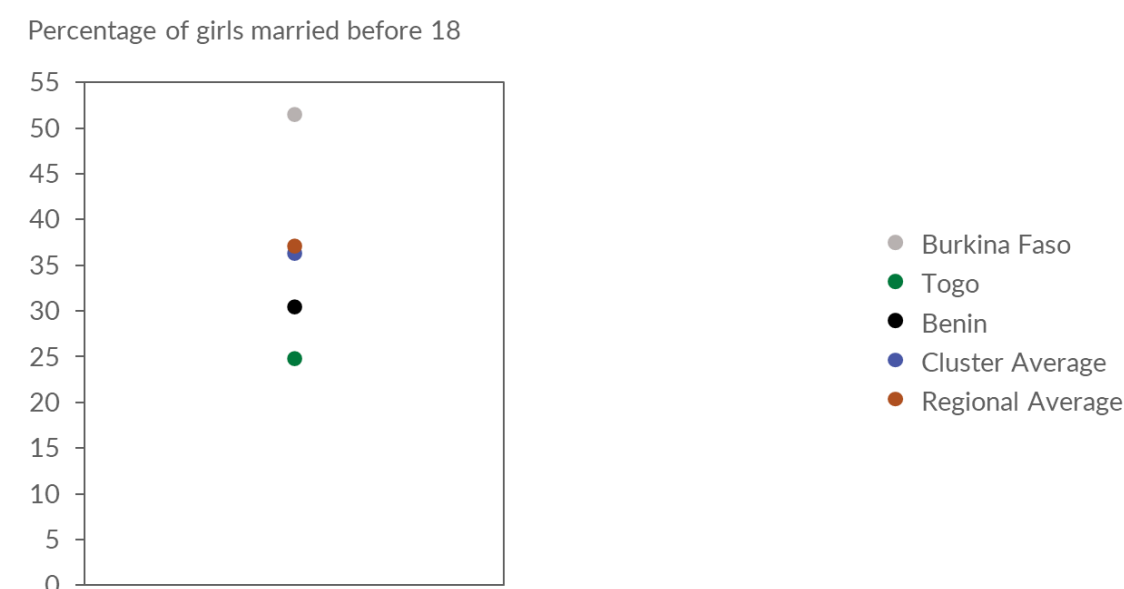
<sup>21</sup> Fink et al, 2014

<sup>22</sup> SIGI, Burkina Faso study, 2017

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF database

in 2 Burkinabè girls are married before the age of 18 with 1 in 10 before the age of 15.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, 50% of burkinabè girls have their first child before the age of 15<sup>25</sup>. This harmful practice remains persistent due to cultural and religious practices facilitated by loopholes in the current Code of Persons and Families which authorizes the marriage of girls from the age of 17. Once married, girls are also expected to get pregnant, thus increasing the risk of them dying or experiencing life-threatening physical injuries like obstetric fistula.

**Figure 7: Child marriage - Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison** <sup>26</sup> - (percentage of girls married before 18)



**With the deterioration of the security context, internally displaced women are left vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.** Women, who make up 65% of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) often find themselves becoming heads of households after their male relatives are killed, forcibly recruited by terrorist organizations or unable to flee out of fear of being perceived as threats in host communities<sup>27</sup>. This situation puts women under increased financial strain, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and sexual exploitation. Young girls are also regularly kidnapped by armed groups to be married off to fighters or used as baits.

## B3. Education, skills, and labor participation

**Over the past decade, Burkina Faso has managed to considerably reduce the gaps in access to education for girls at all levels and encourage more to venture into STEM fields.** Several barriers nevertheless persist such as inadequate facilities, poor teacher training, early marriage and pregnancy, and gender bias. These hurdles in addition to the security challenge, have led to school closings or running under capacity as staff flees the targeted regions, further increasing girls' vulnerability. Additionally, despite programs launched to promote female labor participation, access

<sup>24</sup> Save the Children, [The legislative path to end child marriage in Burkina Faso](#), 2021

<sup>25</sup> SIGI, Burkina Faso study, 2017

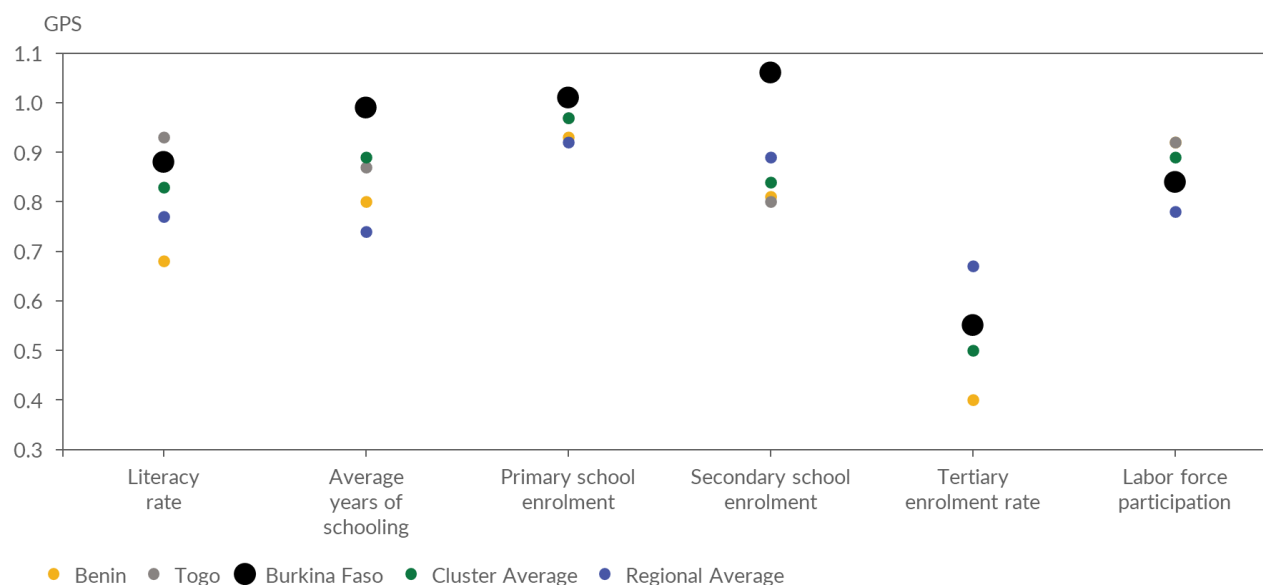
<sup>26</sup> Child marriage data are sourced from the UNICEF Data warehouse which contains data gaps across years: calculated average are based on the most recent data by country between 2012 and 2019, Nigeria data is from 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Women in Displacement, [Hidden in Plain Sight: Women and Girls in Internal Displacement](#), 2020



to formal employment is riddled with challenges like discrimination, the absence of a holistic support framework to women and unpaid domestic work.

**Figure 8: Education, Skills and Labor Participation – Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2020)**  
-Gender parity scores (0-1)



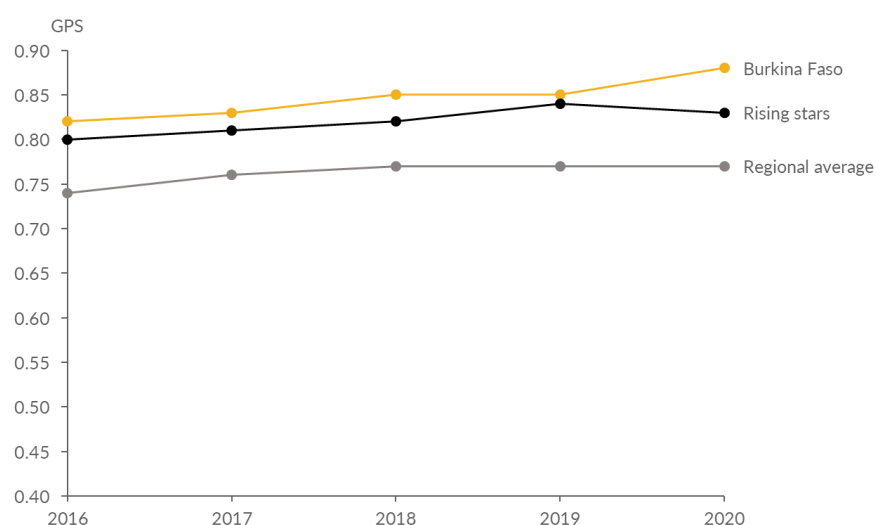
### Girls' primary and secondary education

**In recent years, Burkina Faso has managed to achieve parity in both the primary and secondary level, leading the way behind Senegal.** Burkina Faso has achieved parity in both primary and secondary school, largely thanks to inclusive educational policies. Burkina Faso instated compulsory schooling from 3 to 16 and built new schools particularly at the primary level including boarding schools to reduce travel constraints. Moreover, over 28,000 teachers were recruited and trained between 2016 and 2020, a 31% increase from 2016.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the progress made in non-formal education with the construction of new learning centers (growing from 263 in 2015 to 575 in 2019)<sup>29</sup>, the increase in the number of supervisors and their inclusion in the pedagogical reforms of the National Schools for Primary Teachers (ENEP), has enabled the country to improve its literacy rate, particularly among women who were the most affected. Technical and financial partners have also supported the authorities' efforts, with initiatives such as the Speed School ("Ecole Passerelle"), which aims to coach children who are over school age or have dropped out of school, to enable them to acquire a level sufficient to transfer to traditional schools.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Education

<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Education

**Figure 9: Literacy rate – Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2016-2020)<sup>30</sup> - Gender parity scores (0-1)**

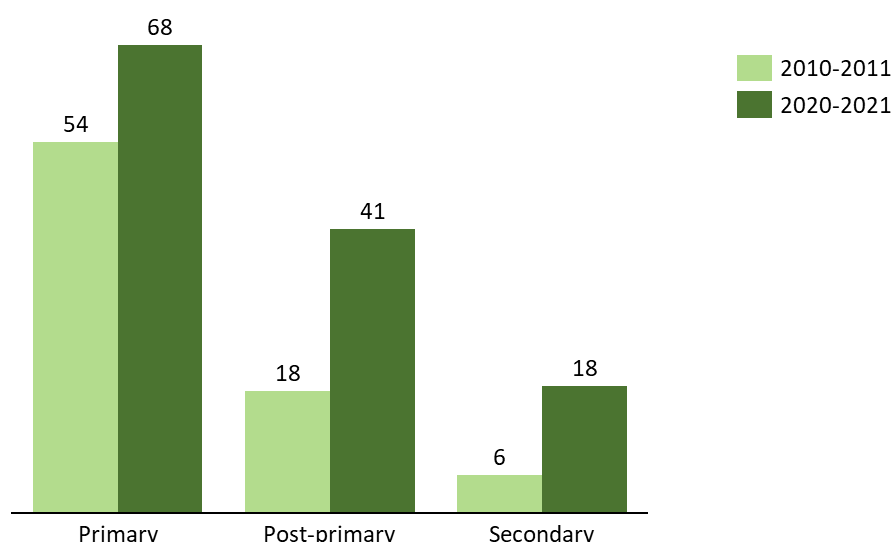


**While access to school has improved overall, girls' attendance and completion rates remain low, particularly at the secondary level.** Poverty poses one of the main obstacles to girls' attendance. Hidden costs (i.e books, uniforms, transportation, tests, etc) often lead to girls' education being deprioritised as families prefer to marry them off to reduce the economic burden or send them to work. The lack of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure and access to period hygiene kits to help them better manage their menstrual health also leads to girls regularly skipping classes therefore ultimately affecting their learning experience. Girls are also confronted to school-related gender-based violence and often face harassment from their male peers and teachers, a situation often made worse when they get pregnant. Additionally, the absence of flexible schedules to accommodate pregnant teens or returning mothers, and the need to sometimes work to support their family, often result in them dropping out of school. Finally, unpaid care work affects girls' studies, as they are often in charge of caring for younger siblings and carry a disproportionate share of unpaid housework. On average, Burkinabè girls spend six and a half hours a day on domestic tasks compared to half an hour for boys<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Due to missing data, regional average is excluding Guinee Bissau

<sup>31</sup> OECD/INSD, SIGI Country Study – Burkina Faso, 2018

Figure 10: Evolution of the girls' completion rates between 2011 and 2021 (in %) <sup>32</sup>



**The security context is also causing a setback in girls' education.** Frequent attacks on schools and education workers have disrupted girls' schooling in affected regions. In February 2020, months before the first COVID-19 case in Burkina Faso, an estimated 2500 schools had closed.<sup>33</sup>

### Women's higher education and vocational training

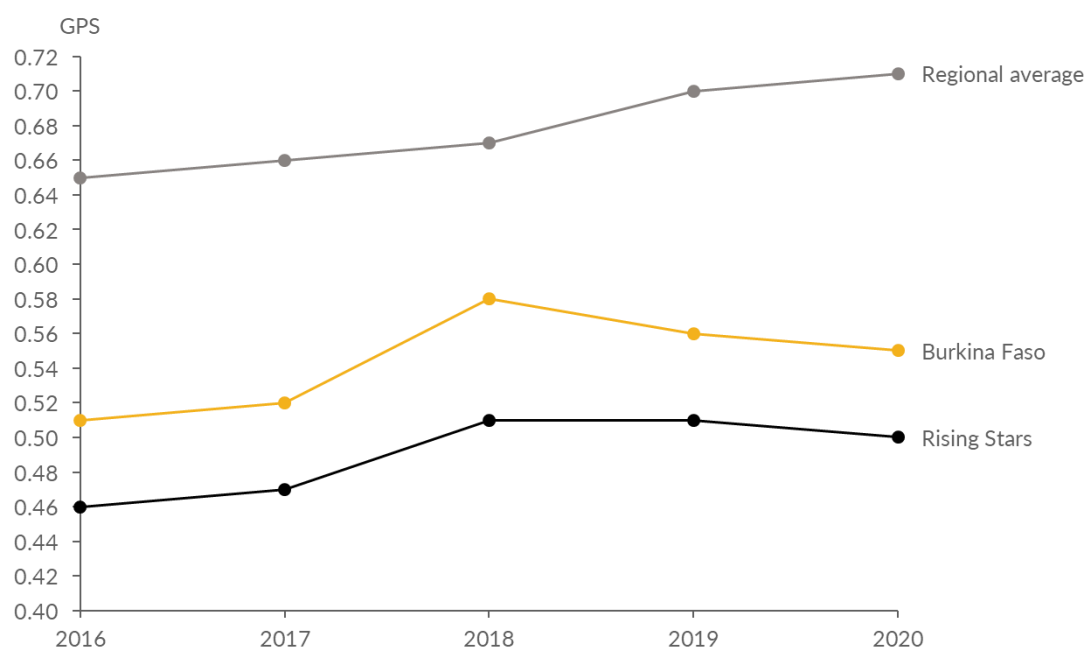
**Despite the authorities' efforts, women are still under-represented in technical and vocational training institutions (TVET), especially in male-dominated fields.** In recent years, several incentives, such as scholarships, have been provided by the authorities to help women access higher education and encourage them to join traditionally male-dominated tracks. Since 2013, 300 scholarships are set aside every year for girls wishing to study towards a bachelor's degree. This policy was recently extended to the master's and doctoral cycles and the age limit raised from 28 to 34 for women, to take into account academic delays and accommodate mothers. While this has helped increase female enrolment in higher education, women are still under-represented in male-dominated fields, therefore creating a limited pool. A recent study by the International Labor Organization (ILO) highlighted the low representation of young women among vocational qualification certificates holders in masonry (6%), building electricity (5%), wood carpentry (12%), metal carpentry (>0.1%), car mechanics (1%) and plumbing (6%), all male-dominated fields<sup>34</sup>. The prevalence of gender stereotypes continues to constitute one main hurdle, as women are often directed towards more "female-friendly" options, and face discrimination and harassment from their male peers.

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Education, 2020-2021 statistical yearbook

<sup>33</sup> Africa News, [2500 schools closed in Burkina Faso due to unrest](#), 2020

<sup>34</sup> BIT, Etude diagnostique des dispositifs de formation professionnelle qualifiante dans les métiers du bâtiment et des travaux publics au Burkina Faso, 2020

**Figure 11: Tertiary enrolment rate – Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2016-2020)<sup>35</sup> - Gender parity scores (0-1)**

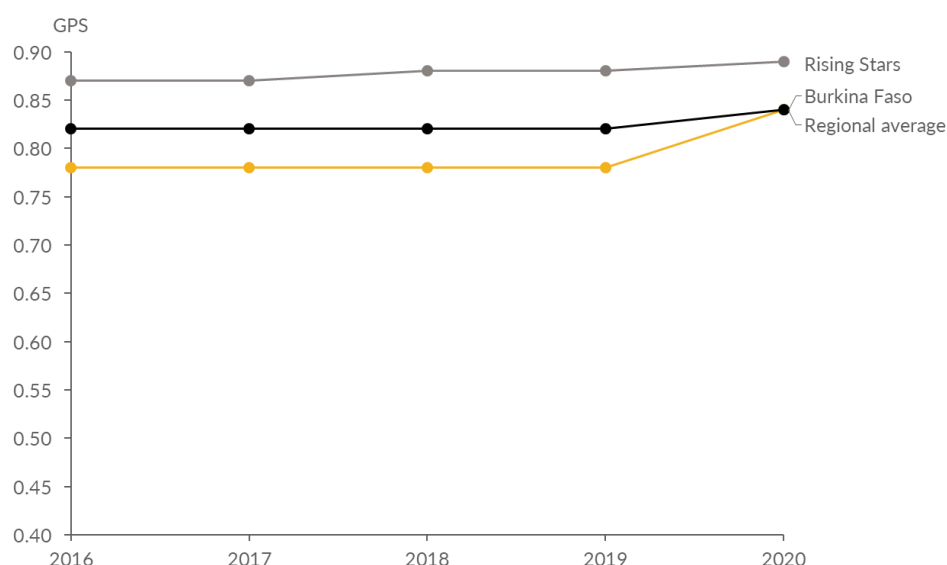


## Workforce participation

**Although women's participation in the labor's market has increased, women still face an opportunity deficit.** Female graduates seeking employment often face discrimination and sexual harassment, particularly in male-dominated fields where despite being qualified, they are not trusted. Those who manage to secure jobs are confronted to a gender pay gap as well as sexual harassment. Additionally, women are still poorly represented in management positions, across key industries. This is due to multiple factors, including (i) limited mentoring and sponsorship opportunities, (ii) the failure to accommodate mothers by having on-site nurseries and flexible schedules, and to (iii) the limited pool of candidates created by the lack of women in STEM fields at university for male-dominated sectors. Finally, the inequitable unpaid care work allocation within households results in higher time poverty for working women, further limiting their ability to actively take part in the labor market and climb the career ladder.

<sup>35</sup> Due to missing data, regional average is excluding Guinea Bissau

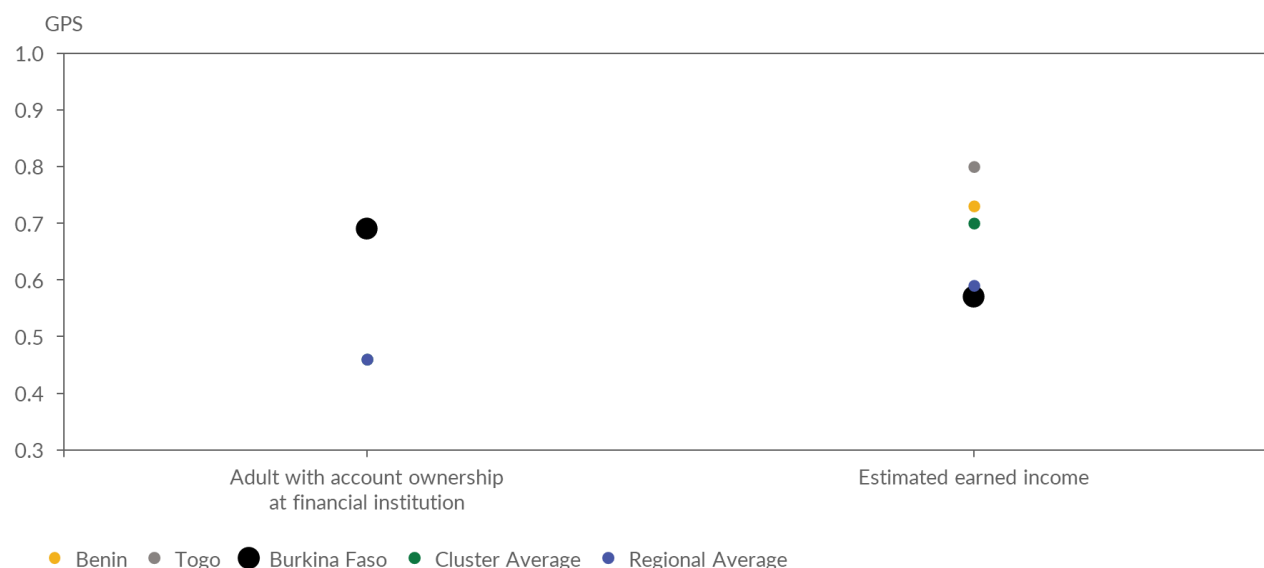
**Figure 12: Labor force participation – Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2016-2020)<sup>36</sup> - Gender parity scores (0-1)**



## B4. Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy

Over the past decade, the Burkinabè authorities and their technical partners have created several mechanisms to promote female entrepreneurship and financial inclusion. These mechanisms however remain poorly tailored to women's needs, for whom securing loans and means of production and access to markets continues to be complicated.

**Figure 13: Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy – Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2016-2020)<sup>37</sup> - Gender parity scores (0-1)**



<sup>36</sup> Due to missing data, regional average is excluding Guinea Bissau

<sup>37</sup> Due to missing data, regional average is excluding Guinea Bissau

## Women and entrepreneurship

In recent years, the Burkinabè authorities have created multiple tools to stimulate female entrepreneurship and improve financial inclusion. In addition to funds catering to entrepreneurs, the Burkinabè authorities have put in place several financial and non-financial tools specifically dedicated to female entrepreneurs, to facilitate access to finance and technical support. Specific funds like , the Women's Income-Generating Activities Support Fund (FAARF) was created to cater to female led SMES, while the Informal Sector Support Fund (FASI) provided support to women in the informal sector. Additionally, technical and financial partners as well as civil society associations have launched initiatives often in collaboration with the authorities. The Youth and Women Economic Empowerment Program (Programme d'autonomisation économique des jeunes et des femmes - PAE/JF), launched in 2017 by UNESCO in partnership with local authorities, was established in that sense. Furthermore, several programs supporting women entrepreneurs in specific fields (i.e shea butter, etc) were also launched by the provide technical assistance, capacity building and business development support. However, their human resources and space capacities are too limited to provide quality services to the growing number of women entrepreneurs. Burkinabè from the diaspora are also increasingly involved in providing key support to local start-ups and SMEs, with some considering entrepreneurship as part of their return plan.

**But support services in place are poorly tailored to the specific needs of female entrepreneurs who are limited in their ability to develop and scale up their businesses.** According to the Maison de l'Entreprise (MEBF), while 30% of working-age women are entrepreneurs, only 21% of them are formal business owners.<sup>38</sup> Government funds are still poorly tailored to the realities of female entrepreneurs, as they often require them to be already formalised, organised in cooperatives, and/or provide collaterals. There is also a lack of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives specifically for female entrepreneurs, which would encourage them to formalize their businesses. Although access to finance represents the main hurdle to the development of their income generating activities, women also face a lack of appropriate technical support. Women's access to markets is also limited by other factors, including the lack of knowledge, and expertise. Additionally, difficult access to means of production which would enable them to upgrade their skills, technology and services limits their ability to remain viable and compete with larger companies. Finally, some women entrepreneurs also face a lack of self-confidence limiting their desire to expand their businesses.

While women account for more than 70% of the workforce in agriculture, particularly in the shea and cotton production, they own less than 20% of the land, in rural areas specifically<sup>39</sup>. Additionally, 18.79% of them lead farmers' organizations compared to 29.99% of men.<sup>40</sup> Women are also disadvantaged in access to dedicated credit lines (2.11% of women compared to 8.79% of men have access to agricultural credit) and to support schemes (only 6% of female landowners enjoy a technical assistance compared to 19.11% of male landowners).<sup>41</sup> Overall, a woman in rural areas earns an average of 49,652 CFA francs per year compared to 157,008 CFA francs per year for a man.<sup>42</sup> This situation is due to several factors, including a lack of financial education and limited access to information on available tools and support. In 2017, only 34.5% of burkinabè women owned a bank or mobile money account compared to 51.2% of men.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, while the law advocates for equal property rights for men and women, access to land remains difficult especially in rural areas due to customary law. This situation prevents women from securing loans with traditional banks that

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<sup>38</sup> Maison de l'Entreprise, 2021

<sup>39</sup> Wikigender, [Africa for Women's Rights: Burkina Faso](#), 2021

<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Note d'orientation politique, 2015

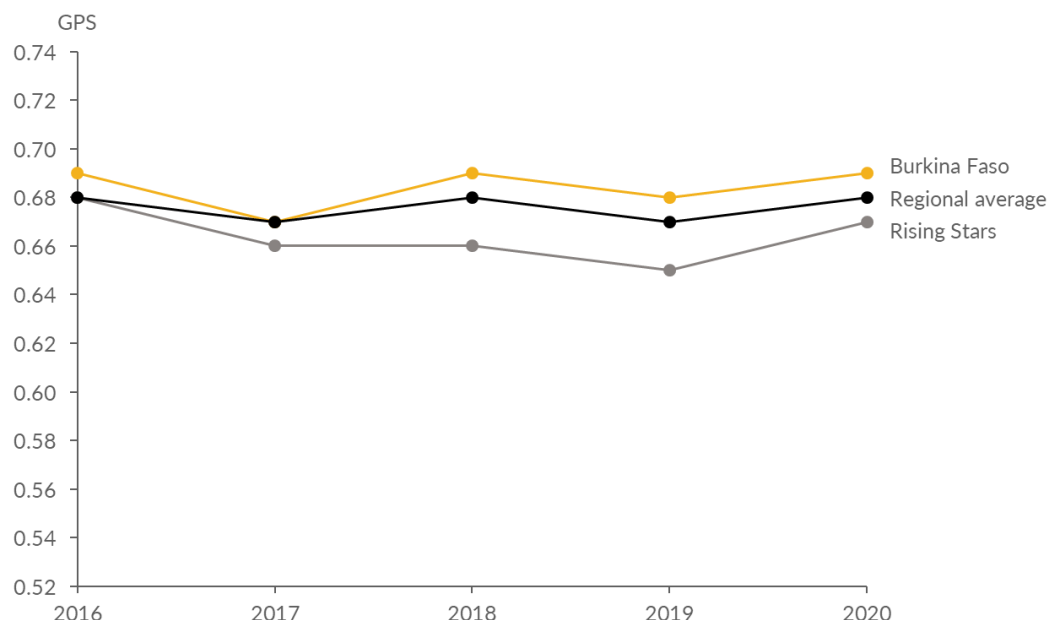
<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Note d'orientation politique, 2015

<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Note d'orientation politique, 2015

<sup>43</sup> World Bank, Database

require a collateral, and as a result limits women from acquiring additional means of production to scale up their activities. Moreover, limited ownership of land also hinders agricultural production itself.

**Figure 14: Adults with account ownership at financial institution- Burkina Faso regional and cluster average comparison (2016-2020) - Gender parity scores (0-1)**



## Women and digital skills

**While the penetration of information communications technologies (ICT) promotes greater financial inclusion and female participation, women's ability to leverage these tools is limited.** The development of ICT creates a level-playing field for women, by facilitating their job search through online employment platforms, and providing them with greater flexibility by allowing them to work remotely, when applicable. However, poverty, illiteracy, lack of computer literacy, and limited access to devices and reliable internet are among factors impeding women's ability to leverage digital tools. Opportunities created in the digital space are therefore limited to a handful of women in urban centres, who benefit from a better access to digital devices and connections.

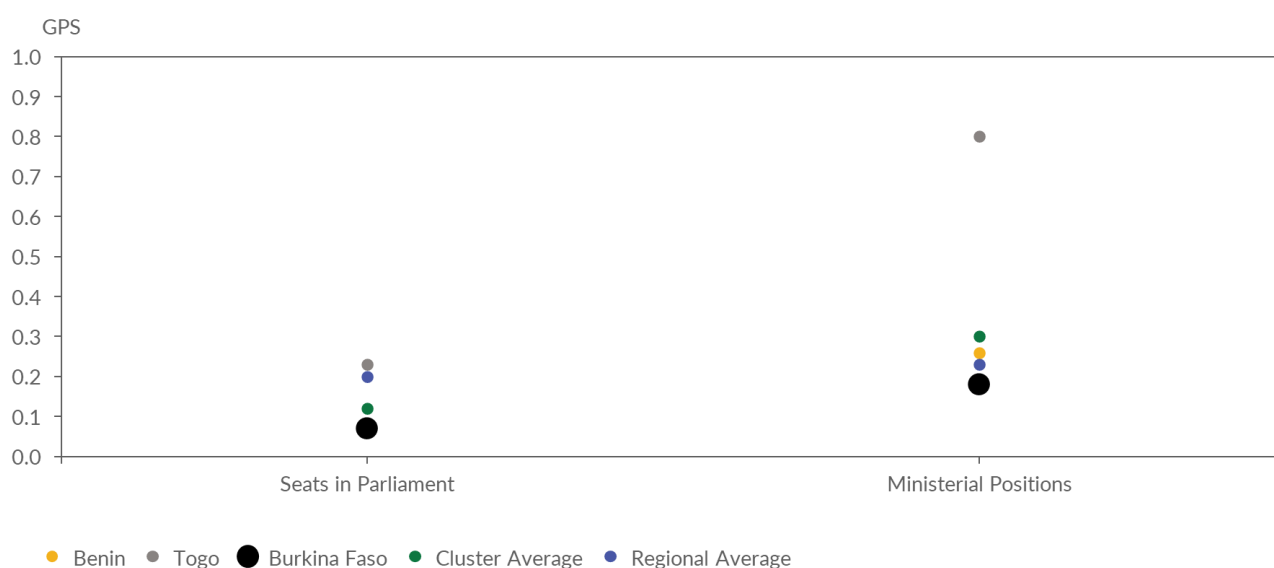
## B5. Political empowerment

Indicators analyzed under this dimension are the ratio of seats in parliament and women in ministerial positions. While they are non-exhaustive, they help provide a holistic overview of the gender gap in the political arena.

In the past 10 years, local civil society organizations have campaigned for greater female representation on the political scene, successfully leading to a law imposing a 30% quota on electoral lists and managing to improve their number in the Parliament.

While women's political representation has increased in Burkina Faso, there are still major cultural and structural barriers that must be overcome to ensure their effective participation in public life. Despite a political commitment to incorporate a gender lens in all actions and programmes, the country still experiences capacity, budget allocation barriers to mainstream gender and implement women's rights related laws.

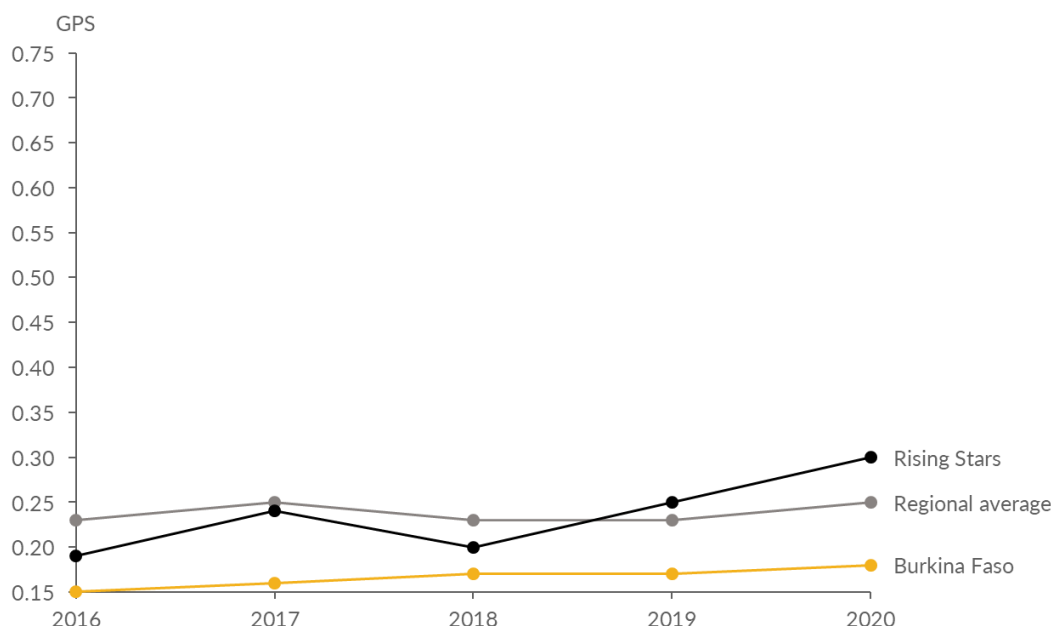
**Figure 15: Political Empowerment -Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2020) -Gender parity scores (0-1)**



## Women's political representation

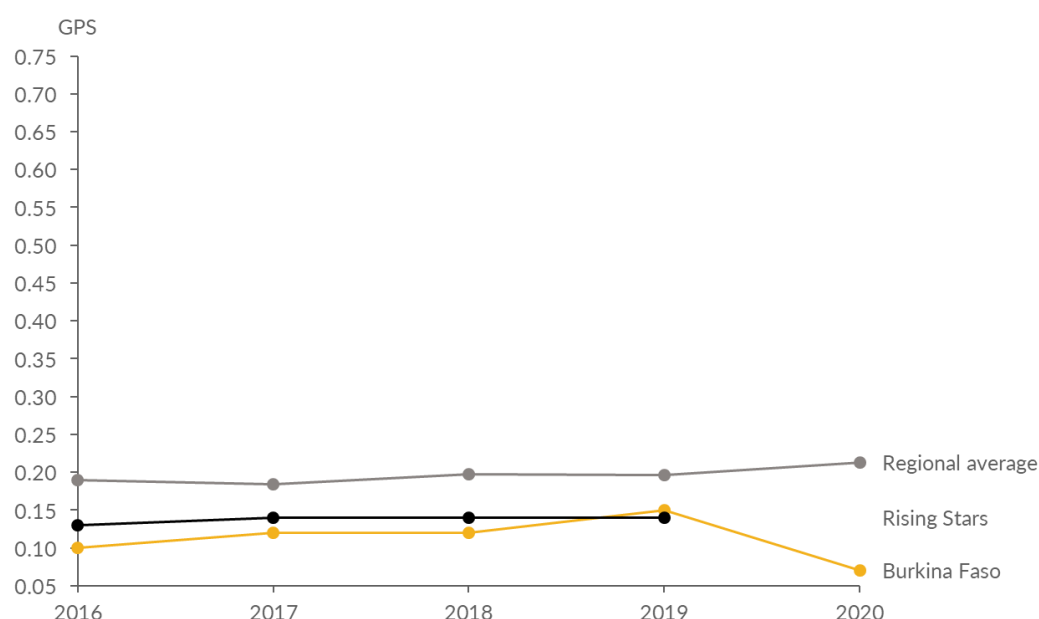
**Over the past decade, Burkina Faso has made efforts to improve women's representation in political parties as well as public institutions.** In 2009, thanks to sustained lobbying campaigns by civil society organizations, a 2009 law was passed requiring political parties to include at least 30% of candidates of either gender on their electoral lists in local and national elections. This measure has helped boost women's participation within political parties. Many now have dedicated secretariats dealing with women's affairs or have integrated women's associations.

**Figure 16: Ministerial positions - Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2020) -Gender parity scores (0-1)**





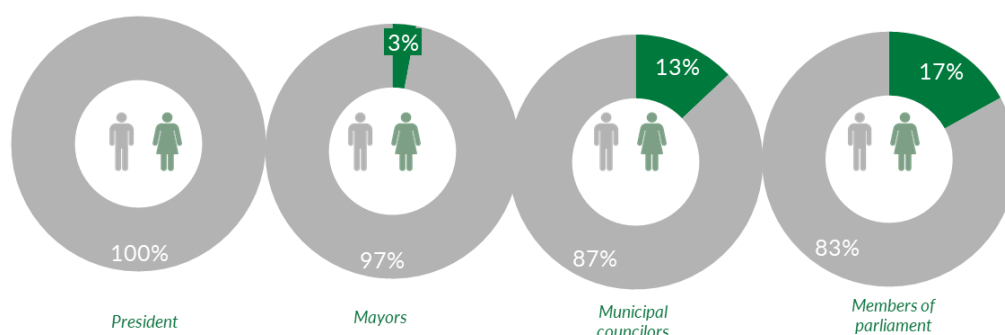
**Figure 17: Seats in Parliament – Burkina Faso regional average and cluster comparison (2020) -Gender parity scores (0-1)**



**Still, women's representation in decision-making spheres remains limited due to socio-economic, and structural barriers.** Despite efforts by the authorities to increase representation, the number of women in Parliament (0.07) and holding ministerial positions (0.18) is lower than both regional and cluster average. While the 2009 legal framework provided financial incentives for parties that have reached or exceeded quotas, there is little transparency regarding its enforcement, providing limited encouragement for greater representation beyond 30%. Moreover, the 50% cut in public funding for parties who fail to comply is not dissuasive enough as it remains merely economic and does not impact the ability to take part in the elections. When women are on the list, their poor positioning reduces the likelihood of them being elected. Few parties are also led by women, who struggle to secure funding. The 2009 law also only applies to electoral lists, and not to nominative and elective posts, therefore limiting the impact it could have. The institutions are also poorly adapted to women's realities, as decisions are often taken late at night. Socio-cultural stereotyping of women in politics deter women from entering public life. Those in the public arena also face difficulties voicing their opinions in a largely male-dominated and traditional environment. Consequently, the number of women in decision-making bodies remains very low. In the executive branch, despite a political pledge to appoint at least 30% women in Cabinet, as of 2019, they were only 22%, mainly holding deputy minister positions. In the legislative branch, since the adoption of the quota law, the proportion of female MPs has decreased (from 19% in 2010 to 17% in 2019). Female representation in civil service has however slightly increased from 31% in 2014 to 34% in 2017.<sup>44</sup>

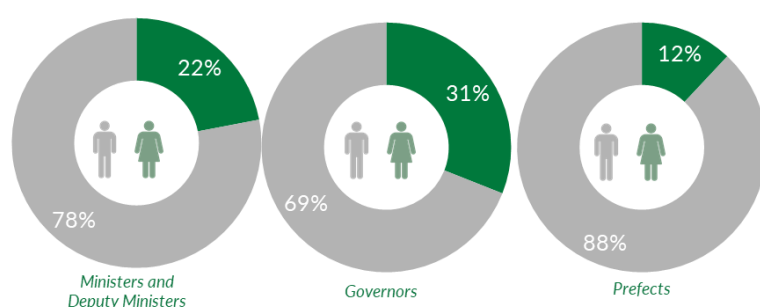
<sup>44</sup> Communication au forum national sur l'autonomisation et la responsabilisation de la femme (Presentation at the National Forum on Women's Empowerment and Accountability), February 2019

**Figure 18: Distribution of women in elected positions of the executive and the legislative in 2019**



Source : Communication au forum national sur l'autonomisation et la responsabilisation de la femme (Presentation at the National Forum on Women's Empowerment and Accountability), February 2019

**Figure 19: Distribution of women in appointed positions of the executive in 2019**



Source : Communication au forum national sur l'autonomisation et la responsabilisation de la femme (Presentation at the National Forum on Women's Empowerment and Accountability), February 2019

**Voting also remains difficult for women, particularly in rural areas.** Rural female voters continue to face issues exercising their right to vote due to several factors including low literacy level and limited access to media. Time poverty is also an issue for female voters who cannot afford to wait as long as male voters at polling stations to cast their votes. Politics Their participation in the political process remains low and politics continues to be a men's affair.

## Gender mainstreaming

**In recent years, the authorities and technical partners have made efforts to improve the inclusion of gender in public policies and programmes across sectors.** Driven by a commitment to place gender promotion at the heart of public-led interventions, Burkina Faso has shifted towards greater gender mainstreaming. In addition to the 2009-2019 National Gender Strategy that is currently being reformulated, most sectoral strategic documents now include gender equality and women in their actions and objectives. Their implementation is monitored by the Ministry of Gender, where a National Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of Burkina Faso's Pro-Women Commitments (CNSEF), a Directorate-General for the Promotion of Women's Entrepreneurship (DGPEF) and a Permanent Secretariat of the National Council for Gender Promotion (SP/CONAP-Genre) have been created. The Ministry also has decentralised services responsible for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of actions at the local level. Additionally, since 2010, gender units have been set up within ministries to ensure gender mainstreaming.

**Despite these efforts, insufficient allocation of budget, capacity constraints and a poor understanding of the approach slow down progress.** Gender units' ability to play their role is limited and most are inactive due to issues such as the lack of funding despite a prescription by the Ministry

of Finance that a budget head of at least USD 8,519 be provided for their operation yearly and an ineffective institutional anchoring of these units which undermines their actions. On budget, no guidance is provided by the Permanent Secretariat of the National Council for Gender Promotion (SP/CONAP-Genre) and the coordination of gender budgets is done by the Directorate General the Budget (Ministry of Finance), where it is not considered a priority. The lack of financial support also impacts decentralised councils for gender promotion, which are left lethargic. Most ministries also lack qualified gender experts to support mainstreaming efforts and build internal capacity. Finally, the poor understanding of the gender approach and the lack of mastery of the tools for mainstreaming the gender perspective into policies, programmes, and budgets, both at the central and decentralised levels, severely limit progress.

## B6. Impact of Covid-19

**Burkina Faso has one of lowest confirmed COVID-19 cases in West Africa.** As of February 1st, 2022, Burkina Faso had reported 20.624 confirmed cases and 366 deaths attributed to COVID-19.<sup>1</sup> The low number of cases is attributed to the authorities' rapid response, inherited from its experience with Ebola. Burkina Faso activated its emergency response systems, developed during the Ebola crisis as soon as March 2020, days before the first case was confirmed. The country was also amongst the first ones to close its air and land borders and airspace and place affected cities under lockdowns. It is likely the number of confirmed cases, however, is largely under-reported due to limited testing capacity and the fact that most tests are carried out on people with symptoms or traveling.

### Impact on health & nutrition

**The COVID-19 pandemic has made access to health services more difficult for women.** The global chain disruptions have limited availability of critical health commodities including contraceptives. Movement restrictions, particularly in rural areas, further limited women's ability to access family planning, maternal and postnatal care. Where access to health centers had not been compromised, the loss of income and anxiety associated with contracting the virus in hospitals and misconceptions relating to the virus, have led to a decrease in hospital visits. A national study on the impact of COVID 19 on women revealed that 66.1% of women have stopped going to health centers for reproductive health consultations since the beginning of the pandemic.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, restrictions imposed on mass gatherings compelled technical and financial partners to halt mass vaccination programs which contributed to new measles outbreaks as experienced in the Sahel region in 2021.

**An increase in gender-based violence, particularly within family units, has been observed.** Since the beginning of the pandemic, 34.6% of women have been subjected to physical violence against 20.5% of men while 25.4% of women have been victims of sexual violence compared to 5.7% of men. To cope with economic hardship, many families also resorted to child marriage as a strategy to reduce their burden.

**The COVID-19 outbreak has worsened the food security situation for women and children in Burkina Faso.** In March 2021, one year after the beginning of the pandemic, the number of people facing IPC 3 level acute food insecurity had increased by 29% averaging 2,076,319, from 1,606,480 the previous year, majority women. The situation is particularly worrisome in Northern Burkina Faso, already affected by the deterioration of the security context, and climate change. To assist populations, cereal sales outlets at subsidized prices were opened by the authorities and food

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<sup>45</sup> Ministry of Health, 2021

distributions campaigns targeting populations in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, launched. Despite such interventions to stabilize food prices, the price of staples like cooking oil and millet is increasing. For instance, the FAO Food Price Index, which measures the monthly change in international prices for a basket containing staple food such as meat, dairy, cereals, vegetable oils and sugar, has increased from 95.8 points to 127.4 points between August 2020 and August 2021<sup>46</sup>. As borders continue to remain closed causing transportation costs to increase, food prices will continue to surge and access to staples like rice, oil and sugar could subsequently become an issue. Across the country, the decrease in purchasing power and increase in staple food prices impact the population's ability to sustain a balanced diet. Small-scale female farmers also faced difficulties sustaining their food production and income. This situation further exacerbated maternal malnutrition. The absence of school feeding programmes also increased the risk of malnutrition and prevalence of stunting among schoolgirls.

### Impact on education

**School closures due to COVID-19 have affected over 4 million children.**<sup>47</sup> The closing of 20.000 schools due to the outbreak has made girls' access to education more difficult. The increased domestic workload and childcare burden that fell on them during this period, have also further limited their ability to attend school, resulting in many leaving. Closures also led to an increase in early pregnancies making a return to studies more difficult for teenage girls. Finally, the pandemic has widened the learning gaps between wealthy and vulnerable children, especially in displaced communities, who had limited home-schooling support or access to distance learning options put in place by the authorities and technical partners, which included TV and radio programmes.

### Impact on entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and the digital economy

**The deterioration of the macroeconomic landscape due to COVID-19 has led to a rise in female unemployment rates, especially in urban areas.** While brief, market closures and other health measures taken by the authorities have negatively impacted daily wage earners in the informal economy, which accounts for 20% of Burkina Faso's GDP<sup>48</sup>, 60% of non-agricultural employment in the private sector and employs 90% of the country's workers, majority women.<sup>49</sup> In 2021, about 48% of informal workers were reported to have lost their jobs during the pandemic, while 65% experienced a decrease in their earnings<sup>50</sup>. Unemployment rates in service industries such as hospitality where women are heavily represented, have also increased, further decreasing their purchasing power. Furthermore, the inability to leave their camps due to measures in place, prevented refugee women from engaging in income-generating activities further increasing their vulnerability.

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<sup>46</sup> Institut d'Etudes de Sécurité, [La hausse des prix des denrées alimentaires pourrait déstabiliser l'Afrique](#), 2021

<sup>47</sup> UNICEF

<sup>48</sup> ILO

<sup>49</sup> IFC, Burkina Faso: Country Private Sector Diagnostic, 2019

<sup>50</sup> The Conversation, [Informal workers in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso have been hit harder by COVID-19](#), 2021

## C. THE JOURNEY TO ADVANCE GENDER PARITY

### C1. Lessons learned from Burkina Faso's gender parity journey

Despite the security crisis that Burkina Faso faces, the country has managed to improve women's access to basic education & health services, using a holistic approach and innovative solutions. Member States facing similar challenges can learn from Burkina Faso's experience in providing access to basic services despite the security context and leverage the community to guarantee sustainable outcomes.

#### Lessons learned in health & nutrition

**The adoption of a holistic approach anchored in community-based service provision has helped improve women's health outcomes.** To regulate the country's fertility rate and reduce teenage pregnancies, the authorities have adopted a comprehensive approach regarding sexual and reproductive health. The extension of free healthcare for pregnant women and children under five to cover family planning methods has helped increase access to contraceptives, while the integration of sexual and reproductive courses in school curriculums from age 10 has contributed to an increase in use. Secondly, Burkina Faso made substantial investments in the supply side of their health sector in infrastructure and the training of additional human resources resulting in sharp improvements in services provision. The most impactful initiative has been the inclusion of CBHWs into the formal healthcare system. This strategy has helped Burkina Faso further increase access to health services in underserved areas. While this solution can be duplicated in other Member States, it is particularly interesting for countries facing similar security challenges, where regular health facilities are often closed due to frequent security threats. In such a situation, CBHWs could help provide much needed basic health services.

Finally, recognizing the importance of engaging men & cultural/religious leaders as gender champions, the authorities and technical partners have launched awareness raising programs and projects targeting them. Initiatives such as the school for Husbands and Future Husbands has helped reduce cases of domestic violence and improve maternal health in the pilot community. The involvement of cultural/religious leaders, who are able to provide interpretations that resonate with their communities, have led to an increase in modern contraceptive use. Adopting a similar approach could help other Member States ensure greater community buy-in, thus maximizing the impact and sustainability of their programs.

#### Lessons learned in education, skills, and labor participation

**By investing in the construction of dedicated facilities and focusing on the re-integration of out of school children, Burkina Faso has managed to improve girls' access to primary and secondary education.** Burkina Faso is one of the few countries within the region to have achieved gender parity both in primary and secondary school. In addition to making school compulsory from age 6 to 16, the authorities have invested in the construction of schools closer to villages, as well as girls-only boarding schools to reduce travel time and lower the risk of girls getting assaulted on their way to and from school. The female literacy rate has also increased thanks to innovative programs like Speed School ("Ecole Passerelle") which aims to re-integrate out of school children.

## Lessons learned in entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy

**Tailoring financial services to women's needs is critical to ensure their uptake.** To tackle the issue of access to funds faced by female entrepreneurs, the authorities and their partners have created and/or revived several dedicated funds. Those however did not fulfil their intended purpose due to a poorly tailored offer. Specific examples include the Women's Income-Generating Activities Support Fund (FAARF) which requires prospective applicants to be already formalized, organized in cooperatives, and/or provide collaterals, failing to recognize that most female-owned businesses are still informal and that women continue to face difficulties securing land rights. Both Burkina Faso and other Member States could learn from this experience to ensure that the offer is adapted or tailored to the target beneficiary's needs, by providing technical assistance to help them qualify for the available financing.

## C2. Recommendations

BF has made a significant progress on its journey towards greater gender parity and equality. The model and our analysis have identified some key areas that the country can address to build on the progress made so far. That include negative gender biases, limited participation in the labor force, the existing legal framework, and the need for accrued partnership between the various stakeholders. Following are the initial set of recommendations to address these barriers and challenges. We have also included a few recommendations that scale up and bring synergies across various efforts made towards gender parity and equality.

### Address persistent gender biased norms

**Persistent socio-cultural and religious norms are keeping women away from fully taking advantage of opportunities available to them, despite improving access to basic services and training.** To tackle this, the country can aim to increase access to information to ease a mindset shift. At school-level, this could include the promotion of youth clubs in schools, mentoring programs and a more gender-sensitive curriculum. TV and radio programs in different languages could also help reach a wider demographic. Moreover, engaging men as well as cultural/religious leaders as gender equality champions has proved to positively contribute to a shift in attitudes and perspectives, thus guaranteeing more sustainable outcomes. This can be achieved through scale up specific programs like the School for Husband and Future Husbands or awareness building campaigns.

### Introduce incentive mechanisms to compensate for women's disadvantaged access to education as well as economic resources

**Incentives can accelerate a shift in existing practices and enable women and girls to participate more effectively in the economy.** Women's participation in the formal labor market remains limited, particularly in male dominated fields where they continue to be underrepresented. It is therefore paramount to equip women with the necessary skills. This can be achieved by continuing to support investment in education and provide scholarships and other financial incentives that can help encourage girls to pursue higher education, particularly in STEM fields. Secondly, women need to be provided with access to productive assets (i.e., land) as well as technical skills through tailored skill training (i.e., digital skills, financial skills) or direct support to facilitate access to finance. Finally, incentives to encourage financial institutions to adapt their products and ease women's access to loans by offering concessionary rates for instance can improve the supply side.

## Create an inclusive legal framework and enforce existing laws

The absence of inclusive laws protecting women's rights and poor enforcement of existing ones limit progress. Hurdles faced by women in climbing up the corporate ladder or gaining more visibility on the political scene can be partly addressed by strengthening the legal framework. Initiatives could include (i) the introduction and enforcement of representation quotas to increase their presence in senior leadership positions across boardrooms and political institutions, and (ii) strengthening existing legislation protecting women at work (i.e., harassment, gender pay gap, parental leave, etc). Additional legal reforms could include a revision of the current Code of Persons and Families (CPF) in-depth to address loopholes regarding child marriage, which prevents girls from completing their education, enter the formal labor force market and contribute in a greater capacity to the country's economic development.

## Support scaling up innovative solutions

Innovative solutions and tech can be leveraged to address the issue of girls' education, particularly in conflict-affected regions and nomad communities. The authorities could further explore solutions like the creation of systems to facilitate tracking and reinsertion of out of nomad and/or displaced girls, as well as creative alternatives for distance learning.

## Encourage synergy of actions between stakeholders

Synergy of actions between the different stakeholders can lead to a greater optimization of available resources. A harmonized approach would ultimately lead to greater impact of the programs launched. This could be achieved by setting up a platform to facilitate coordination of gender related interventions by both technical partners and the authorities, or harmonize gender data collection methodologies.



## D. APPENDIX

### D1. Methodology used for the case study

#### Anchoring the Gender Equality and Parity Study in the 2050 ECOWAS HCD Strategy

The ECOWAS Human Capital Development framework evaluates regional performance metrics across three dimensions, which measure social, economic, and educational elements, all critical for societies to thrive. Dimensions selected include:

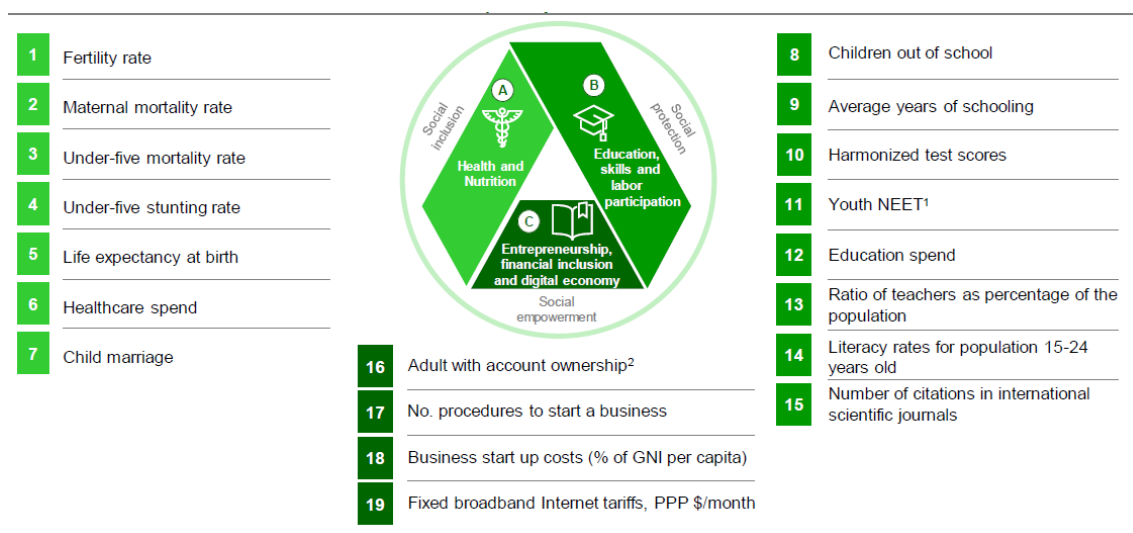
- Health and nutrition
- Education, skills, and labor participation
- Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy

We have also added a political empowerment dimension to assess women's representation in the political arena and capture the challenges they still face.

The gender-transformative human capital development (HCD) strategy is anchored into this overall HCD approach and aims to promote gender equity and equality as key to reaching inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Gender inclusion is critical to drive economic growth and increase societal value. All fifteen Member States have untapped opportunities when it comes to gender equality and parity. For these reasons, gender inclusion is a cross-cutting enabler of the HCD Strategy aligned around the previously outlined dimensions.

Each one of these dimensions breaks down into a set of priority indicators as illustrated in the figure below:

**Figure 20: The ECOWAS HCD framework**



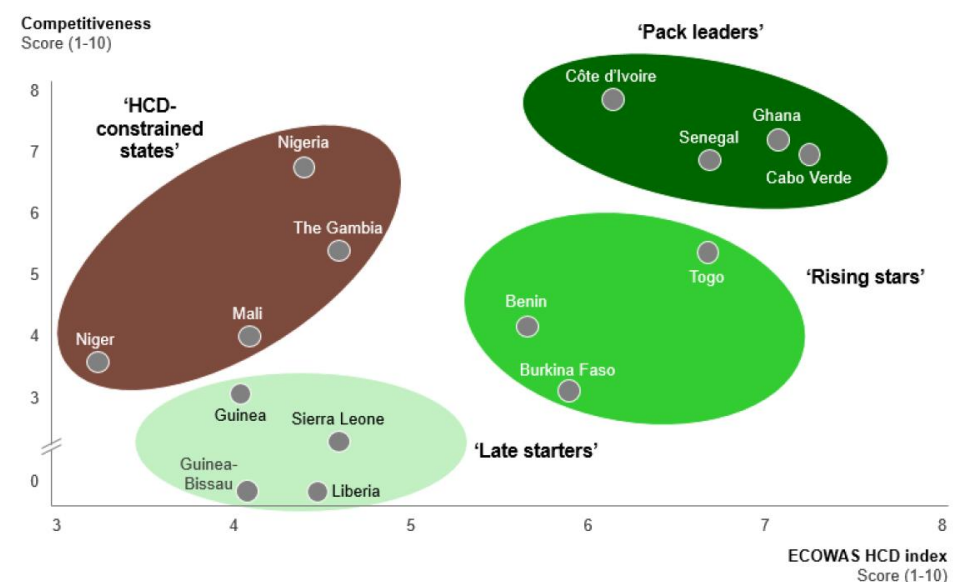
ECOWAS HCD strategy categorizes countries in four clusters based on their HCD performance and economic competitiveness.

- **The Pack Leaders** are the strongest performers on both HCD and competitiveness
- **The Rising Stars** have been registered average performances on both HCD and competitiveness



- **The HCD-constrained States** are lagging behind their peers on HCD indicators despite strong economic competitiveness performances
- **The Late Starters** have experienced a stunt in their progress on HCD indicators resulting in competitiveness under-performance

**Figure 21: ECOWAS country clusters based on economic competitiveness and HCD performance<sup>51</sup>**



The country performance assessment will be framed around these four archetypes and use the selected indicators across each HCD dimension as guidance to evaluate MS' gender parity performance. This clustered approach will capture the region's diversity and allow a comparison of countries performance facing similar constraints. This study will then review the gender parity performance for each dimension of the HCD framework to understand the drivers and binding constraints to reach total parity (Score of 1 for the index).

### Key indicators selected to assess gender parity performance

This study will seek to assess gender equality and parity across a set of key indicators under each dimension (health, education, entrepreneurship, and political empowerment). The figure below is an initial selection of relevant indicators for the gender parity analysis that are used to frame this country assessment. These indicators were chosen because they relate to gender parity and equality. While not an exhaustive list of indicators for lack of gender disaggregated data across all 15 Member States, these indicators capture the state of gender parity consistently across the region.

<sup>51</sup> ECOWAS 2030 Integrated Regional Strategy for Human Capital Development

Figure 22: Selected indicators across HCD dimensions for regional and country gender parity analysis

Selected indicators			
Dimension	Health and Nutrition	Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy	Education, skills and labor participation
HCD Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fertility rate</li> <li>Maternal mortality ratio</li> <li>Child marriage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adults with account ownership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average years of schooling</li> <li>Literacy rate</li> </ul>
Additional Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life expectancy</li> <li>Prevalence of stunting for height</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimated earned income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labor force participation</li> <li>Primary school enrolment rate</li> <li>Secondary school enrolment rate</li> <li>Tertiary enrolment rate</li> <li>Average years of schooling</li> </ul>
Additional dimension	<b>Political Empowerment</b> Seats in parliament Women in ministerial positions		

## D2. Methodology used to conduct interviews and type of stakeholders interviewed

A total of 27 in-country stakeholder interviews were conducted to draft the Burkina Faso deep dive report:

- 6 interviews with ministries and government agencies allowed us to identify challenges and potential opportunities in current gender focused interventions implemented by Member State governments.
- 8 interviews with technical partners were conducted to identify successful gender focused interventions to scale up and synergies between their activities and ECOWAS interventions.
- 7 interviews with civil society organizations focused on promoting women and girls' social, political, and economic inclusion. These conversations were critical to identifying successful initiatives implemented by these organizations to advance gender parity objectives.
- 6 interviews with private sector actors were held and conversations with female-led businesses including informal sector workers across a wide range of sectors were prioritized to better understand the hurdles women face when pursuing their professional aspirations.

We applied a hypothesis-driven approach to develop tailored interview guides for each interviewees/stakeholder archetypes. The table below outlines the list of stakeholders interviewed for the purpose of this study.

**Table 1: List of stakeholders interviewed in Burkina Faso**

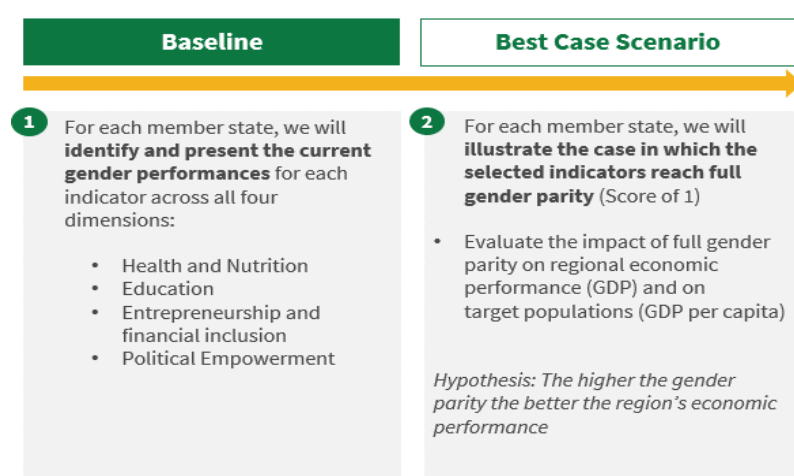
Type of stakeholder	Institution
Government	Ministry of Gender, National Solidarity, Family and Humanitarian Action
	Ministry of Education, Literacy and Promotion of National Languages
	Ministry of Health, Public Hygiene and Welfare
	Ministry of Industrial Development, Trade, Handicrafts and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
	Ministry of Economy, Planning and Finance
	Permanent Secretariat of the National Economic and Social Development Plan
Technical Partners	African Development Bank
	World Health Organization
	Canadian Cooperation
	UNICEF
	Belgian Cooperation
	French Development Agency (AFD)
	Tony Blair Institute
	World Food Programme
Civil Society Organisations	Association of Women Lawyers of Burkina Faso (AFJ/BF)
	Peace and Security Network for Women in the ECOWAS Region (REPSFECO)
	Burkinabe Women's Rights Coalition
	Pugsada Awakening and Support Association / Association d'Eveil et d'Appui Pugsada
	ALIMA
	Mahna Foundation
	Women's Voices / Voix de Femmes
Private Sector	Chamber of Commerce
	Maison de l'Entreprise
	Optic Alizée Group
	Sira Labs
	Informal sector workers

## D3. Methodology used to measure the economic impact of gender parity

The methodology focused on testing the hypothesis that higher gender parity scores lead to a more inclusive society and drive sustainable economic growth. The objective of the modeling exercise was to size the economic potential across each dimension if the region is to achieve gender parity. The purpose is to understand how improvements in gender parity in each dimension can positively impact economic performance.

By using GPS scores for selected indicators and for each country, a baseline and best-case scenario was developed as illustrated below.

**Figure 23 : Illustration of the scenario modeling methodology**



Prior to running the simulations, the pre-selected indicators were presented to ECOWAS to review their relevance to gender. Upon validation of the indicators, a baseline was created for each country using their current gender parity performance scores and determine their current economic performance.

A panel data on the evolution of economic growth was used for each year between 2000 and 2030 in fourteen (14) West African states, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Capo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo<sup>52</sup>. This model analyzed the impact of these different variables on the economic growth for the fourteen (14) countries.

$$\text{GDPgrowth}_{it} = \alpha + \delta \text{GPS}_{it} + \beta X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

**GDPgrowth<sub>it</sub>** = dependent variable- GDP growth for the country (i) at time (t)

**α** = the constant

**δ** = the coefficient of Gender Parity Index for country (i) at time (t)

**GPS<sub>it</sub>** = Gender Parity Score is the variable of interest – independent variable for country (i) at time (t)

**β** = the coefficient of the control variables

**X<sub>it</sub>** = control variables for country (i) at time (t)

**ε<sub>it</sub>** = error term

<sup>52</sup> Guinea Bissau was excluded from the model due to insufficient data availability

A baseline and best-case scenarios simulation were conducted to estimate the impact on the economic performance and targeted populations. With GDP growth as the dependent variable and the GPS as the independent variable of interest. World Bank databases on population growth, the share of international trade in GDP, gross savings rate, and the corruption index were used as control variables in the model. Thus, the indicators whose coefficients were found to be more significant on GDP growth were retained. As a result, primary, secondary, tertiary enrolment rates, literacy rate and labor force participation were determined to be the indicators with the most significant impact on GDP growth.

## D4. Indicators tables across the 4 dimensions

### Health & Nutrition

**Table 2: Burkina Faso's GPS in Health and Nutrition within its cluster and regional average (2020)**

Indicators Countries	Fertility rate (total births per woman)	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	Prevalence of stunting for height (GPS)	Child marriage (% of girls <18)	Life expectancy at birth (GPS)
Benin	5.08	421.99	0.86	30.56	1.05
Togo	4.10	354.22	0.84	24.80	1.03
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	<b>5.04</b>	<b>323.26</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>51.55</b>	<b>1.03</b>
Cluster Average	4.74	369.82	0.83	49.77	1.04
Regional Average	4.09	428.97	0.83	37.18	0.97

**Table 3: Burkina Faso's GPS evolution in Health and Nutrition between 2016 – 2020**

Indicators Years	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	CAGR (2016-2020)
<b>Fertility rate</b> (total births per woman)	5.35	5.27	5.19	5.11	5.04	-1%
<b>Maternal mortality ratio</b> (per 100,000 live births)	331.00	320.00	315.42	309.56	323.26	0%
<b>Prevalence of stunting for height</b> (GPS)	0.76	0.85	0.79	0.82	0.79	1%
<b>Life expectancy at birth</b> (GPS)	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.03	1.03	0%

## Education, Skills and Labor Participation

**Table 4: Burkina Faso's GPS in Education, Skills and Labor Participation within its cluster and regional average (2020)**

Indicators	Literacy rate	Average years of schooling	Primary school enrolment rate	Secondary enrolment rate	Tertiary enrolment rate	Labor force participation
Countries	(GPS)	(GPS)	(GPS)	(GPS)	(GPS)	(GPS)
Benin	0.68	0.80	0.93	0.81	0.40	0.92
Togo	0.93	0.87	0.97	0.80	0.56	0.92
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>0.84</b>
Cluster Average	0.83	0.89	0.97	0.84	0.50	0.89
Regional Average	0.77	0.74	0.92	0.89	0.67	0.78

**Table 5: Burkina Faso's GPS evolution in Education, Skills and Labor Participation between 2016 – 2020**

Indicators	Years	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	CAGR (2016-2020)
<b>Literacy rate (GPS)</b>		0.82	0.83	0.85	0.85	0.88	1%
<b>Average years of schooling (GPS)</b>		0.94	0.95	0.96	0.98	0.99	1%
<b>Primary school enrolment rate (GPS)</b>		0.98	0.98	0.98	0.99	1.01	0%
<b>Secondary enrolment rate (GPS)</b>		0.95	0.97	1.00	1.03	1.06	0%
<b>Tertiary enrolment rate (GPS)</b>		0.51	0.52	0.58	0.56	0.55	2%
<b>Labor force participation (GPS)</b>		0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.84	2%

## Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion, and Digital Economy

**Table 6: Burkina Faso's GPS in Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy within its cluster and regional average (2020)**

Indicators	Adult with account ownership at financial institution	Estimated earned income
Countries	(GPS)	(GPS)
Benin	N/A	0.73
Togo	0.70	0.80
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.57</b>
Cluster Average	0.46	0.70
Regional Average	0.46	0.59

**Table 7: Burkina Faso's GPS evolution in Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy between 2016 – 2020**

Indicators	Years					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	CAGR (2016-2020)
Adult with account ownership at financial institution (GPS)	0.69	0.67	0.69	0.68	0.69	0%
Estimated earned income (GPS)	0.66	0.66	N/A	0.60	0.57	-3%

## Political empowerment

**Table 8: Burkina Faso's GPS in Political within its cluster and regional average (2020)**

Countries	Indicators	Seats in parliament	Ministerial positions
		(GPS)	(GPS)
Benin		0.08	0.26
Togo		0.23	0.45
Burkina Faso		0.07	0.18
Cluster Average		0.12	0.30
Regional Average		0.20	0.23

**Table 9: Burkina Faso's GPS evolution in Political Empowerment between 2016 – 2020**

Indicators	Years					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	CAGR (2016-2020)
Seats in parliament (GPS)	0.10	0.12	0.12	0.15	0.07	-8.42%
Ministerial positions (GPS)	0.15	0.16	0.17	0.17	0.18	4%