

How is gender equality included in education sector planning?

An analysis of power, voice and social change in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso Country Report

Annex D.4 Burkina Faso Country Report

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List of Acronyms

CAST	Compte d'affection special du tresor
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPEIEFG	Direction de la promotion de l'éducation inclusive, de l'éducation des filles et du genre
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IpBF	l'Initiative Pananetugri Burkina Faso
LEG	Local Education Group
MENAPLN	Ministere de l'Education Nationale, de l'Alphabetisation et de la PLN
PDSEBS	Plan strategique de développement de l'éducation de base et secondaire /Strategic Plan for the Development of Basic and Secondary Education
PUE	Burkina Faso Education Emergency Plan
TFP	Technical and Financial Partner
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Context and overview of planning process

Although the last two decades have seen considerable progress on global commitments to address gender disparities in education, many challenges remain. Girls in Sub-Saharan Africa are still furthest from equality in educational access and achievement, with factors such as poverty and location compounding with discriminatory gender norms to exclude girls from education (UNESCO 2022b). Through the [Gender at the Centre Initiative \(GCI\)](#), a program that encourages Ministries of Education to embed gender equality at the heart of education systems, a study was commissioned to examine how gender equality is integrated in education sector planning in 8 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Niger and Sierra Leone). The synthesis report identifies examples of good practice, opportunities and threats to promote gender transformative education systems. This country report presents the findings of the analysis for Burkina Faso

The analysis focusses on the most recent Education Sector Plan planning process in Burkina Faso: the preparation of the Strategic Development Plan for Basic and Secondary Education (PDSEBS 2021-2025). It follows on from the Strategic Development Plan for Basic Education (PDSEB) which covered the period 2012-2021 and is part of the Sector Plan for Education and Training (PSEF) 2017-2030.

The process was conducted between October 2019 and December 2021 and involved - to different degrees - all stakeholders in basic and secondary education development. It included 4 phases:

- Preparation phase: institutional consultation and implementation of the process.
- Diagnostic phase: diagnostic workshop, then presentation to the management committee, to the thematic management group, then to the partnership framework.
- Formulation phase: framing workshop, drafting of the framing note, writing workshop, presentation to the management committee, to the thematic management group, then to the partnership framework, taking into account the observations, then presentation of the new plan to the various actors at regional level, taking into account the observations.
- Validation and adoption phase: presentation of the draft document to the CNPD, comments, validation workshop, consideration of amendments, validation by ministerial order.

Burkina Faso has a population of 20.3 million (2019), with 50.1% of women and girls. Between 2000 and 2019, Burkina Faso's Human Development Index (HDI) value increased from 0.293 to 0.452, an increase of 54.3 percent. Its HDI value for 2019 is 0.452, positioning it at 182 out of 189 countries and territories. Its Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.594, ranking it 147 out of 162 countries in the 2019 index. In

comparison, Chad and Mali are ranked at 160 and 158, respectively.¹ This progress is yet challenged by the security context: violence in the North has led to a sharp increase of displaced people and put additional barriers to girls' access to education.

The present analysis is based on 10 interviews with stakeholders: 4 Ministry representatives, 2 CSO/NGO, 1 youth representative, 3 technical partners – 4 women and 6 men. The interviews were complemented by a literature review, particularly in relation to the organization of the PDSEBS process, as it is a process well organized and managed by the planning teams in the Ministry.

Thematic results

Political economy

Political will

The interviews conducted show that there is a strong political will to promote gender equality in the education system.

At the political and strategic level, there are strong signals in favour of promoting gender equality. However, despite the positive environment, these are not translated into operational and budgetary planning that allow for transformative action. Some interviewees attributed this to a lack of technical expertise over gender-sensitive planning, or to a real lack of interest in gender issues beyond the rhetoric. It should also be noted that the evolution of the political and security situation in recent years often relegates gender to the bottom of the priority scale.

"We are becoming victims of our achievements. Ten or fifteen years ago, we were talking about access, retention, etc. Today, this issue of access is being won at all levels of education, but the issue of retention and success remains. And it is as if some decision-makers were satisfied with the access indicators. Interventions need to be maintained because completion rates and success rates are still widely disparate." - Representative from Ministry of Education

The participatory gender diagnosis conducted in the first half of 2022 in Burkina Faso, further points out that sectoral education policies and strategies are increasingly unclear and inconsistent with regards to gender. Gender is often

¹ Human Development Report 2020, UNDP, Burkina Faso

dissolved in the notion of inclusion, and there is a tendency to confuse gender with women.

"There is a certain hypocrisy at the central level regarding main-streaming gender: we say that we take it into account but when it comes to budgeting, if the budget is too important, it is in the gender activities that we will cut" - Technical Partner Representative

Interviewees did not mention the lack of resources as a major constraint. On the contrary, they indicated that funds are available to carry out the desired actions, notably thanks to tools such as the Special Allocation Account in the Treasury supplied by the TFPs.

Accountability

The respondents mentioned several accountability mechanisms for monitoring actions to promote gender equality.

First, the existence of a National Council for Gender Promotion, chaired by the Prime Minister. This body brings together all ministerial departments and public institutions (minister and members of the ministerial gender unit). It holds an annual general meeting, in which members present the progress of actions to promote gender equality. Since the country is committed to the process of gender and child's rights sensitive budgeting, each ministerial department must submit an annual report on the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Indicators with targets have been defined for this purpose.²

The other mechanism mentioned by the actors is linked to the intervention of technical and financial partners through the Gender Trust Fund³ or the Education Trust Fund. These funding mechanisms are important levers for promoting gender, by reserving a percentage of funding for this purpose and imposing monitoring and evaluation indicators for their implementation.

At the level of the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de l'Alphabétisation et de la PLN (MENAPLN), the issue of stakeholders accountability is limited by the absence of explicit gender-related missions and attributions in the mission sheets of agents, both at the central and decentralised levels. The interviewees did not mention their individual obligations in relation to the position they hold. Furthermore, they

² For example, we were told that no representative of the structure was invited to the planning process, nor to the Education Forum in 2021.

³ The Common Gender Fund was created in 2005 by a group of TFPs with the aim of supporting the Burkina government's efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming through better coordination of the financing of gender activities, synergy of TFP actions and increased transparency in the management of allocated resources.

mentioned the existence of gender focal points within each service/department but did not specify their roles and missions. The Direction de la promotion de l'éducation inclusive, de l'éducation des filles et du genre (DPEIEFG) is repeatedly listed as the main body responsible for gender main streaming in MENAPLN's actions. Its mandate is to increase girls' access, retention and success in schools. At the local level, interviewees mentioned the involvement of parents through a principle of accountability organized around the communes and provinces, particularly in the context of the sectoral dialogue which is held periodically and where all these issues are addressed.

Lastly, in terms of indicators, respondents mentioned efforts to highlight data on equality in the annual reports that monitor the reference framework actions.

"Within the Ministry, we are working to have all our data disaggregated to integrate all the issues related to girls' education into the Ministry's and the DGS's data collection mechanisms" - Representative from Ministry of Education

However, these efforts are insufficient to provide the plan with a real monitoring and evaluation system for these aspects, particularly because all the basic data has not been collected yet.

Relationships

Power and decision-making

"We have no choice but to listen to them, but priorities mean that not everything can be taken into account. But we find compromises to make sure they agree." - Representative from Ministry of Education

Discussions with stakeholders outside the Ministry, indicates that the planning process was consultative. Most respondents highlighted that they had been consulted at various stages of the process. However, the limits of the consultation created some difficulty: such as being called upon to give an opinion on a document without having been involved in its drafting caused challenges in understanding what space was left for making changes. The majority of stakeholders regretted not having been more closely involved and making more concrete proposals that reflected the reality on the ground. On the other hand, the

lack of knowledge in planning made it impossible to grasp the constraints and issues at sectoral level.

Networks and Coalitions

Planning is an exercise that is well mastered at the MENAPLN level. It is composed of both trained and experienced planners. The respondents interviewed indicated the DPEIEFG as being systematically associated with and represented by the various management and drafting committees. It was also reported to be a well-established and participatory process.

The stages of diagnosis and of drafting the framing note seem to be a crucial moment for the proper consideration of gender in the planning process. Given the small number of DPEIEFG staff, contributions at this stage remained rather limited, especially at the operational planning and budgeting stages.

"The influence of the TFPs in terms of gender is strong because they set conditions: CSOs and political organisations have no choice but to go along with the partners who accompany them. Moreover, it is often their presence within the consultation frameworks that allows CSOs to express themselves." - CSO Representative

The role of the Local Education Group (LEG) is played by the Cadre partenarial pour l'éducation, which was established in 2007 and whose members include representatives from the government, civil society organizations (CSOs), teacher organizations, as well as bilateral and multilateral development partners. While the actors interviewed did not specifically mention its role in the process, LEG representatives were involved at all stages, as required by the official texts.

At the level of technical and financial partners, the Compte d'Affectation Spéciale du Trésor (CAST's) contributors are known as being the most active and influential. The partnership framework is perceived as an influential actor, and it allows for the consideration of gender in the various documents and actions. Solicited at the various stages of the document's development, they have made active contributions. Canada, for example, mobilised specific gender expertise, which contributed to the inclusion of gender equality aspects in the document.

Overall, respondents felt that there was real progress, but that it was not enough and that overall security issues had exacerbated the problem. Several examples of progress were named as having been achieved thanks to CSO advocacy and their knowledge of grassroots realities; such as issue of menstruation in schools. In the past, through national CSOs, there was a request to provide support with hygiene kits, which is now included in the strategy.

Voices

Gender expertise

The integration of gender issues into MENAPLN's policies and strategies relies on the DPEIEFG, whose mission is to support all directorates and services in this regard. During the PDSEBS development process, apart from the expertise mobilised by this department, and the support provided by technical and financial partners (notably Canada) at the various stages, the interviewees did not mention any other gender expertise. Although there are competent human resources on the subject in other sectors (notably those that have developed the National Gender Policy and the National Gender Strategy), they were not mobilised for this exercise. Despite its will and effort, the sole involvement of the DPEIEFG appears insufficient to ensure proper integration of gender issues: firstly, because it does not have the institutional legitimacy to do so, but also because its human and financial resources are limited in number and capacity. While the diagnostic analysis is well mastered, the planning and budgeting aspects, which ensure that the planned actions are operational, require specific skills.

"The Ministry should have been able to involve gender specialists alongside the DPEIEFG in the development of these policy documents; this is also part of capacity building" - Technical Partner Representative

Some representatives with gender expertise within the CSOs regretted that they were not more closely involved in the process. CSOs chosen to participate at the different stages of the process were also not specialised in gender. As a result, they felt that certain issues are not sufficiently considered (for example, the specific needs of girls, i.e., psychosocial support, access to information on sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, etc., has not been considered and remained general). These stakeholders are therefore currently drafting an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the plan in terms of gender mainstreaming.

Voices of young people and communities

"The consultation activities are not enough, the methodology used does not allow for the issues to be properly taken into account. Not everything is in the final document" - CSO Representative

The stakeholders interviewed for this analysis feel that the ways and means by which they have been consulted are sufficient, but more could be done. In their view, sector strategies could be made more effective and operational by changing the process by which they are developed, to better integrate realities on the ground. This can be done by mapping the stakeholders involved in gender issues and allowing them to come together without any influence to make proposals (instead of the opposite pattern).

Society

Social norms

Several of the stakeholders interviewed felt that involvement of religious and traditional leaders should begin at the early stages of the process. The influence granted by their social and political status is either seen as an important lever for the promotion of gender equality or a major obstacle. Yet, it is emphasised that this requires effort and organisation, and must be considered over a long period of time. It was reported that since the 2000s, much progress was made in terms of changing social and cultural norms. Things have to be done gradually, and social mobilisation programmes play an important role. However, some stakeholders were concerned that the security crisis may change parental and community behaviours, reverting to previously held gender norms. Some of these issues are also identified in the PSDEBS and accordingly awareness-raising, advocacy and social mobilisation actions are planned. Furthermore, greater efforts are planned in this area in the Emergency Plan for Education⁴.

Resistance

The stakeholders interviewed did not mention any socio-cultural resistance in the process, as it may have occurred in the past. Any socio-cultural constraints that prevented girls from being sent to school were reported to have dissipated.

⁴ Burkina Faso Education Emergency Plan (PUE/BF) 2020-2021, which aims to "Improve the learning and resilience of school-aged children/youth (3-17 years) affected by the security and health crisis in Burkina Faso through equitable access to quality education in safe, inclusive, and protective learning spaces". To complement the PDSEBS, a National Strategy for Education in Emergencies has been developed to deal with everything that was not addressed in the sub-sectoral strategy (ex: for internally displaced pupils: girls are specifically provided with a kit (notebooks, pens, etc.) to enable them to settle in; to avoid gender-based violence, activities aim at allowing girls to group together to take a house, allowing them to stay in the host regions).

However, poverty is still named as the main source of resistance to gender equality in the education system.

SWOT Analysis

3.1 Strengths

There is political will to promote gender equality in the education system, as demonstrated by the creation of a Gender Ministry, the development of a National Gender Strategy, and engagement from higher levels of the government.

Important tools such as gender budgeting are gradually being integrated into government operations.

There is active cooperation with technical partners to better promote gender within the government policies and strategies.

There is strong civil society engagement in promoting gender equality and presenting gender expertise, which could be better used during the planning process.

3.2 Weaknesses

The stakeholders see progress on access to schooling as sufficient and are not necessarily willing to go further, looking at equality or other outcomes, especially in the current context of crisis.

There is a limited understanding amongst stakeholders involved in the planning process of what gender means; general tendency to confuse it with anything to do with women and girls.

There is a lack of human resources trained in gender-sensitive planning and budgeting to integrate gender issues into their regular activities at all stages of the process (starting with the sector analysis).

The planning process does not include voices from local/ decentralised authorities and communities that would bring more insight into real challenges of gender inequalities on the ground.

3.3 Opportunities

There are funding opportunities available from the TFPs through tools such as the Common Fund and an active local education group (LEG) that could help maintain gender activities as priorities in the budgeting decisions.

With gender expertise of the TFPs locally available, it can be involved more closely alongside the DPEIEFG in the policy and strategy development processes to provide capacity building in the form of training/action throughout the process.

With acceptance of gender, there is a need to popularize the concept and the issues related to gender for the Ministry's technicians and decision-makers (DGs, SGs, etc.) in order to ensure that they have a good understanding of the issues and to facilitate their support for the efforts undertaken.

There is a need to promote cross-sectoral cooperation within government so that the education system benefits from advances made in other sectors (e.g., Gender Strategy of the Ministry of Family).

With an active CSO culture, a capacity-building mechanism can be established for stakeholders at the grassroot level for gender-sensitive planning and budgeting (teachers, parents, mothers, etc).

3.4 Threats

The security context may have a negative impact both in terms of mobilisation of funding (gender may be de-prioritised at the expense of more 'important' issues), and in terms of social behaviour. The impoverishment triggered by the security crisis may have a strong impact on families' choices which deprioritise girls' education.

Stakeholder analysis

Interviewees were asked to plot where they felt various actors sat on the following scale. While opinions varied, the matrix below does give an indication as to which groups could be targeted with different engagement strategies.

Stakeholder matrix

Within key informant interviews the researchers included a stakeholder mapping exercise. KII's were asked to plot actors on two axes: level of power and influence; and commitment to positive change on gender equality in education.

This exercise resulted in a mapping of actors in four groupings:

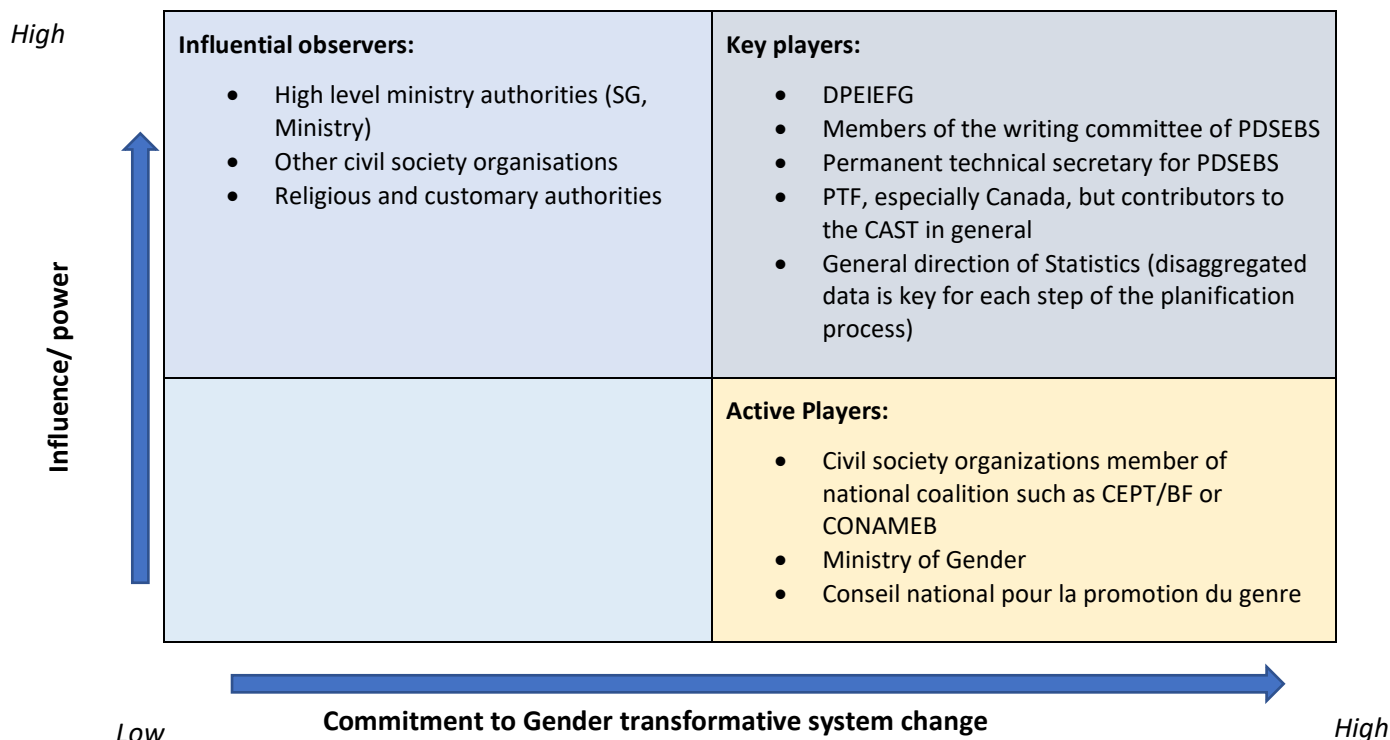
Influential observers: High power, low commitment to gender equality

Key players: High influence and high commitment

Active players: high commitment, lower influence

Observers: Low influence, low commitment

The results are valuable at country level and to consider methods of influence to engage different actors or targeted in advocacy campaigns.



List of Documents Reviewed

1. Strategic Plan for the Development of Basic and Secondary Education (PSDEBS) 2021 – 2025 & its triennial operational plan
2. Note méthodologique relative à l'organisation du processus d'élaboration du PSDEBS
3. Arrêtés de mise en place des instances d'élaboration du PSDEBS
4. Diagnostic participatif genre du Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de l'alphabétisation et de la promotion des langues nationales du Burkina-Faso, MENAPLN/IIPE, février 2022