

# My Mother's Education or my Death

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March 2024/ HCD-PB-ICC-001

## Critical issues

- Burkina Faso's low level of women's education and low levels of women's empowerment, are related to a high rate of child mortality in the country;
- The education of mothers improves their economic empowerment, especially in relation to their income, but not in regard to the usage of that income;



- A reduction in infant mortality is arrived at through an improvement in the levels of economic empowerment of mothers as a result of an increase in their income generation capacity and their decision-making power in relation to their income, which in turn depends on their levels of education.
- Policies targeted towards the economic empowerment of women should take socio-cultural factors into account.

## Background and statement of the problem

Education levels in Burkina Faso, especially those of women, remain low, despite the efforts by policy makers and international organisations in trying to implement goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, it is observed that there are difficulties in arriving at the economic and social empowerment of women. Indeed, in Burkina Faso the unemployment rate of women has been at an average of 6% over the past five years, which is relatively high and way above the global average of unemployment rates (World Bank, 2021). Also, according to the African Development Bank, 65.4% of women in Burkina Faso work in the informal sector. Equally, Burkina Faso's rates of mortality for children are relatively high; they were at 56.68 per 1000 for infant mortality and 26.98 per 1000 for neonatal mortality, and 93.96 per 1000 for child mortality over the period 2015-2019. These rates remain higher than the sub-Saharan average. It is, therefore evident that Burkina Faso's low level of women's education level and low levels of women's empowerment, are related to a high rate of child mortality in the country; This study aims to examine the impact of the education of mothers on mortality through a focus on women's economic empowerment.



## Results and implications

The literature demonstrates that in Burkina Faso, an improvement in human capital of women promotes their economic empowerment. Indeed, access to education, in other words women attending school and becoming literate, increases their probability of having a



decent job. Nevertheless, it does not seem to have an impact on their decision-making power on household income expenditure. It is also evident that decision-making power over household income expenditure reduces infant mortality in Burkina Faso, especially in rural areas.

This study, therefore, recommends the proliferation of policies related to the education of the girl-child and women with the aim of increasing their economic empowerment and allowing them access to income-generating activities. It also recommends the adoption of policies that take into account socio-economic factors, especially in regard to rural areas, so as to improve the decision-making capabilities of women on household income expenditure as a way of reducing infant-mortality in Burkina Faso.



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