

Agility in times of crisis: Enhancing Education for Children with Disabilities in Burkina Faso

BURKINA FASO IMPROVING EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

2021-2024 | US\$2.75 million grant

With over 72% of children with disabilities out of school, Burkina Faso faces significant challenges in ensuring inclusive education. Barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of teacher training, and societal stigma prevent many children from accessing quality learning opportunities. While the government has developed a National Strategy for Inclusive Education, its implementation has been limited. Recognizing these challenges, the World Bank launched the Burkina Faso Improving Education of Children with Disabilities project, which sought to enhance access and quality of education for vulnerable children, with a focus on children with disabilities, in the country's five poorest regions and Ouagadougou.



The [project](#) illustrates the flexibility of small interventions financed by the [Japan Social Development Fund](#) (JSDF), which partners with local NGOs to reach vulnerable groups, and can provide much-needed agility in times of crisis. The project was implemented in an unstable environment marked by the succession of coups d'état in January and September 2022 and security incidents in certain implementation areas. The security crisis led to the forced displacement of the population, especially students, towards safe areas including project schools. The project adapted to this context, through the establishment of reception sites and the designation of project schools as safe havens for students. To further ensure continuity in implementation, the project transferred the acquisition of specific equipment to NGOs and used Geo-enabling monitoring system (GEMS) tool and telephones to obtain project data.

As a result, around 50,966 students were enrolled/re-enrolled in 140 schools during the period from 2021 to 2024, including 19,127 children with disabilities and 31,839 other vulnerable children. This brought the number of direct beneficiaries of the project to 60,737, vastly surpassing the initial target of 15,412.

Implemented by the Ministry of National Education, Literacy and Promotion of National Languages (MEBAPLN), the project provided 19,127 children with disabilities with medical consultations and 3,259 of these children with special equipment, created 280 direct jobs through income generating activities for parents, and financed training and infrastructure upgrades in 140 schools to support vulnerable students. A total of 140 School Management Committees has been revitalized, with 980 members trained to oversee the implementation of inclusive education strategies. Finally, the project held awareness campaigns to foster a more inclusive mindset towards education for children with disabilities, and trained 8,359 families to help them sustain their children's education.

The project's achievements led to government requests to continue these efforts in other projects. This is, for instance, the case of the new project financed by the World Bank, [Restoring Education System Performance and Improving Resilience Project](#), which addresses the issues of children with disabilities, building on the successes of this project.