

# Analysis of Multidimensional Inequalities in West Africa and a Strategy for Inequality Reduction

DEVCO, AFD, AECID and Oxfam Research Project

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**Abstract:** With the Multidimensional Inequality Framework and the capabilities approach as its theoretical underpinning, this research shows that strong similarities in the expressions of inequalities exist in different domains of life in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal. Inequalities depending on the place of residence, level of income, education and gender, clearly expressed in health, education, financial security and dignified work, living conditions or participation. In general, women living in rural areas, with lower income and lower education are the most disadvantaged, compared to those living in urban areas, with high income and higher education, especially men. The research identifies **three structural drivers and four policy drivers** that can explain in part the mentioned inequalities, and suggests **a set of policies clearly targeted** towards the most remote rural areas and towards women, youth and other minorities and marginal groups.

**Keywords:** Inequality, multidimensional inequality, policy drivers, rural areas, health, education, West Africa.

**Original version:** English

# INDEX

<b>Summary</b> .....	Pág.004
----------------------	---------

<b>Introduction</b> .....	Pág.010
---------------------------	---------

## **What is the problem? Mapping of inequalities in West Africa**

Domain 1. Life and health .....	Pág.016
Domain 3. Education and learning .....	Pág.024
Domain 4. Financial security and dignified work .....	Pág.036
Domain 5. Living conditions .....	Pág.048
Domain 2. Physical and legal security .....	Pág.058
Domain 6. Participation, influence and voice .....	Pág.070
Domain 7. Individual, family and social life .....	Pág.080

## **Why? Common drivers and strategic issues behind inequalities in West Africa**

- Contextual aspects ..... Pág.084
- Policy drivers ..... Pág.088

## **What is the solution? A pack of regional policies designed to address inequalities in West Africa with a different approach**

- Essential services (health and education) targeting the most remote areas, the poorest communities and the marginalized groups. .... Pág.100
- Agricultural policies targeting the most remote rural areas and the poorest farmers ..... Pág.101
- Labour policies targeting young men and women, and inclusion ..... Pág.104
- Progressive fiscal policies' reform ..... Pág.106

<b>Conclusions, recommendations and final note</b> .....	Pág.107
----------------------------------------------------------	---------

<b>Bibliography</b> .....	Pág.118
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**Annexes** (<https://oxfam.box.com/s/uftnc42d8d39fvklal3piuov7cg6twyd>):

**Annex I:** Multidimensional Inequalities Framework

**Annex II:** Methodology

**Annex III:** List of institutions and experts consulted

**Annex IV:** Semi structured interviews to identify the main expressions of inequalities

**Annex V:** Experts' ranking of domains and subdomains and data availability

**Annex VI:** Additional figures and tables of expressions of inequalities

**Annex VII:** Data sources

## SUMMARY

Despite the lack of disaggregated data and the particularities of each country, this research shows that strong similarities in the expressions of inequalities exist in different domains of life in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal. Inequalities depending on the place of residence (urban/rural), level of income, level of education, and gender, clearly expressed in **health, education, financial security and work conditions, living conditions, personal and legal security and participation**. In general, women living in rural areas, with lower income and lower education are the most disadvantaged, compared to those living in urban areas, with high income and higher education, especially men.

Although this analysis does not specifically look at inequality in contexts of conflict and instability, there is substantial literature that shows that overlapping and growing inequalities foster frustration and provide ground for conflicts and instability; and that communities that live close to border areas and ethnic minorities are especially vulnerable to that context; an aspect that plays a role in the West African region.

This research conducts a sub-regional analysis of several political, social and economic inequalities in five countries in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal), using the [Multidimensional Inequality Framework](#) (MIF), based on Amartya Sen's capabilities approach and developed by Oxfam, the Centre of Analysis for Social Exclusion (CASE) of the London School of Economics, and the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. The MIF is formed by seven domains of life, their respective indicators and measures, a set of drivers for each domain, as well as a suggested pack of policies and measures for inequality reduction.

### What is the problem? Mapping of inequalities in West Africa

As in most part of the developing world, **gender inequalities** in West Africa are present in all domains considered and reinforce other disadvantages. Gender often compounds disadvantages related to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, location, religion, disability, age, and race. The double exclusion from gender and poverty means that only 25% of the poorest girls in low-income countries complete primary school.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank (2018) World Development Report, Chapter 2

Secondly, in West Africa, **the greatest inequalities are first and foremost spatial, between urban and rural areas**, where public services are practically absent in all the countries in the region. Although we have very little data for inequalities among different districts or provinces in-countries, based on the literature, we use the urban/rural disaggregation as proxy of inequalities between the coast and the interior in Ghana and Senegal, between Southern and Northern provinces in Mali and Niger, and between the central region and the rest in Burkina Faso. In Burkina Faso, there are important investments gaps in education, health and infrastructure between the west and central regions, and the East and North/Sahel regions. In Niger, only 6% of the poorest girls living in rural areas complete primary school.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, **individual and household income** is the variable that measures vertical inequalities. It clearly expresses the worse off conditions of those with lower incomes, and it mostly overlaps with other variables such as location and gender. Individuals **at the bottom of the income distribution** are also the most exposed to multidimensional inequalities, in contrast with those at the top. These often express the differences in education and job conditions, with those with the lowest skills, peasants and with no education gathered at the bottom. In fact, **education** appears to be both an expression and a driver of inequalities, deeply interlinked with other domains.

**Age** appears to be especially relevant in the domain related to working conditions, linked to unemployment. Also plays an interesting dynamic in the indicators on participation, which probably is a reflect and a reaction to the very hierarchical social and political existing structures in the countries. A special note deserves child marriage, which remains a dominant problem in West Africa, and has intergenerational consequences, including low educational attainment and weak access to economic opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

According to the literature and, especially, to the experts consulted, **ethnic group and religion** are relevant variables for inequalities related to health, education, living conditions, security, participation and social life. However, it is very difficult to find disaggregated data and, even if data was available, using it may be sensitive for political reasons in the context of the region. Nevertheless, in most countries ethnic groups are mostly associated with certain religious groups, and their concentration in specific regions within countries very much coincide with the rural-urban split. Hence, we suggest to use the urban-rural disaggregation as a proxy for ethnic and religious disaggregation. In Mali, for example, only 22% of Bozo children complete primary school, compared with 64% of Bobo children.<sup>4</sup>

A recent research of ethnic and religious differences in education,<sup>5</sup> shows large differences in social mobility across ethnic and religious lines both across and within countries, illustrating how initial differences in education translate into differences in social mobility. For example, in Ghana the likelihood that children from illiterate parents will manage to complete at least primary schooling is on average 62.5%. For the Akan (Ashante) that dominate national politics, the likelihood is 76.5%, while that for the Gurma is only 45.5%.

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<sup>2</sup> UNESCO Data base

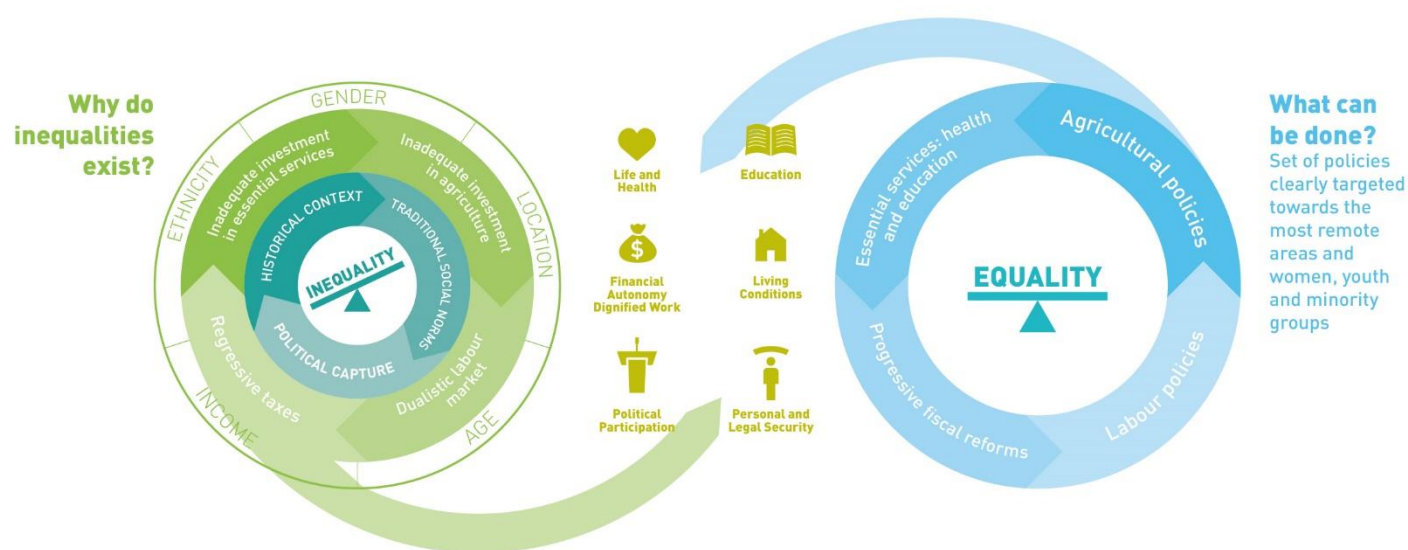
<sup>3</sup> UNICEF (2014) Ending child marriage: Progress and prospects.

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO Data base

<sup>5</sup> Alesina, A., Hohmann, S., Michalopoulos, S. and Papaioannou, E. (2018), Ethnic and Religious Intergenerational Mobility in Africa; Center for Economic Policy Research; September 27, 2018.

Unfortunately, the lack of availability of data and the scope of the research, have not allowed to look for inequalities against other minority and marginalized groups, such as people with **disabilities**. For example, girls with disabilities face triple discrimination, based on societies' negative attitudes towards gender, youth and disability. As a result, they are often not allowed to attend school or, if they do, they often face discrimination and violence, including sexual violence.<sup>6</sup>

All these characteristics overlap, being the case of a woman, living in rural areas, with very low income and from an ethnic minority, the most disadvantaged due to the overlap of inequalities.



## What are the reasons behind?

The research identifies **three structural drivers and four policy drivers** that can explain in part the mentioned inequalities.

Among the structural drivers are the historical context, which was determinant on the type of institutions, privileges and relationships between different groups in societies. The traditional, cultural and religious social norms, some of which set intrinsic dynamics of exclusion and inequalities, especially against women, youth and minority groups; and, very much related to the other two. And the dynamics of political capture by few powerful groups and the lack of participation in public decision making by large segments of the population, which weaken the transparency and overall social accountability of the state, in favour of excessive influence by specific groups.

In this context, the four policy drivers identified are:

- **Policy driver 1. Inadequate investment in essential services: education, health and social protection for vulnerable and marginalized groups.** With an unequal distribution of basic

<sup>6</sup> Save the Children (n.d.) Promoting girl's right to learn in West and Central Africa. Regional Coordination Group on SDG4 in West and Central Africa. Gender Equality and Inclusive Education Task Team.

services and facilities (e.g. roads, electricity, schools, hospitals, water and sanitation) between rural and urban areas, which drives disparities in income, health and education outcomes.

- **Policy driver 2. Inadequate investment in smallholder agriculture.** particularly food crop farmers, and in productive, income generating and wealth creation agricultural strategies, that would promote sustainable intensification of agricultural production, improving market access, supporting transformation, trade, access to funding, etc. and the necessary “social protection” type of support for farmers practicing subsistence agriculture.
- **Policy driver 3. A highly dualistic labour market structure,** with limited formal employment monopolised by a labour elite in the government, multinational companies and the extractives sector, whereas the majority of labour earns much lower incomes in the informal or subsistence sector, and with very high unemployment, much larger among the young population. There is internal migration within countries, with a movement of labour out of rural areas, posing more pressure in urban areas.

The prevalence of **large informal sectors**, and a very small formal sector, worsens inequalities, in particular gender inequalities (most women work in the informal sector).

- **Policy driver 4. Regressive taxes.** The distributional impact of fiscal policies in sub-Saharan African countries has eroded, and induced tax regressivity is a common phenomenon.<sup>7</sup> Tax pressure rates remain low, with a very low tax base at the start: the State levies taxes on the formal sector and a few companies, which only account for a small part of a largely informal economy, and provides exemptions to big multinational companies.<sup>8</sup>

The solution proposed is not to focus on one policy, but on a **set of policies clearly targeted towards the most remote rural areas**, to correct for spatial inequalities, and towards **women, youth and other minorities and marginal groups**, including elements of citizenship participation, transparency and social accountability in the design of policies and in the implementation.

The proposal is to take advantage of the existing governmental spaces in the region (i.e. ECOWAS, UEMOA, African Union), that can be influenced by civil society and supported by donors, to articulate a regional strategy to tackle inequality around four policy areas. Although all countries have full competencies at national level in these policy areas, a regional strategy would help to gain political weight of the relevant policy and the implementing countries, align initiatives among countries and with other institutions (such as the African Union or donors), share learnings and experiences, and avoid unwanted competition effects.

The proposed policy pack, to be implemented according to the mentioned targeting approach, includes:

1. **Essential services: health and education policies**, targeting the most remote areas and the poorest communities.

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<sup>7</sup> UNDP (2017) Income inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences

<sup>8</sup> Yabi, Gilles (2017), ID4D blog 12 September 2017

2. **Agricultural policies** targeting the most remote rural areas and the poorest farmers.
3. **Labour policies** targeting young men and women, and the inclusion of people from marginalized and minority groups, especially in the rural areas.
4. **Progressive fiscal policies' reform**, that would ensure predictable, sustainable and optimal funds for all the public policies and services needed, and would contribute to partially correct income and wealth inequalities, helping to break the current cycles of power and influence.

The design, implementation and monitoring of these policies should promote **participation** of different actors and targeted groups, to ensure **inclusiveness, transparency and social accountability**. This has the potential to strengthen trust between the State and citizens and to break the vicious cycle of power concentration by promoting an active, watchful critical mass of active citizens.

**The reduction of inequalities must be a collective effort.** Therefore, the action taken by regional institutions, governments and development actors is key. Focusing on donors and international development institutions, already considering that they are taking steps to integrate inequality reduction in their strategies, **the recommendations suggested are:**

**Applying a policy coherence for development approach:** Better coherence across all of their policies should be ensured; scrutinize development policies to secure full coherence with the SDG goal of reducing inequality and its commitment of leaving no one behind; and enhancing dialogue with different stakeholders –multi-actor dialogue at different levels-.

**Addressing structural causes of inequality:** Development actors should make and maintain a clear commitment to tackle inequality as part of their development aid and cooperation policies; incorporate the recommended policy pack with the approach suggested to tackle inequality in their cooperation strategies and programs; tackle gender inequality with greater urgency; support the defence of civic space and strengthen it; play a central role in coordinating development aid for the Sahel and strengthen joint efforts to design and implement effective public policy for inequality reduction; increase official development assistance for the West Africa region, particularly through budget support; ensure that donor support to peace and security expenditures does not divert ODA funds away from development, social services and inequality reduction.

**Supporting the analysis of inequalities:** support national statistics systems and improve related institutional capacity to gather more and better data related to inequality, in particular data disaggregated by in-country location, ethnic groups, level of wealth / income, level of education, sex and age, migration status, persons with disabilities and other people living in marginalised communities and vulnerable situations; and data disaggregated by level of education, age and ethnicity. Support national statistics systems to gather more and better data related to inequality in contexts of conflict, violence and insecurity.

## **Learnings on Multidimensional Inequalities with a subregional approach**

The major strength of the Multidimensional Inequality Framework (MIF) is to be a comprehensive framework with a set of outcome indicators and disaggregation variables (gender, age, geography or ethnicity) around seven areas or domains of life. Given its multidimensionality, the MIF allows to



integrate and identify interactions among different types of inequalities, being economic, social or political. It also allows to combine vertical, horizontal and spatial inequalities.

The MIF can be applied for a comprehensive analysis of inequalities in any specific context at different levels (regional, national or local). It can also help to highlight how specific population groups are affected by existing inequalities, or to make comparative analysis among countries or regions.<sup>9</sup> The outcome is a wide and multifaceted picture of inequality and its drivers which can be used for informing policy-making.

The quality of the analysis, however, will depend on the availability of accurate, updated, comparable and disaggregated data. West African countries suffer from underinvestment in statistical capacities; in turn, the main limitation when applying this framework is the lack of access to data, particularly for certain domains of life or dimensions of inequality like ethnicity. This could lead to a bias in the analysis of inequality, since some domains acquire more relevance than others merely due to the data available.

The absence of statistical information could be partially compensated by combining quantitative and qualitative methods, including the literature review and expert consultation, to better understand how people experience inequalities. However, this could undermine part of the strength of the tool, that lies in its statistical soundness. In any case, the MIF is very useful to identify and make explicit where information gaps are more severe.

Another aspect to be explored is the absence of a robust set of indicators to capture inequalities in conflict situations, which is very relevant in the case of West African countries.

Informing policy making is one of the main goals of the tool and the MIF can be applied to analyze the impact of a given public policy in terms of inequality, based on its module on drivers. However, this analysis needs to set beforehand a prior limitation of its scope to make it feasible.

Finally, the modular nature of the MIF makes it usable in a flexible way, as a whole or by modules, in order to go deeper into a certain domain or sub-domain of life. Given the wide and comprehensive scope of the MIF, limiting the scope of the research in an early stage is a must. In this regard, and always depending on the availability of disaggregated data, the number of countries and domains considered will affect the extent of an in-depth analysis.

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<sup>9</sup> Taking into account that data are not always homogeneous

# 1.INTRODUCTION

This research conducts a sub-regional analysis of several political, social and economic inequalities in five countries in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal),<sup>10</sup> using the Multidimensional Inequality Framework (MIF), developed by Oxfam, the Centre of Analysis for Social Exclusion (CASE) of the London School of Economics, and the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, which is based on Amartya Sen's capabilities<sup>11</sup> approach. The research suggests a set of public policies that, if implemented with a radical approach targeting the most remote areas and the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, these policies with that approach could have major effects on reducing some of those inequalities. The research also provides recommendations to the donor community, governments and regional institutions (e.g. ECOWAS, UEMOA, African Union) to reduce inequalities.

The assumption has been that some public policies may have different impacts according to specific regional contexts; that these impacts may vary if the policy is designed to effectively tackle spatial, gender and ethnic inequalities, as well as taking into consideration the impact of multidimensional inequality on women and girls, as well as on youth; and that active citizenship is a means to achieve development. The main hypothesis of this research is that "an inclusive regional policy may have positive impact for inequality reduction in West Africa". The methodology followed for this research (see Annex II) helped us to test this hypothesis and identify a sub-regional approach and set of policies that could contribute to tackle inequalities.

The MIF is composed of seven domains of life, their respective indicators and measures, and a set of drivers for each domain, accompanied by suggested research questions and potential indicators.<sup>12</sup> The literature reviewed and a consultation with experts provided a classification of domains and subdomains by relevance (for more information about this prioritization, see Annexes III, IV and V). The research focusses on the domains considered most relevant or of medium relevance, and only includes a light discussion on the domains considered less

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<sup>10</sup> This report uses the term "region" when referring to the West Africa region, other regions in Africa and to regions (or areas) within a country (for example, when saying "the most remote regions in country X"). The term "sub-region" is used when referring to the specific five countries analyzed in this research.

<sup>11</sup> Sen describes capabilities as "notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities do you have regarding the life you may lead" (Sen, 1987: p.36).

<sup>12</sup> Drivers refer to issues that could "explain" inequalities.

relevant:

- Most relevant domains: Life and health (domain 1) and Education and learning (domain 3), understanding that being alive and healthy is a precondition for enjoying life, and that education is not only an area where inequalities are clearly expressed, but also and mainly a determinant of inequalities.
- Domains with medium relevance: Financial security and dignified work (domain 4), Living conditions (domain 5) and Personal and legal security (domain 2). Living conditions refers to those aspects that determine the way people live, such as housing, or access to basic services, like energy, water and sanitation; in contexts with spread and profound poverty, like the West Africa region, this is a very relevant area, and it refers to aspects that relate directly with the day to day of people's lives, hence it is very high in people's perceptions of their life conditions. The level of financial security and access to dignified work determine to great extent the living conditions. Personal and legal security is relevant, but is considered to come at a second stage in the development needs.
- Less relevant: Participation, Influence and Voice (domain 6) and Personal, family and social life (domain 7). Participation, like legal security, is considered to be relevant once the basic living needs are guaranteed; for this reason, it is considered less relevant. Personal, family and social life has not been analysed, due to the lack of disaggregated data (a necessary requirement for the multidimensional analysis); in addition, this domain was considered by experts as relevant and strong in the West Africa region context, but far from the policy influence.

In order to identify the most relevant inequalities and the drivers in the five West African countries, one should analyse all the indicators for each domain and subdomain, disaggregated by the corresponding variables, in order to see where the deepest inequalities appear. However, the lack of robust and homogeneous disaggregated data for most of the indicators in the five countries studied strongly limits the feasibility of a robust in-depth analysis. According to a recent analysis of the data availability for the SDGs, only 37.8% of official SDG indicators have data for African countries.<sup>13</sup> In order to ensure comparability of data, the analysis presented in this report is based on homogenized data available in international data sources. Where it exists, the research has used data disaggregated by gender, geographical location (urban/rural), level of income, level of education and age; but in general, the research has been limited by the availability of disaggregated data in international data sources. Some of the data gaps have been addressed through the literature review, the interviews with experts and the discussions during the workshop in Accra in November 2019.<sup>14</sup> For example, issues related to urban poverty and inequality, the linkages between inequality, conflict and security, or aspects of participation of civil society in public policy processes.

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<sup>13</sup> UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), 2017. 2017 Africa Sustainable Development Report: Tracking Progress On Agenda 2063 And The Sustainable Development Goals. Available at <https://www.uneca.org/publications/2017-africa-sustainabledevelopment-report>

<sup>14</sup> Workshop "Shedding light on multidimensional inequalities in WAF", 4th-5th November 2019, Accra, with 25 participants, combining experts and academics on inequalities, practitioners and decision makers from different countries.

A special mention deserves the lack of data disaggregated by ethnic groups and, in the case of countries with religious diversity, by religious groups. Box 1 illustrates the diverse ethnic composition of the five countries studied. Later in the research these aspects will be highlighted from the literature and the experts' opinions.

### Box 1. Ethnic and religious composition of the five countries

In **Burkina Faso**, more than half of the population belong to the Mossi, with the rest of the groups accounting for less than 10% of the population each.

In **Ghana**, three ethnic groups (Akan, Mole-Dagbani and Ewe) account for nearly 80% of the population. Akan is by far the largest group, and are the majority of the population in five of the country's ten<sup>15</sup> regions in the south (e.g. Western, Central, Eastern, Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo). The second largest is the Mole-Dagbani, and are predominantly found in the northern regions (Northern, Upper West and Upper East).

In **Mali**, 34% of the population are Bambara. Five other groups account for 55% of the population: Fulani (15%), Sarakole and Senufo (11% each), Dogon and Malinke (9% each).

More than half of the population in **Niger** are Hausa (54%); being Zarma the second largest group (21%); the rest of the groups account for less than 10% of the population each.

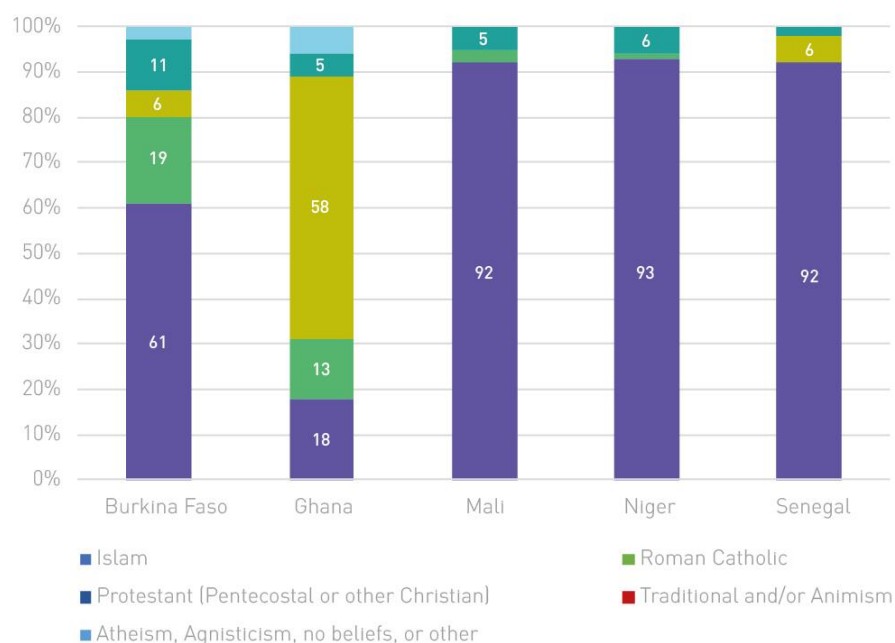
In **Senegal** the largest group is Wolof (43%), followed by Fula (24%) and Serer (15%).

Burkina Faso		Ghana		Mali		Niger		Senegal	
Mossi	50,20%	Akan	47,50%	Bambara	34%	Hausa	54,10%	Wolof	43%
Fulani	9,4%	Mole-Dagbani	16,6%	Fulani	15%	Zarma	21,1%	Fula	24%
Bobo	5,9%	Ewe	13,9%	Sarakole	11%	Tuareg	9,9%	Serer	15%
Guma	5,8%	Ga-Dangme	7,4%	Senufo	11%	Fulani	9,2%	Jola	4%
Mandé	5,3%	Gurma	5,7%	Dogon	9%	Kanuri	4,6%	Mandinka	3%
Senufo	4,9%	Guang	3,7%	Malinke	9%	Tubu	0,4%	Soninke	1%
Gurunsi	4,8%	Grusi	2,5%	Bobo	3%	Arab	0,4%	Other	10%
Lobi	4,7%	Mande	1,1%	Songhai	2%	Gurma	0,30%		
Tuareg	2,5%	Other	1,4%	Tuareg	1%				
Other	6,5%			Other	5%				
Sud Ouest	28%								

In terms of religious composition, Mali, Niger, Senegal and, to a lesser extent, Burkina Faso, have a

<sup>15</sup> Note that Ghana has recently increased the number of regions from 10 to 16. The bold regions are the original regions and those newly created regions are the following: **Northern Region** (Savannah Region, North East Region), **Volta Region** (Oti Region), **Brong-Ahafo Region** (Ahafo Region, Bono East Region, Bono Region) and **Western Region** (Western North Region ). See: <http://presidency.gov.gh/index.php/briefing-room/news-style-2/1142-president-akufo-addo-visits-three-new-regions>

clear majority of Muslim population (over 90% in the first three countries, and more than 60% in Burkina Faso, where there is a 19% of Roman Catholic and 11% of traditional beliefs); while in Ghana religious groups are more spread, with a majority of Christian population, composed of Pentecostal (>28%), Protestant no-Pentecostal (>18%) and Roman Catholic (>13%) and Other Christian groups (>11%), and a substantial presence of Muslim population (17,6%).



**Source:** Author elaboration based on data from World Atlas, <https://www.worldatlas.com>

This research report provides in chapter 2 a sub-regional analysis of the expressions of inequalities found in the five selected countries in West Africa, based on the data available for several (5 to 7) indicators per domain proposed by the MIF, disaggregated for relevant and available variables. Chapter 3 analyses the common causes or drivers of inequalities in the five selected countries, explains the strategic issues behind the main results in terms of inequalities in West Africa described in the previous chapter, and provides an overview of the groups that are most affected by different inequalities. Chapter 4 presents a suggestion for policy areas that, implemented at the sub-regional level with a clear approach to tackle inequality, could address inequalities in West Africa. And Chapter 5 includes a synthesis of the conclusions and several recommendations to governments and policy makers, and to donor agencies, on how to support the reduction of inequalities in the sub-region. The annexes complement the analysis presented in the main body of the report (see Index).

## 2. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

### MAPPING OF INEQUALITIES IN WEST AFRICA

This chapter presents an analysis of the available indicators for each domain and subdomain, by order of relevance. Highlighted in cursive are all the relevant dimensions of disaggregation affecting all countries.

The findings in this chapter need to be taken with caution, since they are limited by the availability of data. The areas in which most good quality data is available are health and education; this can partly be explained because these are the areas that have received large donor investments, mainly (but not only) from different UN Agencies. Many African countries still rely on the help of international organizations for collecting, processing and gathering data as their investment in statistical capacity is weak. The consequence is that statistics production is often driven by the donors agenda. For instance, data about children and maternal health are much more available and reliable (thanks to the technical and financial support provided by UNICEF) than data related to human rights abuses. This may give the impression that there are more inequalities in health and education than in other areas, simply because that is the data that is available. Hence, while inequalities in health and education are very significant, it is important to have in mind the possible bias due to data availability, and that the lack of data may be hiding other significant inequalities, that we simply cannot measure. Data gaps have been addressed to the possible extent in this research through the literature review, consultations with experts and the discussion in the workshop in Accra in November 2019 (see footnote 8).

## Domain 1. LIFE AND HEALTH

### Inequality in the capability to be alive and live a healthy life

The life and health domain covers the differences in the capability to be alive, to enjoy longevity and avoid premature death, and captures key health inequalities across physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health.

The West African region has seen marked improvements in health outcomes in the last two decades. There has been an impressive increase in life expectancy and a decline in child, maternal and adult mortality rates, as well as substantial decreases in the burdens of several diseases including the HIV. Despite these improvements, there are still severe disparities in the health status of different social groups in the five countries studied, according to income level, place of residence (rural/urban location) and the education level attained. The lower an individual's socio-economic position, the higher the risk of poor health.<sup>16</sup>

The literature reviewed indicates important differences in child mortality among ethnic groups, linked to economic inequalities and different access to health services.<sup>17</sup> However, this has not been analysed in this research, except for the regional distribution of reported poor health status in different regions in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali.

The WHO warns that health inequality contributes to high incidences of preventable illness, disability and premature deaths across the most vulnerable population groups such as the poor, women, children, elderly and displaced populations.<sup>18</sup>

#### Sub-domain 1.A: Avoid premature mortality through disease, neglect, injury or suicide

**Under-five mortality rate** (Figure 1) within the poorest *income* quintile compared to the richest quintile is 2.4 times higher in Senegal, 1.8 in Burkina Faso and Mali, 1.4 in Ghana and 1.3 in Niger.<sup>19</sup> For children whose mothers have no *education* compared to those whose mothers have completed secondary education is 2.5 times higher in Burkina Faso, 2.2 times in Senegal and 1.7 times in Ghana, Mali<sup>20</sup> and Niger.

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<sup>16</sup> World Health Organization (2014) The health of the people: What works. The African Regional Health Report 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Brockerhoff and Hewett (2000) 'Inequality of child mortality among ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa'. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 2000, 78 (1).

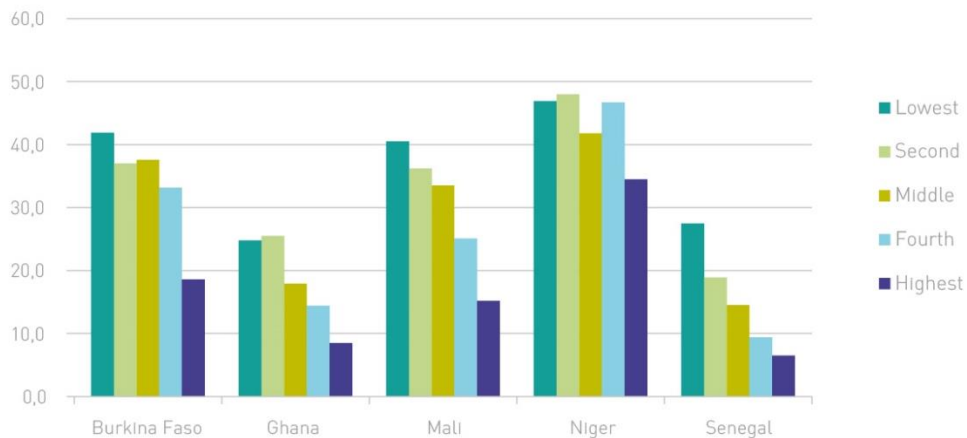
<sup>18</sup> World Health Organization (2014) The health of the people: What works. The African Regional Health Report 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Data for quintiles I; II and III in Mali and Niger show an unexpected pattern, as under-five mortality rates seem to increase with higher level of wealth. This could be explained by a problem of under reporting of deaths among the poorest people.

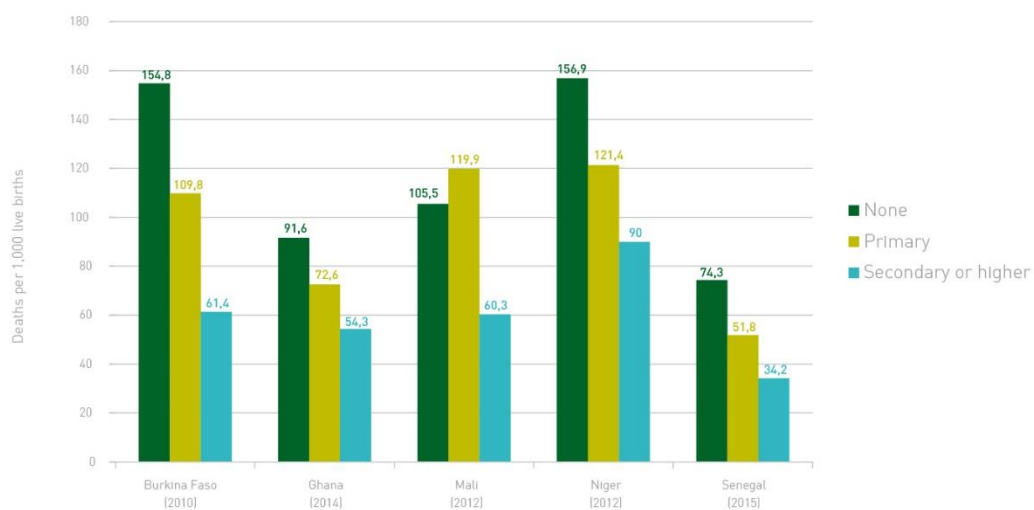
<sup>20</sup> Mali also shows an unexpected result on infant mortality rates of babies from mothers with no education and mothers that have completed primary education; probably due to under reporting or overall weak reporting.

**Figure 1: Under-five mortality rate (deaths per 1000 live births)**

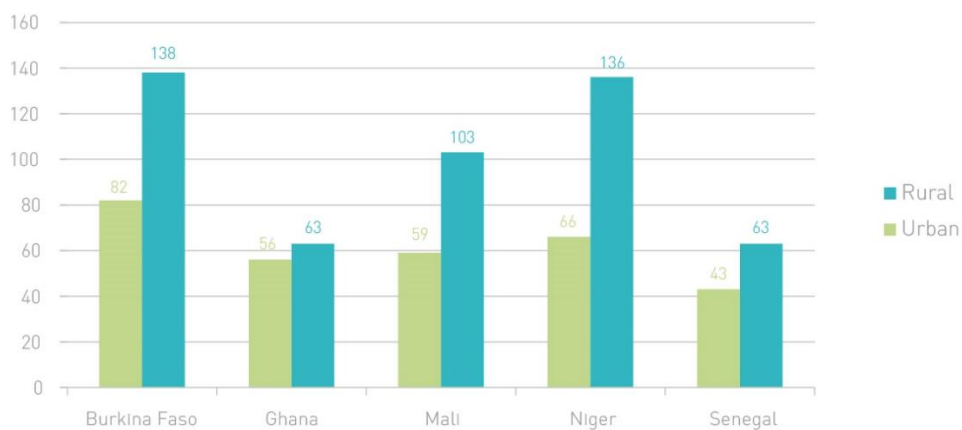
**BY INCOME**



**BY EDUCATION LEVEL**



**BY LOCATION**



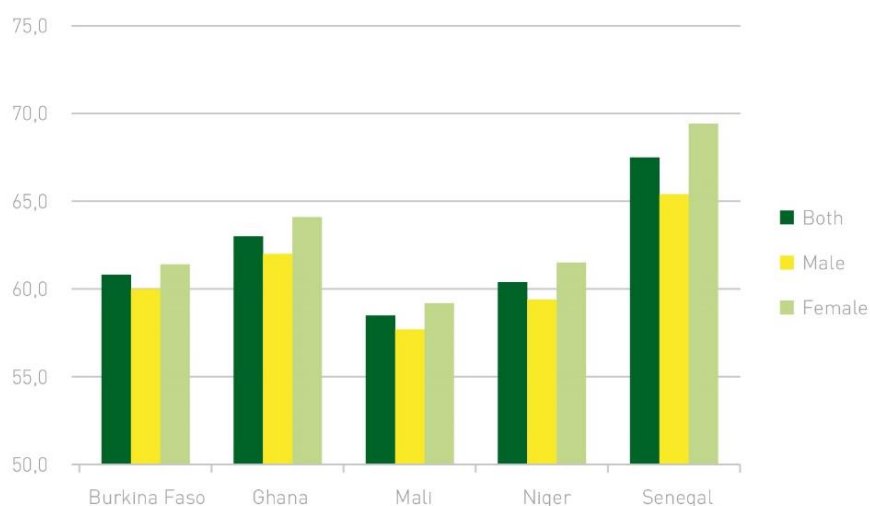
Source: Global Health Observatory data repository, available at: <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.nHE-1546?lang=en>



In Senegal, **child mortality rate** decreased since 1997, from 139 deaths per 1.000 live births to 56 in 2017.<sup>21</sup> However, disparities persist among income groups, between rural and urban areas, and according to the level of education of mothers.

Disaggregated data on **life expectancy** (Figure 2) was only available by sex, but not by income, location or level of education. It is estimated that for every 10% increase in life expectancy at birth there is a corresponding rise in economic growth of 0.4% per year.<sup>22</sup> Data shows a considerable improvement in life expectancy in the last three decades, especially in Niger (with an increase of almost 17 years between 1990 and 2017, from 43.5 to 60.4 years), but also in Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal. In the West African region life expectancy at birth was 60 on average over the 1990-95 period, compared with 51 just before the 1990s.<sup>23</sup> The evolution is not as significant in Ghana and Senegal, but probably because the life expectancy in 1990 was already considerably high; although Senegal shows an important improvement that we do not see in Ghana. Differences in life expectancy between countries persist: life expectancy today varies from 67.5 years in Senegal to 53.9 in Nigeria.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 2: Life expectancy by sex (2017)**



Source: Human Development Data (1990-2017), available here: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>

## Sub-domain 1.D: Achieve the highest possible standard of physical health

Looking at the **people that report having poor health status** (Figure 3), we find that disaggregated data is only available for Burkina Faso (2007), Ghana (2012) and Mali (2007). These data have to be taken with caution, due to the small size of some samples used, which could explain some of the rare results. Still, we see these subjective perception of health status to be more negative among the *poorer* people in the three countries. The disaggregation by *level of education* of respondent is

<sup>21</sup> Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD) [Sénégal] et ICF. 2018. Enquête Continue du Sénégal, Cinquième Phase 2017 : Rapport de synthèse. Rockville, Maryland, USA : ANSD et ICF.

<sup>22</sup> World Health Organization (2014) The health of the people: What works. African Regional Health Report 2014.

<sup>23</sup> UNDP (2017) Income Inequality Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, determinants and consequences.

<sup>24</sup> Human Development Data (1990-2017) available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>.

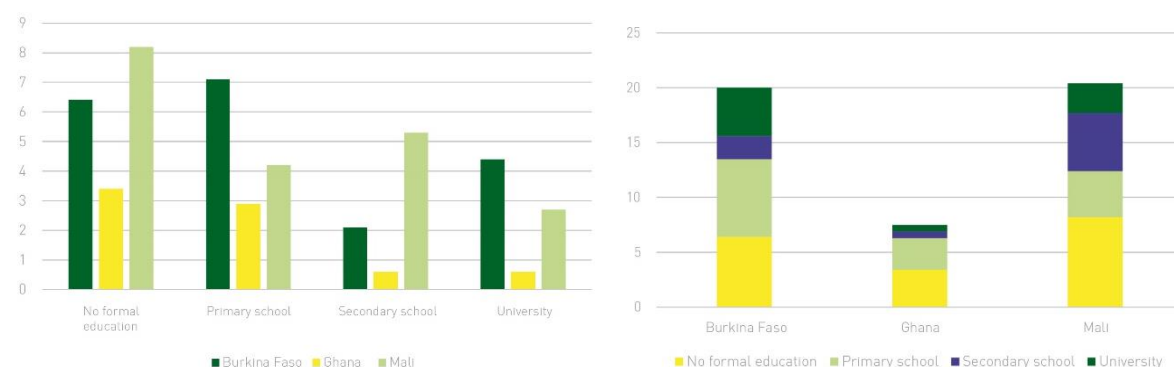
not conclusive, although we see a worse reported conditions among respondents with no formal education or only primary education. With the same precaution, we can say that subjective health status is worse in the Upper East Northern, Western and Upper West regions in **Ghana**; in the South West in Burkina Faso; and in Segou, Sikasso and Kayes provinces in **Mali**. (See also Table 1 in Annex VI).

**Figure 3: Percentage who report poor current health status in Burkina Faso (2007), Ghana (2012) and Mali (2007)**

**BY INCOME:**



**BY EDUCATION LEVEL:**



**Source:** World Values Survey, available here: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp>

**Note:** The samples were very small for some groups, which could explain rare values. Data for deciles IX and X was either missing or clearly not representative; this data has not been included.

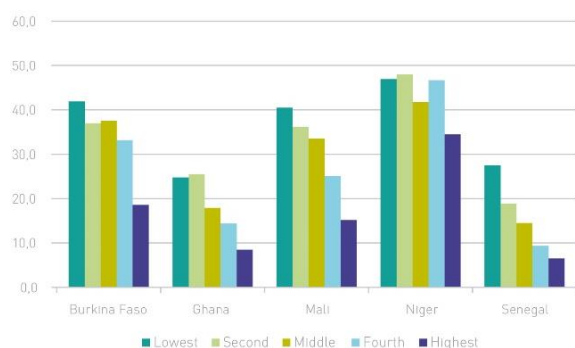
Prevalence of **stunting in young children** (Figure 4) is extremely high in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso (compared to Senegal and Ghana), and its incidence is considerably worse among the poorer segments of the population and decreases with *income* level: prevalence of stunting in children under five is 42% for the lowest income quintile and 18% for the highest income quintile in Burkina Faso, and 35% compared to 15% in Senegal.<sup>25</sup> Also among those with no *education* or with only primary education (compared to those with secondary education); in *rural* areas, as compared to

<sup>25</sup> Source: WHO (2014) The health of the people: What works. The African Regional Health Report 2014

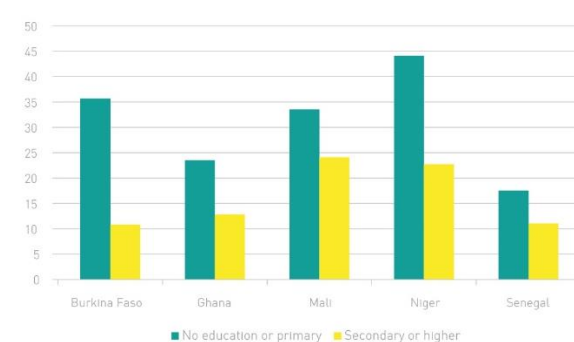
urban; and among boys compared to girls. In Senegal, for example, it has been reported that rural areas lack adequate health infrastructure and skilled health professionals, resulting in higher malnutrition and HIV/AIDS prevalence.<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 4: Prevalence of stunting in young children**

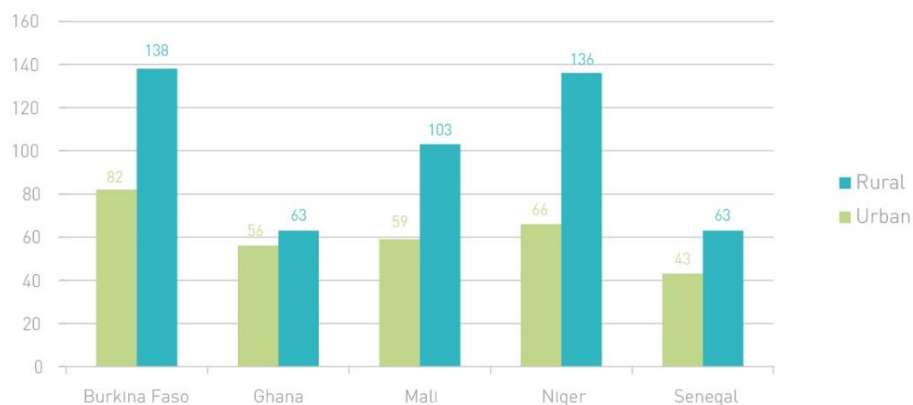
#### BY INCOME



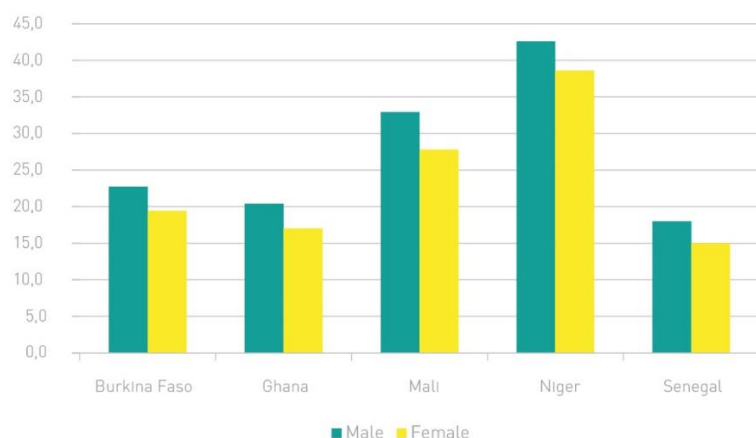
#### BY EDUCATION LEVEL



#### BY LOCATION



#### BY SEX



Source: UNICEF Global Database, available here: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/>

<sup>26</sup> Diene (2004) 'Inequalities in the Context of Structural Transformation: The case of Senegal', *Development*, 2014, 57(3–4), (540–546)

## Sub-domain 1.F: Have good sexual and reproductive health

The African continent achieved impressive progress improving women's health from 1990 to 2015, with very significant reductions in maternal mortality. However, despite this progress there are still major risk factors for women's health, including the high rate of adolescent birth, and maternal mortality rate is still extremely severe in certain African countries.<sup>27</sup>

*Gender-* based inequalities in health have their major expression in **sexual and reproductive health care**. This gap is also interconnected with other inequalities including wealth, income and education. Within most developing countries today, access to critical sexual and reproductive health care is generally lowest among the poorest 20% of households and women within this group are more likely to give birth without assistance.<sup>28</sup>

The lack of adequate sexual and reproductive healthcare is also linked to the demographic challenge facing the region. High fertility rates and rising underemployment among youth are likely to undermine future growth prospects, and could limit, if not reverse, the current achievements in poverty reduction.<sup>29</sup> However, one in four women in West Africa lack reproductive autonomy or the power to decide when, if at all, to have children.<sup>30</sup>

**Access to family planning** (Figure 5) is key in this context: access to contraceptive modern methods for women in the *richest quintile* compared to the poorest quintile is almost 4 times higher in Mali, 2.7 in Burkina Faso, 2.5 in Senegal and 1.7 in Niger.<sup>31,32</sup> The level of *education* of mothers is not determinant in the access to family planning in Ghana and Niger; while it has some effect in Senegal and Mali, and definitely in Burkina Faso. The differences are clearly marked depending on the *location*, with rural areas suffering more from unmet family planning needs in all countries except, again, Niger<sup>33</sup> (although the Government of Niger has put in place a national action plan to increase the current prevalence of the use of contraceptives to 50% in 2020)<sup>34</sup>. In Burkina Faso and Senegal, access to contraceptive modern methods is three times higher for women living in *urban* areas compared to those living in rural areas.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> UNDP (2016) Africa Human Development Report 2016: Accelerating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa.

<sup>28</sup> UNFPA (2017) Worlds apart: Reproductive health and rights in an age of inequality, State of World Population 2017

<sup>29</sup> African Development Bank (2016) African Development Report 2015. Growth, Poverty and Inequality Nexus: Overcoming barriers for sustainable development.

<sup>30</sup> Bouchama, N., et al. (2018) 'Gender Inequality in West African Social Institutions', West African Papers, No. 13, OECD

<sup>31</sup> Source: [Global Health Observatory data repository](https://data.who.int/global-health-observatory/).

<sup>32</sup> In Niger there is almost no difference in unmet need for family planning by income. Weakness of data, and/or underreporting may explain this result.

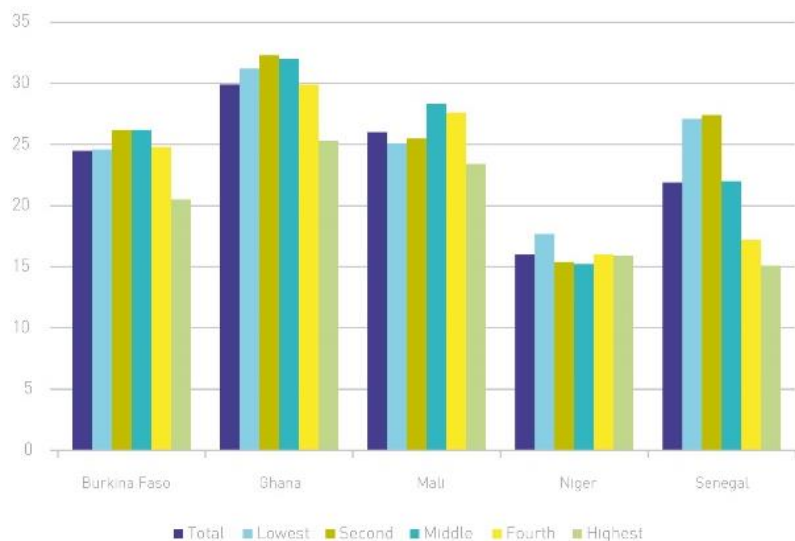
<sup>33</sup> See previous note.

<sup>34</sup> See: <http://www.lesahel.org/index.php/2019/12/27/hausse-du-taux-de-prevalence-contraceptive-au-niger-le-pays-a-capitalise-les-experiences-et-les-pratiques-innovantes/>

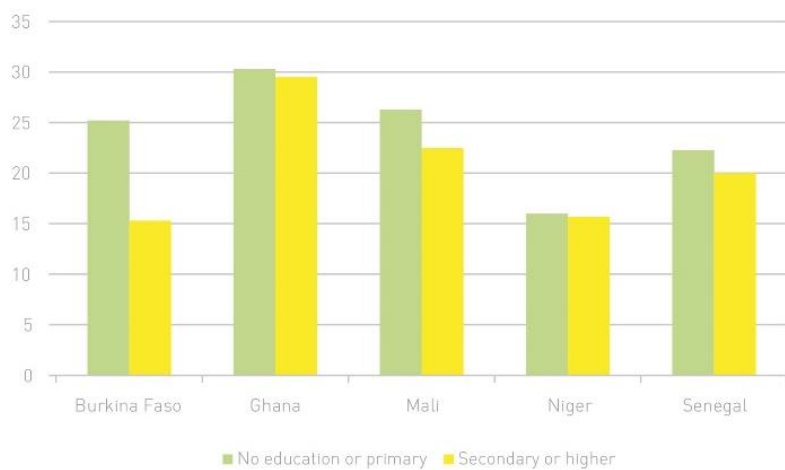
<sup>35</sup> WHO (2014) The health of the people: What works. The African Regional Health Report 2014, based on national DHS (2010).

**Figure 5: Unmet need for family planning**

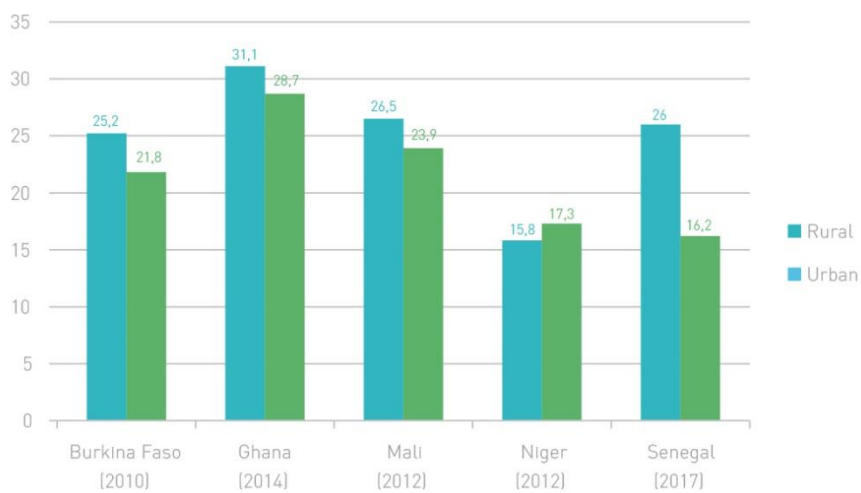
**BY INCOME**



**BY EDUCATION**



**BY LOCATION**

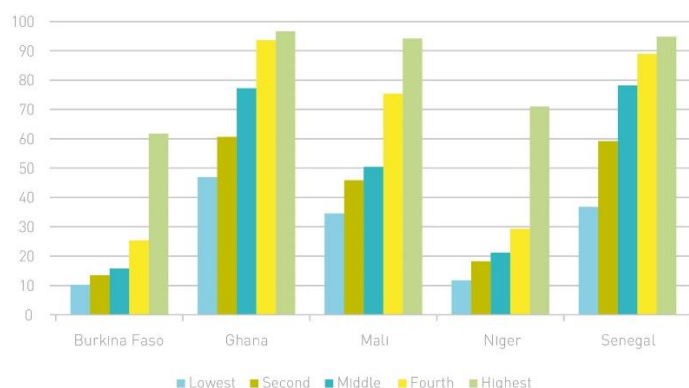


Source: USAID DHS Program

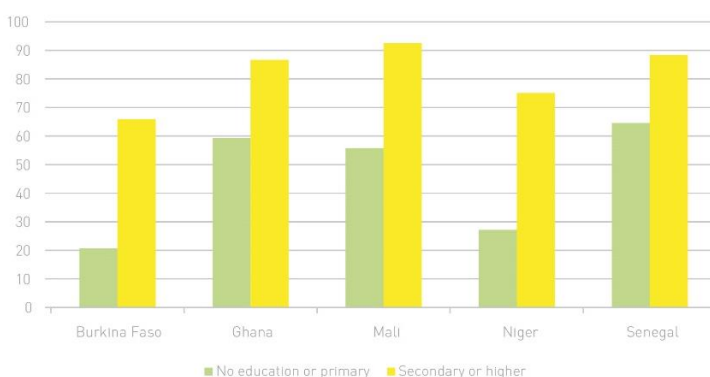
The percentage of women who have given **birth in the last five years attended by a qualified health professional** (Figure 6) is clearly affected by the *level of income*, with extremely low percentages among the poorest women in Burkina Faso and Niger; while in Senegal, only 30% of births are attended by skilled personnel in the lowest income quintile, compared to 95% in the highest income quintile.<sup>36</sup> The same pattern repeats depending on whether women live in *rural or urban* areas. Health professional attendance during delivery is higher among women that have completed secondary *education* or higher.

**Figure 6: Deliveries attended by health professionals**

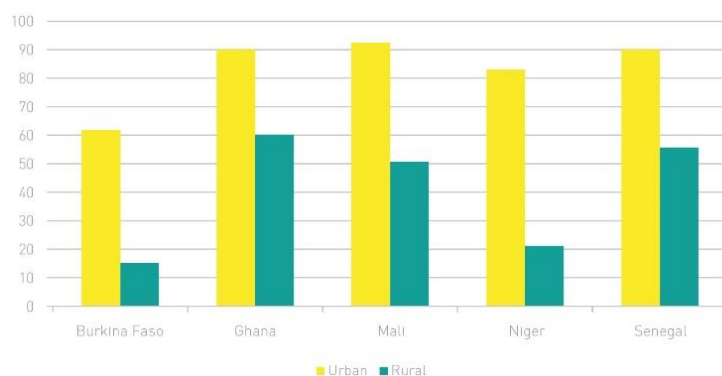
#### BY INCOME



#### BY EDUCATION



#### BY LOCATION



Source: USAID DHS Program

<sup>36</sup> WHO (2014) The health of the people: What works. The African Regional Health Report 2014, based on national DHS (2010).

## Domain 3. EDUCATION AND LEARNING

### **Inequality in the capability to be knowledgeable, to understand and reason, and to have the skills to participate in society**

This domain deals with the capability to be knowledgeable, to understand and reason, and to have the skills to participate in society; education is important in itself, but also contributes to the expansion and equality of capabilities in other spheres of life. The domain covers the preparedness of young children set to enter the formal education system, differences during each phase of the education cycle, and beyond schooling, it looks at lifelong learning and knowledge required to participate in society, including technological skills.

Education is probably the most crucial domain for tackling multidimensional inequalities. Many inequalities between different groups express very clearly in education, while at the same time those inequalities determine and reinforce inequalities in other areas (such as access to jobs, participation or children's health), acting as a driver of inequalities. So it is both an expression and a driver of inequalities. Therefore, the following analysis should also be considered in the next section of this report to illustrate why education acts as a driver of inequalities.

#### **Sub-domain 3.A: Attain the highest possible standard of knowledge, understanding and reasoning through access to education, training and lifelong learning that meets individual needs.**

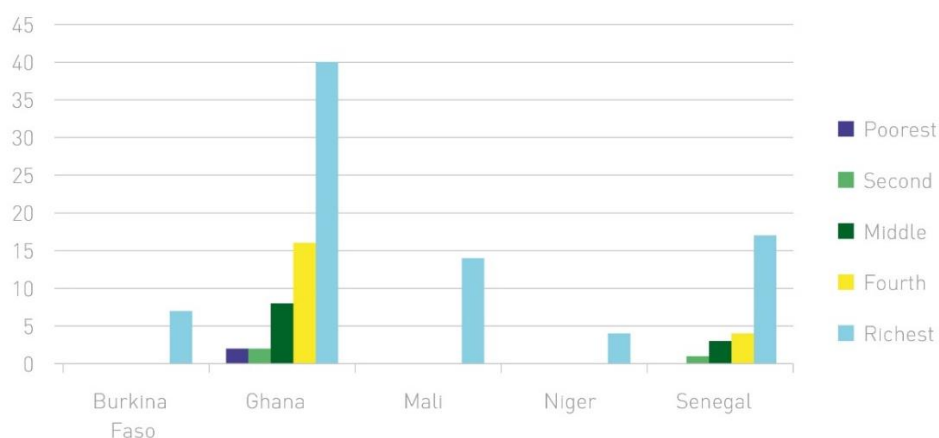
Behind the many privations in West Africa, lies the fact that the region has the lowest level of education in the continent: 35% of the population has no primary schooling and in 38% of households no one is educated.<sup>37</sup> Despite some countries in West Africa have closed the gender gap in primary school enrolment, youth (aged 15-24) illiteracy rate is still higher for women than for men;<sup>38</sup> and higher education is still limited to a very select elite: in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, **only** students from the top 20% income households get higher education. (Figure 7)

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<sup>37</sup> OPHI (2017)

<sup>38</sup> Gaëlle Ferrant and Nadia Hamel, Gender equality in West Africa? The key role of social norms; 8 March 2018; OECD Development Matters

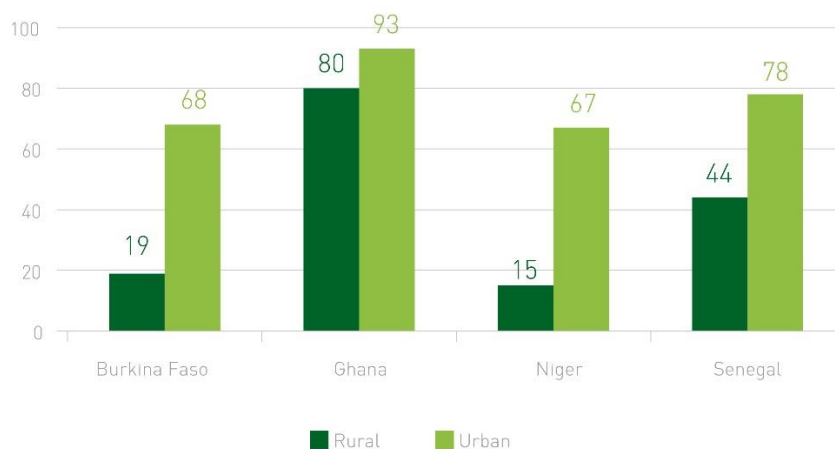
Figure 7: Percentage of population achieving higher education completion by wealth quintile



Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database

Achievements in **literacy rate (maths and reading skills, measured by the age of 15)**<sup>39</sup> (Figure 8) are very different depending on *place of residence*. Ghana is the most equal country, with a percentage of literacy rate on average, varying from 80% in rural areas to 93% in urban areas. Niger, by contrary, shows the biggest gap with a literacy rate of 67% in urban areas but only 15% in rural areas. The difference between urban areas and rural areas is greater than three times in Burkina Faso, and almost double in Senegal. No disaggregated data is available for Mali.

Figure 8: Inequality in maths and reading skills (measured by age 15), by location



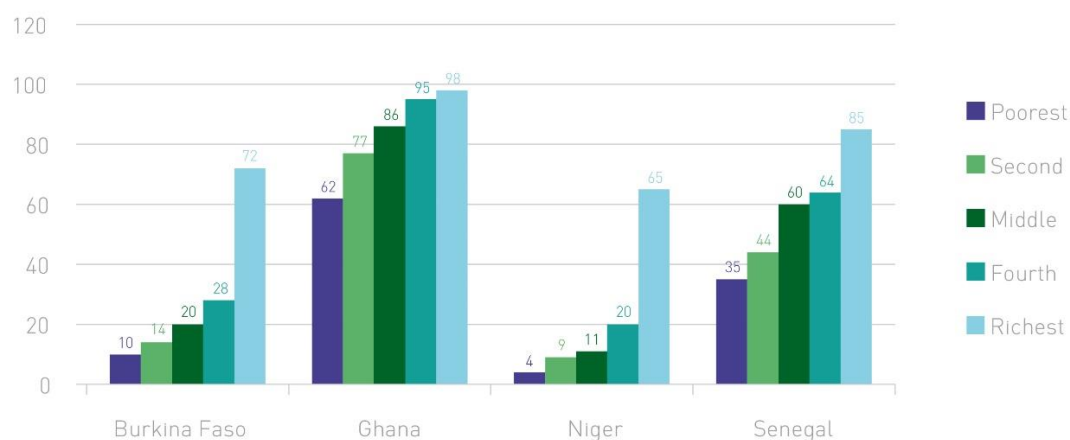
Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database (no disaggregated data available for Mali)

*Wealth* is even more influencing on literacy rate results than location. In the four countries (no data available for Mali), *income level* clearly determines inequality in math and reading skills, with results for the wealthiest 20% of the population reasonably good in the four countries, but far from the results of people with lower income level, especially in Burkina Faso and Niger, where the gap is very prominent. In Niger, only 4% of the poorest young people can read a single sentence, in contrast with 65% among the richest quintile, and the gap has increased since 2006. (Figure 9).

<sup>39</sup> The minimum proficiency level will be measured relative to new common literacy and numeracy scales currently in development (SDG indicator 4.6.1 definition).



**Figure 9: Inequality in maths and reading skills (measured by age 15), by income**



Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database (no disaggregated data available for Mali)

A closer look at math and reading skills by regions in the four countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger and Senegal, see table 1) provides information about which regions have better and worse performance, with all the countries showing better results in the capital city areas.

**Table 1. Math and reading skills (measured by age 15), per regions in countries**

Burkina Faso by region		Ghana by region		Niger by region		Senegal by region	
Average	37	Ashanti	94	Agadez	55	Dakar	76
Centre	66	Average	88	Diffa	19	Diourbel	29
Centre Nord	16	Brong/Ahafo	79	Dosso	21	Fatick	60
Centre Ouest	34	Cental	92	Maradi	29	Kaffrine	29
Centre Sud	33	Eastern	90	Niamey	70	Kaolack	40
Est	22	Northern	62	Tahoua	18	Kedougou	40
Hauts Bassins	49	Upper East	64	Tillaberi	27	Kolda	47
Nord	30	Upper West	68	Zinder	23	Louga	41
Plateau Central	29	Western	88			Matam	36
Sahel	12					Saint Louis	50
Sud Ouest	28					Sedhiou	55
						Tambacounda	35
						Ziguinchor	84
						Average	62

Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database (does not include all regions in each country).

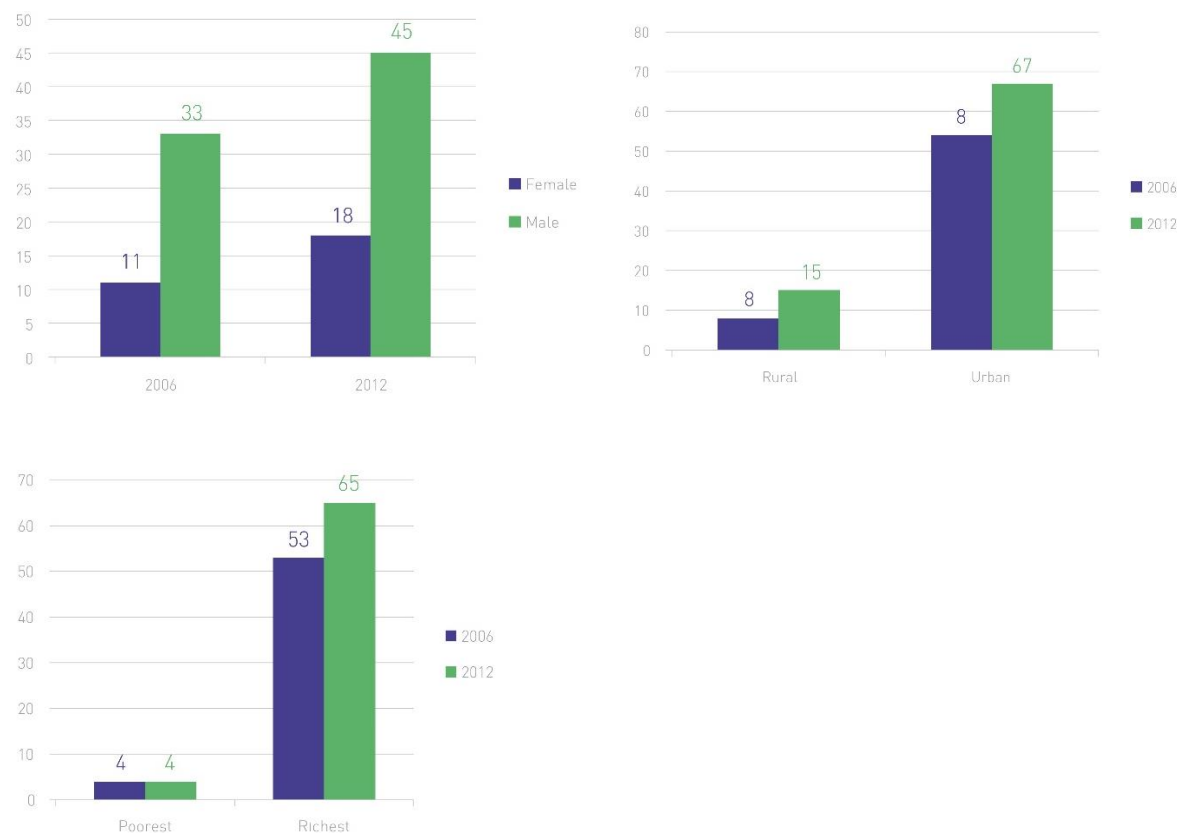
**Note 1:** This indicator measures the proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) and of adults (aged 15 years and above) have achieved or exceeded a given level of proficiency in (a) literacy and (b) numeracy. The minimum proficiency level will be measured relative to new common literacy and numeracy scales currently in development. (SDG indicator 4.6.1 definition)

**Note 2:** This source still does not include data for the 6 new regions in Ghana.

Niger is the least educated country in the world, with average length of schooling being just 18 months, only one in two girls goes to primary school, one in 10 to secondary school and one in 50

to high school.<sup>40</sup> The country shows the poorest performance in math and reading skills among the four countries studied. A closer look at the evolution of the literacy rate between 2006 and 2012 in Niger shows that there have been a positive improvement both for males and females, both in rural and urban areas, but mainly concentrated in the richest segment of the population, while the poorest have not experienced any improvement (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Literacy over time in Niger**



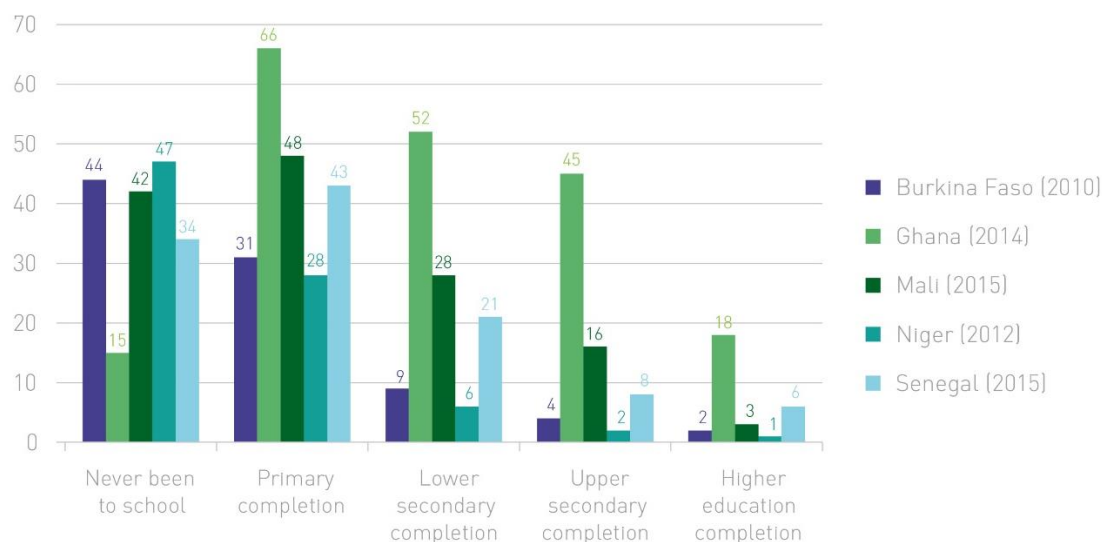
Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database

Figure 11 shows the national average population that has never been to school or completed different cycles of education in the five countries studied. The percentage of people that has **never been to school** in the countries studied is alarmingly high: at least 40% of people have never been to school in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The **primary completion rate** (national average) varies from 28% in Niger to 66% in Ghana. The lower percentage of population that has **never been to school** in Ghana, with more than half of the population having completed primary and secondary school, probably explains its better results in math and reading skills; while less than half of the population have completed primary education in Mali and Senegal, only 16% of the population in Mali have completed **secondary education**; and less than 10% in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Niger (although more recent data on Burkina Faso from the national statistics show completion rates of

<sup>40</sup> Oxfam 2019, The West Africa Inequality Crisis: How West African governments are failing to reduce inequality and what should be done about it

11.2%, 14,8% and 15.4% for 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively; and national statistics for Niger show a completion rate of 78,4% in 2016).<sup>41</sup> Clearly, upper secondary school and higher education is a very exclusive privilege for very few people.

**Figure 11:** National average of population that has never been to school, completing primary education; lower secondary education; upper secondary and higher education

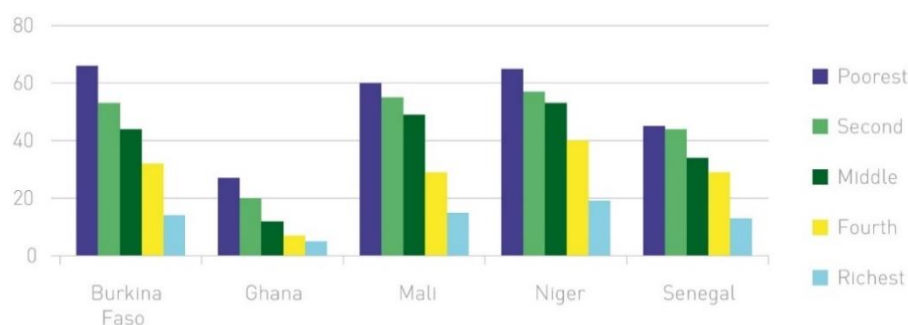


Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database

An analysis of **school attendance and completion** (see Figure 12) by *income level* shows a clear gap between the poorest and the richest segments of the population in the five countries (although less prominent in Ghana). Primary completion rate in the richest quintile compared to the poorest is 7 times higher in Niger, 6 in Burkina Faso and 4 in Mali.

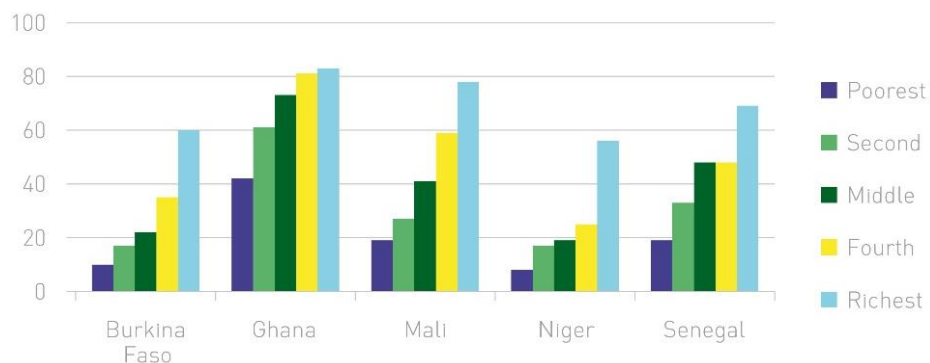
**Figure 12:** Percentage of population achieving different education levels by wealth quintile

#### NEVER BEEN TO SCHOOL

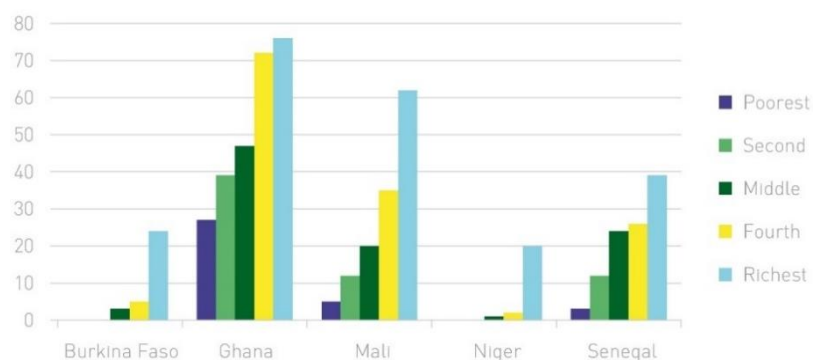


<sup>41</sup> Note that discrepancies appear between national statistics and the data used for the analysis, which (as explained earlier and in the methodology) come from international data bases in order to ensure comparability between countries.

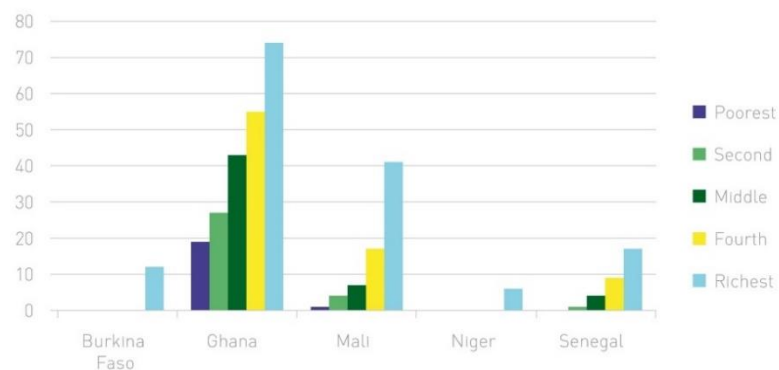
### PRIMARY COMPLETION



### LOWER SECONDARY COMPLETION



### UPPER SECONDARY COMPLETION

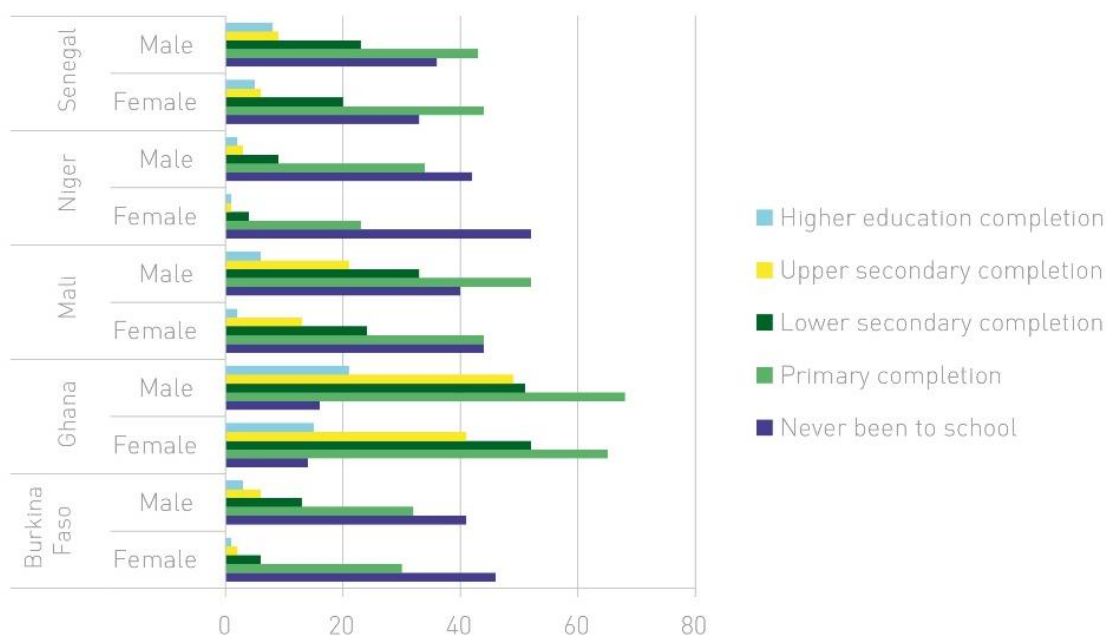


Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database

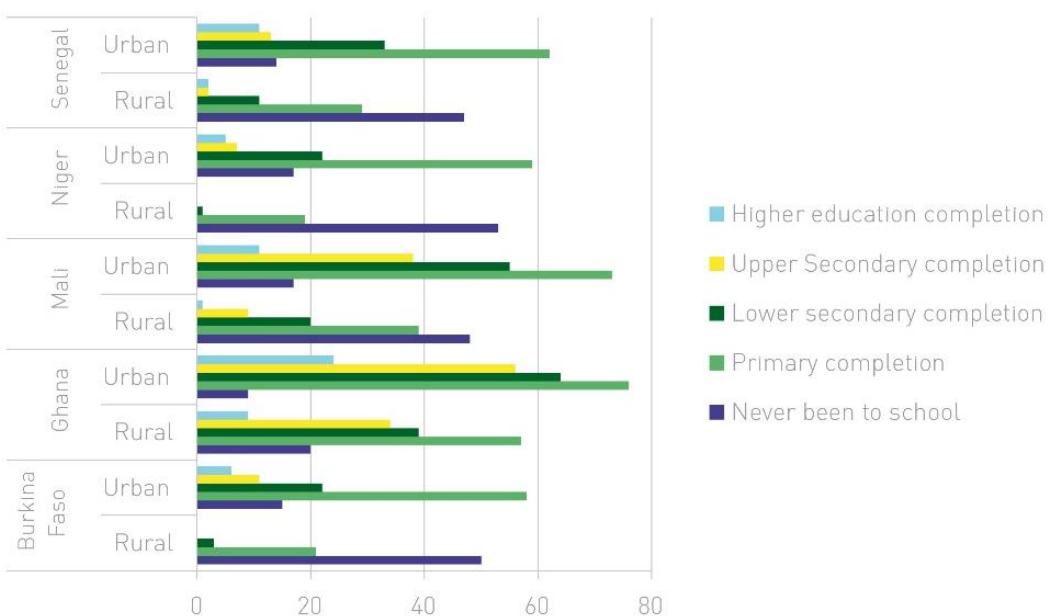
Very few students reach and complete **higher education**, and from those, they are predominantly males, from urban areas and from the richest 20% of the population (Figure 13).

**Figure 13:** Percentage of population that has never been to school, completing primary education; lower secondary education; upper secondary and higher education

#### BY SEX



#### BY LOCATION

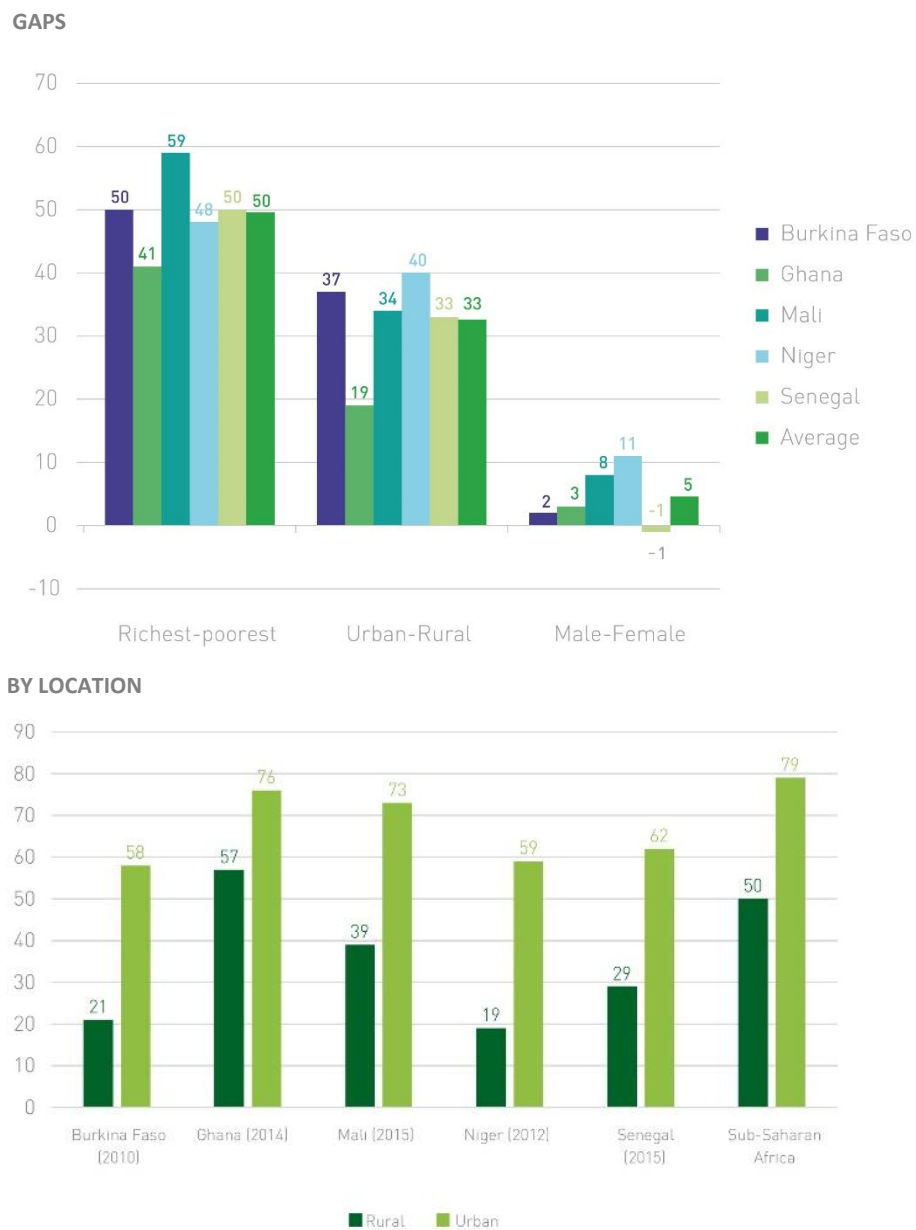


Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database

*Income level* and the *place of residence* are the most influencing factors determining education. There are clear gaps in **primary completion rates** in the five countries (Figure 14), which are of about 50% comparing the richest and poorest 20% of the population, of around 35% between urban and rural areas, and not so relevant (although they exist) between females and males. Primary completion rate

is around three times higher in urban areas, compared to rural, in Niger and Burkina Faso.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 14: Primary school completion rates gaps, and by location**

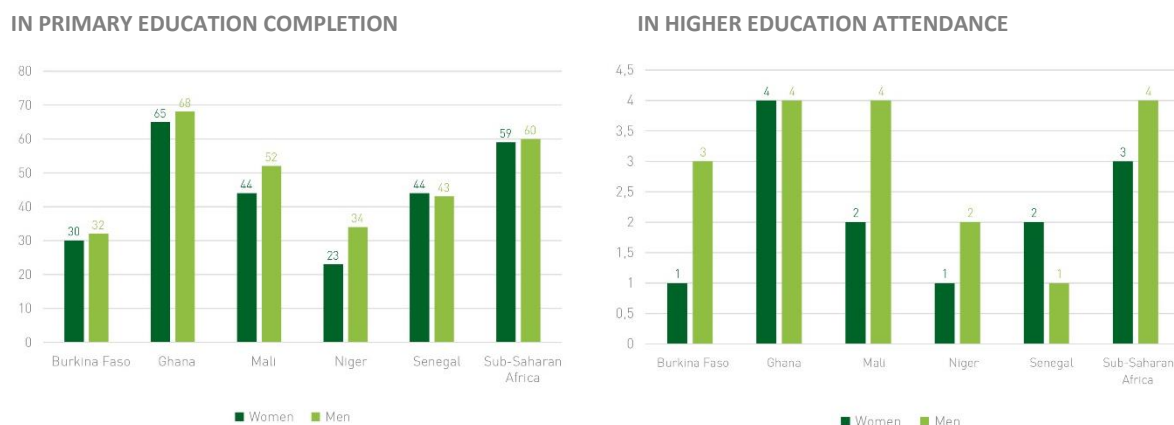


Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database

**Gender** inequalities in education are more prominent in **higher levels of education** (Figure 15).

<sup>42</sup> [Source: UNESCO, World Inequality Database.](#)

**Figure 15: Gender differences in primary and higher education**



Source: UNESCO, World Inequality Database

*Income level, place of residence and gender* play an important role in shaping opportunities for education. These inequalities have an **accumulative effect** and overlapping disadvantages can compound education disparities. In Mali, where 48% of children and young people complete primary school, only 14% of girls from the poorest quintile in rural areas achieve this target, in contrast with 85% of boys from the richest urban households.<sup>43</sup> In Niger, those living in rural areas are three times less likely to finish primary education than those living in urban areas; and those from the richest quintile of households are seven times more likely to complete primary school than those from the poorest quintile. In Ghana, where 45% of young people complete secondary school, the rate is only 19% among the poorest households compared with 74% among the richest. (See Figures 2 to 10 in Annex VI).

In **Senegal**, between 1990 and 2017, mean years of schooling increased by 0.8 years and expected years of schooling increased by 5.2 years.<sup>44</sup> However, the supply of education is not easily accessible for all the population because, despite recent improvements, urban areas enjoy higher access to educational facilities than rural areas.<sup>45</sup> There are large differences between regions in terms of primary education enrolment. At national level, the gross enrolment rate is higher for boys than for girls and geographically, the greatest gender disparities are found in the South of the country.<sup>46</sup> Inequality of household literacy rates is very high and illiteracy is more pronounced in rural zones than in Dakar and the other urban areas.<sup>47</sup> (See figure 11 in Annex VI).

It is also significant to consider inequalities in the **percentage of children out of school** (Figure 16). These exist but are not very prominent in gender, with slightly more girls than boys out of school. Again, where differences are more pronounced is between rural and urban areas, and by income, between the poorest and the richest segments of the population.

<sup>43</sup> UNESCO, [World Inequalities Database](#).

<sup>44</sup> HDI Indicator

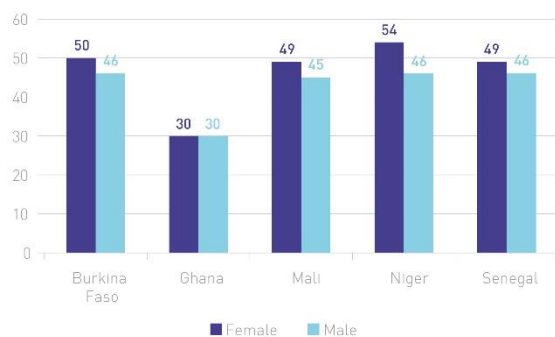
<sup>45</sup> Inequalities in the Context of Structural Transformation: The case of Senegal', December 2014, Volume 57, [Issue 3–4](#), pp 540–546

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

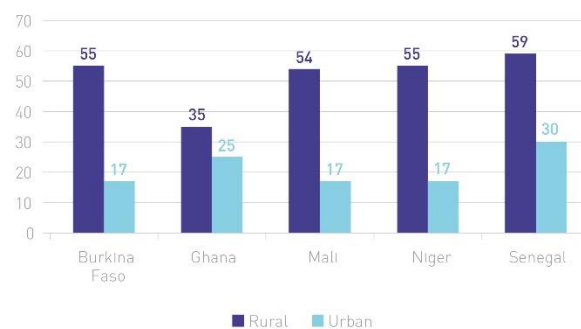
<sup>47</sup> Ibid

Figure 16: Percentage of children out of school

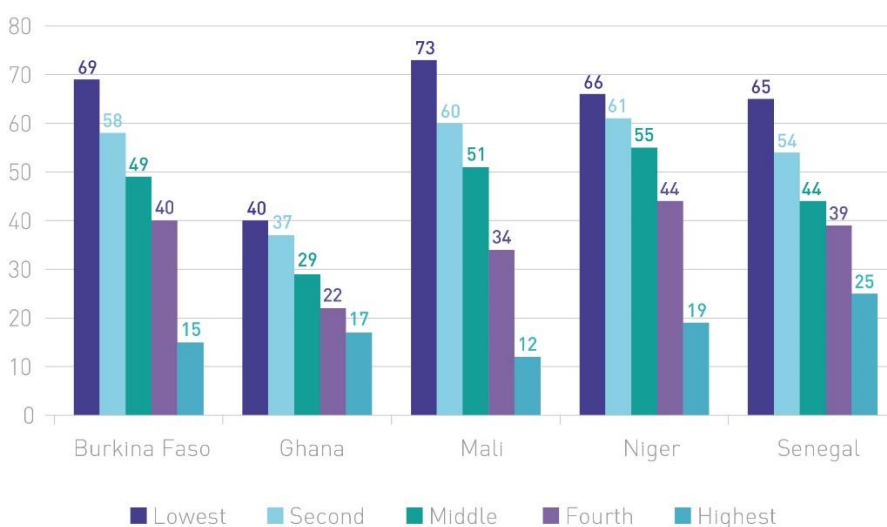
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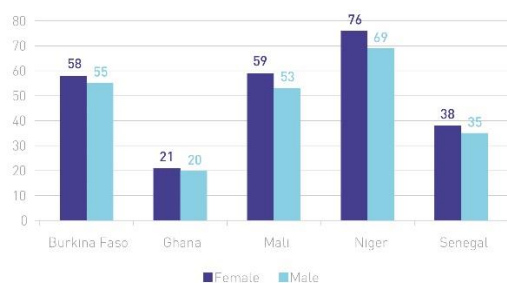


Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database

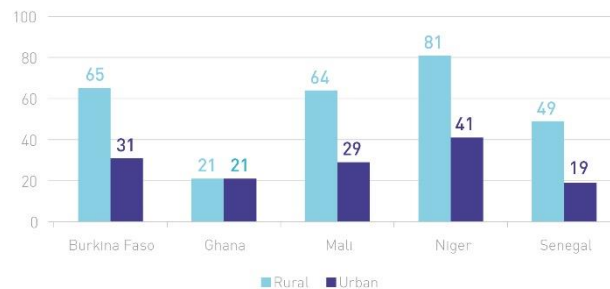
To understand the conditions of young population, we look at the **percentage of 16-18 years old not in education, employment or training** (Figure 17): again, gender differences are biased against *women*, and we find big inequalities between *rural and urban* areas, and by *income level*, in all countries except in Ghana. In rural areas, 80% of youngsters are not in education, employment or training in Niger, 65% in Burkina Faso, 65% in Mali and 50% in Senegal.

Figure 17: Percentage of 16-18 years old not in education, employment or training

BY SEX

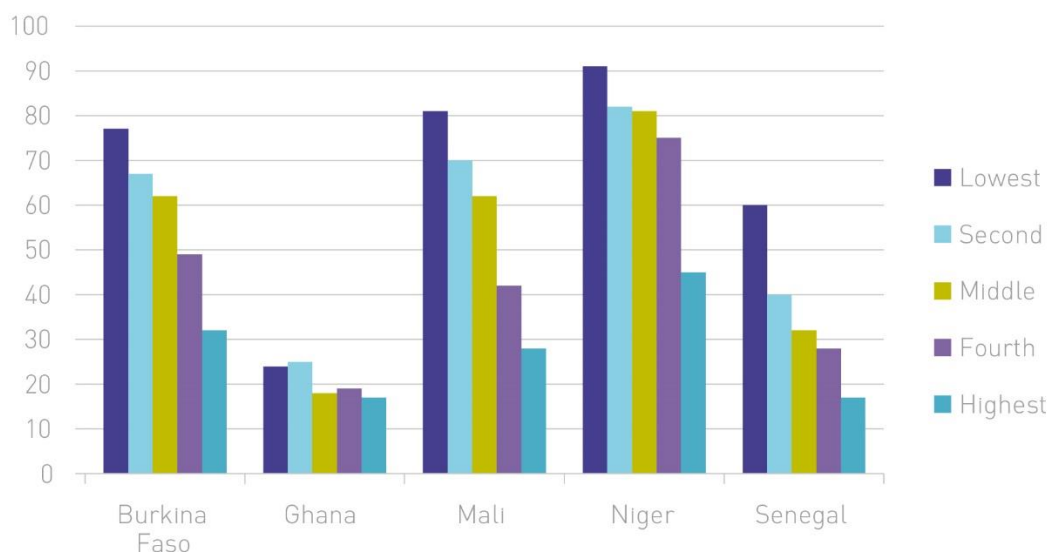


BY LOCATION





#### BY INCOME



Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database

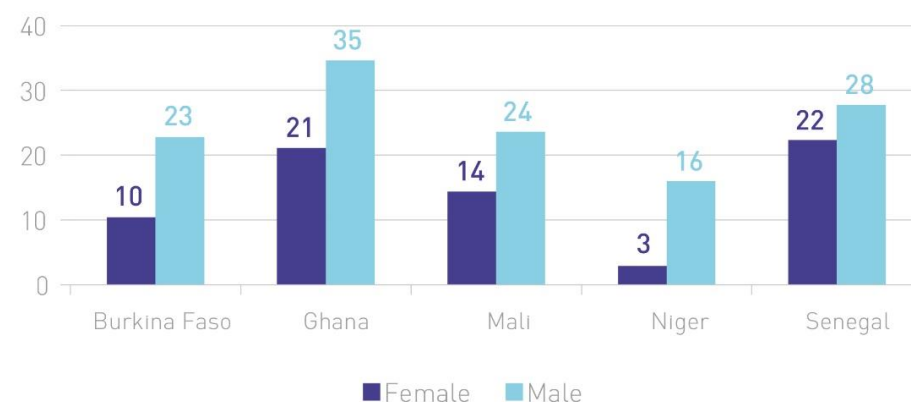
### Sub-domain 3.B: Access information and technology necessary to participate in society

Educational attainment and achievements have a direct impact on people's working opportunities; which, nowadays, are very much linked to access to internet technologies and skills.

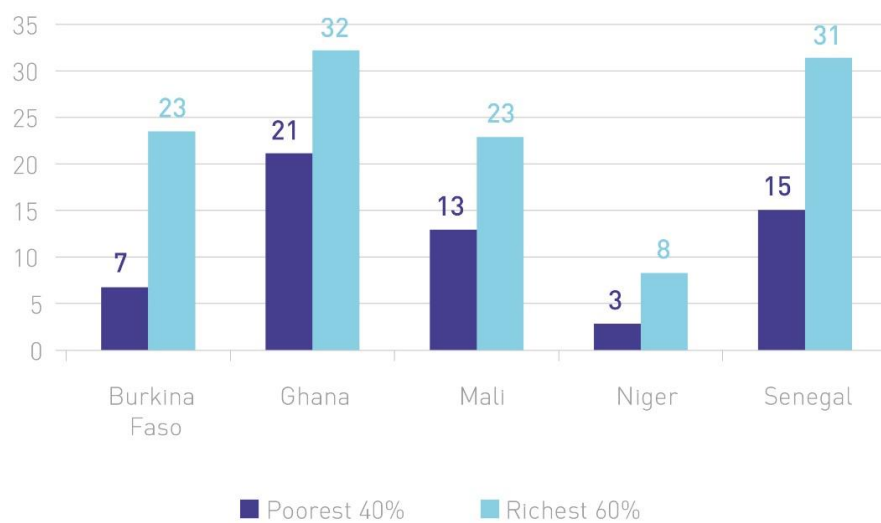
*Gender* differences in **access to the internet** (Figure 18) are more prominent in Burkina Faso (10% of women vs. 23% of men), Ghana and Mali, than in Senegal (with similar percentages), and are much lower in Niger, probably due to the small proportion of population with access to internet. Similarly, inequality in access due to *income* is very prominent in Burkina Faso and in Senegal, and somehow less in Ghana and Mali: only 15% of the poorest 40% have internet in Senegal, against 31% of the richest 60%.

Figure 18: Percentage of population who have access to the internet

#### BY SEX (% AGE 15+)



#### BY INCOME



Source: World Telecommunication / ICT Indicators Database

## Domain 4. FINANCIAL SECURITY AND DIGNIFIED WORK

### Inequality in the capability to achieve financial independence and security, dignified and fair work, and recognition of unpaid work and care.

Like education, economic inequality is both an important dimension of inequality and an important driver of inequalities in other domains. It is related to the economic remuneration and to the quality of work. The domain focuses on inequalities in financial independence, financial security and dignified work. Countries with high Gini (an indicator of high economic inequality) are prone to political instability, tend to have the highest levels of homicides, and the weakest results in access to education and health.<sup>48</sup>

Financial inequalities in the countries studied (as in many other countries around the globe) reflect the privileges of a small group of rich and powerful educated men, that live in urban areas, enjoy well remunerated jobs and benefits, against a vast majority of poorly educated people, most of which survive from basic agriculture in rural areas, or from precarious jobs in the suburbs of cities, all of them in the informal economy without any benefits or protection. Again, this domain is intrinsically related to education, fuelling a vicious cycle of privileges of the few and exclusion of the many.

#### Sub-domain 4.A: Achieve financial security and resilience against shocks

This subdomain looks at relative income inequality and poverty data. Poverty is the area most analysed and with more data available, and this is reflected in this section. The analysis digs into the disaggregation variables to search for horizontal inequalities in this domain.

Depending on where we look in the African continent, **poverty** is very dissimilar. Together with the Sudan Savanna Belt, the Sahel contains most of the world's poorest areas, showing the interaction between poverty and the harsh environmental conditions.<sup>49</sup> Forecasts indicate that by 2030, nearly nine in 10 extremely poor people will live in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>50</sup>

West Africa is the region with the lowest **human development indicators (HDI)** in the world (along with East Africa).<sup>51</sup> In ECOWAS, 13 countries were classified by UNDP in 2013 as having a Low Human Development, including Nigeria (global rank 153), Senegal (154), Ivory Coast (168), Burkina Faso (183), Malí (182) and Niger (187; the lowest ranked country in the IDH). The only two countries with a Medium Human Development are Cabo Verde (132) and Ghana (135). HDIs are slightly rising: in 2017, HDI was 0.47 for the entire region, compared with 0.33 in 1990; within the region, HDI ranges from 0.35 in Niger to 0.65 in Cabo Verde.<sup>52</sup> Disaggregated MPI results are available for 475 sub-national regions in 41 countries. The poorest region continues to be Salamat in Chad, followed by

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<sup>48</sup> Ortiz and Cummin (2011)

<sup>49</sup> OPHI (2016)

<sup>50</sup> World Bank (2018) *Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle*, pg 25, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/30418/9781464813306.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> OECD Africa's Development Dynamics 2018, Chapter 7: West Africa

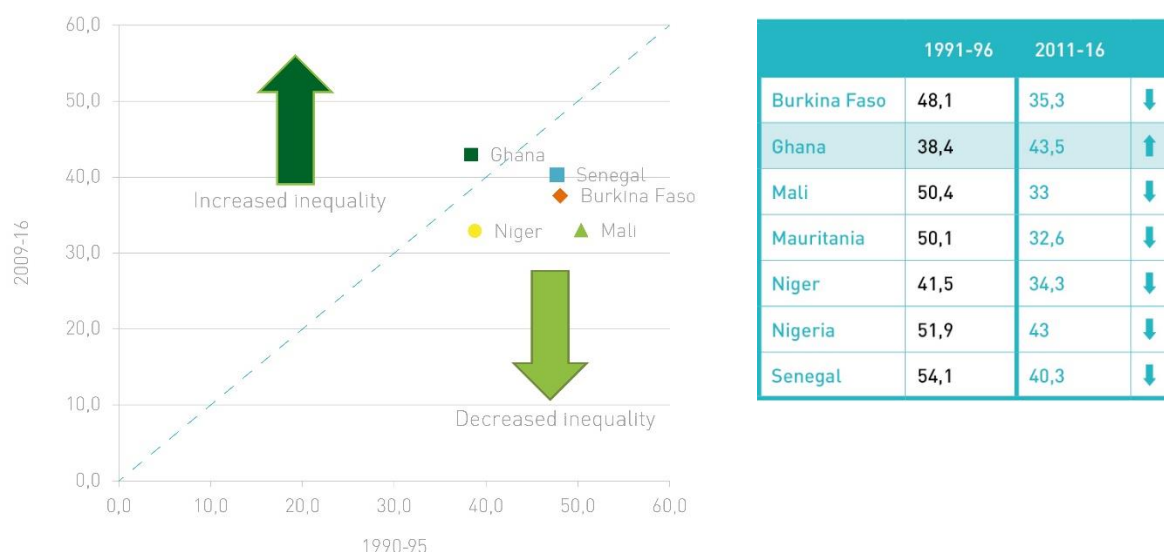
<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

East in Burkina Faso and Hadjer Iamis in Chad.<sup>53</sup>

**Income inequality**<sup>54</sup> in West Africa has been falling in the past three decades, despite remaining high in the region's largest economies.<sup>55</sup> The distribution of wealth in West Africa appears to favour the middle or intermediate class. The proportion of revenue held by the 60% of the intermediate population rose by 44.2% to 47.3% between the periods of 1990-95 and 2014-17. (See Figure 13 in Annex VI).

**Gini index**, improved from 43.2 on average in the period 1990-1995 to 39.6 between 2014-2017, with decrease in all countries analysed except Ghana.<sup>56</sup> In fact, Ghana is the richest country among the five, and also the most unequal. (Figure 19).

**Figure 19:** Gini index for selected countries



Source: World Development Indicators (consulted May 2019)

Considering the **Palma index**, which looks at the ratio of the richest 10% of the population's share of gross national income (GNI) divided by the poorest 40%'s share, Ghana clearly shows the greatest inequality among the considered countries. Gilles looked at the evolution of this index in several recent periods and indicates an increase in inequality in Ghana (between 1998-2005), and a decrease in Senegal (2001-2005), Mali (2001-2010) and Niger (2005-2008), where consumption of the bottom 40% has increased.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> OPHI (2016)

<sup>54</sup> There is no disaggregated data for income distribution (e.g. by location, education, gender or ethnic groups), hence, income indicators provide a picture of income distribution in each country, but does not compare between groups.

<sup>55</sup> AUC/OECD (2018)

<sup>56</sup> Data from WDI (World Development Indicators, accessed 4th May 2019)

<sup>57</sup> Yabi Olakounlé Gilles (2015) Les inégalités extrêmes empoisonnent la vie de tous en Afrique de l'Ouest : il est temps d'y mettre fin, Oxfam.

Table 2: Palma index (2018)

Country	Palma
Burkina Faso	1,5
Ghana	2,1
Mali	1,3
Niger	1,4
Senegal	1,9

Source: UN Development Programme (consulted July 2019)

Concurrently, a relative **decline in poverty rates** has occurred over the period 1990-2015. According to 2017 World Bank data, extreme poverty – at the threshold of USD 1.90 at purchasing power parity – decreased from 55.4% to 43.8% from 1990 and 2015.<sup>58</sup> These improvements are primarily due to national poverty reduction strategies and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) since the start of the 2000s which benefitted 13 countries.<sup>59</sup> In Burkina Faso for example, since 2000 the rhythm of poverty reduction is identical to that seen in China between 1996 and 2013.<sup>60</sup>

However, the total number of poor people, as well as extremely poor people, continues to rise.<sup>61</sup> In 2013 (the most recent estimate), 43% of the population lived below the international \$1.90 per day poverty line.<sup>62</sup> The number of people living in extreme poverty in West Africa grew from 98.9 million (55.4%) in 1990 to 144.4 million (43.8%) in 2013.<sup>63</sup> Almost 67% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty and the intensity of deprivation among the poor reaches 56%.<sup>64</sup> It is estimated that 60% of the West African population lives on less than one dollar a day. These trends, however, mask some notable differences between countries in West Africa. Poverty in landlocked areas is much higher than in coastal areas, affecting about 86% versus 14% of the population in Africa.<sup>65</sup> (See Figure 14 in Annex VI).

**Poverty** clearly concentrates in *rural* areas, where most of the population in these countries live: rural population represents 84% of total population in Niger, 71% in Burkina Faso, 58% in Mali, 53% in Senegal and 44% in Ghana.<sup>66</sup> (Figure 20).

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<sup>58</sup> AUC/OECD (2018)

<sup>59</sup> Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo; AUC/OECD (2018)

<sup>60</sup> AUC/OECD (2018)

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> ADB (2018)

<sup>63</sup> AUC/OECD (2018)

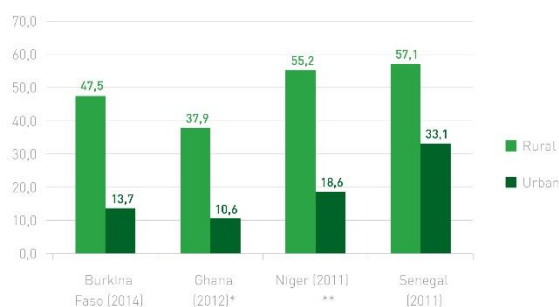
<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> ADB blog

<sup>66</sup> World Bank staff estimates based on the United Nations Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision. World Bank, World Development Indicators; <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?view=chart>

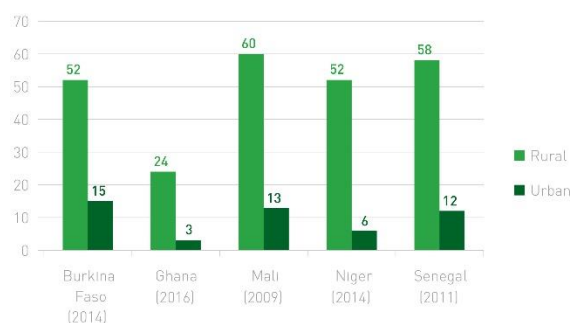
**Figure 20: Poverty rate by location (% population living below poverty lines)**

#### NATIONAL POVERTY LINES



Source: SDG Indicators Global Database (indicator 1.2.1)

#### INTERNATIONAL POVERTY LINE (US\$1.90, 2011 PPP)



Source: World Bank Poverty and Equity Data Portal

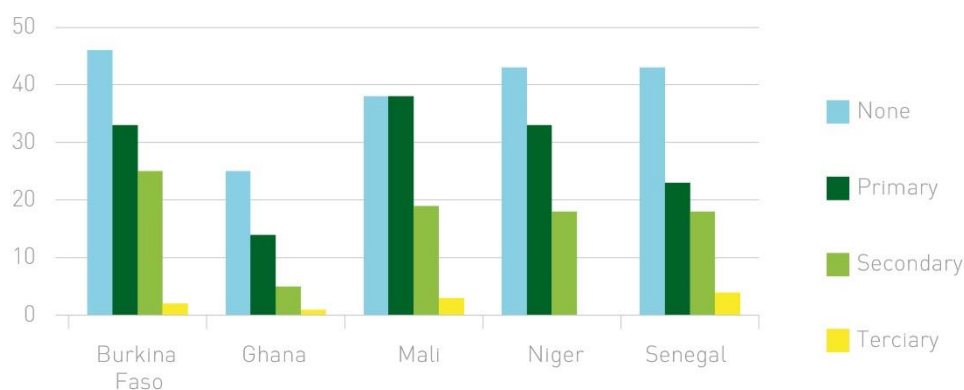
\* National poverty incidence in 2016 was 23,4% (6 million people) but no disaggregated data are available.

\*\* National poverty incidence in 2014 was 44,5 (8,5 million people) but no disaggregated data available.

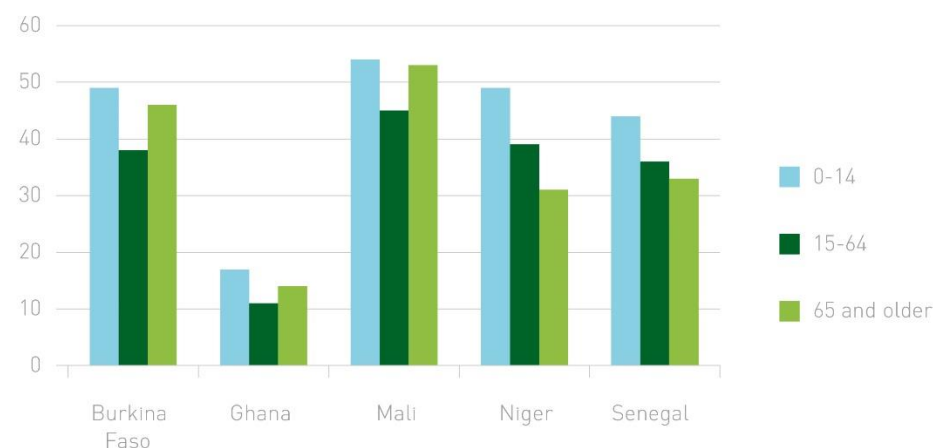
The level of *education* is also closely related to the level of poverty, which decreases with higher education, and if we look at age, poverty incidence is slightly less among people in working *age* (15 to 64 years old) in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali, while in Niger and Senegal poverty incidence is lower among the oldest people. (Figure 21)

**Figure 21: Poverty incidence**

#### BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (AGE 16 AND OLDER)



#### BY AGE (INTERNATIONAL POVERTY LINE)



Source: World Bank Poverty and Equity Data Portal

## Sub-domain 4.B: Enjoy financial independence and control over personal spending

Nowadays, mobile **phone banking** is widely spread in rural areas in West Africa, and measuring access to credit, size of credits and payments would probably provide an accurate picture; however, these data were not found in global homogenized sources.

Having a **bank account** could be an indicator of financial independence. The percentage of adults (ages 15+) who report having a bank account (by themselves or together with someone else) at a bank or another type of financial institution or personally using a mobile money service in the past 12 months. Disaggregated data is only available by sex, and it indicates a substantial gender gap that varies from 9 to 20 percentage points in this respect in the five countries studied. (See Figure 16 in Annex VI).

Although the MIF tool does not include an indicator for **remittances**, it would be interesting to see to what extent there are inequalities (by gender, location, level of education or other) in the distribution (generation, access and use) of remittances. Despite the relevance of remittances in some of the countries studied (accounting for 10.3% in Senegal, 7.4% of GDP in Mali, 5.2% in Ghana, and less than 5% of GDP in Burkina Faso and Niger)<sup>67</sup> it has not been possible to find disaggregated data to allow for an inequality analysis.

## Sub-domain 4.C: Have equal access to paid work, job opportunities, productive assets and markets

**Labour market** is almost entirely **informal** in these countries, due in part to the large proportion of the population that live on agricultural or livestock production. In West Africa between 2008 and 2014, agriculture's share of employment declined. However, employment appears to have moved to services more than to industry. Although the service sector is considered to have higher-productivity, it has an extended heterogeneity, and it is unclear where in the service sector the labour from agriculture ended up.<sup>68</sup> Although West Africa's growth has been impressive, much of it came from increased primary commodities production, which does not create much productive employment and can lead to "jobless growth."<sup>69</sup>

The inequalities of labour income and job opportunities are furthermore very high between men and women. Half of the countries in the West Africa region, including Mali and Niger, have a very high level of *gender* discrimination in their social institutions, according to the Social Institutions and Gender Inequality (SIGI) index:<sup>70</sup> in Mali, the chances of access to employment are the same for men as for women in the informal sector, whereas income levels are different, with women earning less than men for similar jobs;<sup>71</sup> in Niger, typically, women are more active in the traditional retail trade

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<sup>67</sup> Oxford Analytica (2016). EU and African xenophobia may hurt remittance flows; August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016; <https://dailybrief.oxan.com/Analysis/GA213231/EU-and-African-xenophobia-may-hurt-remittance-flows>

<sup>68</sup> ADB (2017)

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> AUC/OECD (2018)

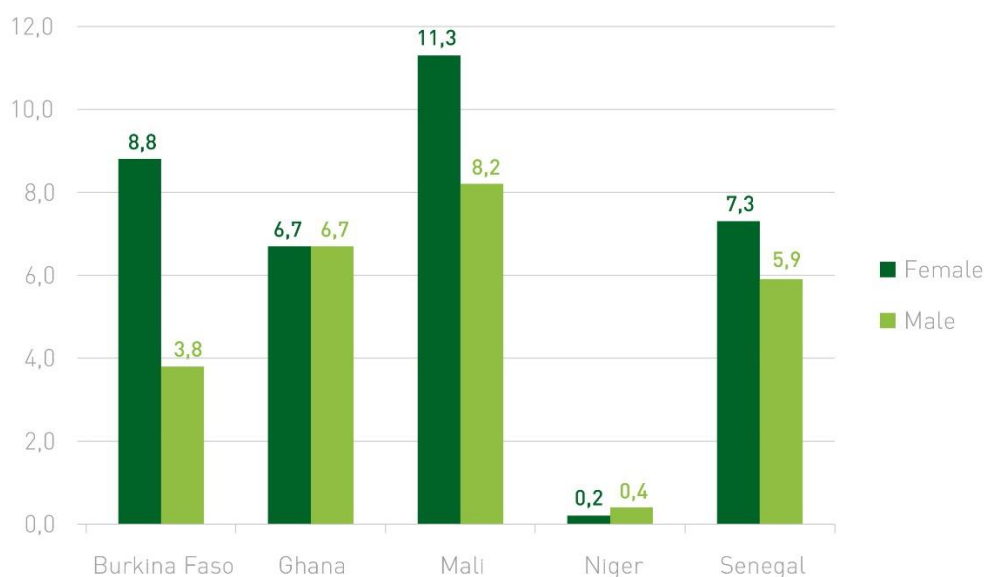
<sup>71</sup> Yabi Olakounlé Gilles (2015); citing Fox and Nabalamba (2011)

sector, while men are either wholesalers or industry workers.<sup>72</sup>

Female **access to property and assets**, including land, remains difficult,<sup>73</sup> and informality, underemployment and job precariousness affect women more than men.<sup>74</sup> Even if access to employment was, in principle, similar for women and men, the type of work and the remuneration each one has access to determines a gender gap in working conditions, due to sexual division of work, the access men and women have to certain and concrete types of jobs, and because of gender roles, or pure discrimination against women at work, among other reasons.

Data on **unemployment** (Figure 22) has to be used with caution, since people tend to report informal employment as employment (in the case of Niger, the data seems to show a clear under reporting of unemployment). The disaggregated data by sex, that shows a clear unemployment *gender gap* in Burkina Faso and, less pronounced, in Mali and Senegal; with practically no difference in Ghana and Niger (where the reported rate of unemployment is suspiciously low, clearly under reported).

Figure 22: Unemployment rate, by sex



Source: ILOStat

The **percentage of the population that work in the informal sector** is huge (Figure 23), a reality that deepens gender inequalities: a large percentage of women work in the informal sector in Ghana, Niger, Mali and Senegal;<sup>75</sup> and in West Africa, women hold 66% of all jobs in the non-agricultural informal sector and only make 70 cents for each dollar made by men.<sup>76</sup> This reality puts women in clear disadvantage regarding fair working conditions, since none of the already very weak labour regulations apply to the informal sector.

<sup>72</sup> Moumni (2012)

<sup>73</sup> AUC/OECD (2018)

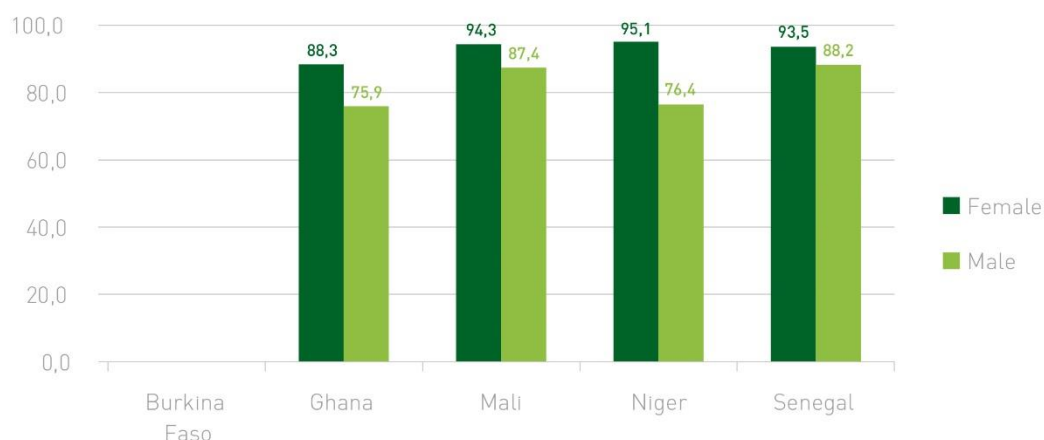
<sup>74</sup> ADB (2017)

<sup>75</sup> And probably Burkina Faso, but there is no data

<sup>76</sup> UNDP (2016)



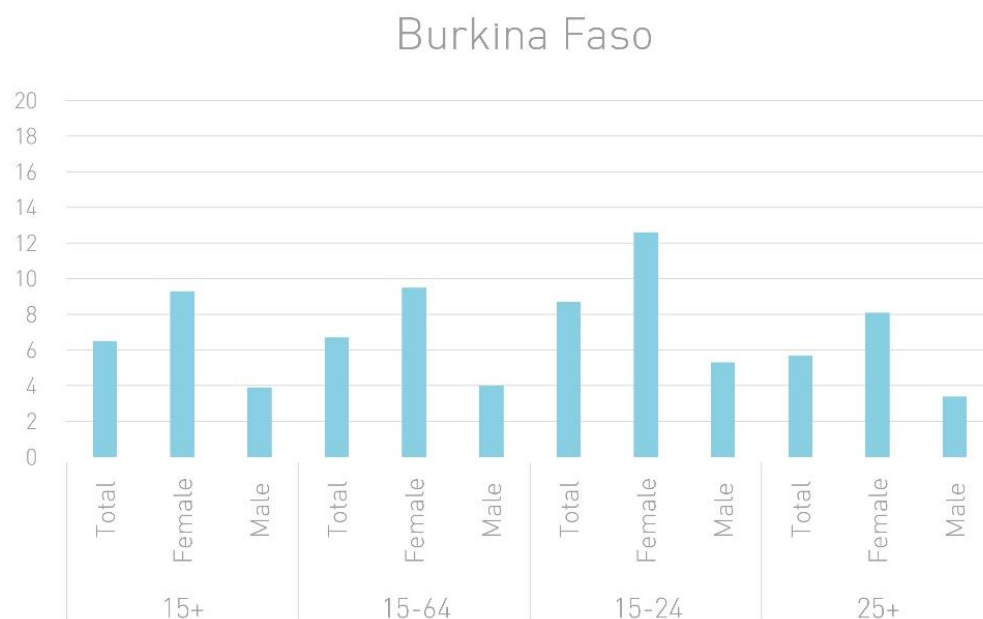
**Figure 23:** Percentage of the population working in the informal sector, by sex



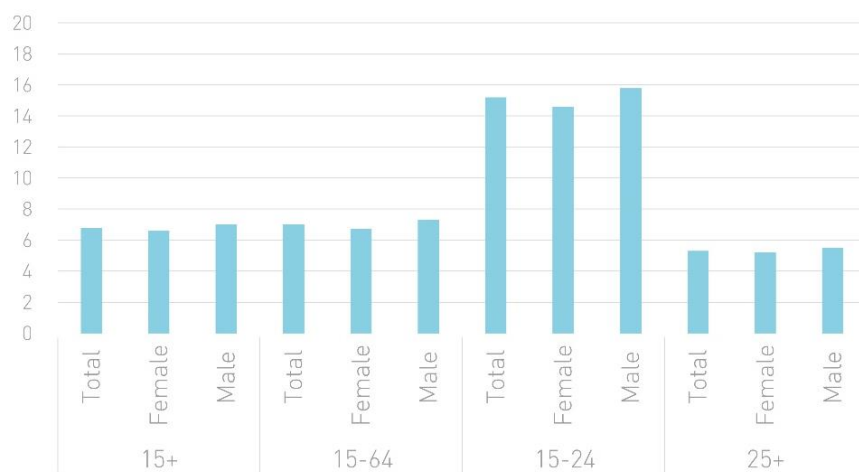
Source: ILOSTAT

Young people make up the bulk of the labour force and bear most of the unemployment burden. Disaggregated data by *age* and *sex* in each country clearly shows how **unemployment is much larger among the young population (15-24 years old)** in the five countries studied, with no clear difference by sex (Figure 24). This indicates a potential policy need for employment strategies targeting this group.

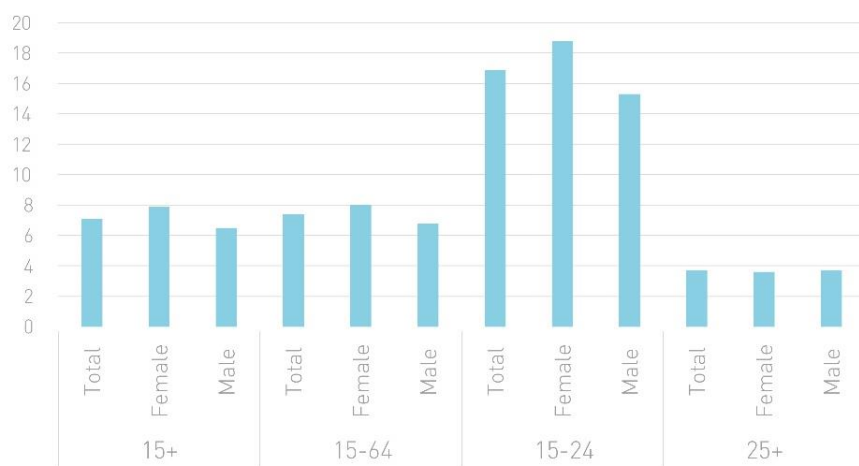
**Figure 24:** Unemployment rate, by age and sex



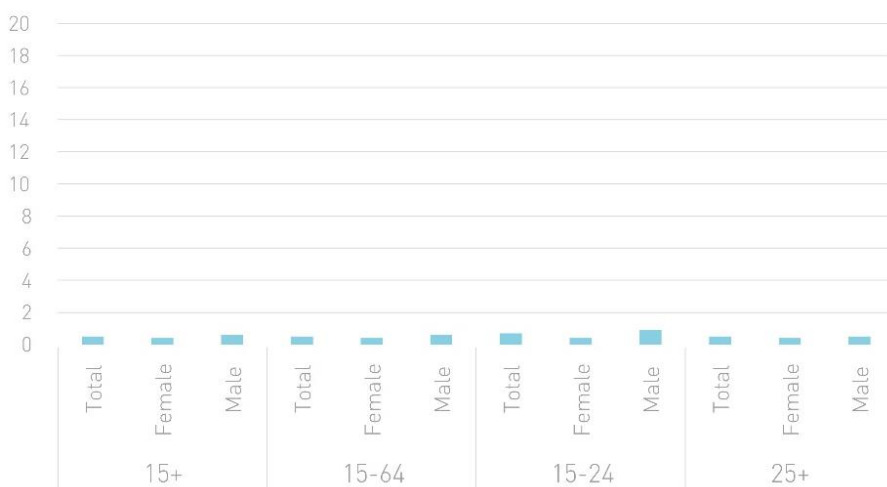
## Ghana

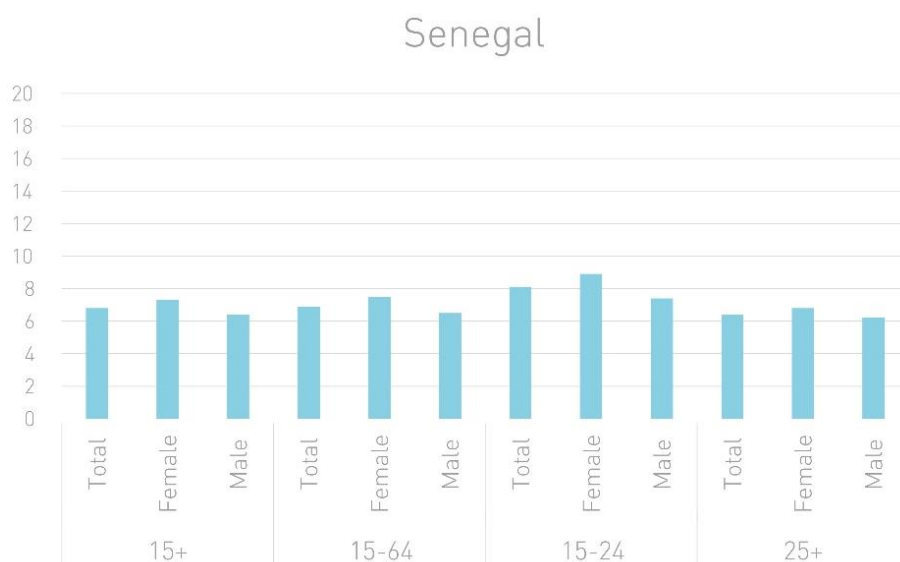


## Mali



## Niger

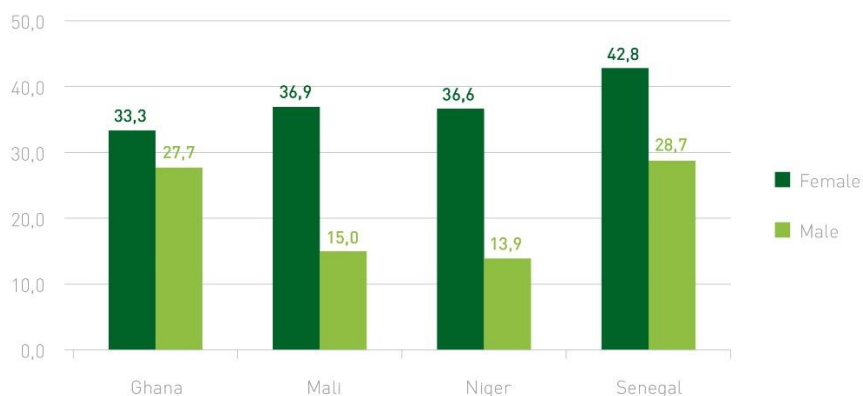




Source: ILOStat

The situation of *young people* (15-24 years, Figure 25), shows that there is a vast majority of *women* in that age that are **not in education, training or employment** in Mali and Niger, and to less extent in Senegal and Ghana (no disaggregated data is available for Burkina Faso).

**Figure 25:** Percentage of young people (15-24 years) not in education, training or employment, by sex



Source: ILOStat

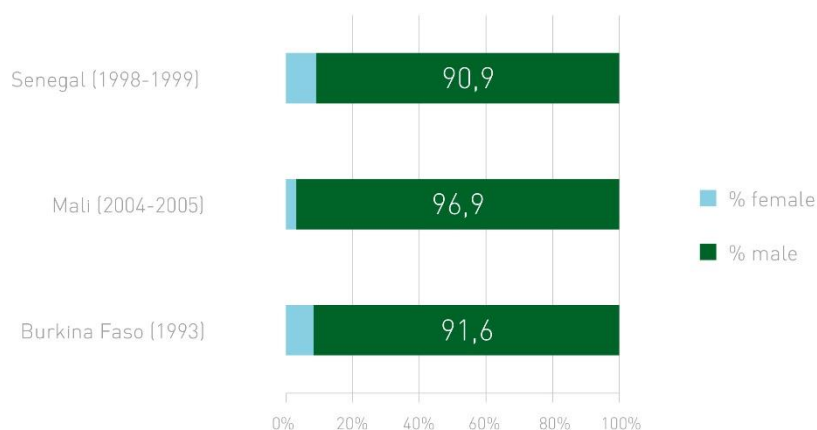
Considering the large proportion of the population that depend on agricultural or livestock for their living, we look into the conditions of **land ownership** (see Figure 26 below, and also table 8 in Annex VI) Customary land tenure and traditional uses make that the ownership of land by women is almost null in all countries. In Ghana, only 10% of private land is held by women.<sup>77</sup> The customary right that governs the allocation of arable land in certain communities is also intended to protect agricultural wealth by favouring men.<sup>78</sup> In Niger, according to reported ownership in 2011, 39,5% of land is owned by women, against 60,5% owned by men.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>77</sup> AUC/OECD, 2018), citing [Derry \(2016\)](#)

<sup>78</sup> AUC/OECD, 2018), citing [OECD \(2018b\)](#).

<sup>79</sup> LSMS-ISA Enquête Nationale sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages et l'Agriculture de 2011 (GLRD team own estimate)

**Figure 26: Distribution of agricultural holders by sex**



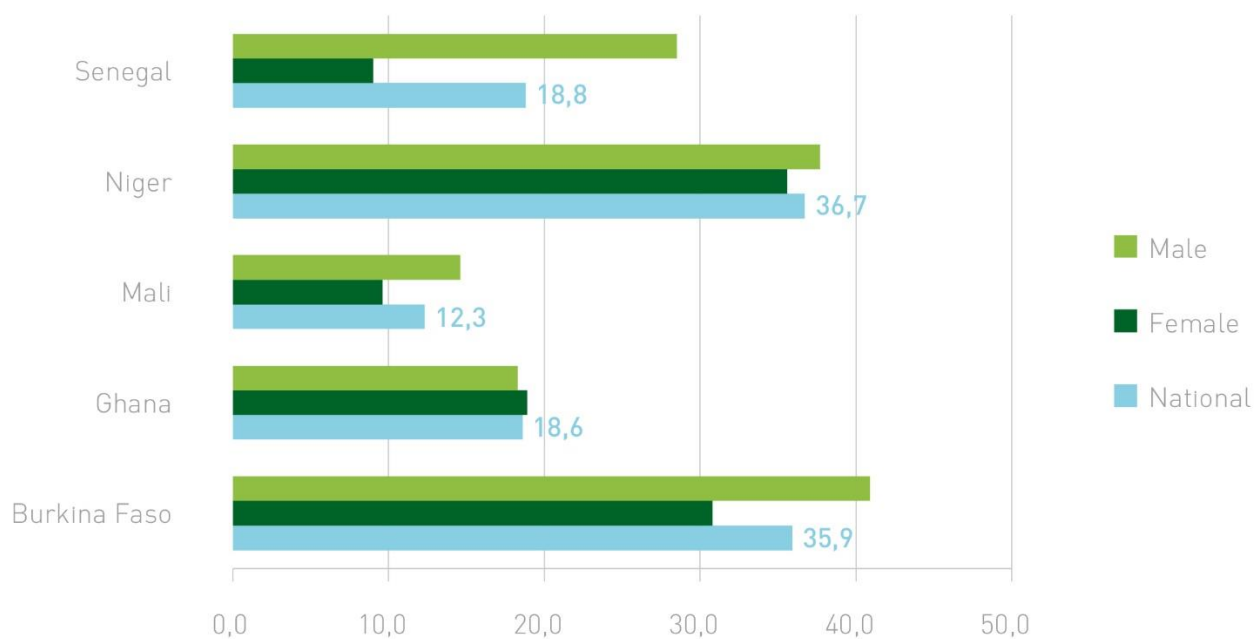
Source: Agricultural Census

## Sub-domain 4.E Be protected from forced labour and exploitative conditions

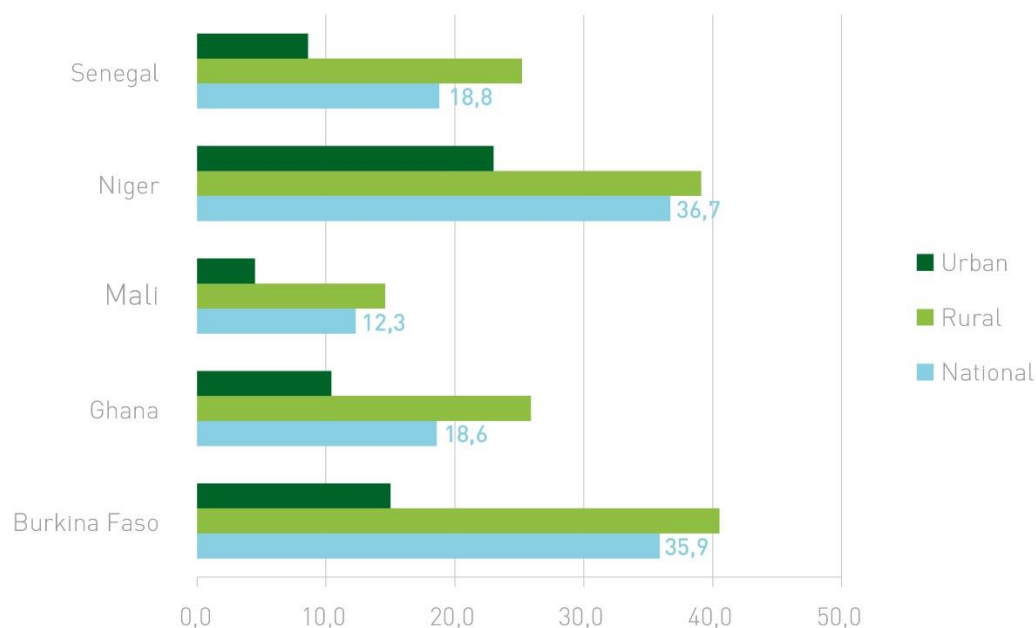
Data related to **child labour** (5-14 years old, Figure 27) shows a high prevalence in Niger (36.7%) and Burkina Faso (35.9%); a bit less but still very high in Senegal and Ghana (18.8% and 18.6%), and a bit lower in Mali (12.3%). In all countries except in Ghana, more *boys* than girls are reported to be involved in child labour activities, which take place predominantly in the *rural* areas.

**Figure 27: Child labour, 5-14 years old**

BY SEX



## BY LOCATION

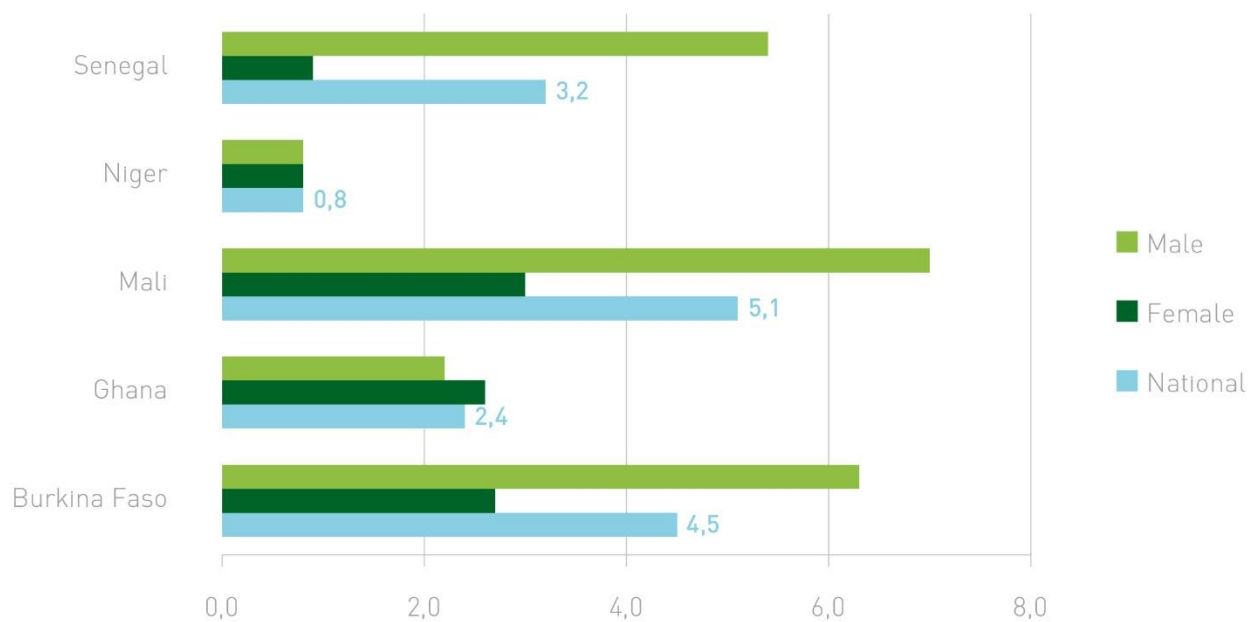


Source: UCW (Understanding Children's Work) UNICEF/ILO

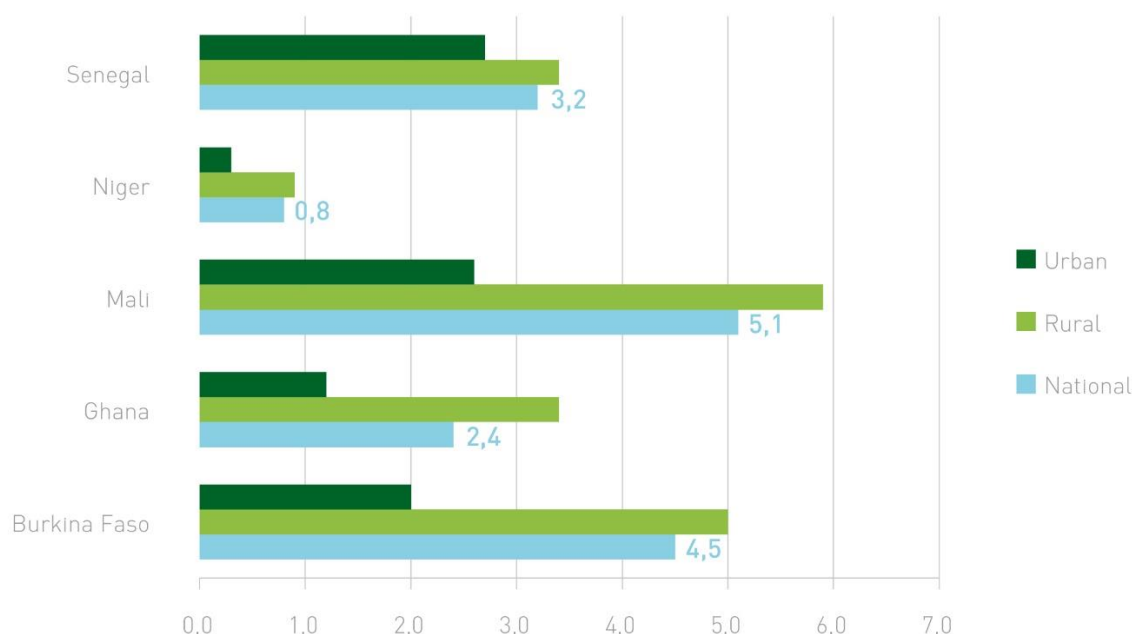
Part of the child labour involves **hazardous work** (Figure 28) mainly for boys (in all countries except in Ghana), and predominantly in rural areas in Mali, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Figure 28: Hazardous work, 5-14 years old

## BY SEX



#### BY LOCATION



Source: UCW (Understanding Children's Work) UNICEF/ILO

#### Sub-domain 4.F: Enjoy equal division of care and un-paid domestic work

Women and girls make up most of the **domestic and care work** force, almost entirely unpaid. There is very little data on this, but on average, women spend six times more time than men on unpaid care work — cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood, and caring for children, the ill and the elderly. Old data for Ghana and Mali, is still very significant: in Ghana, *girls and women* dedicate around 15% of their time to domestic work, against 4% that boys and men dedicate; in Mali, this difference is more pronounced, from 20-22% of their time for women, to around 2% for men. The lack of basic infrastructure and public services exacerbates the burden of domestic and care work, typically carried out by women; for example, in Ghana, a stronger participation of women in the work force still requires attention, since women carry out between two-thirds and three-quarters of domestic work and childcare.<sup>80</sup> (See also table 9 in Annex VI).

<sup>80</sup> OECD. (2014), Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes. [https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid\\_care\\_work.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf)

## Domain 5. LIVING CONDITIONS

### Inequality in the capability to enjoy comfortable, independent and secure living conditions

This domain analyses the capability to enjoy comfortable, independent and secure living conditions. It considers inequalities in meeting basic needs, access to good quality and secure housing, access to transport infrastructure, the ability to live in environments that promote dignity and respect, the quality of the local environment and the ability to enjoy leisure time alongside employment or caring responsibilities.

This domain is perceived by experts as the most relevant with regard to the perceptions of people about their lives. Secure access to food, clean water, shelter, sanitation, warmth and utilities are basic defining features of secure and comfortable living conditions. A lot of it may have to do with health, education or work conditions, but at the end, these translate into better or worse access to enjoy comfortable, independent and secure lives, which is what determines people's lives and perceptions.

These are aspects that people directly perceive in their daily life, and find it easy to compare their situation with others' in their surroundings. This comparison can easily fuel frustration and a sense of exclusion and injustice in those that are worse off, and may translate into tensions and conflicts. The region has seen this at the local level, between dominant and excluded groups, at the national level between rural and urban areas, or within cities between young and older people, raising protests of the young people demanding better jobs and housing conditions, for example (as has been seen in Ouagadougou in the last two years).

#### Sub-domain 5.A: Enjoy secure access to food, clean water, clean air, shelter, sanitation, warmth and utilities

**Standard of living indicators** (access to basic infrastructure and public basic services such as drinking water, sanitation, electricity and mobile telephones) have improved in Africa, despite demographic growth of 3.5% per annum.<sup>81</sup> Access to basic infrastructure and public basic services such as drinking water, sanitation, electricity and mobile telephones has improved in West Africa but still falls well below the global average, especially in rural areas.<sup>82</sup> Despite those general improvements, wide disparities persist between and within countries, especially between *urban and rural areas*, and also *within the cities* with the proliferation of slums without adequate planning and limited progress in public services. The differences in living conditions are intimately related to public investment on basic services and the regional divide existing between coastal areas or areas next to the capitals (with better provision of services), and remote areas, coinciding with the regions closer to the Sahel belt in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Senegal.

**Food insecurity** is on the rise globally. The rise in the prevalence of **undernourishment** has been highest in West Africa, and is accelerating, it has increased from 33 million people (12.3% of population) in 2005 to 56.1 million (15.1%) in 2017,<sup>83</sup> and is particularly high in Guinea, Mauritania,

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<sup>81</sup> AUC/OECD (2018) *Africa's Development Dynamics 2018: Growth, Jobs and Inequalities*.

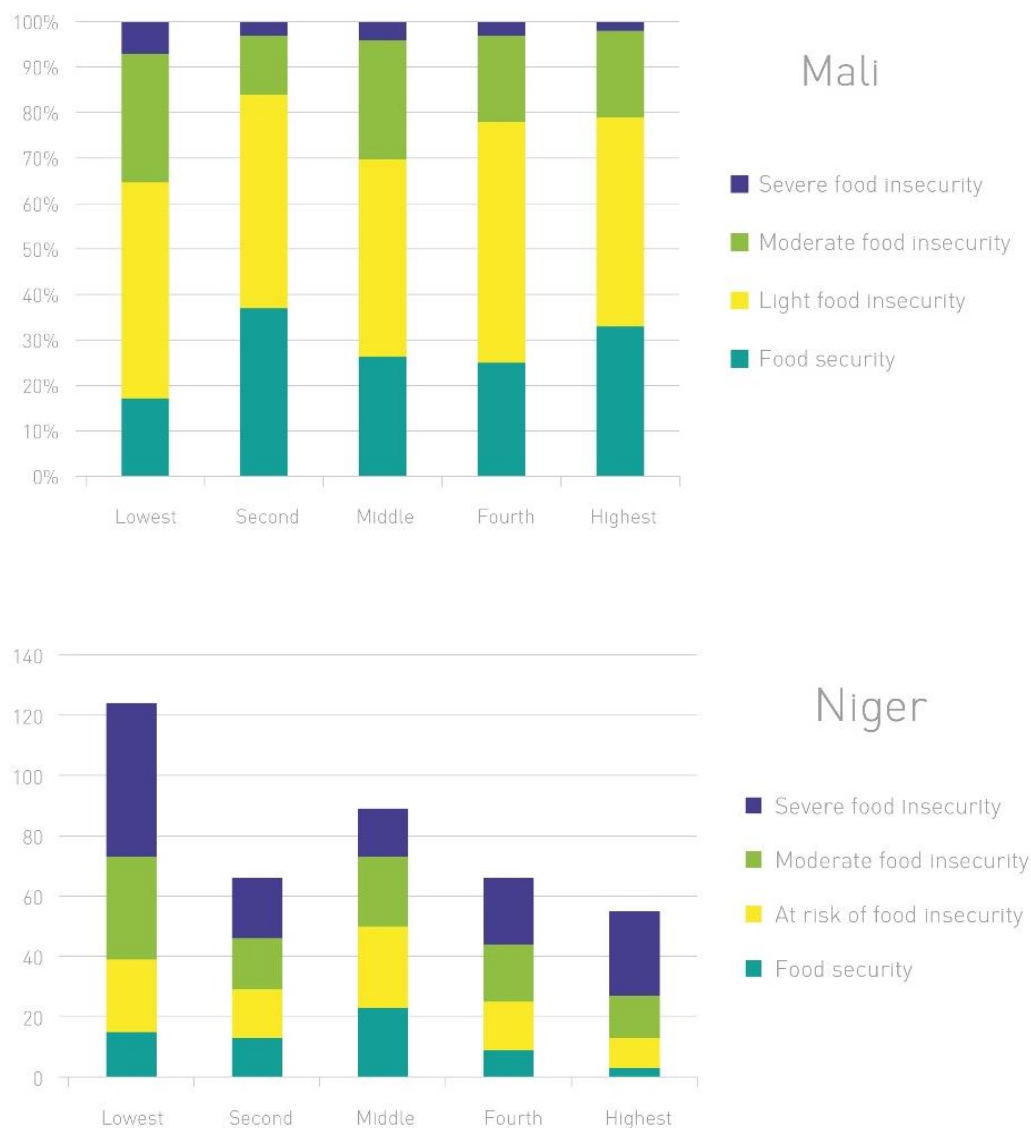
<sup>82</sup> 2018 Africa Sustainable Report.

<sup>83</sup> FAO and ECA (2018) *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition. Addressing the threat from climate variability and extremes for food security and nutrition*.

Niger and Nigeria. Conflicts and climate change are key drivers to food insecurity and they affect disproportionately the most vulnerable people relying heavily on agriculture.

The prevalence of **severe and moderate food insecurity** is more profound among the very poor in Mali and Niger, although there is a wide proportion of the population even with higher *income* that are at risk of food insecurity. (Figure 29)

**Figure 29: Prevalence of food insecurity, by wealth quintile**

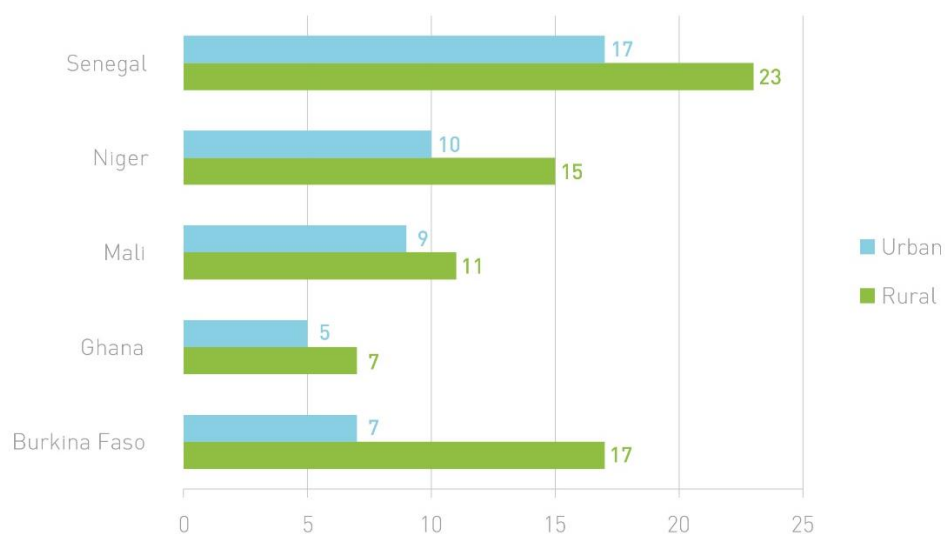


Source: Mali - Enquete Nationale sur la securité alimentaire et nutritionnelle. Rapport de synthese, pg. 46; Niger - Enquete conjointe sur la vulnérabilité à l'insecurité alimentaire des menages au Niger, December 2017

**Rural** areas have worse conditions of food insecurity in the five countries. The proportion of **underweight adults** is particularly high in rural areas in Burkina Faso, comparing to urban areas; while in Senegal, the proportion of underweight is very high both in rural and urban areas. (Figure 30).



**Figure 30: Underweight in adults by location**

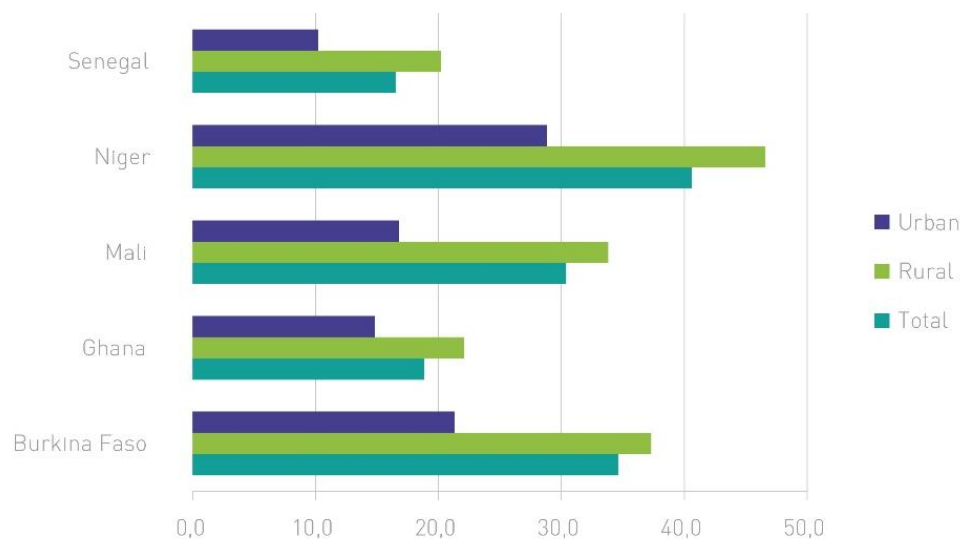


Source: van Wesebeeck, Cornelia F.A. (2018) Disentangling Urban and Rural Food Security in West Africa, OECD, West African Papers, N°15 (based on DHS survey data)

The **prevalence of stunting** among children under 5 years of age (Figure 31) is slightly worse on *boys* than girls in all the countries, and more prominent in rural than in urban areas (46% in rural areas in Niger, vs. 29% in urban areas). There is a clear inequality related to income, with stunting concentrating among the *poorest* households: 42% for the lowest income quintile and 18% for the highest income quintile in Burkina Faso, and 35% compared to 15% in Senegal;<sup>84</sup> and also related to the level of *education* of the mothers, showing that completion of secondary education reduces in more than three times the incidence of stunting among children in Burkina Faso, and by half in Ghana and Niger.

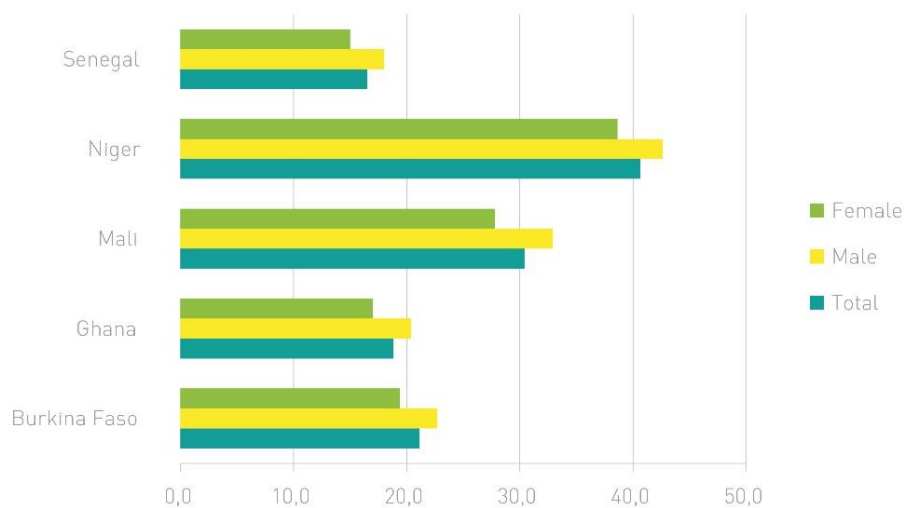
**Figure 31: Prevalence of stunting**

**BY LOCATION**

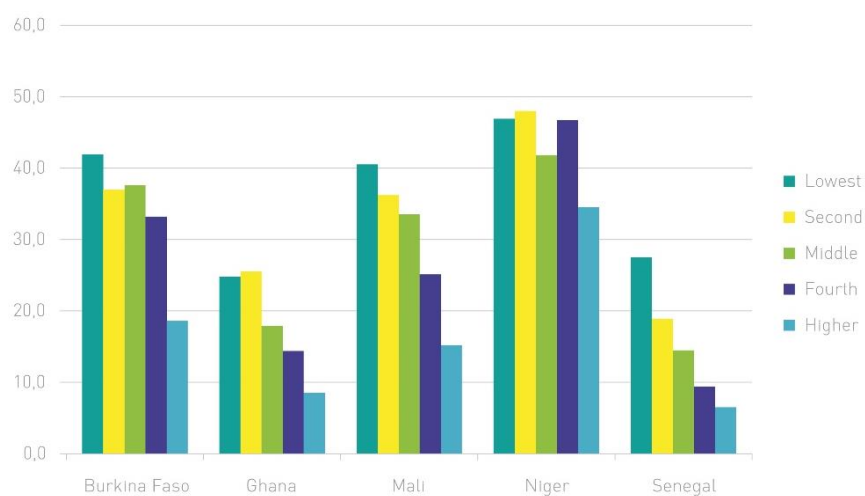


<sup>84</sup> Source: WHO (2014) The health of the people: What works. The African Regional Health Report 2014

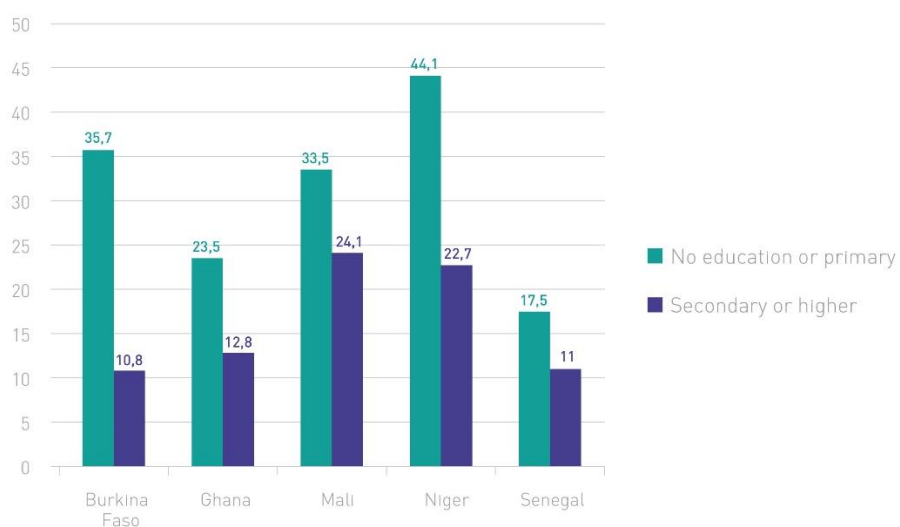
### BY SEX



### BY INCOME



### BY MOTHER'S EDUCATION

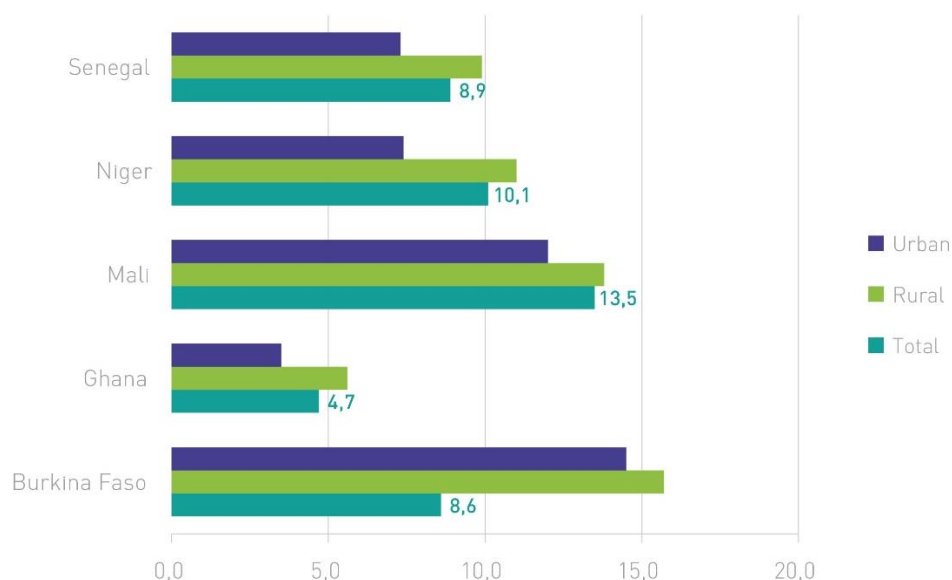


Source: UNICEF Global Database

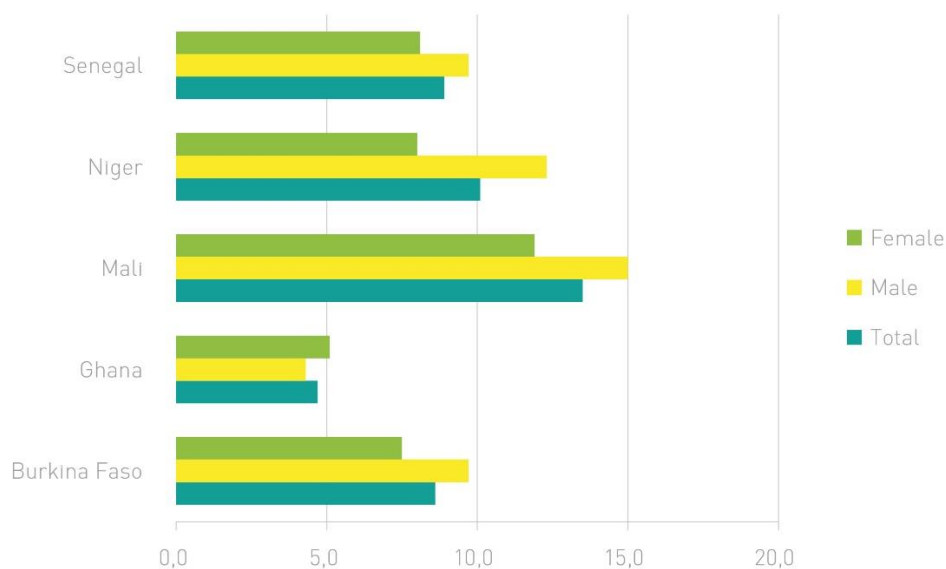
Similar results are found when looking at prevalence of **wasting among children under 5 years of age** (Figure 32), for which incidence is worse in rural areas, among boys, and decreases with the level of income (except in Ghana, which seems an anomaly due to the period covered by the indicator, since the last available reports for Ghana show the expected tendency, where wasting decreases with health status<sup>85</sup>).

**Figure 32: Prevalence of wasting among children under 5 years of age**

**BY LOCATION**

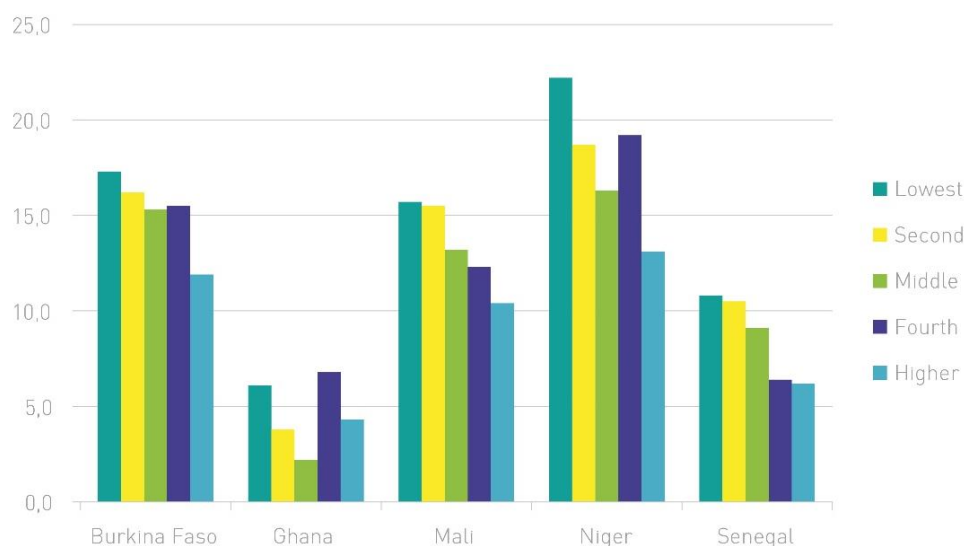


**BY SEX**



<sup>85</sup> See for example table 11.1 on page 156 of Ghana DHS (Demographic and Health Survey) of 2014; table 1 on page 36 of Ghana MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) of 2011; and key messages on slide 38 of the snapshot information released on Ghana MICS 2017/18 (the full report is not available yet), confirming the same trend.

## BY INCOME



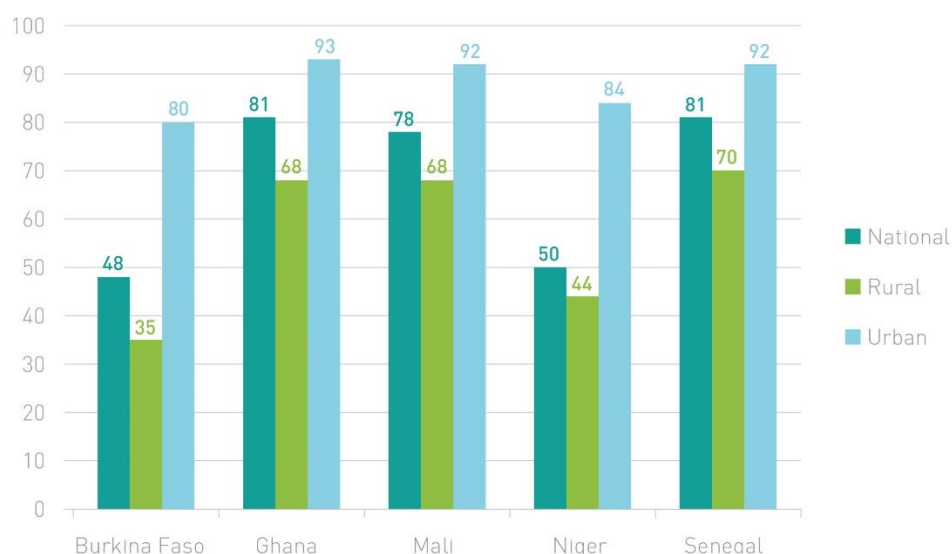
Source: UNICEF Global Database

Achieving universal and equitable access to **safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation** services for all is still far from achieved, despite progress reached in the last decades. The rapid urbanization and population growth, a rising share of informal settlements, inadequate infrastructure, governance and institutional weaknesses and deteriorating water sources are some of the major challenges.

Data on **safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation** have to be treated with caution, since national sources tend to show better results, but that is because they do not capture if water is managed in a safely way or not, and data is not comparable among countries. For example, Ghana in its Poverty Profile Report of 2015 (pg.40) presents numbers between 73% and 99% in access to drinkable water (see table 11 in Annex VI), while table 19 in Annex VI shows much lower values based on the data from WHO/UNICEF which captures the quality of that water. Still, although probably higher than in reality, national data show how the situation is worse in rural than in urban areas and among the poorest households. Unfortunately, this data is not available for the other countries.

Global data from WHO/UNICEF is used to compare results between countries. This shows that the percentage of population with **access to at least basic drinking water services** (Figure 33) is better in *urban* areas (worse in Burkina Faso and Niger, but reasonably good in Ghana, Mali and Senegal); while in *rural* areas in Burkina Faso and Niger, less than half of the population has access to basic drinking water services. Basic access is enjoyed by only 35% of the population in *rural* areas in Burkina Faso, 44% in Niger, 68% in Ghana and Mali, and 70% in Senegal; while in urban areas between 80% and 93% of the population have basic access.

**Figure 33:** Percentage of population with access to at least basic drinking water services



Source: WHO and UNICEF JMP for water supply, sanitation and hygiene. JMP Estimates by country

A closer look at access to basic drinking water services in Ghana and Mali show the differences between regions in these countries (see table 3; no data is available for the other countries), and Figure 18 in Annex VI shows how in Mali this access improves with the level of income.

**Table 3:** Access to basic drinking water services by region (%)

**IN GHANA**

Region	%
Western	77
Central	88
Greater Accra	98
Volta	59
Eastern	78
Ashanti	89
Brong Ahafo	84
Northern	50
Upper East	71
Upper West	76
National	79

**IN MALI**

Region	%
Kayes	88,7
Koulikoro	56,6
Sikasso	56,3
Ségou	71
Mopti	61,6
Tombouctou	83,9
Gao	48,7
Bamako	96,1
National	68,9

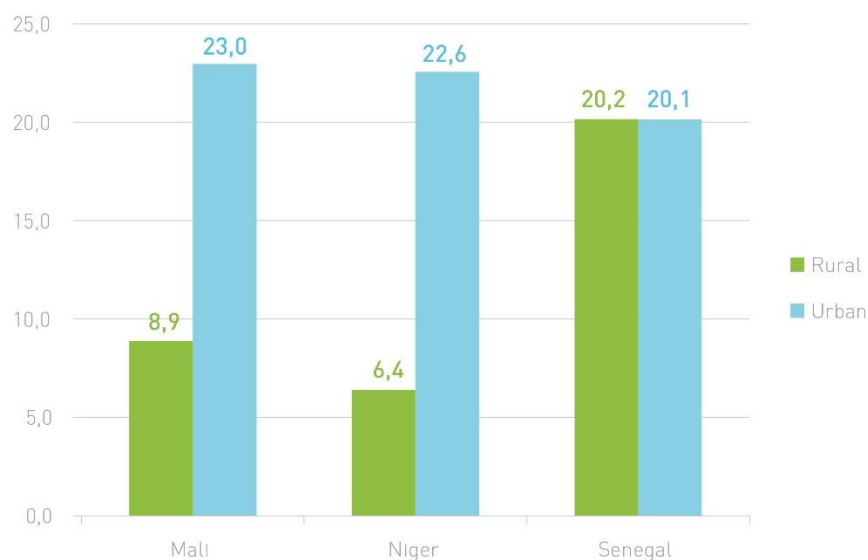
Source: Ghana: 2017/18 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Six (MICS6); Mali: Institute National de la Statistique de Mali. Consommation, pauvreté, bien être des ménages 2015-2016

The situation is much worse when looking at the access to **sanitation services**. With global data on **safely managed sanitation services** available only for Mali, Niger and Senegal (Figure 34), we find that the percentage is around 20-23% in *urban* areas, similarly in Senegal in rural areas, but as little as 9%

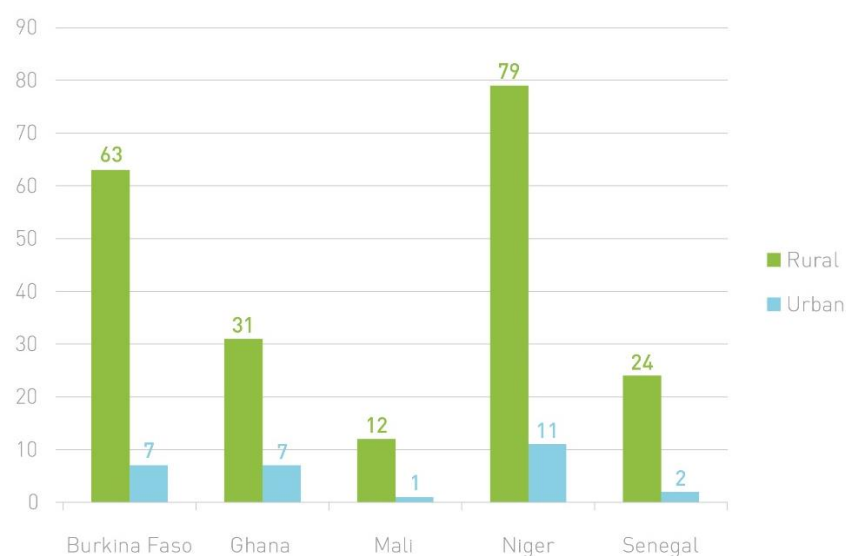
and 6,4% in rural areas in Mali and Niger respectively. In order to complete the picture with the five countries, we also look at the percentage of population that practice open defecation, as an indication of no existence of sanitary services. Again, this indicator illustrate a vast absence of sanitation services in rural areas in Niger and Burkina Faso, and considerable absence in Ghana and Senegal.<sup>86</sup> If the “safety” condition is not captured, and we use data that reflects access to at least basic sanitation services, the number look a bit better but still, very bad in general, especially for Senegal and Mali.

**Figure 34: Access and use to sanitation services in rural and urban areas**

**PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION USING SAFELY MANAGED SANITATION SERVICES**

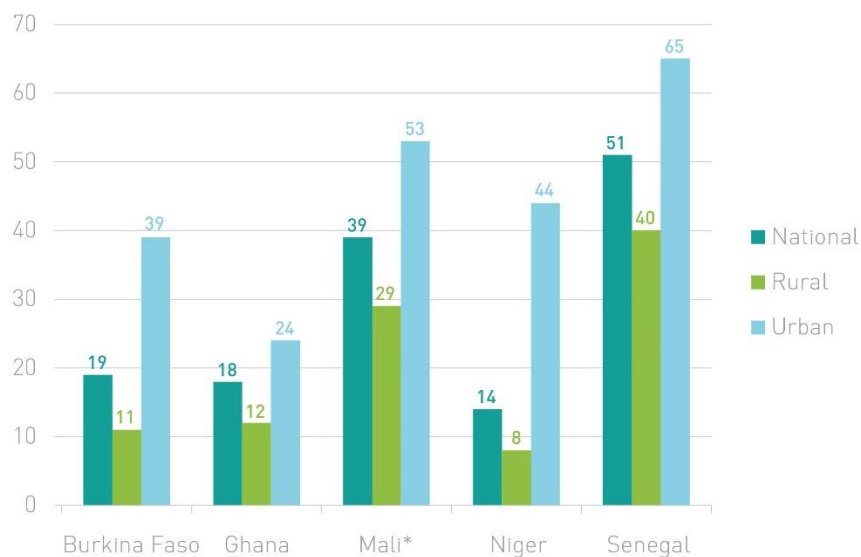


**PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION PRACTICING OPEN DEFECACTION**



<sup>86</sup> Surprising low figures appear for Mali, probably due to under reporting or bad reporting.

#### PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO AT LEAST BASIC SANITATION SERVICES



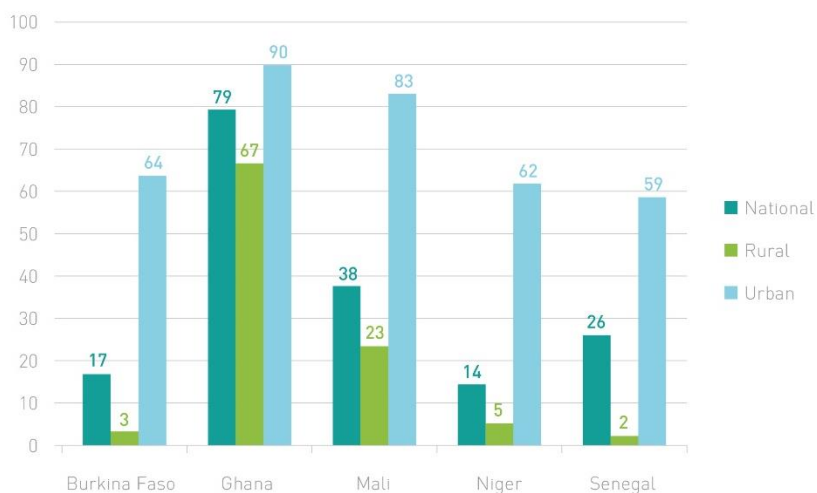
\*Includes basic and improved services

Source: WHO/UNICEF JMP Database

A closer look at data from different regions in Ghana illustrate some in-country inequalities, with the Upper East, Norther and Upper West regions clearly being the most deprived. (See tables 12 and 13 in Annex VI).

**Access to electricity** is also determinant to the people's conditions of life. Unfortunately, disaggregated data is only available by *location* (Figure 35), but is sufficient to show ominous inequalities between rural and urban areas in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal, being Ghana a bit better served in this regard. Disaggregated data by *level of income* is only available for Ghana and Mali, and shows very strong relation between access to electricity and income level. (See Table 14 18 in Annex VI).

**Figure 35: Percentage of population with access to electricity, by location**



Source: USAID DHS Program

Data for different regions in Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mali give an idea of the electricity coverage in different regions (see table 4), being the ones with worse coverage the Upper East, Upper West and

Northern regions in Ghana; Boucle de Mouhoun, Sud-Ouest, Est, Centre-Ouest, Sahel, Centre-Sud and Centre-Nord in Burkina Faso; and Tombouctou, Mopti, Kayes and Gao in Mali (note that these regions in Burkina Faso and Mali are strongly affected by conflict and insecurity).

**Table 4: Access to electricity by regions in Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mali**

#### GHANA

Access to electricity by region

Year: 2016/17

Source: Ghana Poverty Profile Report 2005-2017

Region	%
Western	88
Central	85
Greater Accra	94
Volta	75
Eastern	75
Ashanti	89
Brong Ahafo	73
Northern	66
Upper East	49
Upper West	59

#### BURKINA FASO

Access to electricity by region

Year: 2017/18

Source: USAID DHS Program (from MIS survey)

Region	%
Total	16,8
Ouagadougou	71,4
Centre (including Ouagadougou)	60,0
Boucle de Mouhoun	5,2
Centre-Sud	10,8
Plateau Central	7,2
Centre-Est	11,9
Centre-Nord	8,9
Centre-Ouest	8,2
Est	7,5
Nord	12,7
Cascades	18,7
Hauts Bassins	32,1
Region : Sahel	8,6
Region : Sud-Ouest	6,2

#### MALI

Access to electricity by region

Source: Institute National de la Statistique de Mali. Consommation, pauvreté, bien-être des ménages 2015-2016

Region	%
Kayes	24,7
Koulikoro	43,8
Sikasso	69,6
Ségou	43,8
Mopti	23,1
Tombouctou	13,7
Gao	24,9
Bamako	84,9
National	44,8

## Sub-domain 5.B: Enjoy adequate housing quality and security

Unfortunately, there is no disaggregated data for indicators in this domain. Only a general illustration about the percentage of population that live in urban areas in some kind of inadequate housing, which goes from around 30% in Senegal and Ghana, to 47% in Mali, 62% in Niger and 58% in Burkina Faso. (See Figure 20 in Annex VI).

The gap in transportation infrastructure and services is marked by the colonial past, when port facilities were developed to facilitate exports. This would explain the big inequalities between North and South and between coastal and land-locked cities.<sup>87</sup> Table 15 in Annex VI provides details about the proportion of households that can access public transportation in less than 30 minutes in different regions in Burkina Faso. Only in Centre region, Hauts-Bassins, Nord and Boucle de Mouhoun, at least half of the population have access to public transport within less than 30 minutes.

<sup>87</sup> Yabi, G. (2017) 'Inequalities in West Africa: Urban-Rural and North-South divides', [Ideas for Development](#), Blog coordinated by the Agence Française de Développement



## Domain 2. PHYSICAL AND LEGAL SECURITY

### Inequality in the capability to live in personal safety and legal security

For individuals to be capable of living the kind of life they have reason to value, they need to be and feel physically safe and secure, and be protected and treated equally and fairly by the law. This domain covers the key elements of physical security through indicators and measures that highlight absence of physical security as well as subjective measures reporting individuals' sense of physical security and safety, and it also looks at legal security.

Inequality, discrimination and social exclusion are some of the defining challenges confronting the world today. They not only pose an obstacle to the realisation of the right to development, but also remain among the major threats to peace, security, and human rights.<sup>88</sup>

Human rights and security situation have deteriorated in the West African region. In **Mali**, attacks by non-state armed groups against civilians spiked, the army committed atrocities during counterterrorism operations, and intercommunal violence killed hundreds and precipitated a humanitarian crisis. Certain regions are more affected by this crisis, which also has an ethnic dimension: during 2018, at least 300 civilians were killed in over 100 incidents of communal violence in central and northern Mali. The violence pitted ethnically aligned self-defense groups against communities accused of supporting non-state armed groups, resulting in the pillage and destruction of dozens of villages and displacement of tens of thousands.<sup>89</sup> Today, the conditions have deteriorated across Mali border areas into neighbouring countries (Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad lake), and already one third of the territory in Burkina Faso is highly unstable.

Despite its importance for development and human wellbeing, this domain of inequality has not been studied enough. The literature review provides little information about inequalities regarding physical and legal security in West African region, despite being a region of high political instability and conflicts since 1990.<sup>90</sup> There is almost no data that would allow a sound analysis in this regard. More efforts need to be done to identify the specific expressions of security inequality regionally and by country, as well as the potential policy measures to reduce this gap.

In addition, the Multidimensional Inequalities Framework (MIF) is not well equipped to analysis contexts of fragile states, armed conflicts and terrorism, which in the countries studies is crucial. Future versions of the MIF will include suggestions about how to analyse inequalities in these contexts.

### Sub-domain 2.A: Be free from violence including sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence and violence based on who you are

Inequality and insecurity are mutually reinforcing. The more disadvantaged people in terms of wealth and power tend to be more vulnerable to multiple expressions of violence, including sexual and gender-based aggressions. Beyond the direct impact on women and children, violence against women

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<sup>88</sup> 'UN experts urge more action on inequalities that threaten peace and security, development, and human rights', United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 4 December 2018. Available [here](#).

<sup>89</sup> Human Rights Watch, available at <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/mali>

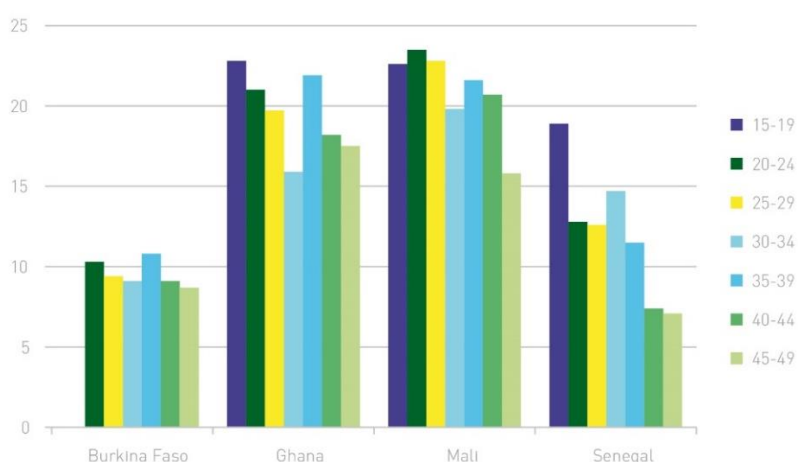
<sup>90</sup> Yabi Olakounlé Gilles (2015)

has wider social and economic consequences, including on infant and child nutritional and health outcomes. It is estimated that 37% of **African women** are victims of violence, mostly inflicted by their intimate partners, and the true prevalence of violence against women is likely to be grossly under-reported. In general, violence against women is socially accepted across the region,<sup>91</sup> and sexual violence in marriage is not the subject of social, judicial or even psychological care in these countries.

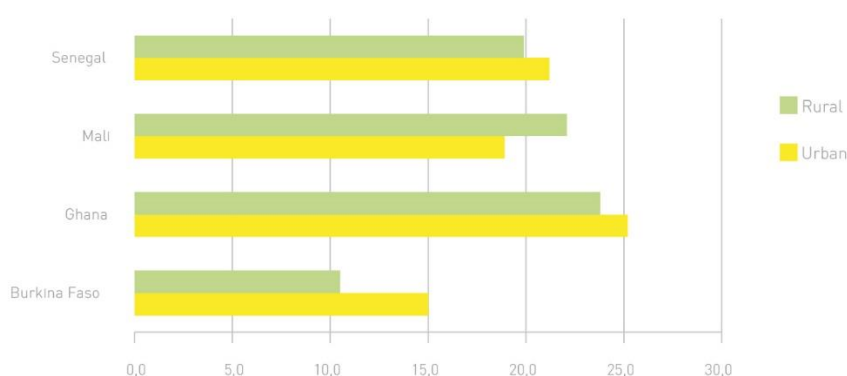
At the household level, between 10% and 20% of married *women* have experienced **physical or sexual violence** committed by their husband or partner (Figure 36), being the *youngest* women the most affected, especially in Senegal and Ghana.<sup>92</sup> The percentage of women that report having experienced physical or sexual violence is greater in *urban* areas (except in Mali), although this could indicate a more open recognition of the facts among women in urban areas. There is no clear *income* effect in the four countries with disaggregated data; but generally speaking, violence against women and girls is a cross-cutting issue, regardless the education of income level of women who experience it.<sup>93</sup> It is worth mentioning that there is no data of this type for Niger.

**Figure 36:** Percentage of ever married women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence committed by their husband or partner in the previous 12 months

#### BY AGE



#### BY LOCATION

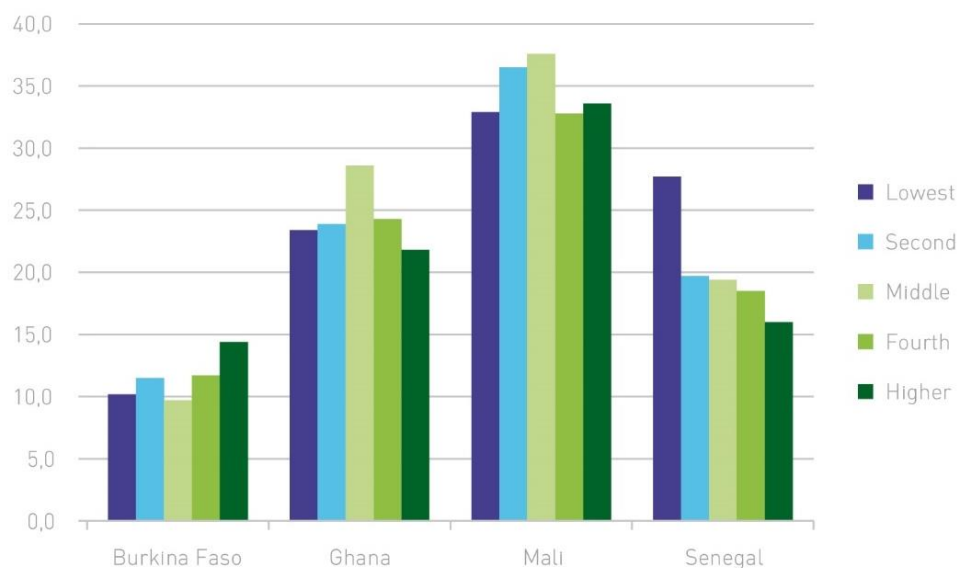


<sup>91</sup> UNDP (2016) Africa Human Development Report 2016: Accelerating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa.

<sup>92</sup> There is no data of this type for Niger

<sup>93</sup> UN Stats, The World's Women 2015, [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/WorldsWomen2015\\_chapter6\\_t.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/WorldsWomen2015_chapter6_t.pdf)

## BY INCOME



	15-49	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	Year
Burkina Faso	9,3		10,3	9,4	9,1	10,8	9,1	8,7	2010
Ghana	19,2	22,8	21,0	19,7	15,9	21,9	18,2	17,5	2008
Mali	21,5	22,6	23,5	22,8	19,8	21,6	20,7	15,8	2006
Senegal	12,2	18,9	12,8	12,6	14,7	11,5	7,4	7,1	2017

	Lowest	Second	Middle	Fourth	Higher	Year
Burkina Faso	10,2	11,5	9,7	11,7	14,4	2010
Ghana	23,4	23,9	28,6	24,3	21,8	2008
Mali	32,9	36,5	37,6	32,8	33,6	2012/2013
Senegal	27,7	19,7	19,4	18,5	16,0	2017

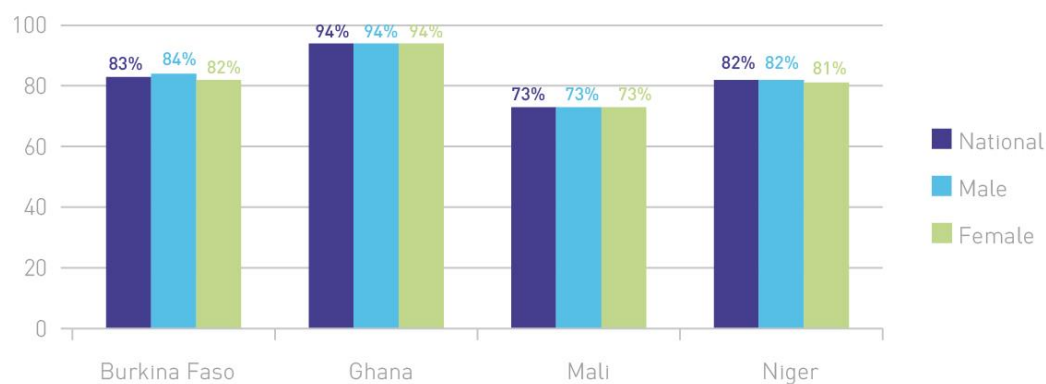
Source: SDG

The percentage of children aged 0-17 years who have experienced any **physical punishment and/or psychological aggression** by caregivers (Figure 37) is distressingly high in the four countries with disaggregated data (Burkina Faso 83%, Ghana 94%, Mali 73% and Niger 82%; no disaggregated comparable data has been found for Senegal<sup>94</sup>). According to the available data, there is no significant difference between girls and boys victims, neither between rural and urban areas, or by income.

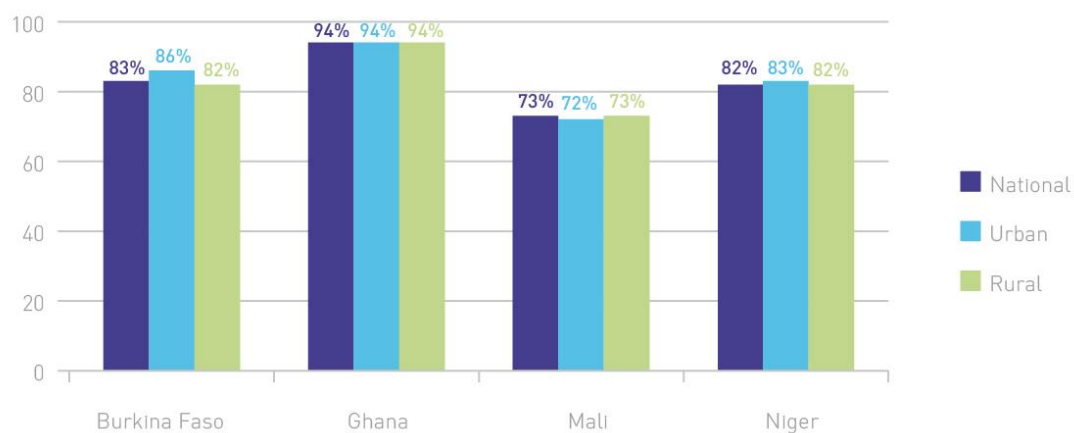
<sup>94</sup> UNICEF provides data on the percentage of children aged 1-14 who have suffered psychological or physical aggressions during the last month in Senegal: 73.7%. UNICEF (2015), Situation des enfants et des femmes, Enquête par grappes à indicateurs multiples, Dakar urbain 2015-2016.

**Figure 37:** Percentage of children aged 0-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers

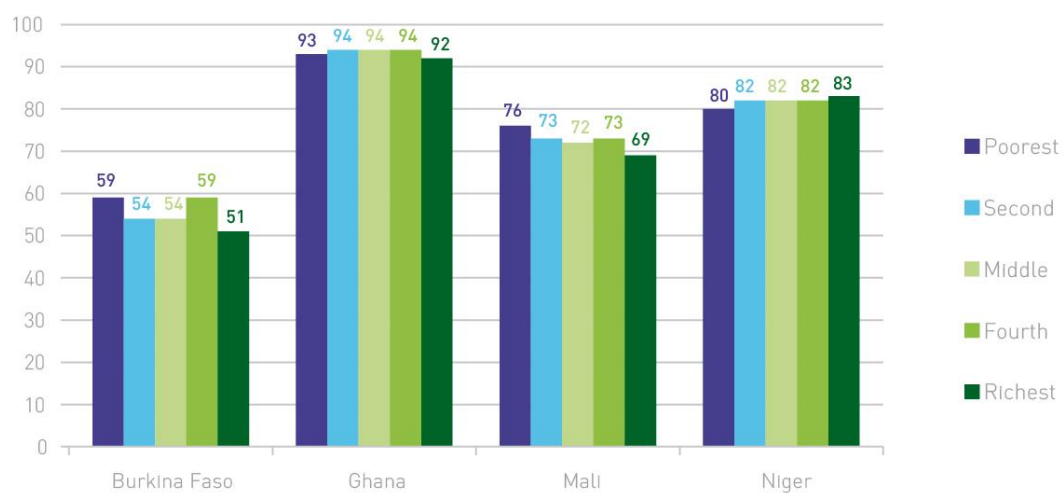
**BY SEX**



**BY LOCATION**



**BY INCOME**

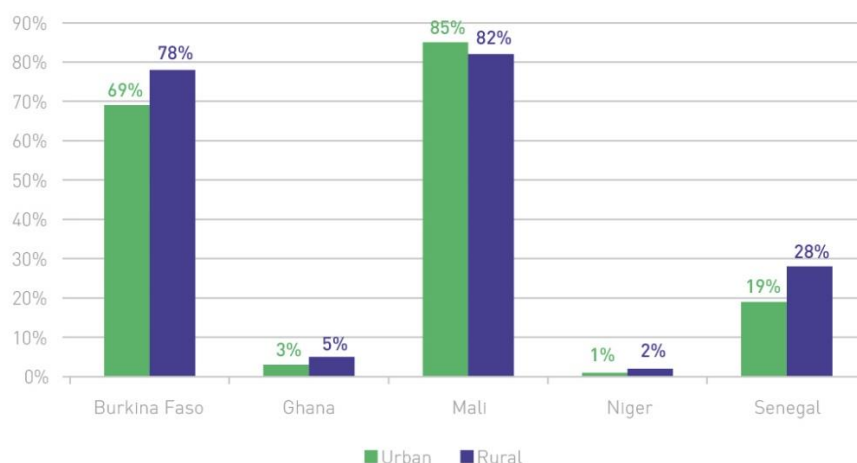


Source: UNICEF Global Database

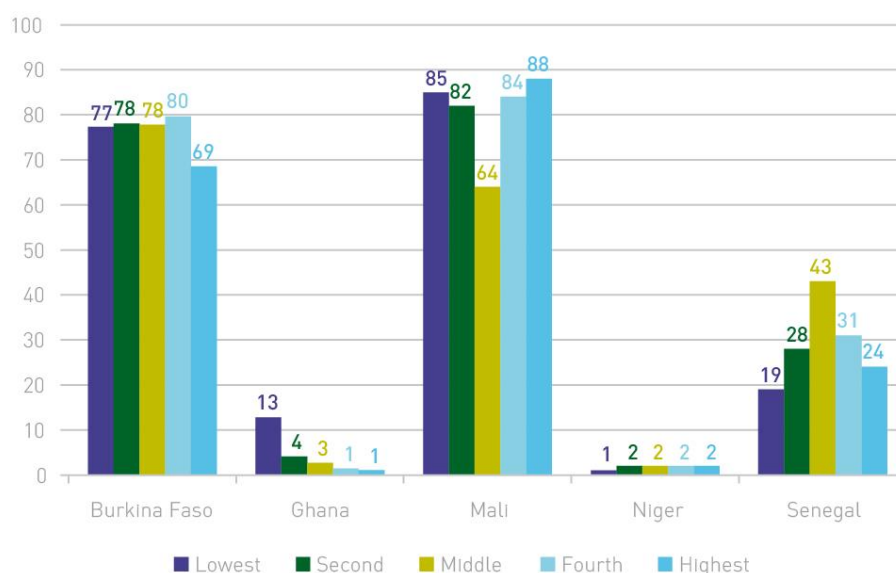
**Female genital mutilation** (Figure 38) is still an extended practice in Mali (83% of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years), in Burkina Faso (76%)<sup>95</sup> and, to lesser extent, in Senegal (23%); while the percentage is much lower in Ghana (4%) and Niger (2%).<sup>96</sup> Disaggregated data show that there is a slightly greater incidence of this practice in *rural* areas in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Niger and Ghana; while in Mali the practice is more extended in *urban* areas. Inequalities by *income* follow a different pattern in each country: only in Ghana we see a decrease in the percentage of affected girls and women with higher income; in Burkina Faso the percentage only decreases in the 20% richest, and in Senegal in the richest 40%.

Figure 38: Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation

#### BY LOCATION



#### BY INCOME



Source: UNICEF Global Database

<sup>95</sup> Burkina Faso reports 67,6% in 2015 according to the Enquête multisectorielle continue (EMC), available here: <https://lefaso.net/spip.php?article75534>

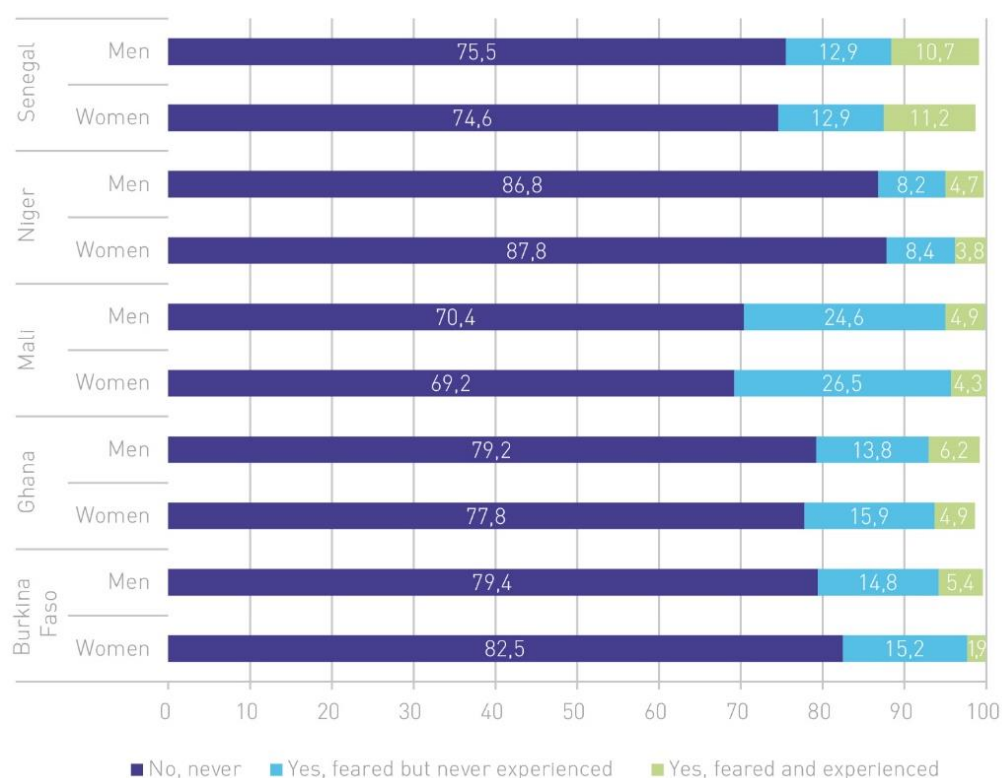
<sup>96</sup> UNICEF Global Database 2017, based on Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and other nationally representative surveys.

**Genital mutilation in Burkina Faso** is common practice, although in the last years there has been a slight tendency to reduce its incidence: according to the National Multisectoral Survey (EMC), 76% of women between 15 to 49 years old were affected in 2010, and 67,6% in 2015, and for girls between 0 and 14 years old, the rate has decrease from 13,3% in 2010 to 11,3% in 2015. The rate of prevalence varies between different ethnic groups and different regions; for example, the higher proportion of girls affected are found in the Centre-Est (90%), Nord (88%), plateau-Central (88%) and centre-Nord (87%). The reduction is the result of several campaigns to sensitize the population about the negative health consequences of the genital mutilation practices, together with a strict law against this practice<sup>97</sup>; since 2017, there is a national strategic plan 2016-2020 to eliminate this practice.<sup>98</sup>

The percentage of **people that feared or experienced violence in the neighbourhood** according to the Afrobarometer (Figure 39), is about 30% in Mali, 25% in Senegal, 22% in Ghana, 20% in Burkina Faso and 12% in Niger; with more *men* than women having experienced violence in all countries except in Senegal, and more *women* than men feeling unsafe in the same countries. This is one of the few sources (and indicators) that provide data disaggregated by race; the data is not complete, does not specify sufficiently the discrimination between groups, and the sample is too small to allow for conclusions.

**Figure 39: Percentage of people that feared or experienced violence in neighbourhood**

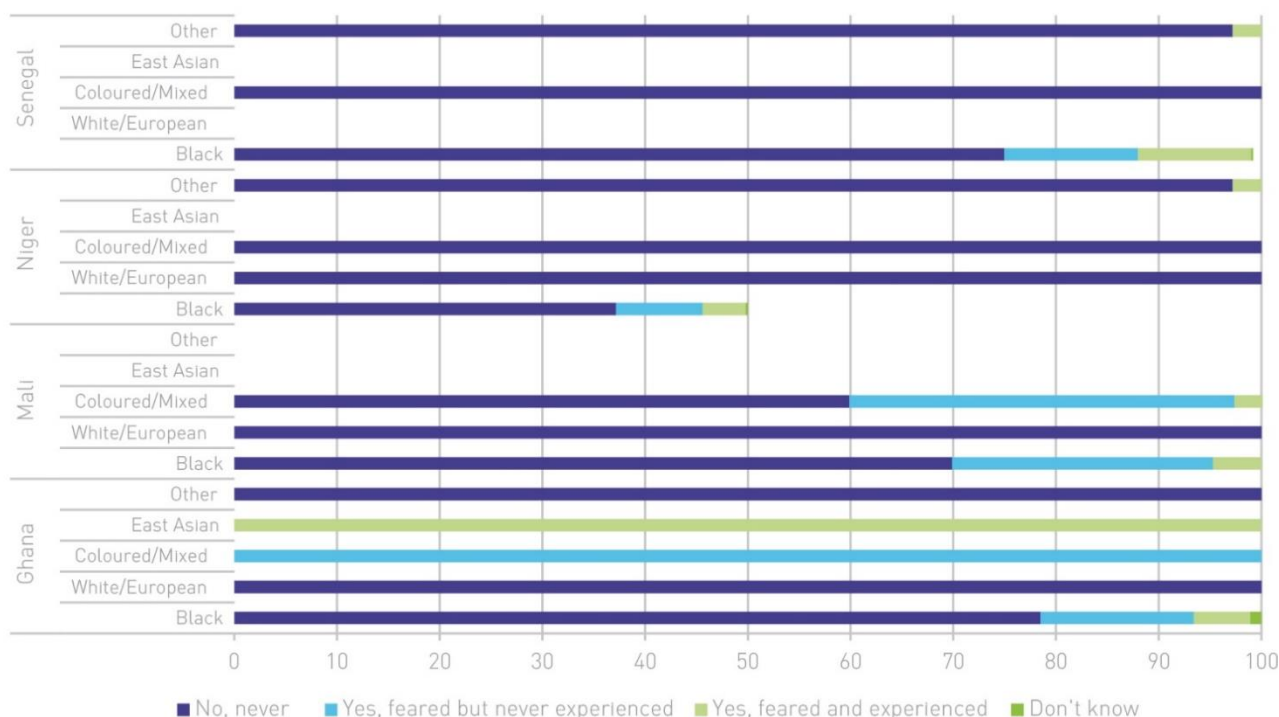
BY SEX



<sup>97</sup> Before this national strategy, there was the adoption of law N° 043/96 / ADP of November 13th, that punishes the guilty, ranging from a imprisonment of six to three years and a fine of 150,000 to 900,000 CFA francs, or one of these two penalties, against anyone who harms or attempts to harm the integrity of the female genital organ by total removal, excision, infibulation, numbness or by any other means.

<sup>98</sup> Mutilations génitales féminines : Redoubler d'ardeur pour éliminer ces pratiques à la peau dure; 31st January 2017; LeFaso.Net; <https://lefaso.net/spip.php?article75534>

## BY RACE

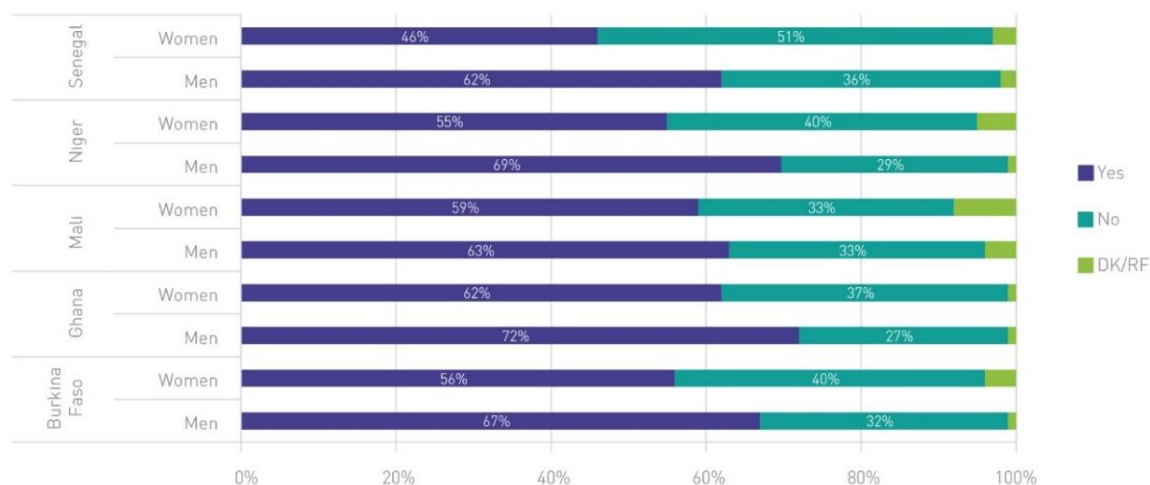


Source: Afrobarometer

Gallup Services have kindly provided the requested data for this indicator<sup>99</sup>, and this data is more reliable (Figure 40). In particular, we see the percentage of people that report feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live, disaggregated by sex, age and household income. In the five countries, the percentage who report not feeling safe is greater for women than for men. If we pay attention to the age of respondents, there is no clear pattern among the five countries; and the same occurs if we look into the different income level of participants.

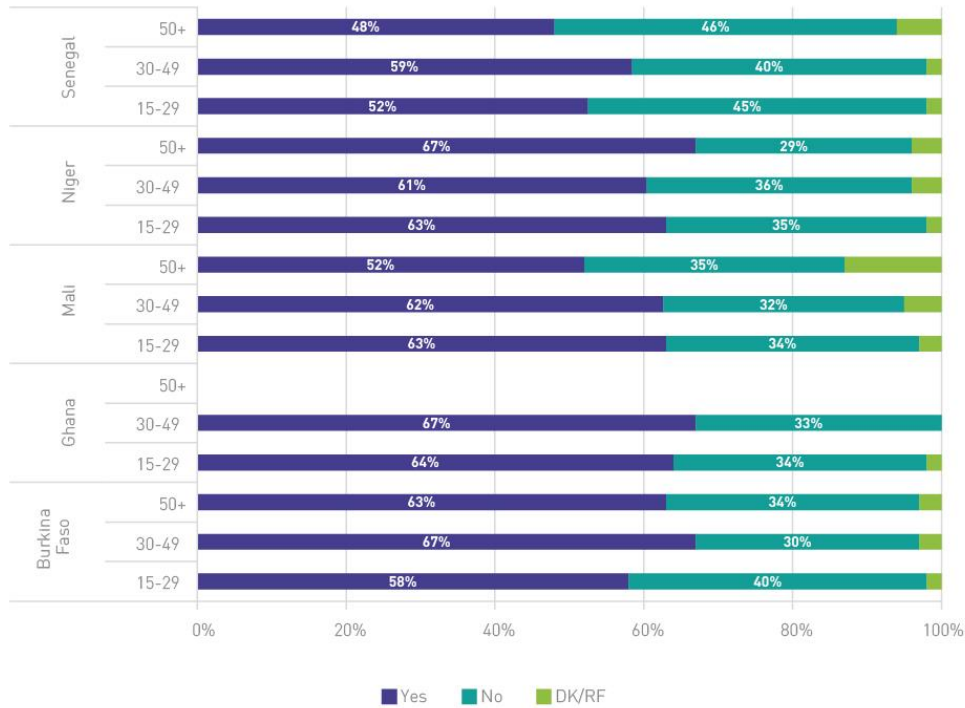
Figure 40: Percentage of people that report feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live

## BY SEX

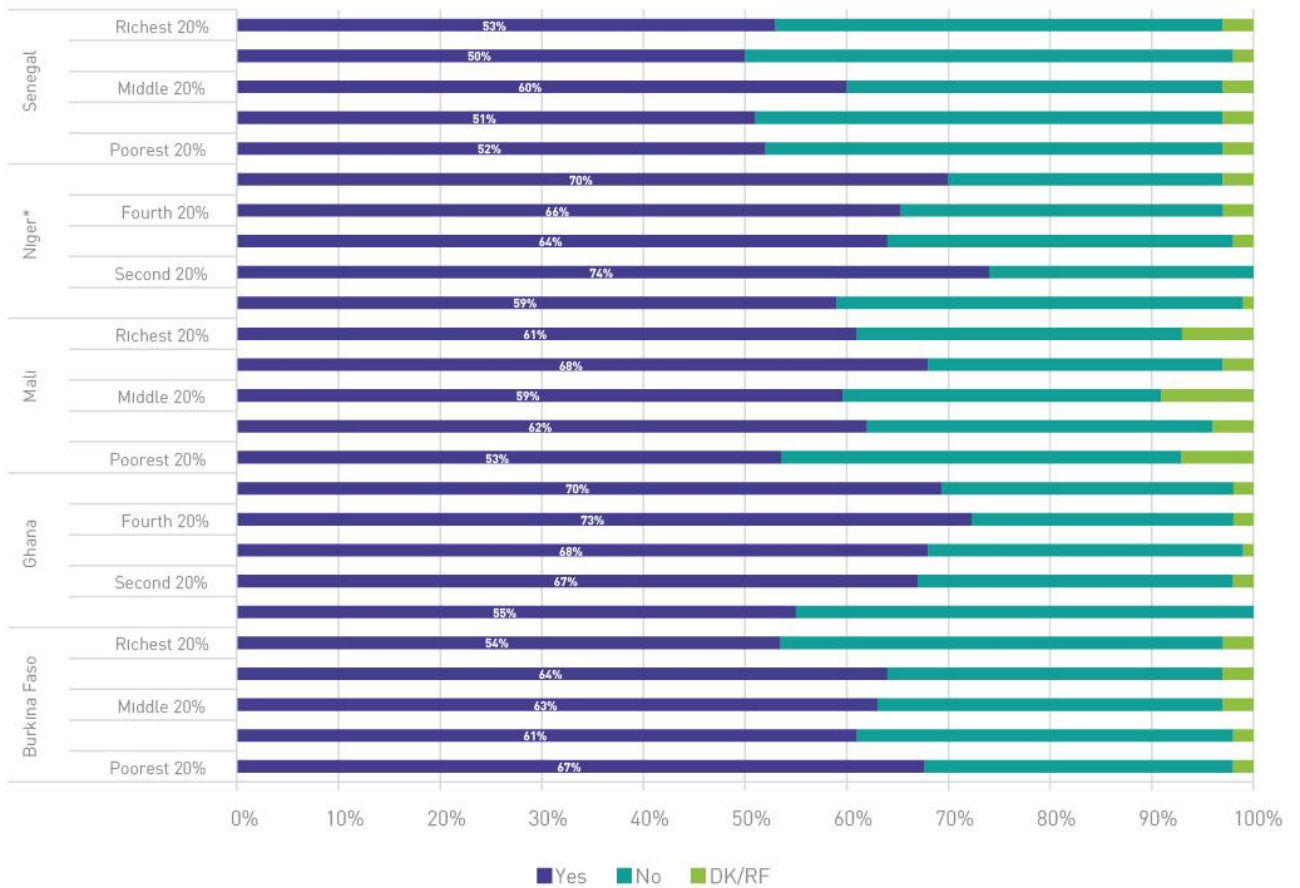


<sup>99</sup> Free of charge, for this Oxfam research

## BY AGE



## BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Source: Gallup World Poll, 2018



## Sub-domain 2.C: Be treated with equality, fairness and non-discrimination before the law, within the criminal or the administrative systems

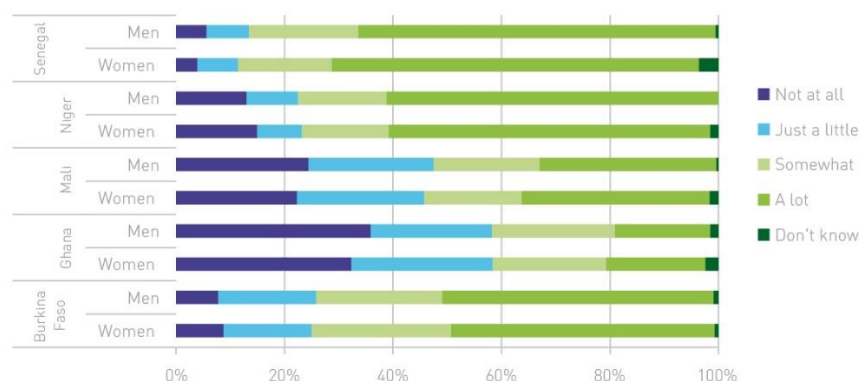
Disparities in **access to justice and personal security** also exist. Specific groups defined by ethnicity, religion or other characteristics are more likely to be victims of stigmatization and violence (including by the military forces and the police) and to be treated unfairly by the legal system. This reality is aggravated by the role of the State as security provider in some contexts, like in the Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali), which derives in “communities’ loss of trust in the defence and security forces, (so that) the ‘total security’ approach is doomed to fail”.<sup>100</sup>

Inequalities in **West African countries** are expressed also in the judiciary sector. Typically, the richest are almost never sentenced for more serious crimes than those committed by the poorest.<sup>101</sup> In **Senegal**, human rights issues in 2018 included torture and arbitrary arrests by security forces; harsh and potentially life-threatening prison conditions; criminal libel; lack of judicial independence; corruption; lack of accountability in cases involving violence against women and children, including genital mutilation; trafficking in persons; and forced labour. The law provides for the same legal status and rights for women as for men. Nevertheless, women faced pervasive discrimination, especially in rural areas where traditional customs and discriminatory rules of inheritance were strongest. Discrimination against individuals of lower castes continued.<sup>102</sup>

To assess the level of **trust in the criminal justice system**, whether in (a) courts’ procedural fairness and in their competence; or (b) in the police, the Afrobarometer asks how much do people trust the police (Figure 41), and Gallup<sup>103</sup> asks about the level of confidence in the judicial system and courts (Figure 42). There is no clear difference between men and women on their trust in the police, the judicial system and courts. Trust in the judicial system and courts is lower among young people in Senegal and Niger, but higher in Mali, Ghana and Burkina Faso. Richest households have more trust than poorer ones in Ghana; but in the other four countries there is no clear pattern according to income level.

**Figure 41: Percentage of people that trust the police**

BY SEX



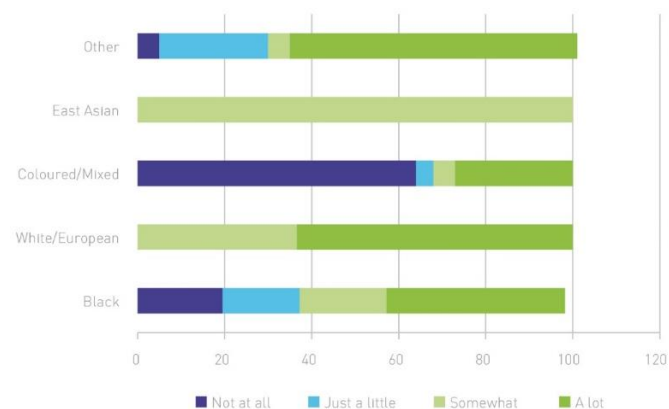
<sup>100</sup> International Alert (2018), If victims become perpetrators; <http://bit.ly/3b6EAdI>

<sup>101</sup> Yabi Olakounlé Gilles (2015)

<sup>102</sup> United States Department of State (2019) [Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Senegal](#)

<sup>103</sup> Gallup Services has kindly provided these data to Oxfam free of charge.

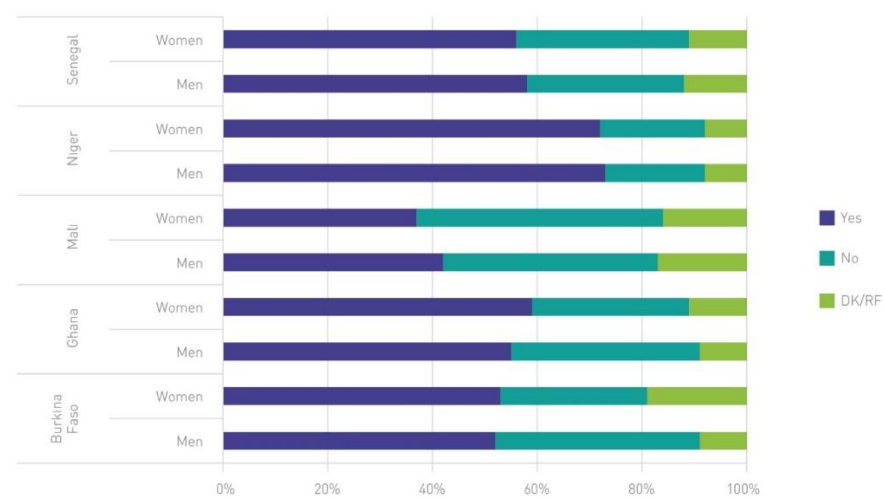
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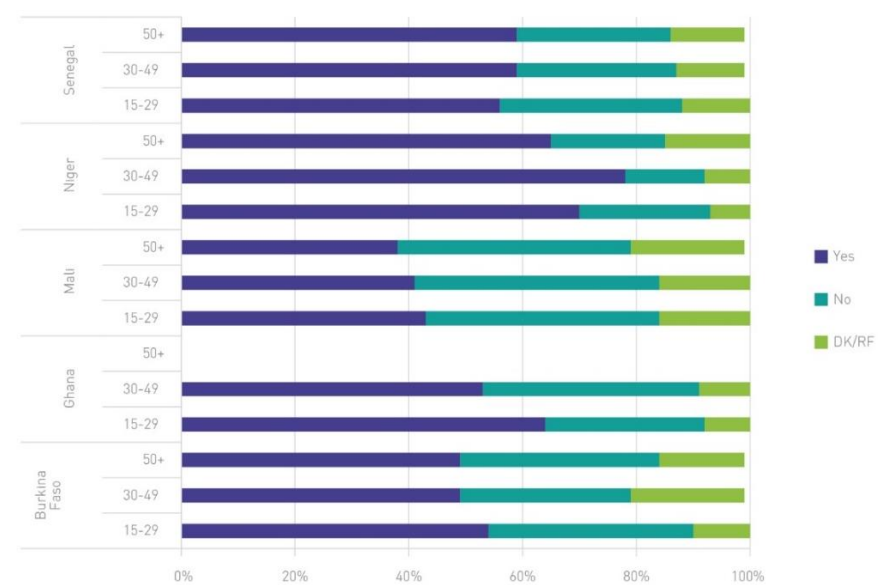
Source: Afrobarometer

**Figure 42:** Percentage of people that have confidence in the judicial system and courts

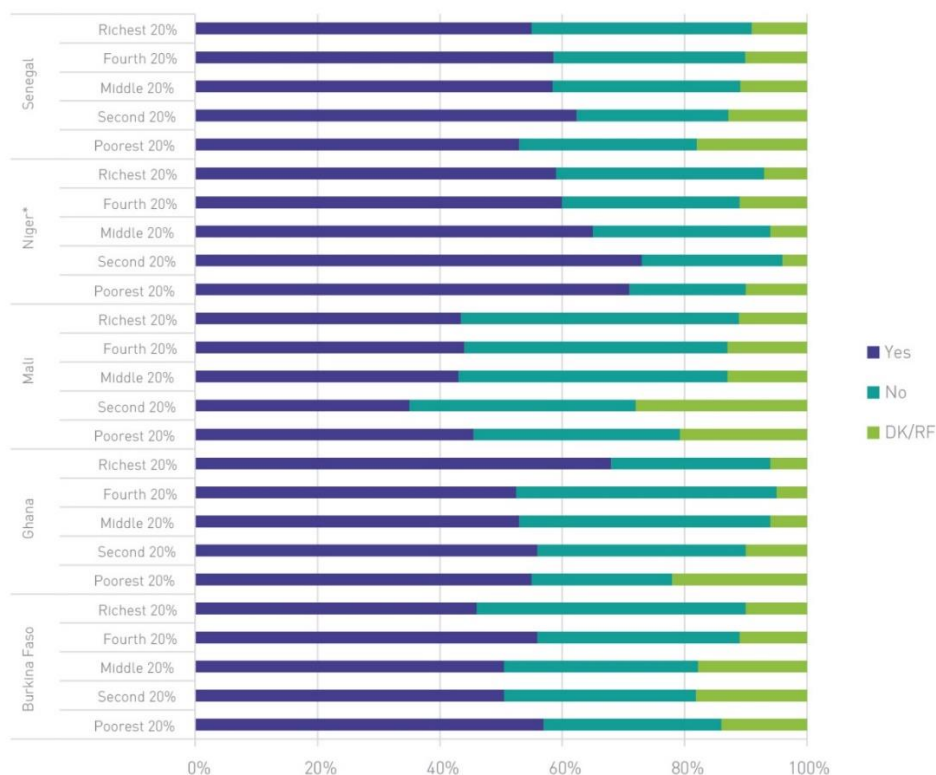
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## BY INCOME



Source: Gallup World Poll, 2018

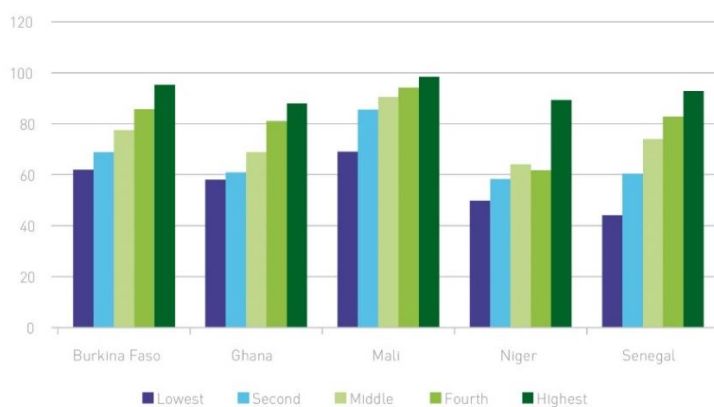
## Sub-domain 2.D Have the right to identity, name, gender and nationality

The right to identity and name is measured by the percentage of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority. In some cases, there are disparities between the legislation on eligibility for nationality and the circumstances such as mobility.

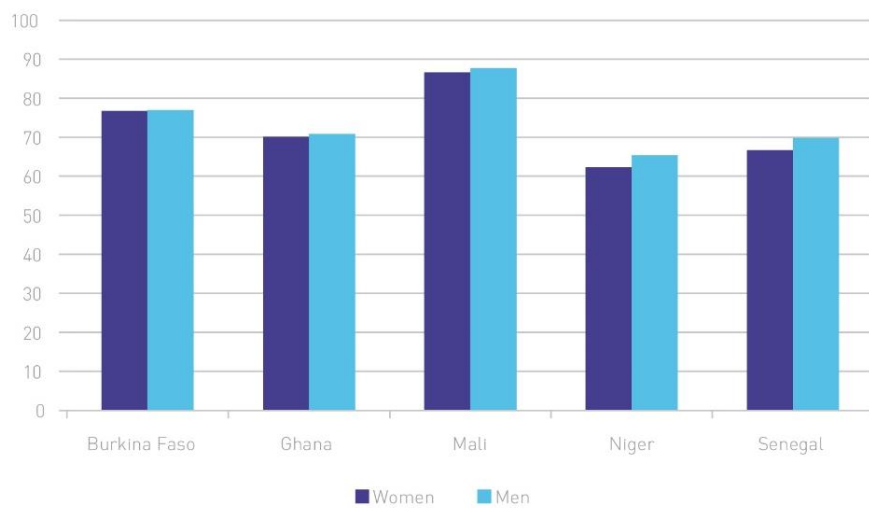
There is a slight bias in the **number of births registered** (Figure 43) in favour of *boys* in Mali, Niger and Senegal, but no gender difference in Burkina Faso and Ghana; a better rate of registers in *urban* areas compared to rural; and clearly an increase in numbers of registrations with the level of income in all the countries.

Figure 43: Registration of births (%)

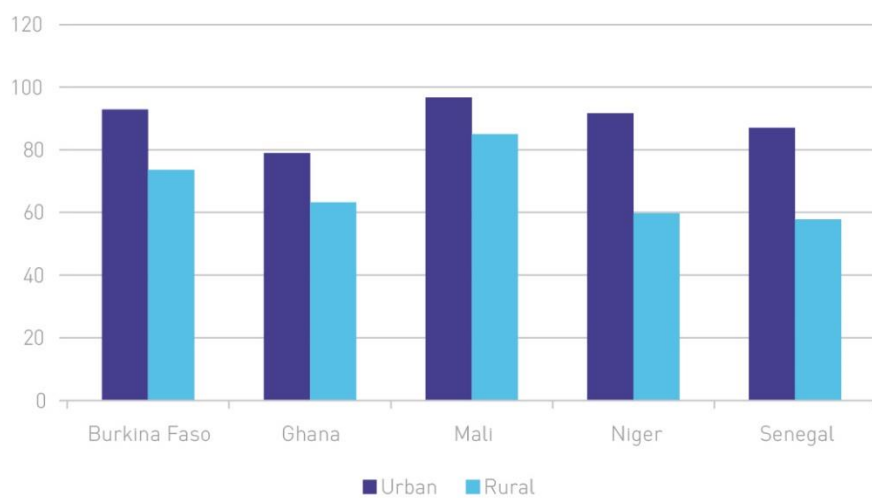
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### BY SEX



### BY LOCATION



Source: UNICEF Global Database

## Domain 6. PARTICIPATION, INFLUENCE, VOICE

### Inequality in the capability to participate in decision-making, have a voice and influence.

The capability to participate in decision-making, have a voice and influence, affects political, social and family spheres of life. This domain covers different forms of participation in democratic processes, such as voting in general and local elections, the ability to join workplace associations and community action groups, and involvement in decision-making in the family.

The relationships between economic inequalities and inequalities in the capability to participate in decision making, have a voice and influence can run both ways. This domain seeks to capture these inequalities, trying to identify links between privilege, participation and influence, corruption and evidence of powerful elites with excess influence in public and political life. Unfortunately, the data is not robust enough to express these dynamics quantitatively. For this reason, the analysis of drivers relies more on literature review explaining these relations.

#### Sub-domain 6.A: Participate in and have influence over democratic and other decision-making processes at any territorial level

Political inequalities may reinforce social and economic inequalities, since they often lead to bias in the design of policies, the way in which public revenues are collected (tax systems) and the distribution of government resources and public expenditure, including access to services and government employment and contracts; and still, inequalities in political and social participation are very little researched in depth. Breaking through these cycles of wealth and power accumulation is crucial to tackling poverty and exclusion among disadvantaged groups. Achieving equality in this domain has intrinsic value, and is also instrumental in promoting equality along other domains, or in achieving development goals.

While there is literature about the relation between ethnic motives behind vote choice, there is no evidence showing the likelihood of voting and political participation in general being linked to ethnicity.<sup>104</sup> Empirical analysis across 20 African countries revealed that women tend to be less politically active than men, rural citizens participate to a greater extent than their urban counterparts and older people participate more than younger individuals.<sup>105</sup>

High **voter turnout**<sup>106</sup> is desirable in a democracy because it increases the chance that the political system reflects the will of a large number of individuals, and that the government enjoys a high degree of legitimacy. In the last elections in the five countries, **voter turnout** has been below OECD average (68%), being very low in Mali (37.24), quite low in Senegal (53.66), and still low but better in Burkina Faso (60.13), Niger (66.27) and Ghana (67.55) (see Table 16 in Annex IV). The current context of increasing numbers of internally displaced people may further decrease the level of participation (especially of the most vulnerable people) in the forthcoming general elections in Niger and Burkina Faso in November 2020. A survey from Afrobarometer indicates higher **reported participation** (Figure 44) by men in all

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<sup>104</sup> Issakson, A. (2010) 'Political participation in Africa: Participatory inequalities and the role of resources', Afrobarometer Working Paper 121

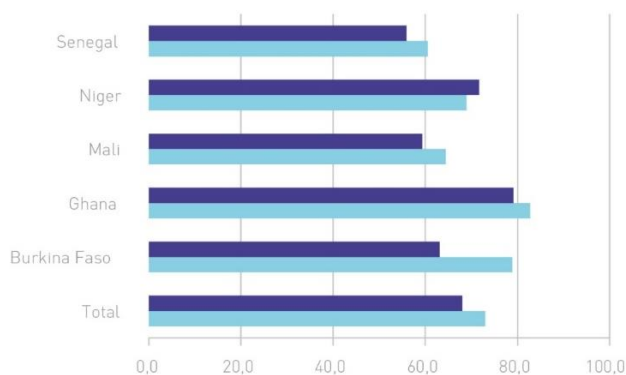
<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> Voter turnout is defined as the percentage of the registered population that voted during an election and is a measure of citizens' participation in the political process.

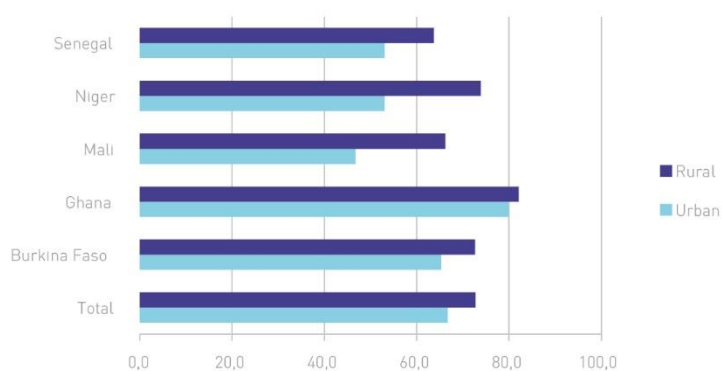
countries except Niger is a bit higher than female, and, interestingly, also higher in rural than in urban areas. Reported participation increases with age, with a considerable difference between participation of young people (18-25 years old, around 40%), and the rest (between 60-70% for 26-35 years old, and above 70% for all the rest, except in Senegal).

**Figure 44:** Percent of respondent who reported participating in the last election

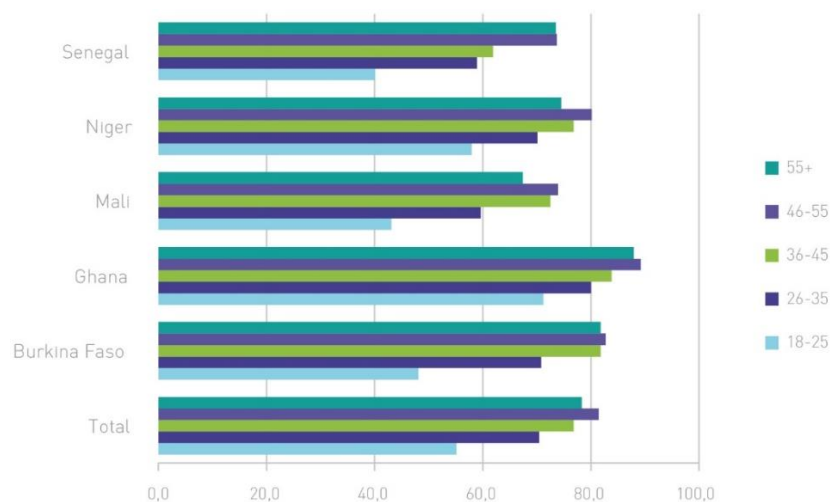
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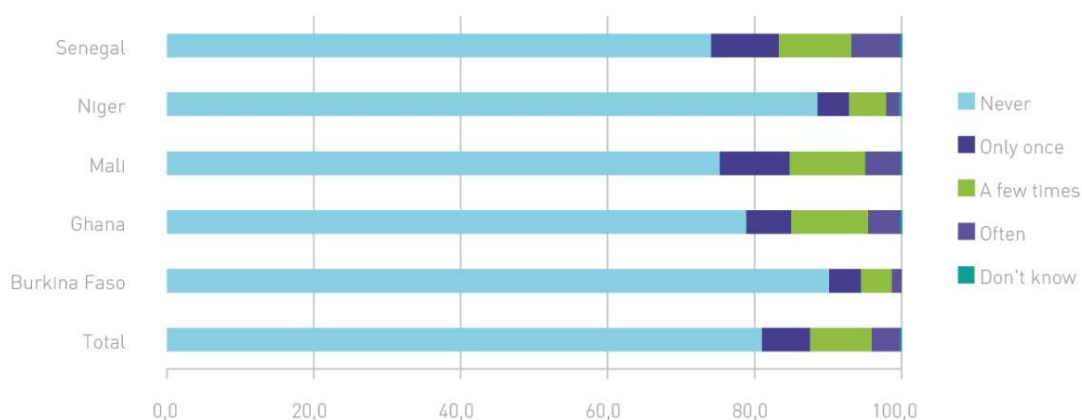


Source: Afrobarometer (survey 2016/2018)

The **percentage of seats occupied in national parliaments and local governments** by different groups is a good indicator of representativeness of the institutions. Women have become much more visible in African politics since 1995, and their representation in parliament has increased markedly. Still, despite efforts to promote female political participation, with the adoption of quotas in six countries, women participation remains disproportionately low compared to men, and in West Africa, women only accounted for 16% of MPs on average in 2017.<sup>107</sup> In Senegal, the proportion of female parliament representatives almost doubled in the last five years, from 23% in 2012 to 42% in 2017, compared to only 9% in Mali, 13.4% Burkina Faso, 13% in Ghana and 17% in Niger (see table 17 in Annex VI).<sup>108</sup>

Afrobarometer also provides the **percentage of people interviewed who have formally contacted local representatives, national government representative or a political party** in the last 12 months (Figure 45). On average in the five countries, more than 80% of the population has never formally contacted any local representative, national government representative or a political party (74% in Senegal, 75% in Mali, 78% in Ghana, 88% in Niger and 90% in Burkina Faso); and just less than 4% on average (6.6% in Senegal and 1.3% in Burkina Faso) do make these contacts often. Of those that have contacted, there were more than double of men than women in all countries (a bit less in Senegal), and they tend to be older, over 36, in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali; while in Niger and Senegal, the young (18-25) have been more active. There is no pattern in the difference depending on living location.

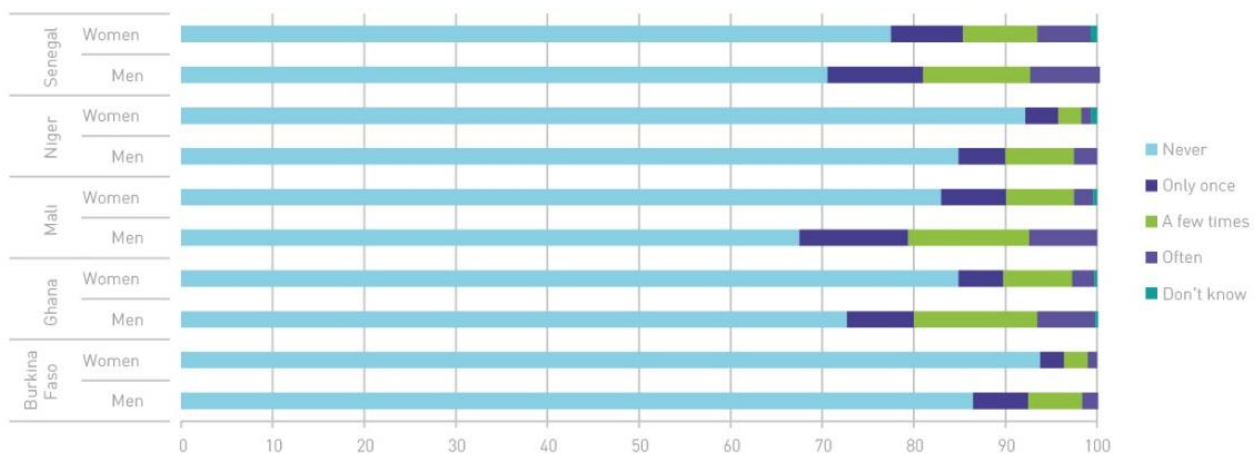
**Figure 45:** Percentage who have formally contacted local representatives / national government representative / political party in the last 12 months (2016/2018)



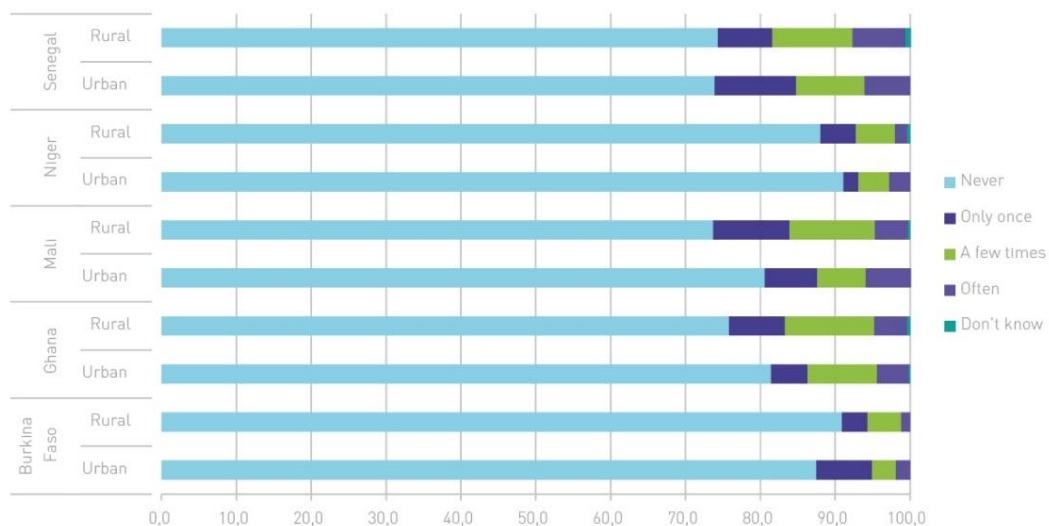
<sup>107</sup> AUC/OECD (2018) *Africa's Development Dynamics 2018: Growth, Jobs and Inequalities*.

<sup>108</sup> UNDP (2016) *Africa Human Development Report 2016: Accelerating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa*; and Inter Parliamentary Union.

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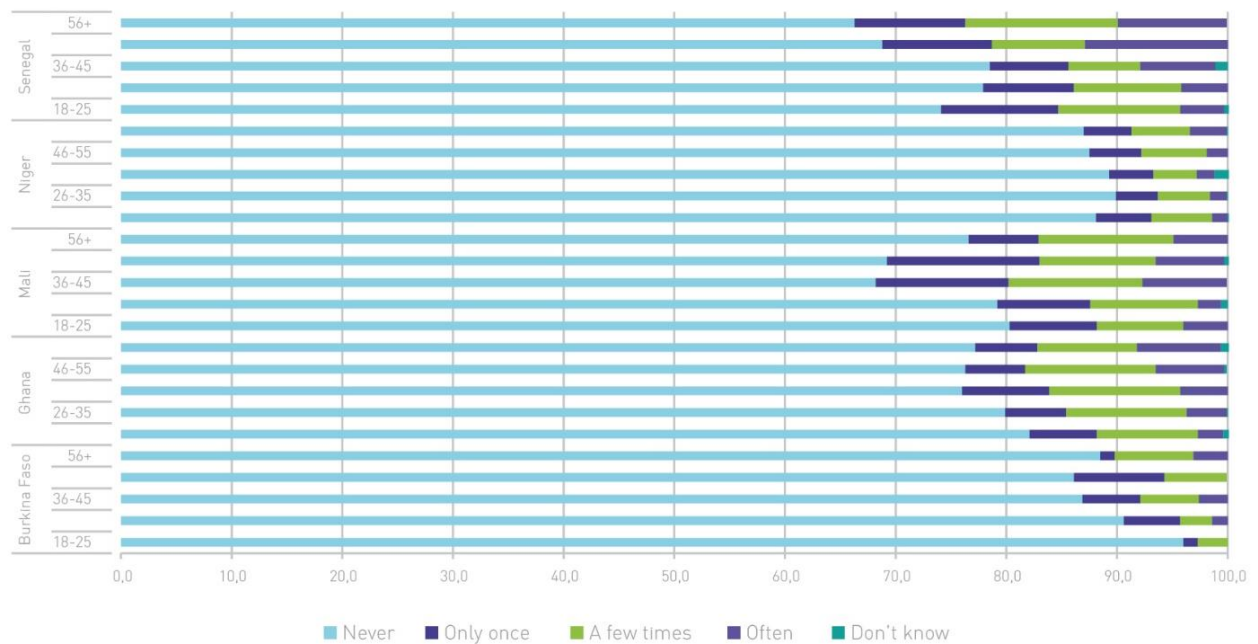


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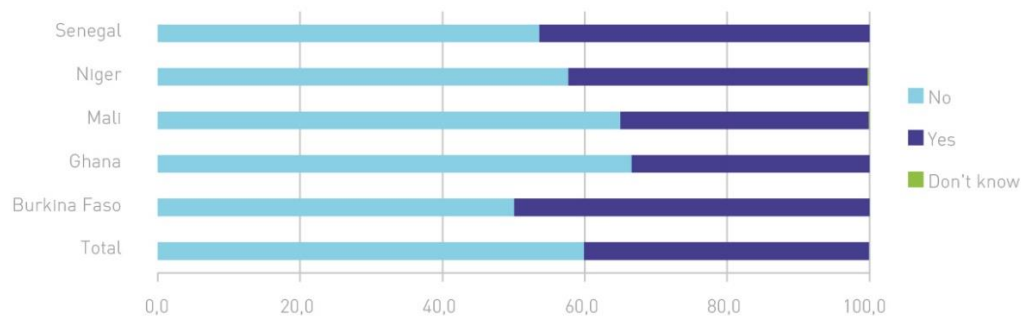
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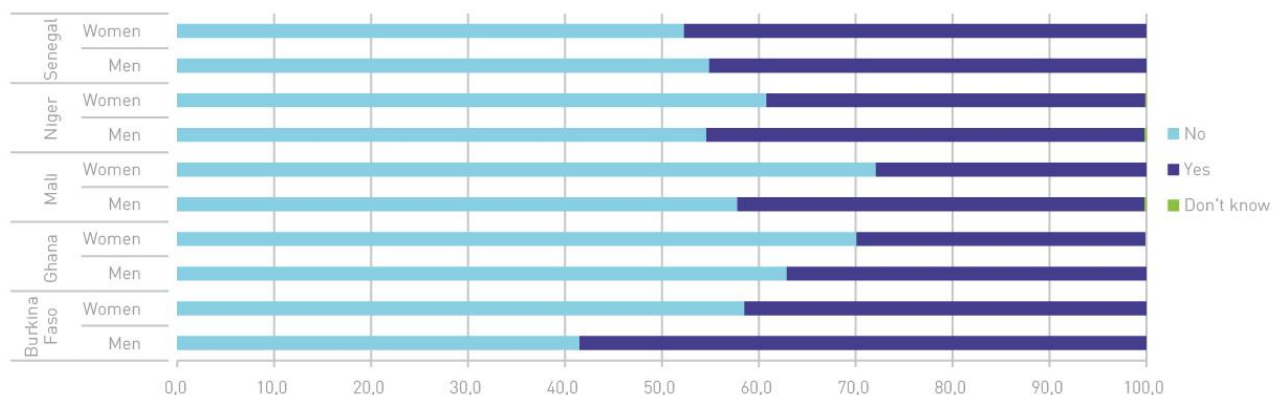
Source: Afrobarometer

Similarly, the **percentage who attended a political rally, meeting or speech** in last 12 months (Figure 46) is around 40% (ranging from 50% in Burkina Faso to 33% in Ghana). Except in Senegal, there were more men than women that attended a campaign rally, and more in rural than in urban areas. This could be explained by the fact that, for people living in communities in rural areas, rallies, meetings and speeches occur in their communities, making it easier to attend; while in urban locations information about these events does not reach everyone, and when it does, it is more difficult to make the time and physically reach the place. In all countries except Senegal, participation was higher among middle age people (36-45), but in Senegal, participation of 56+ was higher.

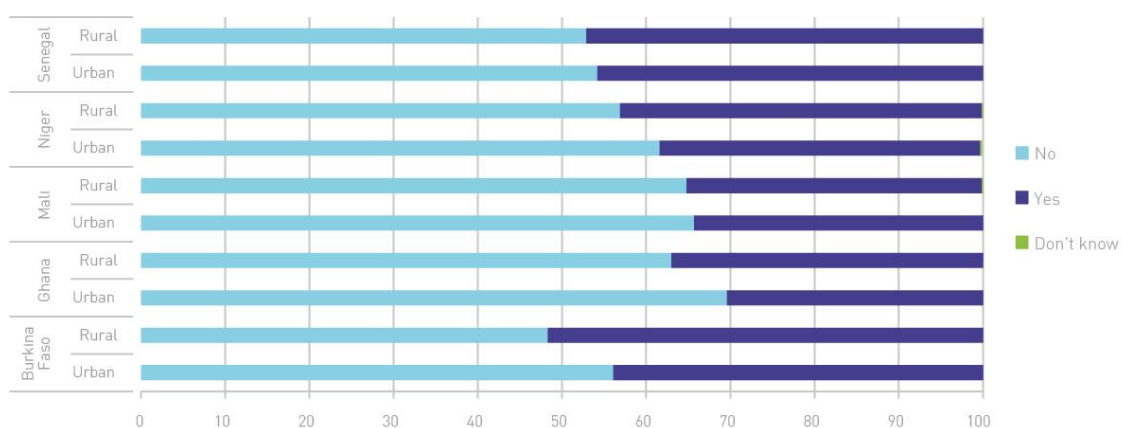
**Figure 46:** Percentage who report having attended a campaign rally in the last elections



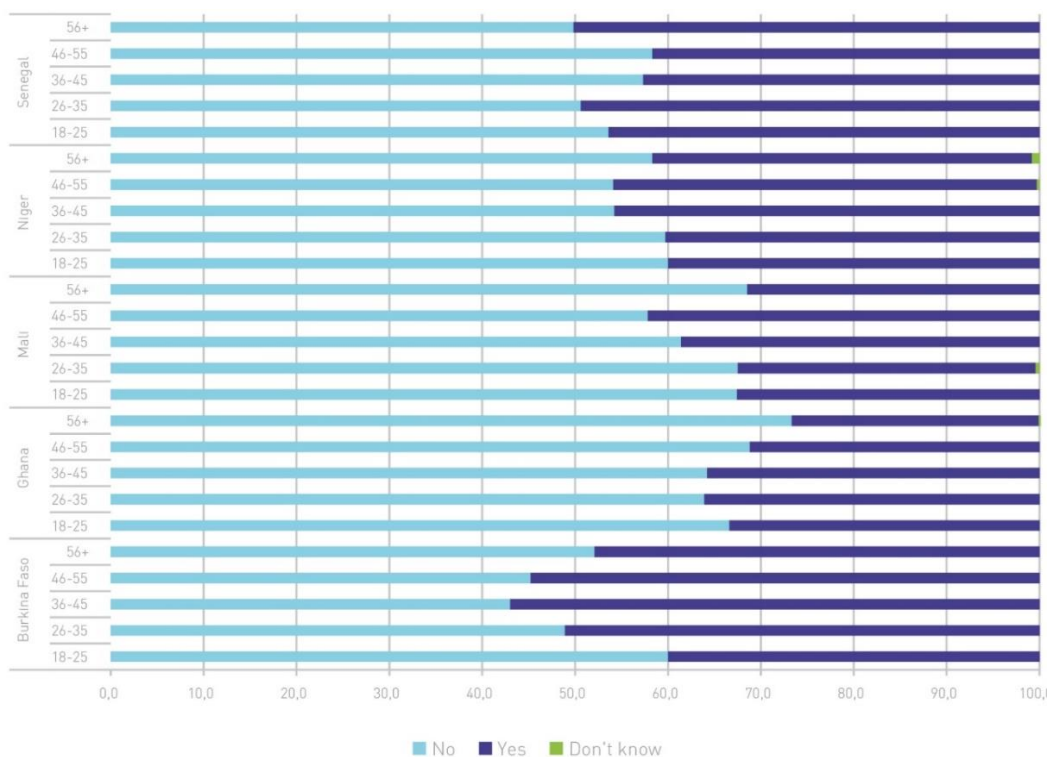
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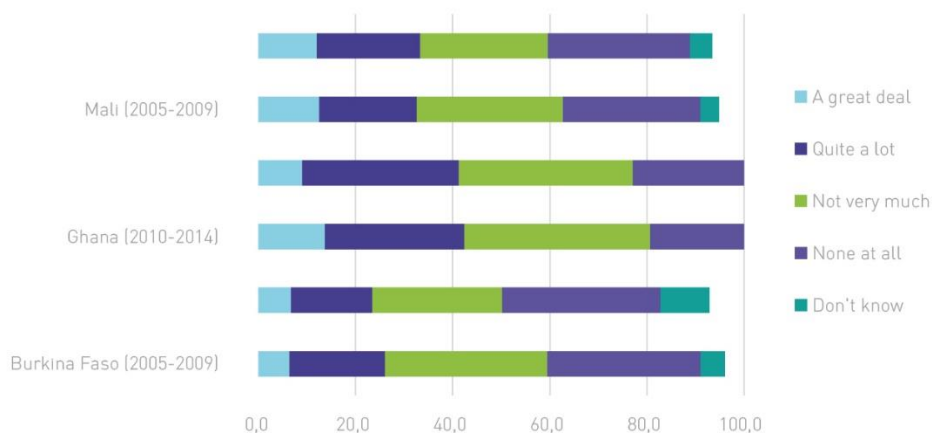


In Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali, most people (60%) have not much **confidence in political parties** (Figure 47); in Burkina Faso, only 24% have some level of confidence, and this percentage is 42% in Ghana and 33% in Mali.<sup>109</sup> There is no gender difference in this perception, and older people tend to have more confidence.

**Figure 47: Percentage with confidence in the political parties**

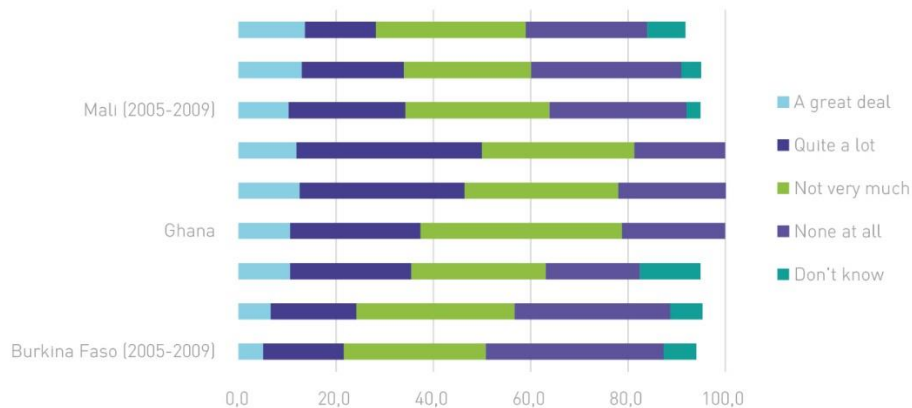


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<sup>109</sup> No data available for Niger and Senegal

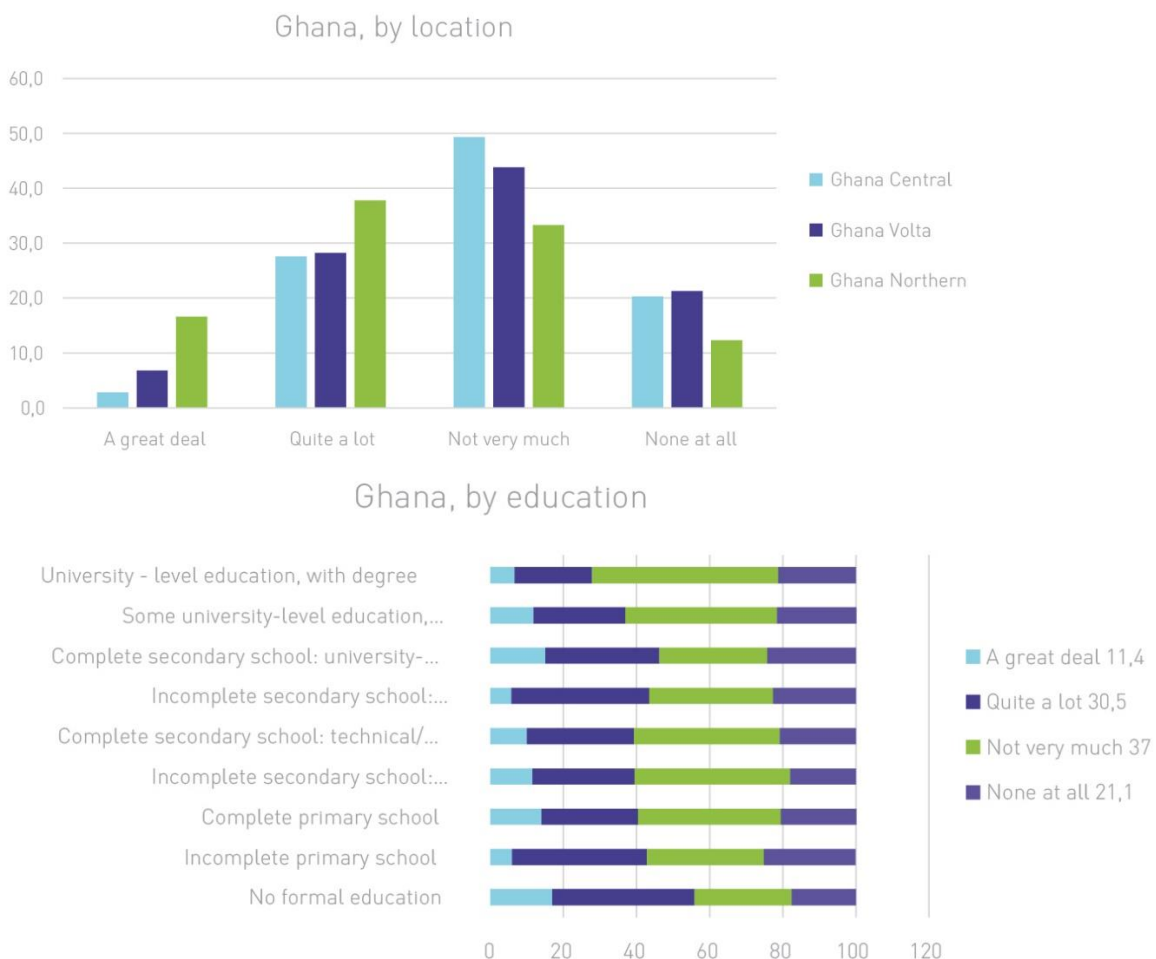
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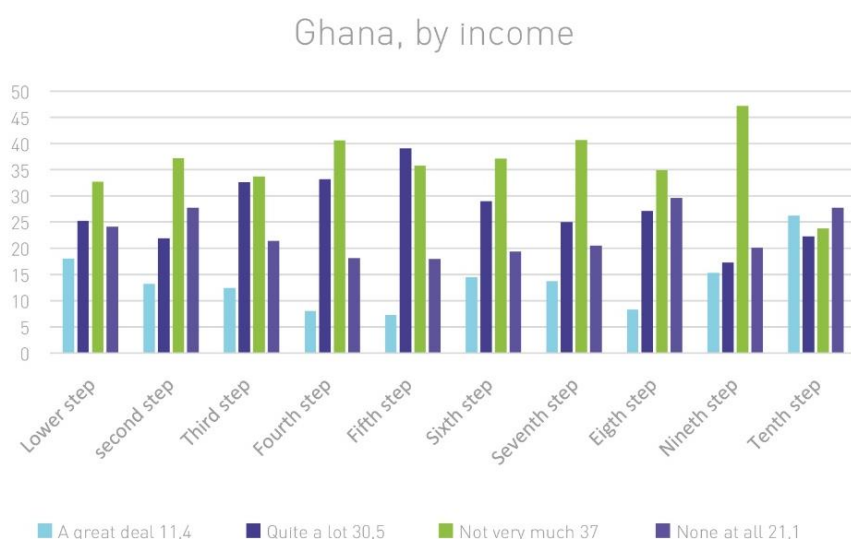


Source: World Values Survey, Wave 6: 2010-2014

Data for **Ghana** is disaggregated also by regions, education and income (Figure 48). We see that people in the Northern region have more confidence than in the Volta region and in Central. Confidence decreases with higher education. And there is higher confidence among people in the two extremes of income distribution.

Figure 48: Percentage with confidence in political parties, in Ghana





Source: World Values Survey, Wave 6: 2010-2014

### Sub-domain 6.B: Participate in decision-making and make decisions affecting your own life independently within your household and family

Data on **who makes final decisions within the family on key aspects** is only available for **Ghana**, and specific about currently married women age 15-49, and regarding women's own health care, major household purchases and visits to her family and relatives. Less than half of the women between 15 and 24 years old make these decisions, while among older women 60% or more make them. There is no significant difference between rural and urban areas; while there are more women that make these decisions among those with higher education, and among women in the middle income levels. See Table 18 in Annex VI.

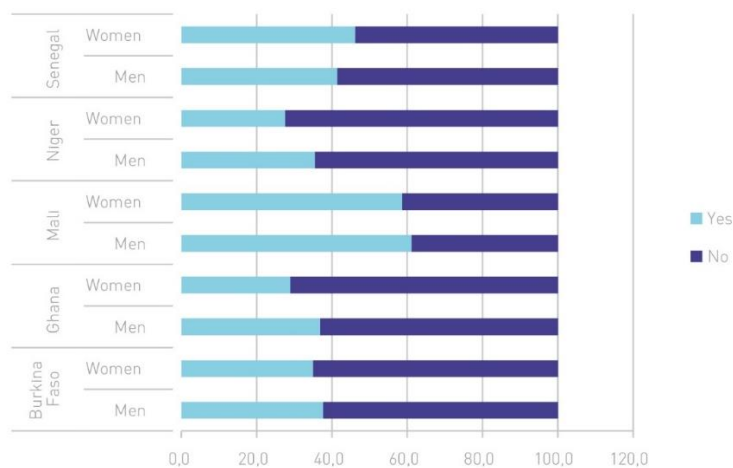
### Sub-domain 6.C: Have freedom to form and join civil organisations, social movements and solidarity groups

The percentage who are a **member of a local decision-making body** (local association, local education or health bodies; see Figure 49) is around 40% in all countries except in Mali, where it is substantially higher (60%). No difference by sex is appreciated, although some studies have found that the support to women's organizations is a very effective way to achieve progress on equality and women's rights.<sup>110</sup> Participation is higher in rural areas and membership is higher among middle aged people, but in general, the rural-urban divides and age differences deserve further analysis as evidence is mixed.

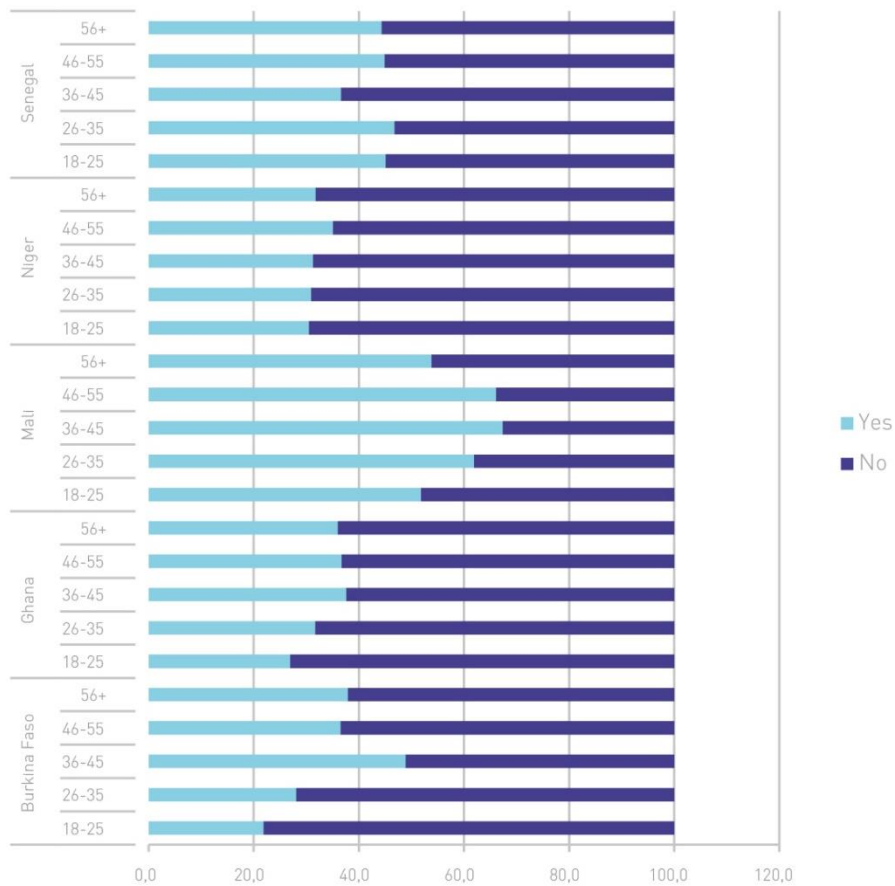
<sup>110</sup> Htun, Mala y S. Laurel Weldon (2012). "The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975-2005." American Political Science Review, Vol. 106, No. 3 de Agosto de 2012 <http://bit.ly/2W4YT70>

**Figure 49: Percentage of respondents that say they are members of voluntary association or community group**

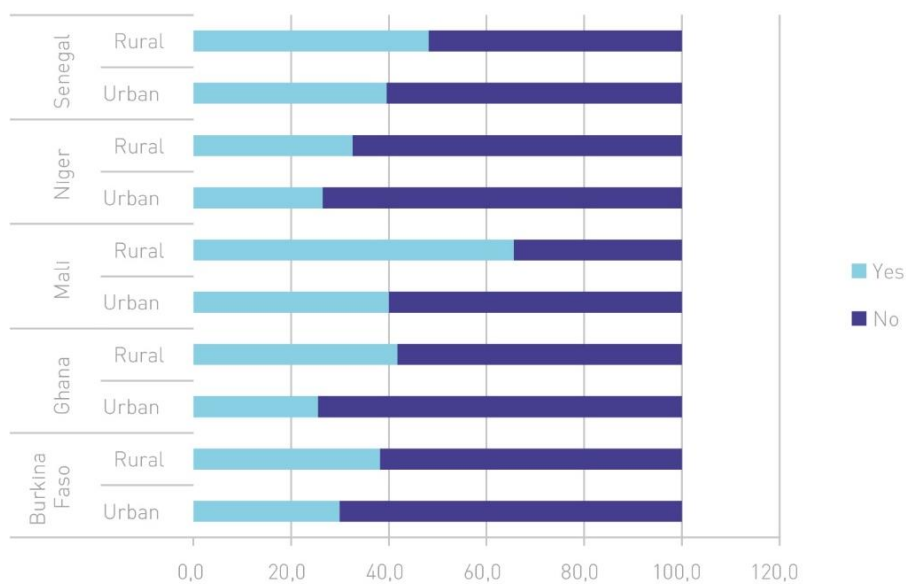
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Source: Afrobarometer 2016/2018

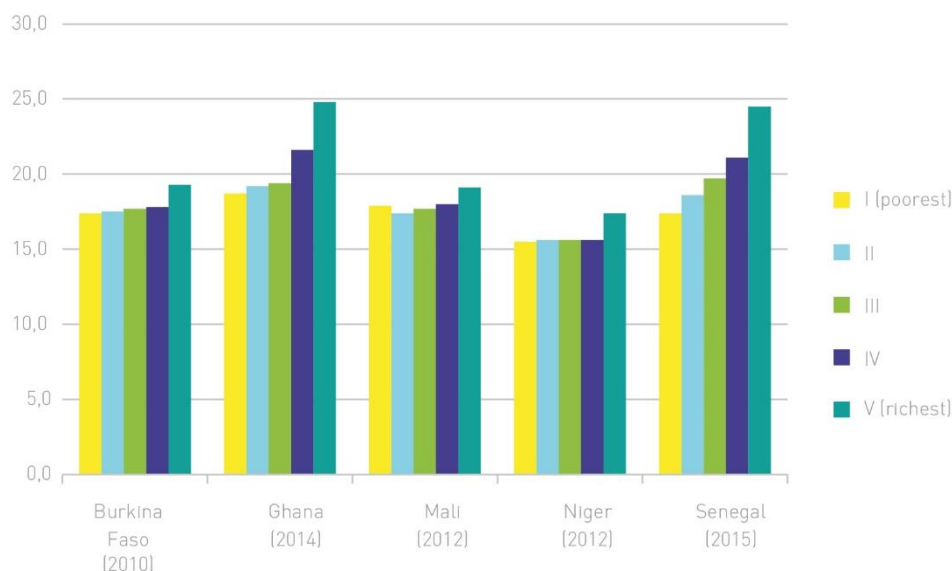
## Domain 7. INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIFE: Inequality in the capability to enjoy individual, family and social life, and to express yourself and have self-respect.

The capability to enjoy individual, family and social life, to express yourself and have self-respect is fundamental to being able to live the type of life people have a reason to value. This domain represents an area of life that typically does not feature in existing frameworks, what explains the lack of adequate data to analyse it, although many social, cultural and religious norms (addressed in the next section as part of the structural drivers), do limit these capabilities.

### Sub-domain 7.3: Be able to form and pursue the relationships you want, free to make decisions on when to form and start a family, live as a family and have a say on family life.

**Child marriage** remains a dominant problem, with particular prevalence in West Africa (Figure 50). Even when legislation condemns this practice, these laws are usually weakened by customary legal systems, as seen in Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania and Nigeria.<sup>111</sup> It is a serious development problem, since one percentage point increase in adolescent birth rate reduces life expectancy by nine months, increases female adult mortality by 1.1 percentage point and worsens maternal mortality by 0.2 percentage point. Early marriage also has intergenerational consequences, including low educational attainment and weak access to economic opportunities.<sup>112</sup>

Figure 50: Median age at first marriage (women): 25-49 by wealth quintile



Source: [USAID DHS Program](#)

<sup>111</sup> Ferrant, G. And Hamel, N. (2018)

<sup>112</sup> UNICEF (2013) Ending child marriage: Progress and prospects.



According to a report<sup>113</sup> published by the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat in collaboration with the Development Centre, one in four women lack reproductive autonomy or “the power to decide” when, if at all, to have children.<sup>114</sup> Despite policies to combat **child marriage** introduced throughout the region, 30% of girls aged 15-19 years are married.<sup>115</sup> In Niger, 77% of marriages among women age 20-46 occurred under the age 18 years.<sup>116</sup>

Discriminatory social institutions still constitute significant impediments to women’s access to land assets and restrict women’s physical integrity and decision-making power in both private and public spheres, holding back women’s education and economic empowerment, thereby decreasing countries’ potential growth.<sup>117</sup> Mali was condemned in May 2018 by the African Court of Human Rights for violation, through its family code adopted in 2011, of several international human rights provisions<sup>118</sup> ratified by Mali (notably the Maputo Protocol); the allegations included age of legal marriage (fixed at 16 years old instead of 18 established in the Maputo Protocol), marriage consent, equal right to inheritance and elimination of harmful practices.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/gender-inequality-in-west-african-social-institutions\\_fe5ea0ca-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/gender-inequality-in-west-african-social-institutions_fe5ea0ca-en)

<sup>114</sup> Ferrant, G. And Hamel, N. (2018)

<sup>115</sup> Bouchama et al., 2018: 9

<sup>116</sup> UNICEF (2013) Ending child marriage: Progress and prospects.

<sup>117</sup> Bouchama, N., et al. (2018), Gender Inequality in West African Social Institutions

<sup>118</sup> The conviction followed a request from the Association for the Advancement and Defense of the Rights of Malian Women (APDF) and the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA).

<sup>119</sup> [www.asfcanada.ca/medias/nouvelles/le-mali-premier-etat-condamne-pour-violation-du-protocole-de-maputo/](http://www.asfcanada.ca/medias/nouvelles/le-mali-premier-etat-condamne-pour-violation-du-protocole-de-maputo/)

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EXPRESSIONS OF INEQUALITIES:

First, as in most part of the developing world, **gender inequalities** in West Africa are present in all domains considered in the MIF. Gender reinforces other disadvantages. It often compounds disadvantages related to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, location, religion, disability, age, and race; the double exclusion from gender and poverty means that only 25% of the poorest girls in low-income countries complete primary school.<sup>120</sup>

Secondly, in West Africa, **the greatest inequalities are first and foremost spatial, between urban and rural areas**,<sup>121</sup> where public services are practically absent in all the countries in the region. Although we have very little data (almost none) for inequalities among different districts or provinces in-countries, based on the literature<sup>122</sup> we use the urban/rural disaggregation as proxy to indicate inequalities between the coast and the interior in Ghana and Senegal, between Southern and Northern provinces in Mali<sup>123</sup> and Niger, and between the central region and the rest in Burkina Faso. In Burkina Faso, there are important investments gaps in education, health and infrastructure between the west and central regions, and the East and North/Sahel regions; and in Niger, only 6% of the poorest girls living in rural areas complete primary school.<sup>124</sup>

Thirdly, **individual and household income** is the variable that measures vertical inequalities. It clearly expresses the worse off conditions of those with lower incomes, and it mostly overlaps with other variables such as location and gender. Individuals **at the bottom of the income distribution** are also the most exposed to multidimensional inequalities, in contrast with those at the top. These often express the differences in education and job conditions, with those with the lowest skills, peasants and with no education gathered at the bottom. In fact, **education** appears to be both an expression and a driver of inequalities, deeply interlinked with other domains.

**Age** is intrinsic in some indicators (which refer to specific age ranges) and appears to be especially relevant in the domain referring to working conditions, linked to unemployment; and also plays an interesting dynamic in the indicators on participation, which probably is a reflect and a reaction to the very hierarchical social and political structures in the countries. A special note deserves child marriage, which remains a dominant problem in West Africa, and has intergenerational consequences, including low educational attainment and weak access to economic opportunities.<sup>125</sup>

According to the literature and, especially, to the experts consulted, **ethnic group and religion** (in countries with religious diversity, like Burkina Faso) are relevant variables for inequalities related to health, education, living conditions, security, participation and social life (please refer to Box 1 in the

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<sup>120</sup> World Bank (2018) World Development Report, Chapter 2

<sup>121</sup> The data analysed in this research does not allow to measure inequalities within cities, but these have been documented in depth by Yabi (2017), who states: "Inequalities are significantly expressed by visible income disparities in cities, where real slums can be found in poor neighbourhoods, in stark contrast with affluent neighbourhoods."

<sup>122</sup> Please refer to Annex II with the Methodology for more information on this aspect.

<sup>123</sup> The North-South difference exists in Mali, but the Sikasso region, bordering Côte d'Ivoire, remains the poorest in the country, challenging the demands or poor regions in the North; Yabi, Gilles (2017) ID4D blog 12 September 2017

<sup>124</sup> UNESCO Data base

<sup>125</sup> UNICEF (2013) Ending child marriage: Progress and prospects.

introduction at the beginning of this report). However, using these variables is problematic: it is very difficult to find the corresponding disaggregated data and, even if data was available, using it may be sensitive for political reasons in the context of the West Africa region. Therefore, we have limited its use to the very few variables where disaggregated data exist. Nevertheless, in most countries ethnic groups are mostly associated with certain religious groups, and their concentration in specific regions within countries very much coincide with the rural-urban split; hence, we suggest to use the urban-rural disaggregation as a proxy for ethnic and religious disaggregation. In Mali, for example, only 22% of Bozo children complete primary school, compared with 64% of Bobo children.<sup>126</sup>

Nevertheless, a recent research<sup>127</sup> of ethnic and religious differences in education, shows large differences in social mobility across ethnic and religious lines both across and within countries, illustrating how initial differences in education translate into differences in social mobility. For example, in Ghana the likelihood that children from illiterate parents will manage to complete at least primary schooling is on average 62.5%; for the Akan (Ashante) that dominate national politics, the likelihood is 76.5%, while that for the Gurma is only 45.5%. In Senegal, educational intergenerational mobility is 43% for Catholics and just 15.6% for Muslims.

Unfortunately, the lack of availability of data, and the width of the research, have not allowed to look for inequalities against other minority and marginalized groups, such as individuals with **disabilities**. For example, girls with disabilities face triple discrimination, based on societies' negative attitudes towards gender, youth and disability; as a result, they are often not allowed to attend school or, if they do, they often face discrimination and violence, including sexual violence.<sup>128</sup> In Burkina Faso, having a disability increases the probability of a child never attending school by about two times.<sup>129</sup>

All these characteristics overlap, being the case of a woman, living in rural areas, with very low income and from an ethnic minority, the most disadvantaged due to the overlap of inequalities.

It is worth mentioning that the current version of the Multidimensional Inequality Framework tool does not provide indicators to properly assess inequalities in fragile and conflict contexts, hence, there is probably a relation between insecurity and inequality in some areas of the countries analysed, that is scaping from this analysis of expressions of inequality. There is extended literature that analyses the links between inequalities and conflicts; and given the relevance of these effects in parts of the West Africa region, this is briefly discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>126</sup> UNESCO Data base

<sup>127</sup> Alesina, A., Hohmann, S., Michalopoulos, S. and Papaioannou, E. (2018), Ethnic and Religious Intergenerational Mobility in Africa; Center for Economic Policy Research; September 27, 2018. [https://cepr.org/sites/default/files/Hohamann\\_IM\\_ethnic\\_religious.pdf](https://cepr.org/sites/default/files/Hohamann_IM_ethnic_religious.pdf)

<sup>128</sup> Save the Children (n.d.) Promoting girl's right to learn in West and Central Africa . Regional Coordination Group on SDG4 in West and Central Africa. Gender Equality and Inclusive Education Task Team.

<sup>129</sup> The World Bank (2018) World Development Report, Chapter 2. Poverty, gender, ethnicity, disability and location explain most remaining schooling disparities

### 3. WHY? COMMON DRIVERS AND STRATEGIC ISSUES BEHIND THE INEQUALITIES IN WEST AFRICA

There is extensive evidence in the literature about the drivers of inequalities in West Africa, as well as about policy recommendations to overcome inequality. Some drivers are exogenous (such as historical legacy, global trade and financial flows, and technological innovation); and some endogenous (such as social, economic and political institutions).<sup>130</sup> In this research, we look into the most relevant drivers derived from the literature reviewed, the conversations with experts and in resonance with the suggested indicators in the Multidimensional Inequalities Framework. We chose to make a distinction between contextual and more structural aspects, on which policy influence is somehow limited, and the what we call policy drivers, that derive directly from policy making. This classification will help us to orient the recommendations on policies to tackle inequalities to where they can be more effective.

#### CONTEXTUAL ASPECTS

These are drivers that determine the context in the five countries studied, and that need to be taken into account to understand and address inequalities in the region.

##### **The influence of the colonial history.**

Geographical inequalities within countries reflect, in part, the heritage of the colonial times, when trade and economic activity was concentrated around the capital cities and, where possible, around the ports in the coastal areas. Gilles (2017) points to the origin of these inequalities in the colonial times, both for British and French colonies, and are characterized by a central-periphery logic in coastal countries, with a central agricultural productive region that accesses to the sea in the South, and the remote periphery in the North (e.g. Ghana, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire or Senegal).<sup>131</sup> This explains the differences between North and South/coastal provinces (in Ghana and Senegal), and/or between the central regions around the capitals (in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger).

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<sup>130</sup> Yabi Olakounlé Gilles (2015); citing UNDP (2013)

<sup>131</sup> Yabi, Gilles (2017) ID4D blog 12 September 2017

Inequalities express also the privileges of civil servants (the military and police forces, followed by professors and lawyers) and the lowest skilled gathering peasants and those with no education; at least in Ghana, all of them with a strong gender and ethnic divide.<sup>132</sup>

Land is the main asset for rural people and the basis for rural livelihoods, but it is even more unequally distributed than wealth. Land dispossession during the colonial period was followed by land grabbing by multinational corporations in collaboration with national governments.<sup>133</sup> In turn, land concentration is not only increasing inequality but also reducing farm outputs and economic growth.<sup>134</sup>

Current relationships with old colonialist powers materialized in important economic contracts and agreements, often undermine the autonomy and capacity of countries to independently take decisions, and fuels the power of the ruling economic and political elites in these countries, that are beholden to outside interests and not to their citizens. Then next aspect of dynamics of political capture is very much related to this.

### Dynamics of political capture

Economic activity came hand in hand with power relationships, and the post-colonial structures reflect, in part, a continuation of those relationships (see Gilles<sup>135</sup>, pg. 12 and 13), favouring the **dynamics of political capture** by which those with economic power influence the political decision making process in their favour, in a vicious cycle of corruption and clientelism, at the expense of the needs and the interest of the majority of the population. In countries like Mali and Niger, there are dynamics of political capture by powerful elites, which hamper investments in local economies and essential social services.<sup>136</sup> Some of these are closely related to the interests of colonialist countries, as mentioned above, for example in the case of extractive industries.

Lack of mechanisms and institutions to support participation and inclusion, weak state accountability and transparency, excessive influence by specific groups and harmful social and cultural norms against minorities favour these dynamics, often involving practices of corruption, often fuelled by the influence of big multinational companies and foreign governments seeking lucrative contracts, clearly for the extraction of natural resources and the construction sector. Freedom House reports widespread corruption in Burkina Faso (particularly affecting police), Ghana, Mali (notably in public procurement), Niger and Senegal (where, the report says, officials often act with impunity).<sup>137</sup>

Group inequalities are closely linked to the ways in which groups are represented in political and social institutions. Those who are deprived socially and economically also lack political power, as it is concentrated by those in a position of economic privilege. The poorest persons, marginalized groups, and women and girls are often totally excluded from the policy decision processes. These discriminations occur hand in hand with the predominance of powerful elites, in contexts of lack of

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<sup>132</sup> Yabi, Gilles (2015); citing Poku-Boansi (2014) for characteristics of Ghana, which can be extrapolated to other West Africa countries, with small variations between British, French and Portuguese ex-colonies.

<sup>133</sup> World Social Science Report (2016) Inequality and natural resources in Africa

<sup>134</sup> AfDB (2018). West Africa Economic Outlook 2018, cited in Oxfam (2019) The West Africa Inequality Crisis

<sup>135</sup> Yabi Olakounlé Gilles (2015) Les inégalités extrêmes empoisonnent la vie de tous en Afrique de l'Ouest : il est temps d'y mettre fin, Oxfam.

<sup>136</sup> Yabi, Gilles (2017) ID4D blog 12 September 2017

<sup>137</sup> Freedom House: Freedom in the World (2018)

transparency and accountability, often prone to clientele and corrupted practices.

## Traditional, cultural and religious social norms

Social norms play an important role in determining and perpetuating inequalities that discriminate on the bases of gender (against women), age (against youth) and ethnic and religious groups (against minorities). A recent UN report on Sub-Saharan Africa states that “perpetuation of inequalities in income, health and education outcomes is linked to complex mixes of social norms and patterns of service provision, in some cases combined with exposure to conflict.”<sup>138</sup>

The OECD Index on Social Institutions and Gender (SIGI) measures gender discriminations derived from social norms in the family environment (early marriages, parental authority, inheritance), on restricted physical integrity, bias in favour of sons, restricted access to resources and assets and restricted civil liberties. The 2018 Index places Senegal with medium levels of discrimination in social institutions compared to the global average; Burkina Faso and Ghana with high levels of discrimination; and Mali and Niger with very high levels of discrimination.

### Box 2. Traditional, cultural and religious social norms limit opportunities for women

Traditional, cultural and religious social norms systematically discriminate women. First, through the role they assign to women as unpaid care givers of children and elderly in households and communities. In Mali, men spend 21 minutes per day doing unpaid work while women spend 241 minutes per day in unpaid work, what means that women in Mali perform over ten times more unpaid work than men.

Women are also limited in access to healthcare because of norms that reduce their decision-making authority in communities and households. In Ghana, women are less likely to use maternal health services when they live in areas that are relatively tolerant of violence against women.<sup>139</sup>

When traditional norms encourage child marriage and childbearing, girls lose the freedom to freely choose how and with whom they want to live their lives, and they are forced to leave school at young age and miss out on opportunities to expand their education and gain skills that would empower them to consider different livelihoods.

Source: UNDP (2017) Income inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences

There have been several legislative initiatives in West Africa to try to address gender inequality; all countries in the region have signed the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the African Youth Charter, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and some of these have translated into national legislation.

<sup>138</sup> UNDP (2017) Income inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences, p.249

<sup>139</sup> Adjwanou and LeGrand (2014), cited in UNDP (2017) Income inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences

However, authors point out that customary practices often downsize these efforts, for example in relation to the age of marriage (in Niger in 2016, 76% of girls aged 15-19 were either married, divorced, widowed or in a religious/customary union.<sup>140</sup> Differences between customary laws and legal frameworks weaken women's rights to land access.<sup>141</sup>

The working group discussions during the workshop held in Accra (November 2019, see footnote 8) as part of this research highlighted interesting ways in which social norms play a role in inequalities in the countries studied. In relation to gender, the group mentioned discrimination against women in forms of exclusion from decision making, shrinking of civil space for women, social violence, inheritance (as has been shown in relation to land tenure above), or as heads of households.

Traditional authorities often deal with social norms that perpetuate inequality through their governance system, sometimes excluding certain minorities from the right to land which is essential for livelihoods, or limiting the right to participate in decision making to those born in the royal family in a certain area. These kinds of issues sometimes boil up minority groups taking up arms against the dominant ones and that fuels the issues of exclusion, poverty and inequality.

The discussions also mentioned how the gerontocratic social norms that establish family and community structures in which the decision making power is in the hands of the oldest members exclude young people from taking a more active role in the society.

Transforming discriminatory social norms requires a solid understanding of political economy and territorial realities that exceeds the scope of this research, and the efforts should rather be endogenous, involving a large range of stakeholders. Still, the OECD recommends continue building evidence base on the extent and nature of discriminatory social institutions, and to put social norm change at the core of future efforts as an effective way to progress towards inclusive development.<sup>142</sup>

## Conflict, violence and security

There is abundant literature analysing the mutual effects of inequality and conflict. The abuse of power by the dominant groups and the marginalisation of certain groups are causes for conflict and violence. On the one hand, conflict exacerbates inequalities, from the basic fact that winners in conflict gain power over losers, and because the destruction of services and livelihoods during conflicts often fosters further inequalities. On the other hand, conflict limits the possibilities of overcoming inequalities: when individuals live in fear of violence (either real or perceived), their abilities to make choices freely and access opportunities are diminished; for example, people may be afraid to leave their homes or communities, which limits work, access to health services and schooling.<sup>143</sup>

Conflict and violence are present at different levels in the region: from the most prominent conflict that affects entire regions, to local conflicts between ethnic groups, and to conflicts at community or household level. In conflict zones, women and ethnic, religious and other minorities are more likely to be threatened by violence, real or perceived.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Ferrant, G. and Hamel, N. (2018) Gender equality in West Africa? The key role of social norms

<sup>141</sup> OECD (2018) Gender Inequality in West African Social Institutions, West African Papers, March 2018. N°13

<sup>142</sup> OECD (2018) Gender Inequality in West African Social Institutions, West African Papers, March 2018. N°13

<sup>143</sup> UNDP (2017) Income inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences

<sup>144</sup> Steward (2008), cited by UNDP (2017)

At the largest scale, West Africa has been a land of instability and political violence and conflict during in the last decades. In addition to the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire, the proliferation of non-state armed groups in the Sahel during the last 15 years has brought conflict and unrest to vast regions in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Senegal. Closely related to these conflicts is the absence of the States in the regions where conflict proliferates.

The lack of investment in public policies that are crucial to contain inequalities, which weakens the legitimacy of political authorities, undermines the consolidation of public institutions and leaves hundreds of people (especially young men) without a hope for a better life. On the one hand, the absence of the State as provider of services and security, can eventually give legitimacy to non-state groups that are able to provide security, control the borders, and give access to some kind of services and a sense of justice. On the other hand, the realization of lack of opportunities and constant exclusion by certain groups (either marginalised ethnic groups and/or groups such as youth), creates frustration and ultimately has the potential to fuel the conflict. For example, in Mali, the 2012 conflict concentrated in the North, an area that accounts for two thirds of the land and where only 10% of the population live, where lack of investment, of cultural rights, political autonomy and lack of attention from the president was the norm.<sup>145</sup>

At the local level, the perception of inequalities and injustices felt by specific groups of the population explains many punctual but common conflicts. These are closely related to the aspects presented above (of colonial history, power dynamics, traditional, cultural and religious issues), that reflect in feelings of unrecognized identity and exclusion of minorities.

Conflict, violence and insecurity are also felt at more micro level, in local communities and in the households, where social norms on gender and age can generate tension and conflict. At the community and household levels, also traditional norms often reinforce inequalities, especially related to gender and age. Women are discriminated on the bases of those norms, hampering their ability to fulfil their rights. Youth is silenced in favour of hierarchical relations. Even dynamics of corruption and clientelism have been mentioned as a possible cause of tension and violence in households, where men feel they have to nurture work related relationships to ensure their jobs, and that uncertainty translates into accumulated tensions in the households.

## POLICY DRIVERS

These are drivers directly related with policy making. In the context of extended poverty, mainly in rural areas (but also, and increasingly, in growing urban areas), and livelihoods highly dependent on agricultural, livestock and fishing activities, the policy drivers identified are related with inadequate investment in essential services (education, health and social protection), together with a very unequal distribution of basic services and facilities; also, inadequate investment in smallholder agriculture, livestock and fisheries; a highly dualistic labour market, with large informal sectors, and the predominance of regressive tax systems in all countries.

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<sup>145</sup> Aggard, F. and Miyandazi, M. (2017). Understanding ECOWAS efforts in promoting a governance agenda: Adapting regional norms to lessons from national crises. European Centre for Development Policy Management



**Driver 1. Inadequate investment in essential services: education** (especially secondary education), **health and social protection** for vulnerable and marginalized groups. With an **unequal distribution of basic services and facilities** (e.g. roads, electricity, schools, hospitals, water and sanitation) between rural and urban areas and across regions, which drives income disparities.

The poor performance of West Africa region in the provision of essential services is confirmed by the average score for regional commitment to social spending (according to Oxfam's commitment to reducing inequality index, CRII) <sup>146</sup>, which is lower than any other region in Africa, including the much-troubled Central Africa area. The index shows that Burkina Faso, Senegal and Mali are the most committed countries in terms of their social spending policies, among West African countries. However, the performance of each country is not uniform. For instance, Senegal spends the most in education (21,33%) but the less in health (5,41%). Burkina Faso is the most committed to social spending. But its spending on social protection is very low, less than 6%.

The following table 5 shows how each of the five countries ranks globally in terms of their government spending on education, health, social protection and the progressivity of their social spending, and the proportion of health and education spending in total public spending and in GNP (gross national product), for the five countries:

**Table 5: Government spending on education, health, social protection**

Country	Education		Health		Social protection		Spending effort rank	Progressivity of spending (1)
	% of gvt spending	Rank	% of gvt spending	Rank	% of gvt spending	Rank		
Burkina Faso	18,82	28	10,70	68	5,56	131	90	88
Senegal	21,33	14	5,41	139	10,98	92	94	102
Mali	17,54	41	6,07	133	15,63	74	95	104
Niger	19,56	24	9,22	98	3,64	141	104	106
Ghana	15,28	69	7,77	115	5,84	128	121	130

It is the average of indicator on social spending effort and impact of spending on income Gini.

<sup>146</sup> Oxfam (2019), Christian Hallum and Kwesi W. Obeng; The West Africa Inequality Crisis

**Figure 51: Proportion of health and education expenditure in total public expenditure and GNP**



Source: Oxfam (2019), Sahel Inequality report, based on data from WHO (2015)

**Health.** Inequality and ill-health are intertwined. Unequal access to health services according to income group, rural/urban location and gender results in lower health status for disadvantaged groups, leading to significant social and economic costs, both to individuals and societies.<sup>147</sup>

West Africa / Sahel remains one of the regions reporting the most alarming health statistics in the world. There are many reasons behind these numbers, such as lack of access to health care services (in Niger, health coverage in 2016 was 48,47%)<sup>148</sup>, with alarming absence of services in rural areas, weak of provision of medical treatments and qualified professionals. Access to care is particularly limited by the cost of services and of reaching health centres and remaining there for the duration of care.<sup>149</sup> In the Sahel, more than half of families do not have the means to provide their children with the health services they need.<sup>150</sup> The direct payment required from the sick to gain access to care is a financial barrier for poor people, therefore household economic status has a significant impact on level of health.

Some countries in West Africa have experienced important progress in terms of health in absolute numbers,<sup>151</sup> thanks to policies exempting users from payment and strengthening the provision of care, such as extending immunization coverage.<sup>152</sup> **Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal** implemented initiatives for priority groups (the needy, pregnant women, children under 5). In **Mali**, the government implemented policies aiming to provide certain services for free, particularly caesarean births. When these policies were funded, they had positive outcomes: between 2005 and 2009, the rate of caesarean births in **Mali** doubled and medically supervised births went from 53% to 64%.<sup>153</sup> In **Niger**, moving to free care for children under 5 led to a significant rise in the use of curative care (from 49% in 2006 to over 90% in 2012).<sup>154</sup> However, under-funding of arrangements and the complexity of management circuits led to delays in the reimbursement of health centres followed by a reassessment of arrangements for lack of adequate funding.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, beyond financial difficulties, targeted free access does not always truly integrate the most disadvantaged people as some of the needy do not benefit.

Under financing for health policies has an impact on personnel, equipment and the supply of medicine and medical material in health centres; and it limits the coverage and the quality of the provision of care and health services, namely the lack of qualified health personnel and the concentration of services in cities.<sup>156</sup>

- No government in the five West African countries is currently meeting the Abuja targets of

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<sup>147</sup> Health Inequities in Selected African Countries: Review of Evidence and Policy Implications; Proceedings of the African Economic Conference 2007

<sup>148</sup> MSP Niger 2016

<sup>149</sup> Oxfam (2019), Sahel Inequality report

<sup>150</sup> Source: <http://bit.ly/2walNPQ>; cited by Oxfam (2019), Sahel Inequality report

<sup>151</sup> In Burkina Faso, maternal mortality has fallen by more than half since the 1990s, from 727 deaths per 100,000 live births to 371 in 2015. Mortality rates for children under five have also fallen by more than half in Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali and by more than two-thirds in Niger and Senegal. WHO database. <http://bit.ly/2UkCUg7>; cited in Oxfam (2019), Sahel Inequality report.

<sup>152</sup> For example, the rate of diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis (DTP) immunization coverage rose from 15% in 2000 to over 90% in 2015 in Burkina Faso and from 34% to 75% in Niger. WHO/UNICEF estimate: GAVI Country Factsheets; cited in Oxfam (2019), Sahel Inequality report

<sup>153</sup> El-Khoury M., Gandaho T., Arur A., Keita. B, and Nichols, L. (2011), 'Improving Access to Life Saving Maternal Health Services: The Effects of Removing User Fees for Caesareans in Mali.' *Health Systems 20/20*, Abt Associates Inc: Bethesda, MD. Quoted in Oxfam (2013): *Universal Health Coverage: Why Health Insurance Schemes are Leaving the Poor Behind*. <http://bit.ly/2TYE6Ak>; cited by Oxfam (2015), Sahel Inequality report

<sup>154</sup> Oxfam France Press Release (May 2013). <http://bit.ly/2Wq1nwW>

<sup>155</sup> AFD Plaquette Initiative Solidarité Sahel (I3S). <http://bit.ly/2U05XJj>; cited by Oxfam (2015), Sahel Inequality report

<sup>156</sup> Oxfam (2019), Sahel Inequality report

spending 15% of public budgets and 5% of GNP on health.

- Health coverage for the richest is around 30% better than for the poorest, except in Ghana, where the difference is 9%.
- Between 36% and 52% of all current health expenditure are direct payments.
- While WHO minimum standard for medical density is 10 doctors per 10.000 inhabitants, the density of skilled health professionals is 0.6 in Burkina Faso (2016), 1.39 in Mali (2016), 0.5 in Niger (2014) and 0.69 in Senegal.<sup>157</sup> Only Ghana reaches the minimum.
- Universal health coverage does not reach half the population in any of the countries, ranging from 32-33% in Mali and Niger, to 39% in Burkina Faso, 41% in Senegal and 45% in Ghana.

Except in Ghana, where about half of all men have some kind of health insurance, in all the other four countries any of these services are practically absent.

**Education.** The ability to learn is both important in its own but also contributes to equality in other spheres of life. A review of 13 developing countries found that spending on education and health accounted for 69% of the total reduction of inequality.<sup>158</sup> The poorest people are the most affected by any marginal increase in or contraction of public spending on education,<sup>159</sup> and still, investment in education is far from the committed targets (see Figure 51 above). In Burkina Faso, more than 2000 schools are closed due to conflict and insecurity; and more than 900 in Mali, precisely in the most remote areas, where the conflict is primed (Boucle de Mouhoun, North and Sahel).

Most of the analysis done in the Education and Learning domain is valid here. In addition, the number of years of free and compulsory primary and secondary education guaranteed in legal framework is 12 in Mali, 11 in Senegal, 10 in Burkina Faso and 9 in Ghana.<sup>160</sup> And the pupil-teacher ratio in Primary school is 93 in Mali, 55 in Niger, 47 in Burkina Faso, 45 in Ghana and 44 in Senegal; and in Secondary school is as high as 281 in Niger, 40 in Burkina Faso, and below 30 in Ghana, Mali and Senegal.<sup>161</sup>

As Brookings institute points out: “Rural schools generally have less qualified teachers and not enough teachers for the number of children enrolled in school. This is clearly evident in the low teachers-per-school ratios and teacher-to-pupil ratios in most rural African regions. The reasons for these low numbers in rural Africa are many and very much linked to poverty and other inequalities and socioeconomic conditions. For example, teachers generally prefer urban to rural schools because urban areas offer greater opportunities and higher incomes. There is also a better quality of life in urban areas, with better access to good infrastructure, other services (such as healthcare) and general public goods. In contrast, rural areas in Africa are often characterized by poor or non-existent infrastructure and little or no provisions for other critical social services. This in turn negatively impacts the quality of education for rural-area children since even getting to school is a more difficult challenge and illness of a pupil or a family member may force the pupil to drop out of

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<sup>157</sup> WHO/Global Health Observatory (GHO) data, Health Equity Monitor. Cited in Oxfam (2019), Sahel Inequality

<sup>158</sup> N. Lustig. (2015). *The Redistributive Impact of Government Spending on Education and Health*; cited in Oxfam (2019) Public good or private wealth

<sup>159</sup> The World Bank (2018) World Development Report, Chapter 2. Poverty, gender, ethnicity, disability and location explain most remaining schooling disparities

<sup>160</sup> UNESCO eAtlas for Education 2030. No data found for Niger.

<sup>161</sup> Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG4

school entirely. Students in rural regions of Africa are further disadvantaged by the fact that their parents are generally uneducated. Again, we see that other socioeconomic conditions and inequalities greatly impact the quality of education in rural areas compared to urban centres.”

For some poor households, distance to the nearest school is a predictor of school participation, especially where social norms or safety concerns make it difficult for children—particularly girls—to travel far from home.<sup>162</sup>

Like in health, an increasing tendency to privatize education and/or introduce school fees makes the cost a barrier to the access for poor families.

**Driver 2. Inadequate investment in smallholder agriculture, livestock and fisheries, including both productive, income generating and wealth creation agricultural, livestock and fisheries strategies,<sup>163</sup> to promote sustainable intensification of production, market access, transformation, trade, access to funding, etc., and support to subsistence agriculture and fishing farming.**

Agriculture is the sector that provides means of live to most people in West Africa. On average, it accounts for 35% of the region’s economy and employs over 50% of the workforce.<sup>164</sup> Oxfam’s report highlights the low level of public investment in smallholder agriculture, low productivity, limited market opportunities, and development policies biased towards urban areas, among the reasons why so many people that depend on agriculture are poor. Agriculture is often treated more as a way of life, than as economic activity.

To reverse the stagnation and achieve the full development potential from agriculture, in 2014 West African countries recommitted to the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAAPD), which called, among other things, for governments to increase their budgetary allocations to the sector to at least 10% annually and to invest in critical public goods. Governments committed to develop National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs) to drive implementation. A regional agricultural policy for West Africa, ECOWAP, was also adopted along the lines of CAADP, and common agricultural external tariffs were adopted in 2015 and raised for specific goods from 20% to 35% to provide some protection to farmers.<sup>165</sup>

The West African Alliance for Climate-smart Agriculture (CSA) was created in 2015, in the context of the climate change negotiations (COP21), acknowledging the impacts of climate change and the need to promote instruments in support of agricultural adaptation to climate change. Very important also in the Permanent Interstate Committee for drought control in the Sahel, that sets the agenda on research for food security and the fights against the effects of drought and desertification, an area of increasing relevance with the impacts of climate change.

African governments committed to spend 10% of their budget in agriculture. The 10% target does not say anything about how effective is expenditure on agriculture, nor about how much is spent on small scale farmers (the majority of which are women), but at least provide an idea of the level

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<sup>162</sup> The World Bank (2018) World Development Report, Chapter 2. Poverty, gender, ethnicity, disability and location explain most remaining schooling disparities

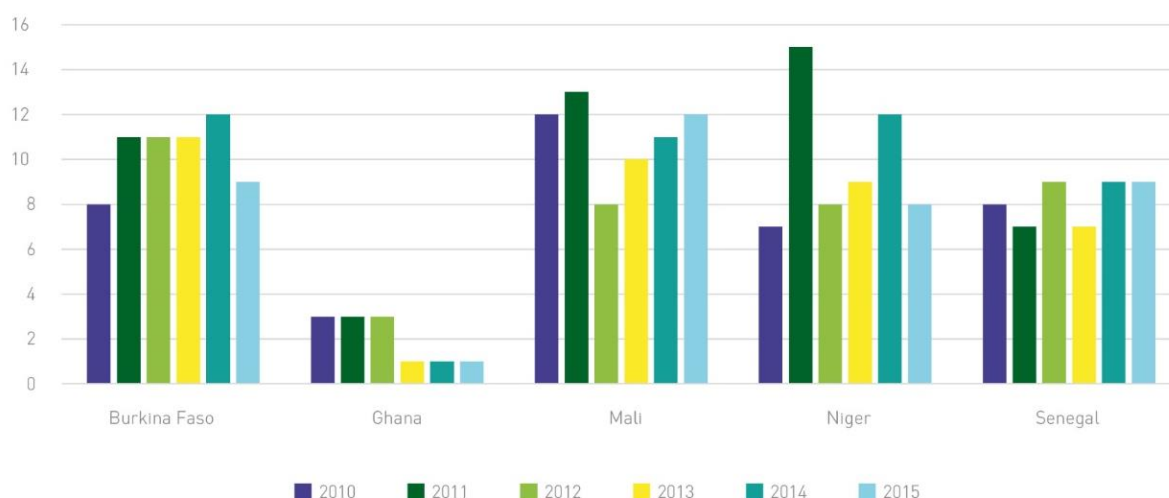
<sup>163</sup> UNDP (2017) Income inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences

<sup>164</sup> Oxfam (2019), Christian Hallum and Kwesi W. Obeng; The West Africa Inequality Crisis

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

of commitment of governments with the sector. In the period 2010-2015, only Mali and Burkina Faso met the 10% budget allocation target, although Niger and Senegal were close (Figure 52). Ghana is far from that target, committing less than 3% of its budget. The role of agriculture in Burkina Faso is greater than in other countries; it provides a wide range of incentives to different actors in the country: is a source of livelihoods, foreign exchange and also of rents for the elites, and this facilitated the adoption already in 2010 of a National Program for the Rural Sector, which merged CAADP principles and actions with national policy priorities.<sup>166</sup>

**Figure 52: Government agricultural spending (% of total spending)**



**Source:** Based on data Oxfam (2019), The West Africa Inequality Crisis; using Regional Strategic Analysts and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) & FAO, 2018; and ReSAKSS compilation is based on IFPRI (2015), World Bank (2017) & national resources

ECOWAP has achieved progress in increasing mobilisation of internal and external resources for agriculture, although this only gain relevance after the crises of food commodity prices in 2008, and major financing challenges remain; and also in increasing agricultural production and trade between countries of the region.<sup>167</sup> However, despite this progress, food insecurity and poverty levels remain at very high levels in the region, and much more needs to be done if inequality is to be tackled.

**Driver 3. A highly dualistic labour market structure**, with limited employment of the labour elite in the government, multinational companies and the resource sector, whereas the majority of labour earns much lower incomes in the informal or subsistence sector.<sup>168</sup> **The existence of large informal sectors**, and a very small formal sector, hampers the reduction of inequalities in general, in particular the gender and age (youth) inequalities; in fact, a large informal sector worsens inequalities.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>166</sup> Aggard, F. and Miyandazi, M. (2017). Understanding ECOWAS efforts in promoting a governance agenda: Adapting regional norms to lessons from national crises. European Centre for Development Policy Management

<sup>167</sup> ECOWAP 2025 Strategic Policy Framework (2017)

<sup>168</sup> UNDP (2017) Income inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences

<sup>169</sup> UNDP (2017) Income inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences

In the five countries the labour market is almost entirely informal. The African Development Bank has estimated, for example, that in Senegal only 3.8% of jobs are formal.<sup>170</sup> Virtually all agricultural labour is informal, and much informal work consists of self-employment. Informal workers are poorly paid, sometimes far below the poverty line.

According to the Oxfam's Commitment to Reducing Inequality index, West African countries perform very unevenly on labour policies to address inequality. Ghana (ranking 104 out of 152 countries), Senegal (112) and Mali (113) are at the bottom group, while Niger (17) and Burkina Faso (33) score much better. Each country must face different challenges. Ghana, for instance, while performing reasonably well in its treatment of trade unions and respect for some workers' rights, it scores badly on its treatment of women in the workplace and on the very low level of its minimum wage.<sup>171</sup>

Oxfam's assessment of the labour conditions as part of the Commitment to Reducing Inequalities Index, measures governments' efforts to protect workers in law and in practice, women's legal rights at work, and minimum wage in local currency and as proportion of per capita GDP. The results indicate that among 157 countries in the world, none of the five studied rank over the position 120. Burkina Faso is the worst scored, closely followed by Niger, and Ghana the best. Although it performs very poorly regarding fair minimum wages.<sup>172</sup>

Oxfam reports<sup>173</sup> that there is no country in West Africa that is without labour rights violations, either in law or in practice. In Burkina Faso, there are restrictions on the rights of young workers (16-year-old workers and apprentices) to establish and/or join trade unions. Many countries in the region – including Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali – continue to deny civil servants and state employees, particularly those in the utility and security sub-sectors, the right to strike.

The most vulnerable groups in this dualistic labour market are youth, women and people living in rural areas. Youth employment (ages 15-24) is very low, in a region with the fastest youth population growth (lead by Niger), and youth unemployment figures miss those that are studying, and those that are not in education, employment or training.<sup>174</sup>

**Driver 4. Regressive taxes** The distributional impact of fiscal policies in sub-Saharan African countries is limited and has eroded, and induced tax regressivity is a common phenomenon.<sup>175</sup> Tax pressure rates remain low, with a very low tax base at the start: the State levies taxes on value added (VAT, which disproportionately affects the poor), the formal sector and a few companies (which only account for a small part of a largely informal economy), and provides exemptions to big

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<sup>170</sup> A Mbaye, A.A. and Gueye, F (2018). Labor Markets and Jobs in West Africa. Working Paper Series N° 297, African Development Bank, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire; June 2018

<sup>171</sup> Oxfam (2018) Building a more equal Ghana: A five-point action plan to close the gap between the rich and the rest

<sup>172</sup> Oxfam (2019), Christian Hallum and Kwesi W. Obeng; The West Africa Inequality Crisis

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Mbaye, A.A. and Gueye, F (2018). Labor Markets and Jobs in West Africa. Working Paper Series N° 297, African Development Bank, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire; June 2018

<sup>175</sup> UNDP (2017) Income inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences



Economic inequality is both an important dimension of inequality and an important driver of inequalities in other domains. Countries with high Gini are prone to political instability, tend to have the highest levels of homicides, and the weakest results in access to education and health.<sup>177</sup> Progressive fiscal systems are an effective tool to reduce income inequality.

According to the Oxfam commitment to reducing inequality index (CRII)<sup>178</sup>, among the five countries, Ghana is the most committed to progressive taxation, and Niger the least committed. However, Ghana performs poorly on tax collection while Niger performs well on tax structure. The performance in terms of progressivity of tax policy ranks Ghana in the 28<sup>th</sup> position in the world, Burkina Faso in 79, Senegal 85, Mali 101 and Niger 134.

Tax revenues are half those of rich countries, accounting for 22% of GDP in Senegal in 2016, 18,1% in Burkina Faso, 16,1% in Mali and 14,4% in Niger, compared with an average of 34,3% among the wealthy countries of the OECD.<sup>179</sup> The region performs very poorly due to a combination of factors, including the size of the informal economy, tax exemptions, low corporate tax rates, tax evasion, and tax regimes are very regressive, with a heavy reliance on consumption taxes like VAT, which disproportionately burden the poor.<sup>180</sup> In Mali, for example, VAT accounted for almost one-third of tax revenues in 2013, while corporate and income tax each accounted for half as much (respectively 16% and 15%).<sup>181</sup> Instead, wealth in Africa, including property, is generally under-taxed, even when continent has seen a boom in property development over the past two decades.

At the same time, taxes levied on businesses have declined in several countries, as a result of lowered tax rates and the introduction of measures to attract potential investors (through tax exemptions and holidays, etc).<sup>182</sup> As a result, West Africa loses an estimated \$9.6bn each year from tax incentives to corporations, with a very negative impact in the countries' revenues. Total tax exemptions in Mali amounted to 203.45 billion CFA in 2015<sup>183</sup>, an amount close to 11% of Mali's budget for that year and 3.5 times the country's education budget.<sup>184</sup> Extractive industries (mainly foreign companies) are among the leading beneficiaries of tax benefits, and these are very relevant for the natural resources sectors in the region: gold in Burkina Faso; gold and gas in Ghana; gold, silver and bauxite in Mali; uranium and gold in Niger.

<sup>176</sup> Yabi, Gilles (2017), ID4D blog 12 September 2017

<sup>177</sup> Ortiz and Cummin (2011)

<sup>178</sup> Oxfam (2019), Christian Hallum and Kwesi W. Obeng; The West Africa Inequality Crisis

<sup>179</sup> Oxfam (2019), Christian Hallum and Kwesi W. Obeng; The West Africa Inequality Crisis

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Oxfam France and Oxfam Mali briefing note (2017). 'Mobilizing Domestic Resources to Help Mali's Poorest Populations: The Role of French Development Aid.' <http://bit.ly/2TWXJsx>

<sup>182</sup> Oxfam (2019), Christian Hallum and Kwesi W. Obeng; The West Africa Inequality Crisis

<sup>183</sup> Delegation of the European Union. Assessment of the Amount and Allocation Process for Tax and Customs Exemptions, 2016. Cited in: Oxfam France and Oxfam in Mali briefing note (2017): 'Mobilizing Domestic Resources to Help Mali's Poorest Populations.'

<sup>184</sup> Oxfam (2019), Christian Hallum and Kwesi W. Obeng; The West Africa Inequality Crisis



## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF DRIVERS OF INEQUALITIES:

The analysis of drivers in this chapter fit with the findings of the expressions of inequalities in chapter 2. The five countries share a context of strong colonial heritage, that left in place power dynamics that favour of dominant groups, prone to corruption, political capture and clientelism. These formal structures and institutions cohabit with traditional norms, strongly influenced by culture and religion, that often deepen the discrimination against weaker groups in society, such as women, youth and ethnic, religious or other minorities. In this context, with large geographical areas where the state is practically absent, inequalities often explode in violence and conflict, which further fuels inequalities, as currently seen in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.<sup>185</sup>

In terms of policy drivers, four areas are highlighted in the literature and, hence, in this report: the lack of adequate investment in essential services (most of all health and education services, but also social protection networks), especially in those extensive and remote areas, where these and another basic services (such as water, sanitation, electricity or transport) are practically absent; lack of adequate investment in smallholder agriculture and, through safety nets or social protection programs, on subsistence agriculture; a labour market characterized by total predominance of informal sectors, that leave workers with no protection, and further deepens discrimination of vulnerable groups; and very weak fiscal systems that do not raise enough revenues to finance the very needed social policies, and the little they raise is in a very regressive way, often through value added taxes, leaving exempt most of the revenues of the biggest companies.

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<sup>185</sup> International Alert (2018), If victims become perpetrators

## 4. WHAT IS THE SOLUTION? A PACK OF SUB-REGIONAL POLICIES DESIGNED TO TACKLE INEQUALITY IN WEST AFRICA

The determinants of inequality in South Saharan Africa are multi-dimensional and complex; there is no one 'silver bullet' to address this challenge, multiple responses are required.<sup>186</sup> For this reason, this research suggests a pack of policies to tackle inequalities in the region, and not a single policy.

It is important to be aware that policies that help reduce poverty are not necessarily the same as those that help reduce income inequality. For instance, quality education and enhanced productivity are potent tools for poverty reduction, yet if unaccompanied by progressive taxation and well-targeted social protection, they could accelerate income disparities. For this reason, this research suggests a different approach of existing policies, to move from tackle poverty to tackle inequality.

### A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO TACKLE INEQUALITIES

Based on the analysis of expressions of inequalities, the drivers, and the recommendations in the literature, the proposal here is not to focus on one policy, but on a set of policies clearly targeted geographically towards the most remote rural areas, and socially towards women and marginalized and minority groups. It is not about doing necessarily different things, but about doing things differently. The following approach should apply to all the policy interventions mentioned below:

- **Target the most remote areas, to correct the spatial inequalities**, which in fact correspond to inequalities at birth. Nationwide access to education and health for children from poor households is a powerful way of fighting inequalities and unleashing potential for economic production.<sup>187</sup> Address regional disparities in distribution of infrastructure facilities.<sup>188</sup> And target employment for young, women, minorities and marginalized groups in rural and remote areas.

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<sup>186</sup> UNDP (2017)

<sup>187</sup> Yabi, Gilles (2017), ID4D blog 12 September 2017

<sup>188</sup> UNDP (2017)

Following this approach, the most abandoned regions that should be set as priority for public policy investment in order to tackle inequality are:<sup>189</sup>

GHANA	BURKINA FASO	MALI	NIGER	SENEGAL
Upper East	Sud Ouest	Sikasso	Tahoua	Kaffrine
Upper West	Est, Centre-Nord	Kouliloro	Maradi	Diourbel
Nothern Ghana	Sahel	Kayes	Tillabéri	Tambacounda
Volta	Boucle du Mouhoun		Diffa	Matam
				Sédhiou

- **Target the most vulnerable groups.** Adopt and implement **comprehensive strategies to address inequalities related to gender, minorities and marginalized groups.** To tackle inequalities related to gender and other minority and marginalized groups, promote equal opportunities policies in education, health, access to productive resources and income, and access to decision-making bodies.<sup>190</sup> Affirmative action policies to reduce **gender, minorities and marginalized groups' inequalities** should therefore be adapted to the targeted sector. In the informal sector, they will be able to act directly on access to employment and remuneration, with the aim of eliminating unjustified income gaps, whereas in the formal sector, public policies should aim for equal opportunities to access to employment for men and women, people with disabilities, and people from minority groups. Again, all these focused on rural and remote areas.
- Include in the design and implementation of policies elements of **citizenship participation, transparency and accountability.** Transversal to all these policies should be the **promotion of participation of civil society** in all policy assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. In terms of participation, the research finds plenty of evidence about inequalities against women in the six domains analysed, and there is abundant literature explaining the dynamics of gender inequalities in participation and decision making. For example, some studies have shown the importance of carrying out gender responsive budgeting to design policies that address the needs and demands of women and girls,<sup>191</sup> and several studies having found that the support to women's organizations is a very effective way to achieve progress on equality and women's rights.<sup>192</sup> Although the lack of data does not allow to analyse the discrimination against other social groups (like ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities), these are also referred to in the literature.

Promoting participation, institutional accountability and transparency would allow to ensure making these policies inclusive, and would promote very much needed transparency and accountability in policy making. In sum, this approach would help to break the cycles of political capture, wealth and power accumulation, an aspect that is crucial to tackle poverty and inequality.

<sup>189</sup> This selection of the "most abandoned regions" is based on the results of a number of indicators analysed in this study. Due to the limitation of data availability, the information has been triangulated with experts from Oxfam teams in the field.

<sup>190</sup> Yabi Olakounlé Gilles (2015) Les inégalités extrêmes empoisonnent la vie de tous en Afrique de l'Ouest : il est temps d'y mettre fin, Oxfam

<sup>191</sup> See: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/data-for-gender-responsive-budgeting-620765>

<sup>192</sup> Htun, Mala y S. Laurel Weldon (2012). "The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005." American Political Science Review, Vol. 106, No. 3 de Agosto de 2012 <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/feminist-mobilisation-andprogressive-policy-change-why-governments-take-action-295457>

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE EXISTING REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR A REGIONAL POLICY PUSH

The African Union (AU), as continental institution working in the promotion of growth, development, inclusion and cooperation; the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as regional institution promoting integration in the areas of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial issues, as well as social and cultural matters; and the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU, UEMOA in French), as sub-regional economic institution promoting economic and financial integration, convergence and cooperation among member states towards a single market with a common tariff; all provide useful frameworks and spaces to move forward on the fight against inequalities in West Africa.

ECOWAS countries have already set ambitious convergence criteria that must be implemented and deepened to make **integration** even more beneficial.<sup>193</sup> Despite its limitations in making governments accountable for the commitments agreed in ECOWAS; the institution serves as an umbrella under which articulating policy proposals that gather sufficient interest among several countries is possible if member states find the correct entry points.<sup>194</sup> In this sense, the potential of pushing for specific regional initiatives to promote these policies should be accompanied by enhancing regional integration and build public sector institutions.<sup>195</sup> Providing ECOWAS with the mandate and the instruments to enforce governments' compliance with its policies is a pending task, which exceeds the scope of this research; however, it is a clamorous demand by the institution and related organizations.

The combination of the Agenda 2063 approved in 2013 by the African Union and the efforts gathered around the Sustainable Development Goals, provides an excellent framework to achieve progress.

## SUGGESTED POLICY PACK

### 1. Invest in essential services: health and education, targeting the most remote rural areas and the poorest and marginalized groups

Having good **health** or having access to proper health care is a fundamental need to have a dignified life. Health indicators in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal are among the lowest in the world. Only Ghana performs a bit better. The numbers in rural areas, among the poorest people, and among women with less education, are at the very bottom. Promoting free universal quality health care, including sexual and reproductive care, to reach the most remote rural areas and accessible to the most marginalized, is imperative. Health schemes based on out-of-pocket payments have proven to leave out the people that are in most need.

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<sup>193</sup> AUC/OECD 2018

<sup>194</sup> Aggard, F. and Miyandazi, M. (2017). Understanding ECOWAS efforts in promoting a governance agenda: Adapting regional norms to lessons from national crises. European Centre for Development Policy Management

<sup>195</sup> ADB (2017)

All governments should comply with the commitment to allocate a minimum of 15% of government budgets and 5% of their GDP to fund a public health system that is free of charge, universal, easily accessible and of high quality, and donors and development aid must consider health (and education) a priority as well.

**Education** has the greatest impact in reducing income inequality: increasing the participation of the poorer 80%<sup>196</sup> and reducing the gender income gap.<sup>197</sup> Improving the education of mothers, increases the probability of their children achieving better results in health and education.<sup>198</sup> Millions of poor parents make difficult choices about whether to educate their children. Only about a quarter of rural households in Burkina Faso enrol all their children in school.<sup>199</sup> Cutting the cost of schooling, therefore, significantly raises school participation by children from poorer families.<sup>200</sup> Education also impacts on the reduction of gender inequality, providing girls with a better control of their lives, for example, to delay the age of marriage or having less children.<sup>201</sup>

Education contributes also to transform societies, helping people to gain voice against unfair rules that perpetuate economic inequality and to improve their life opportunities, allowing people to reclaim their rights and to demand government accountability.<sup>202</sup>

All governments must fulfil their commitment to allocate 20% of their budget and 6% of their GDP to boost universal public quality education that is free of charge, with a special emphasis on improving access to high quality primary and secondary education. They can also provide incentives, such as an additional bonus for teachers who accept positions to teach in rural schools. For their part, Africa's development partners should support initiatives and programs that specifically target rural schools in order to help improve learning outcomes in those areas.

## 2. Agricultural policies targeting the most remote rural areas and the poorest farmers, taking into consideration the impacts of climate change.

Agriculture is a strategic sector in West African economies. Despite that, rural areas show the highest concentration of poverty and inequality, are highly vulnerable to climatic, political and economic shocks and suffer from the lack of income-earning opportunities and unequal access to basic services.

If intended to reduce inequalities, agricultural policies cannot only be addressed to increase

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<sup>196</sup> European Commission report: Income inequality and poverty reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa; <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/913d9058-b864-11e6-9e3c-01aa75ed71a1> (pg 11); cited in Oxfam (2019) Aid and Inequality.

<sup>197</sup> The World Bank has shown that an additional year of education can increase the income of women between 10% and 20%. Oxfam (2019) Aid and Inequality.

<sup>198</sup> Banco Mundial (2012), Informe sobre el Desarrollo Mundial 2012, Igualdad de género y desarrollo; cited in Oxfam (2019) Aid and Inequality.

<sup>199</sup> The World Bank (2018) World Development Report, Chapter 2

<sup>200</sup> The World Bank (2018) World Development Report, Chapter 2. Poverty, gender, ethnicity, disability and location explain most remaining schooling disparities

<sup>201</sup> Each additional year of secondary education can reduce the probability of getting married in infant age (before 18) in five percental points or more. Source: Economic impacts of child marriage: Global synthesis report (2017), p.5; cited in Oxfam (2019) Aid and Inequality

<sup>202</sup> Oxfam (2019) Aid and Inequality

agricultural production and added value of the sector. They should start addressing the root causes of inequality and creating equal opportunities for every rural person, particularly women, to participate in the benefits of agricultural development and attain sustainable livelihoods.

Landless and the land poor are among the most vulnerable people. Therefore, securing land rights (particularly to women, the youth and marginalized groups) and democratizing the access to other productive resources, basic services and rural infrastructure will be determinant to tackle inequality in rural areas. First of all, all governments should fulfil the Maputo commitment to allocate 10% of the budget to agriculture. Despite having increased the financial resources devoted to the sector, few countries have achieved the 10% threshold and the average spending is about 5%.<sup>203</sup>

But the quality and targeting of these investments is even more important. The West African agricultural sector is dominated by family-based subsistence farming, which benefits far too little from agricultural investment, particularly the rural youth and women.<sup>204</sup> Most public programs, and notably subsidies, are in practice captured by a minority of well-off beneficiaries. Access to financing is another uneven playing field for small producers, mostly excluded from collateral-based schemes and agricultural insurance. As for strategies aimed at developing value chains, they mainly target public investment in small and mid-sized agri-food enterprises, largely neglecting family farms.<sup>205</sup> Pastoralists have been particularly ignored by public policies, despite animal husbandry accounting for close to a third of the agricultural GDP of many Sahel countries and 10% to 15% of their total GDP.<sup>206</sup>

If inequality is to be tackled, efforts must focus on enhancing sustainable productivity, resilience and profitability of family-scale agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries. For that purpose, agricultural policies in the region should include the following:

- **Allocating at least 10%** of public spending to agriculture and herding policies that provide dignified work and income opportunities for all people, strengthen resilience and improve food and nutritional security, particularly targeting women, the youth and marginalized groups.
- Designing and implementing policies that **guarantee access to land and secure land rights** for all, in particular women, young people and marginalized populations such as livestock farmers (transhumance shepherds, nomads) and family-scale producers.
- **Redistributing land** and improving land governance to tackle the challenge of land scarcity and commercial pressures on land. Agrarian reform policies seem to have dropped off the political agenda, despite internationally recognized as necessary to limit land concentration and enhance productivity.<sup>207</sup>
- Urgently designing and implementing comprehensive **climate change mitigation and adaptation** policies and mechanisms that strengthen the resilience capacity of the populations most directly affected by the ongoing disruptions, while capitalizing on both

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<sup>203</sup> ECOWAS Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources (2017) 2025 *Strategic Policy Framework*

<sup>204</sup> Oxfam (2019) Sahel: Fighting inequality to respond to development and security challenges, Oxfam briefing paper, July 2019

<sup>205</sup> CIRAD (2016) 'Vers une accentuation des disparités dans le financement de l'agriculture en Afrique de l'Ouest?', *Cahiers Agricultures*

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> See the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and more recently the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other People Working in Rural Areas

traditional and innovative initiatives.

- Linking **small-scale production** with local, urban and peri-urban food markets, very relevant in a context of increasing urbanization and transforming food demand. This would contribute both to tackle food insecurity by increasing food availability and to improve the living conditions of smallholders and pastoralist by developing local value chains.
- **Rebalancing the power** in agri-food supply chains, where today corporations and local elites appropriate most of the value, among other things by supporting producers' organizations and enforcing fair regulations.
- **Reversing geographical inequalities** in rural infrastructure and services between areas well connected to markets and marginalized areas.
- Strengthen measures to **prevent and respond to food crises** by improving planning for the lean season in pastoral areas and increase participation of civil society organisations.
- Guaranteeing **strong safety net programs** for the poorest and most vulnerable rural populations. Prioritize productive social safety nets that combine cash transfers and in-kind transfers of productive assets (equipment, seeds and fertilizer or livestock) to support income-generating activities.

Particularly important for inequality reduction is the targeting of interventions at the level of zones, households and household members with a gender-specific approach and women's task reduction, in particular. Building resilience and safety nets will be key in the Sahel, where economic opportunities are lower for farm households and where it is estimated that nearly 50% of family farms are vulnerable to the slightest shock.<sup>208</sup>

The common agricultural policy for West Africa (ECOWAP) offers a good framework to make progress with an agricultural strategy to tackle inequality. It has a central focus on food security and poverty reduction, and its main objective is "contributing, in a sustainable manner, to meeting the food needs of the people, economic and social development and poverty reduction in the Member States". After the 2008 food crisis, ECOWAP emphasized the food sovereignty objective and the concern of reducing food vulnerability.

The institutional structures are in place, and some initiatives could contribute to the suggested strategy. For example, the Food Crises Prevention Network for Sahel and West Africa (RPCA), a platform for dialogue and coordination with the international community, made possible the harmonisation of the food security framework (*Cadre harmonisé*); the "Zero Hunger" Initiative to overcome hunger and malnutrition by 2025, could be the lever for tear two safety net strategy; the Regional Food Security Reserve; or the common external tariff to stimulate regional trade.

However, the ECOWAP 2025 Strategy acknowledges numerous gaps and challenges that should be addressed in order to make the regional space more efficient. These include, among others<sup>209</sup>:

- The need to reduce food dependency on imports: while agriculture is the first economic

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<sup>208</sup> ECOWAS Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources (2017)

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

sector (importance in GDP, share of employment and incomes), paradoxically the region still has to import the equivalent of 20% of its food requirements.<sup>210</sup>

- The urgency to address livestock and pastoralism needs, and to define a common vision shared by the Sahelian and coastal countries.
- The need to include agro-ecological solutions, and more dialogue among different actors.
- The lack of gender mainstreaming within regional and national agricultural investment plans (RAIP and NAIP), coupled with weak “Gender and agriculture” diagnoses in West Africa
- The lack of measurement of the trends in incomes and inequalities in the monitoring and evaluation systems, making impossible to evaluate the impacts on inequality reduction.

Overall, any policy measure should take into account the climate emergency situation. Climate change is already harming poor rural people and smallholder agricultural producers. They need immediate and comprehensive adaptation actions to reduce the damage, as well as assistance to realize their potential contribution to keeping global warming under 1.5°C.<sup>211</sup>

### 3. Labour policies targeting young men and women, especially in the rural areas.

Although West Africa’s growth has been impressive, there is increasing concern that economic growth has not led to improvements in labour-market outcomes for all. One of the reasons is that much of this growth came from increased primary commodities production, which does not create much productive employment and can lead to “jobless growth.”<sup>212</sup> Inadequate job creation, together with an inadequate policy framework, are contributing to deepening inequalities among West African population.

Inadequate job creation in the region is largely due to the characteristics of the regional path of economic growth and transformation. Diversification out of agriculture has been mainly into services and basically in the informal sector. Few new jobs have been created in industry because growth in this sector has been largely due to mining and oil extraction, which is not labour intensive. In consequence, structural transformation has not emerged as a driver of great equality.<sup>213</sup>

Informality, underemployment and the precarious nature of jobs affect almost all West Africans of working age, and more women than men. Labour rights violations, in law or in practice, are the norm. Even though freedom of association and collective bargaining are enshrined in law in most African countries there are still concerns, particularly around the right of unions to operate without government interference and in some cases without prior government approval.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> IFAD (2019) Climate Action Report 2019.

<sup>212</sup> African Development Bank (2018) *West Africa Economic Outlook 2018: Macroeconomic developments and poverty, inequality, and employment. Labor markets and jobs*

<sup>213</sup> African Development Bank (2016) African Development Report 2015. Growth, Poverty and Inequality Nexus: Overcoming barriers for sustainable development

<sup>214</sup> Oxfam (2019) A tale of two continents: Fighting inequality in Africa



Labour policies with an inclusion approach are necessary to create equal opportunities for all and reduce income inequality, by facing the interlinked challenges of economic growth, job creation and social inclusion. Higher wages and stronger labour rights for ordinary workers, especially for women, are key to reducing inequality.

Policies should stimulate an inclusive **regional structural transformation in West Africa**, to ensure that wealth creation involves all segments of the population, promoting –through incentive policies– sectors intensive in non-skilled labour, to reduce drastically the informal sector and allow the incorporation of young people into the job market.<sup>215</sup> And also support sectors which have the greatest potential for job creation, both in large cities and in regional centres near rural areas.<sup>216</sup>

Reversing **geographical disparities** in infrastructure, public services, access to markets and education will be essential to create growth in manufacturing and an expanding service sector.

With the **agricultural sector** employing two-thirds of the continent's workforce, concentrating investment in this sector has considerable potential for creating productive employment. But this requires a shift towards more local processing of agricultural produce, to capture greater value, along with new agricultural practices and technologies, in order to drive up productivity.

Design specific employment programs targeting at **incorporating young women and men** into the formal sector, since they are the most affected by unemployment, linking these programs with adequate education and training needs and provisions. However, the heterogeneous nature of demographics in West Africa calls for policies that are context specific, in order to achieve youth employment outcomes that are both timely and sustainable.<sup>217</sup>

Governments must put skills development in the informal sector back on the agenda and create incentives for public providers of training to serve the informal sector. Skills help workers to access non-agricultural jobs and help increase their earnings. Put in place systems to ensure that the informal sector progressively complies with at least the minimum regulatory requirements on pay for both women and men and on the work environment.

Strengthen **protection for labour rights** and enact policies for more inclusive labour markets, including: improve protection for the right of labour to unionize and to strike, and for unions to bargain on behalf of their members; review minimum wage policies and regulatory regimes to lift the wages of the bottom 40% of wage earners; legislate to enforce equal pay for equal work for men and women and invest in skills and on-the-job training for women; distribute equitably paid work opportunities and unpaid work responsibilities between men and women, and with the co-responsibility of the state; and fight discrimination against women.

An inclusive and relatively high minimum wage, along with arrangements that strengthen trade unions tend to reduce income disparity as workers gain bargaining power.<sup>218</sup> A regional initiative could be promoted to adopt a **common framework for setting a minimum living wage**, adjusted to the living cost in each country, which is enforced in all the countries to ensure that all workers

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<sup>215</sup> AUC/OECD 2018

<sup>216</sup> Yabi, Gilles (2017), ID4D blog 12 September 2017

<sup>217</sup> ADB (2015)

<sup>218</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Economic Policy Reforms 2012: Going for Growth.

everywhere receive a wage ensuring a dignified standard of living. This should be defined and updated regularly in consultation with workers, employers and civil society through a permanent participatory mechanism and strong social dialogue.

However, the minimum wage would have little impact on the vast majority of West African population which works in the informal sector and therefore is not covered by minimum wage regulations. Workers in the informal sector also lack voice or the opportunity for collective bargaining through effective representation by trade unions. It would be necessary to **extend the benefits of formalization** to the informal sector, among other things through access to health care, social insurance and pensions. This includes the gradual integration of existing micro-insurance arrangements into national social insurance schemes.

Improvements in working conditions and salaries should be made regionally in order to avoid the threat effect that comes from the unregulated capital mobility and the risk of a “race to the bottom” in the cost of labour, where countries compete by offering low salaries and more advantages to attract corporations and investors. A common policy on minimum wages could help to prevent this problem and also the risk of brain-drain and cross-border social dumping. It can also be a powerful way to counteract the pressure that national governments receive by large corporations to compete with each other. In Asia, Indonesia has proposed a regional minimum wage to help prevent the competition between nations that all too often results in poverty wages for workers. This concerted effort is not free of challenges, however, as the current negotiation in the European Union, where workers in high-wage countries fear that this could weaken collective bargaining and lead to lower wages.<sup>219</sup>

#### 4. Progressive fiscal policies’ reform.

Progressive and equitable tax policy choices can play a major role in reducing inequality and poverty, but also in strengthening the social contract. Reform **tax systems** to ensure sufficient, sustainable and predictable progressive revenues. Increase tax revenues by collecting more from those who have more in order to better fund basic social services.

Increase the overall progressivity of the tax system by expanding taxes that are typically paid by the rich, such as wealth taxes, taxes on capital gains, personal income tax for top earners and property taxes, as well as corporate income tax for large companies, and by reducing dependence on consumption taxes such as VAT, which tend to fall disproportionately on the poorest people and in particular on women.<sup>220</sup>

Pay special attention to increasing tax compliance by high net worth individuals and seek to tax wealth that is hidden offshore; and ensure that multinational corporations pay their fair share of taxes by strengthening anti-tax avoidance policies, transfer pricing legislation and counter-measures against tax havens. Stop the regional ‘race to the bottom’ on corporate taxation by.

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<sup>219</sup> See ‘Nordic countries at odds with EU over minimum wage’, *The Guardian*, January 12 2020, at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/12/nordic-countries-at-odds-with-eu-over-minimum-wage>

<sup>220</sup> Oxfam (2019), Christian Hallum and Kwesi W. Obeng; The West Africa Inequality Crisis

## 5.CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINAL NOTE

This research has illustrated the expressions of inequalities in six domains of life provided in the Multidimensional Inequalities Framework (MIF), in five West African countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal), depending on gender, location (urban/rural), level of income / wealth, level of education and, in some cases, age. Availability of disaggregated data is a limitation not only to this research, but also to the correct understanding and design of policies in the region. Despite this limitation, the available results are overwhelming: in general terms, in these countries, poor women with low education living in rural areas are in a much worse situation than others. In addition, there is an ethnic factor affecting minorities that has not been possible to analyse, but that is referenced in the literature. For most indicators in most domains, inequalities are more pronounced in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, compared to Senegal and Ghana, being Ghana (in general) the country with best performance.

The research identifies contextual and policy drivers common to the five countries (and, in general, to the West Africa region). A special mention is made to the particular context of conflict and insecurity in certain parts of these countries, characterized by the absence of the State (and the services it should provide) and the lack of opportunities for youth.

The analysis of inequalities based on the MIF provides an innovative look on inequalities, more complete and coherent with the complex realities that affect people's lives. This is a step forward in the way we approach development policies, that need to be sustainable, equitable and inclusive. As such, the conception, design and implementation of policies to tackle the multidimensionality of inequalities must respond to those complexities; development as usual is not an option if the objective is to tackle inequalities in a context of uncertainty and climate change. For this reason, this research proposes the adoption of a pack of development policies that, in order to truly tackle inequality, should be implemented with a radically different approach: targeting the most remote areas, the most vulnerable groups, and supporting citizenship participation, transparency and accountability.

With this objective, the following are the suggested recommendations to policy makers in ECOWAS and to international development institutions.

## A. Recommendations to regional institutions (ECOWAS, WAEMU, CILSS, African Union)

### Commit to tackle inequality:

The regional institutions should make a clear commitment to tackle inequality in all regional strategies, implying a commitment to put the effort in reaching the most remote areas identified, and in targeting women, youth and marginalised groups in their policies. Including:

Prioritize tackling inequality in the agenda of ECOWAS Commission, WAEMU and African Union.

- Develop a regional framework and action plan, with objectives and indicators, which seeks to significantly improve upon West Africa's current position as the African region least committed to the fight against inequality, encouraging national governments to adopt fair and equitable policies.
- Generate reliable disaggregated data and develop a robust mechanism to assist with and to monitor implementation of the SDGs, including Target 10.1 regarding inequality.

### On essential services:

The institutions should make public investment in health and education a priority for the region. Accompany member states to allocate at least 15% of government budgets to fund public health sector also free of charge, universal, easily accessible and of high quality, and 20% to boost universal quality education that is free of charge.

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This should entail putting in place the necessary mechanisms to monitor budget allocations and final use of funds, ensuring compliance with regional and international commitments, and supporting the inequality approach mentioned in the previous recommendation.

### On agriculture:

Make public investment in agriculture a priority for the region.

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Accompany member states to allocate at least 10% of government budgets to fund agriculture.

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Invest in a new deal for rural West Africa, which tackles the needs of food crop farmers, small-scale agricultural producers, pastoralist populations, women and the youth.

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Promote regional efforts to develop value chains through initiatives such as the Milk Offensive launched in 2015 by ECOWAS,<sup>221</sup> including commercial and taxing instruments to protect local producers and taking advantage of the WAEMU framework, as well as ensuring dignified jobs along the value chain.

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Promote full implementation of the African Union's framework and guidelines on land policy in Africa<sup>222</sup>, with a particular focus on ending agricultural land poverty, landlessness and insecurity in land use among the poorest people, particularly women.

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<sup>221</sup> For information on the Milk Offensive see: [www.hubrural.org/IMG/pdf/angl.\\_projet\\_de\\_rapport\\_final\\_ym\\_rev2-3.pdf](http://www.hubrural.org/IMG/pdf/angl._projet_de_rapport_final_ym_rev2-3.pdf)

<sup>222</sup> AUC-ECA-AfDB (2010). Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa

Develop and apply a new set of strict guidelines for all large-scale private sector engagement in agriculture to improve their inclusivity, accountability and effectiveness, including monitoring of the highest available standards and international agreements on land, gender, labour and human rights.

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Build on the regional strategy on agriculture (ECOWAP) to ensure targeting policies and interventions as required to address inequality, focusing efforts on fighting the root causes of inequality and creating equal opportunities by enhancing sustainable productivity, resilience and profitability of smallholder agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries.

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Secure adequate financing for the Climate Investment Plan adopted by 17 Sahel states in February 2019.

## On labour:

Adopt a regional **structural transformation strategy** to promote sectors that are intensive in non-skilled labour, to reduce drastically the informal sector and allow the incorporation of young people into the job market.

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Design and implement a **regional plan to protect labour rights** and enact policies for more inclusive labour markets, including:

- improve protection for the right of labour to unionize and to strike, and for unions to bargain on behalf of their members;
- review minimum wage policies and regulatory regimes to lift the wages of the bottom 40% of wage earners;
- legislate to enforce equal pay for equal work for men and women and invest in skills and on-the-job training for women;
- distribute equitably paid work opportunities and unpaid work responsibilities between men and women, promoting the co-responsibility of the State and the private sector in the provision of care work;<sup>223</sup>
- fight discrimination against women with affirmative action labour policies;
- adopt and ratify the ILO conventions against violence in the work space, and put in place measures to comply with them.<sup>224</sup>

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Adopt and enforce a **common framework to set the minimum living wage**, adjusted to the living cost in each country, to ensure that all workers everywhere receive a wage ensuring a decent standard of living. This should be defined and updated regularly in consultation with workers, employers and civil society through a permanent participatory mechanism and strong social dialogue.

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<sup>223</sup> Oxfam (2020), Time to Care, page 45 onwards: according to the so-called “4-R framework” of care work (Recognise, Reduce, Redistribute and Represent), “Redistribute unpaid care work more fairly within the household, from women to men, and simultaneously shift the responsibility of unpaid care work to the state and the private sector”. Available on: <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620928/bp-time-to-care-inequality-200120-en.pdf>

<sup>224</sup> Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190); here: [www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C190](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190)

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**Ensure dignified work.** Improvements in dignified working conditions and salaries should be made regionally in order to avoid the threat effect that comes from the unregulated capital mobility and the risk of a “race to the bottom” where countries compete by offering low salaries and more advantages to attract corporations and investors.

### On fiscal policies:

Support national governments in their efforts to promote progressive tax reforms to redistribute from the rich to the poor, increasing revenues by collecting more from those who have more, removing unnecessary tax incentives, and ensuring that multinational corporations pay their fair part.

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Take advantage of the regional spaces (in ECOWAS and WAEMU) to encourage a race to the top in national progressive reforms to fight against inequality and avoid competition among states to attract foreign investment with tax incentives that dramatically erode revenues and fiscal capacity of countries.

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WAEMU could also strengthen transfer pricing regulations where they exist and introduce robust regulation at regional level, supporting the capacity of national revenue authorities to curb illicit financial flows.

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Take a lead on the harmonization of tax incentives by setting up an independent taxation unit within the ECOWAS Commission to advise and coordinate tax policies, and play a more active role in global tax reforms to safeguard the interests of West African countries.

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Encourage and support governments in the region to play an active role in reforming the global tax system, including the OECD Inclusive Framework on BEPS, to ensure that unfavourable rules are reformed and that any new rules adopted also address the interests of countries in the region.

### On participation, transparency and accountability:

Promote participation of civil society in the policy design, assessment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in all regional policy processes, instances and institutions.

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Guarantee transparency and social accountability of all ECOWAS policy processes, to allow citizens and other actors to know exactly what decisions are being made, and how they are implemented, to ensure public policies and resources deliver to the benefit of the poorest and most marginalized groups and communities.

## B. Recommendations to national governments (of Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal)

### Commit to tackle inequality:

States should make a clear commitment to tackle inequality in all national strategies, implying a commitment to put the effort in reaching the most remote areas, and in targeting women, youth and marginalised groups in their policies. Including:

- Develop a national action plan, with objectives and indicators, which seeks to significantly reduce inequality.
- Support the regional effort to develop a robust mechanism to assist with and to monitor implementation of the SDGs, including Target 10.1 regarding inequality.

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Invest in the generation of reliable disaggregated data and statistics in the different areas related to multidimensional inequalities at the national level, and supporting sector specific statistical and research institutes to this end.

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Regarding labour market statistics, robust data should be promoted to build national accounts that reflect women's work contribution to the economy.

### On essential services:

Public investment in health and education must be a priority for the country. Allocate at least 15% of government budgets to fund public health sector also free of charge, universal, easily accessible and of high quality, and 20% to boost universal quality education that is free of charge.

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Implement universal tax-based public services and social protection.

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Mechanisms to monitor budget allocations and final use of funds, ensuring compliance with regional and international commitments, should be put in place, supporting the inequality approach mentioned in these recommendations.

### On agriculture:

Make public investment in agriculture a priority for the country

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Uphold Malabo declaration and the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAAPD) by increasing investments in agriculture to a minimum of 10% of national budgets, taking measures to ensure a large proportion of the additional investment goes to small-scale rural farmers and pastoralists, particularly targeting women, the youth and marginalized groups.

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Secure access to land and other means of production for women and marginalized populations, among other measures, through land reform processes, regulation of land markets to prevent concentration and land planning.

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Fully implement the African Union's Land Policy Framework, with a particular focus on ending agricultural land poverty, landlessness and insecurity in land use among the poorest people, and particularly among women.

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Urgently design and implementing climate change adaptation policies and mechanisms that strengthen the prevention and resilience capacity of the populations most directly affected by the ongoing disruptions, while capitalizing on both traditional and innovative initiatives.

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Link small-scale production with local, urban and peri-urban food markets, very relevant in a context of increasing urbanization and transforming food demand.

Rebalance the power in agri-food supply chains, among other things by supporting producers' organizations and enforcing fair regulations.

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Reverse geographical inequalities in rural infrastructure and services between areas well connected to markets and marginalized areas.

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Strengthen measures to prevent and respond to food crises by improving planning for the lean season in pastoral areas and increase participation of civil society organisations.

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Strong safety net programs must be guaranteed to the most vulnerable rural populations.

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## On labour:

Support the creation of dignified work: full employment and dignified jobs/working conditions, in particular for women (including migrant women), young people and those living in poverty, by designing effective programs targeting at incorporating them into the formal sector.

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Invest in the agricultural sector with programs that maximize job creation.

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Invest in physical and social infrastructure needed to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, in which all agents (men, state and private sector) share their fair part of co-responsibility.

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Invest more in human development, particularly in inclusive and accessible quality education for all, including basic education, vocational education and training as well as higher education.

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Legislate and put in place mechanisms to ensure that the informal sector progressively complies with at least the minimum regulatory requirements on pay for both women and men and on the work environment.

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Improve protection for the right of labour to unionize and strike, and for unions to bargain on behalf of their members;

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Review minimum wage policies and regulatory regimes to lift the wages of the bottom 40% of wage earners;

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Reinforce and expand the policy, legal and regulatory framework on maternity protection, starting with raising awareness among workers and employers of the existing regulatory framework;

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Distribute equitably paid work opportunities and unpaid work responsibilities between men and women;

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Fight discrimination against women with affirmative action labour policies;

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Adopt and ratify the ILO conventions against violence in the work space, and put in place measures to comply with them.

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Better manage the vulnerability of large sections of the working population by incorporating workers in the informal sector into social insurance schemes and mechanisms, including the gradual integration of existing micro-insurance arrangements into national social insurance schemes.

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## On fiscal policies:

Promote progressive tax reforms to lighten tax burden on the poorest individuals, strengthen states' ability to collect revenue in an equitable manner, by expanding taxes that are typically paid by the rich, such as wealth taxes, taxes on capital gains, personal income tax for top earners and property taxes, as well as corporate income tax for large companies; and by reducing dependence on consumption taxes such as VAT.

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Increase revenues by collecting more from those who have more, removing unnecessary tax incentives, and ensuring that multinational corporations pay their fair share of taxes by strengthening anti-tax avoidance policies, transfer pricing legislation and counter-measures against tax havens.

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Pay special attention to increasing tax compliance by high net worth individuals and seek to tax wealth that is hidden offshore.

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Stop the regional 'race to the bottom' on corporate taxation by scrapping unnecessary tax incentives for investors, and review existing incentives and tax treaties with a view to increasing revenue from investors.

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Strengthen transfer pricing regulations where they exist already and introduce robust regulations where they do not, and improve the capacity of national revenue authorities to curb illicit financial flows.

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## On participation, transparency and accountability:

Promote participation of civil society in the policy design, assessment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in all national policy processes, instances and institutions, including fiscal policies.

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Guarantee transparency and accountability of all policy processes, to allow citizens and other actors to know exactly what decisions are being made, and how are they implemented, to ensure public policies and resources deliver to the benefit of the poorest and most marginalized groups and communities.

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Develop and implement policies providing a legal framework promoting civil action, to guarantee the right to free association expression, assembly and information, and the voice and inclusion of the poorest citizens, marginalized groups and women.

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Restore bonds and trust between populations and institutions and between communities and population groups, and improve transparency and accountability of institutions in order to strengthen the social contract.

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Ensure that the human aspect of security is taken into account by supporting its inclusion in community peacebuilding initiatives, and that defence and security spending do not divert public funds from development, social services or inequality reduction.

## C. Recommendations to donors and international development institutions

Development institutions are taking steps to integrate the reduction of inequalities in their policies. The European Commission has called Member States to strengthen their tools and approaches to make them more effective in addressing inequality and to mainstream the reduction of inequality in their development cooperation. The New European Consensus on Development frames the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in partnership with all developing countries and guides the action of EU institutions and Member States in their cooperation with all developing countries.<sup>225</sup>

### A policy coherence for development approach should be applied:

Development institutions should ensure better coherence across all of their policies, including on development cooperation, trade, labour, taxes, climate change, military and foreign policies. Donor countries' responsibility doesn't start and end with aid: if donors are serious about ending inequality, they need to ensure that none of their policies are undermining inequality reduction.

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Scrutinize development policies to ensure full coherence with the SDG goal of reducing inequality and its commitment of leaving no one behind.

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Enhance dialogue with different stakeholders, from local to national and regional authorities, civil society, private sector and international organisations.

### Address structural causes of inequality:

Make and maintain a clear commitment to tackle inequality as part of their development aid and cooperation policies. In particular, ensure that strategies incorporate reduction of social, economic and political inequalities, as well as horizontal inequalities between sexes and different communities and population groups.

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Mainstream the reduction of inequality in the programme and project cycle by further integrating inequality into country situation analyses and the development of country assistance programmes, including through ex-ante assessment of inequality impacts and inequality-related indicators in programmes and projects where feasible. Inequality assessments should in particular look at the impact of development cooperation on closing the gap between the incomes of the top 10% and the bottom 40% in countries receiving aid (Palma ratio).

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Development institutions should incorporate the recommended policy pack - on health, education, agriculture, labour and fiscal policies (including through increased ODA support to equitable domestic revenue mobilisation), with the approach suggested to tackle inequality (targeting the most remote areas, the most vulnerable and marginalized groups and communities, and promoting

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<sup>225</sup> See The New European Consensus on Development: 'Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future', available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/new-european-consensus-development-our-world-our-dignity-our-future\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/new-european-consensus-development-our-world-our-dignity-our-future_en)

participation, transparency and accountability) in their cooperation strategies and programs.

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Gender inequality must be tackled with greater urgency, through the adoption of a feminist approach to development cooperation, and a greater allocation of aid in support to gender justice and women's rights, including through increased support to women's rights organisations.

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Support regionally and nationally-led processes and commitments to reduce inequalities. In particular ECOWAS and country governments. Using aid in ways that strengthen country systems and country ownership is key to lasting impact on inequalities.

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Support the defence of civic space and strengthen it, by collaborating with civil society organizations and platforms, supporting their participation in national and regional policy processes, and requesting governments to have in place a legal framework to allow civil society freedom of association and expression, without favour or discrimination by government or discriminatory regulations against women or based on ethnic or religion.

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Development actors must play a central role in coordinating development aid for the Sahel and strengthen joint efforts to design and implement effective public policy for inequality reduction under states' leadership.

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Official development assistance for the West Africa region, particularly through budget support, should be increased, and increase concessionally level of various types of loans in order to limit debt servicing costs.

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Ensure that donor support to peace and security expenditures does not divert ODA funds away from development, social services and inequality reduction. In addition, ensure that donors' security-focused approach to cooperation in the region does not come at the expense of a developmental and rights-based approach to addressing the causes and consequences of conflict and fragility, identifying weak governance, inequality and unequal gender and power relations as key factors.

### **Support the analysis of inequalities:**

Support national statistics systems and improve related institutional capacity to gather more and better data related to inequality, in particular:

Data disaggregated by in-country location, ethnic groups, level of wealth / income, level of education, sex and age, migration status, persons with disabilities and other people living in marginalised communities and vulnerable situations, related to:

- wealth inequality
- access to work, productive assets and markets
- working conditions
- living conditions, in particular related to access to food, clean water, clean air, sanitation, utilities, housing and transport
- participation, voice and influence in political and decision making processes
- individual freedoms in people's lives

Data disaggregated by level of education, age and ethnicity related to:

- Health: mortality, prevalence of diseases
- Physical security: violence by different actors, human trafficking
- Equal treatment

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Support the generation of qualitative data to complement quantitative data to better understand the expressions of inequalities.

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Support national statistics systems to gather more and better data related to inequality, in contexts of conflict, violence and insecurity.

## **D. Final note on the use of the Multidimensional Inequality Framework (MIF): limitations and opportunities for West Africa**

The Multidimensional Inequality Framework (MIF) has been developed to better understand inequalities - integrating inequalities of opportunities and inequalities of outcomes - and their main drivers in any given context. Its major strength is to be a comprehensive framework with a set of outcome indicators and disaggregation variables (gender, age, geography or ethnicity, among others) around seven domains of life.

Given its multidimensionality, the MIF allows to integrate and identify intersections among different types of inequalities, being economic, social or political. It also allows us to combine vertical (eg. based on income levels), horizontal (eg. based on gender or age) and spatial (based on geographic location) inequalities.

The MIF can be applied for a comprehensive analysis of inequalities in any specific context at different levels (regional, national or local). It can also help to highlight how specific population groups are affected by existing inequalities, or to make comparative analysis among countries or regions (taking into account that data are not always homogeneous). The outcome is a wide and multifaceted picture of inequality and its multiple drivers which can be used for informing policy-making.

The quality of the analysis, however, will depend on the availability of accurate, updated, comparable and disaggregated data. West African countries suffer from underinvestment in statistical capacities. In turn, the main limitation when applying this framework is the lack of access to data, particularly for certain domains of life. Indicators on health (domain 1) and education (domain 3) are much more available than those on participation, influence and voice (domain 6) or on individual, family and social life (domain 7). For some dimensions of inequality, such as ethnicity, the lack of data is even more pronounced.

This could lead to a bias in the analysis of inequality, since some domains acquire more relevance than others merely due to the availability of data. International institutions (such as the WHO or UNICEF) support and finance statistical data production and the capacity development of statistical offices. With the SDG approach to combat inequalities, efforts to produce comparable data are focused on feeding the SDG indicators database. Indicators not aligned with the SDG are less likely to be measured.

The absence of statistical information could be partially compensated by the use of mixed methods, combining quantitative and qualitative methods including the literature review and expert consultation, to better understand how people experience inequalities in their daily lives. However, this could undermine part of the strength of the tool that lies in its statistical soundness. In any case, the MIF is very useful to identify and make explicit where information gaps are more severe.

Another potential limitation, related to the way the MIF was developed, is the absence of a robust set of indicators to capture inequalities in conflict situations. In the case of West African countries this is very relevant as some population groups are clearly more affected than others. Including new indicators for conflict contexts could be feasible, but a different issue would be the availability of data to feed those indicators.

When applying the framework we should consider, especially for some domains, that quantitative information is not enough to explain inequalities. The percentage of population completing primary education, for instance, does not tell anything about the quality of the education system. Complementing the MIF with qualitative information would help to acquire a better understanding of inequalities.

Informing policy making is one of the main goals of the tool. The MIF can be applied to analyze the impact of a given public policy in terms of inequality. While the MIF set of indicators is more focused on development outcomes, its module on drivers is also tailored to policy analysis. But the analysis of drivers can be exhausting if no prior limitation of its scope is set beforehand. In this regard, the framework complements well with the Commitment to reducing inequality index (CRII), developed by Oxfam and Development Finance International (DFI) to measure government efforts to combat inequality in three policy areas: social spending, taxation and labour (plus agriculture for the CRII in Africa).<sup>226</sup> Therefore, a suggestion would be to combine the two of them for the analysis of drivers, and indicate as a potential expansion of the analysis of drivers those that are not covered by the CRII.

Finally, the modular nature of the MIF makes it usable in a flexible way, as a whole or by modules, in order to go deeper into a certain domain or sub-domain of life. In a first phase of this research it was necessary to select the domains, sub-domains and indicators relevant to the West African context. This was based on data availability and consultation to experts, and it is a necessary step in order to adapt the tool to each specific context and specific interest. Given the wide and comprehensive scope of the MIF (both on the outcome analysis and the drivers analysis), limiting the scope of the research in an early stage is a must; in this regard, and always depending on the availability of disaggregated data, the more countries and domains considered, the less feasible is an in-depth analysis.

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<sup>226</sup> Oxfam (2017) The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index. More information at <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/commitment-reducing-inequality-index-2018>

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