

# Meeting the equity challenge in Burkina Faso: regional policies to reduce economic inequalities

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### PITCH

In their design and formulation, policy documents are generally limited to the macro level (entire country); they set out regional differences without explicitly highlighting the intraregional mechanisms at play.

It is necessary to understand these interregional inequalities, but also to shed light on intraregional inequalities and consider specific regional policies to reduce inequalities, especially economic ones.

### ISSUES

The values of justice and equity are at the heart of international and regional

development agendas. (SDG 10, aspiration 3 of the African Union's Agenda 2063, first pillar of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development on "Dignity and Equality"). Development policies in Burkina Faso have always been based on these values of justice and equity. Thus, the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) 2016-2020, which is currently the reference framework for development policies, stipulates that "from the perspective of inclusive and sustainable human development, the main issues that arise relate to the persistence of social inequalities, the inadequacies of the national

productive system, the low quality of human resources, and the inefficiency of governance".

One of the guiding principles featured in the PNDES is "equity and gender," insofar as the document mentions that "the reduction of social and regional inequalities and national solidarity will be the guiding principle to ensure intraregional and intergenerational equity, taking gender into account, as well as regional specificities by enhancing the potential of regions, for more spatial equity and social peace".

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**Key words** Poverty, economic inequalities, dynamics of inequality, inter-regional variability, intra-regional variability, regional policy, regional growth pole, job creation

**Geography** Burkina Faso

**Themes** Inequalities, economics, regional development

**Find out more about this project:** <https://www.afd.fr/en/carte-des-projets/analyzing-inequalities-perspective-health-education-and-employment-trajectories>

1 Burkina Faso-PNDES, 2016, p. 4.

2 Burkina Faso-PNDES, 2016, p. 27.

## RESULTS

The results from the study of inequalities in Burkina Faso<sup>3</sup> show a decrease in economic inequalities since the 2000s. Indeed, the Gini index fell from 0.46 in 2003 to 0.35 in 2014 at the national level. It can therefore be said that, overall, the distribution of consumer spending remains unequal, but the drop in inequalities is significant (nearly 24%).

While there has been a decline in the general level of poverty and economic inequalities at the national level since the beginning of the 2000s, the regional dynamic is different (Figure 1). Indeed, the situation of economic inequalities has hardly changed in the majority of regions (8/13), namely the Centre-Nord, Est, Hauts-Bassins, Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre-Est, Centre-Sud, Sud-Ouest, and Centre-Ouest. The Hauts-Bassins and Sud-Ouest regions deserve special attention since the results show that they have a relatively high

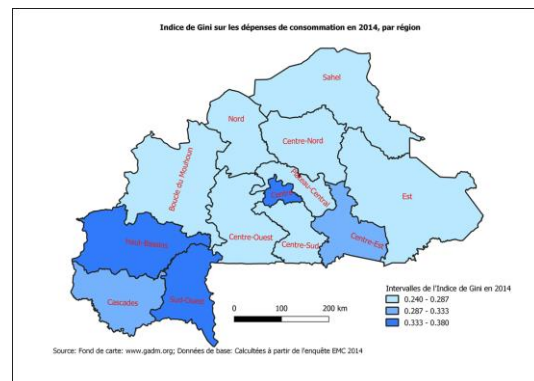
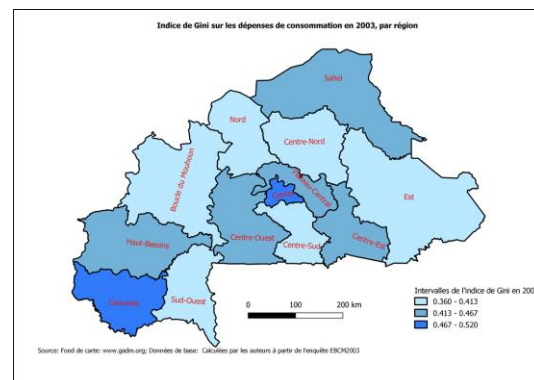
level of monetary poverty with strong economic inequalities compared to others.

The results also show that in 2014, 73.4% of inequalities in consumption expenditure were due to inequalities within regions (intra-regional variability) and 26.6% to regional differences (inter-regional variability).

In other words, the socio-demographic characteristics of the population (gender, education level, and employment status) within a region explain economic inequalities more than the contextual characteristics of the regions.

Several social and cultural factors help explain inequalities in access to social resources (education, health, etc.).

However, the economic dimension is also an important component, given the cost of accessing these social services. That is why the economic



**Figure 1. Regional variations of the Gini index from 2003 to 2014**

empowerment of women is at the heart of the 2009 national gender policy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the study of economic inequalities, three recommendations can be made to the Ministry in charge of the Economy:

- ▶ Accelerating the policy to create hubs of economic growth by prioritizing job creation (with an approach targeting young people and women), while placing particular emphasis on regions with a high prevalence of monetary poverty, such as the Nord, Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre-Ouest, and Est. In 2014, the incidence of poverty in the Nord (70.4%), Boucle du Mouhoun (59.7%), Centre-Ouest (51.6%), and Est (50.1%) was above the national level (40.1%). However, in terms of reducing economic inequalities, the regions of the Centre and Hauts-Bassins, home to the country's two largest cities, deserve special attention.
- ▶ In collaboration with the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, implementing a policy for the development and diversification of the value chain in the agricultural sector, in order to make it more productive for the country's economy. One of the major challenges in reducing economic inequalities is that of the employability of young people. Yet, paradoxically, while the vast majority of the country's working population is in the agricultural sector, specific training for such jobs remains insignificant in technical and vocational education and in higher education. The agricultural sector presents enormous opportunities for job creation and this requires an overhaul of the sector, from the modernization of production to its transformation and industrialization.
- ▶ Encouraging the development of local policies at the regional level to reduce social and economic inequalities, with the involvement of all development actors.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.afd.fr/fr/ressources/etat-des-lieux-des-inegalites-multi-dimensionnelles-au-burkina-faso>