PROMOTING EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES: A

PERSPECTIVE OF BURKINA FASO

A Project

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MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

by

Jamie Chu Brezinski

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Jamie Chu Brezinski

Approved by:

______________________________, Committee Chair
Serge Lee, Ph.D., M.S.W.

______________________________
Date
Student: Jamie Chu Brezinski

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this thesis is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the thesis.

__________________________, Graduate Coordinator
Dale Russell, Ed.D., LCSW

Division of Social Work
Abstract

of

PROMOTING EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES: A PERSPECTIVE OF BURKINA FASO

by

Jamie Chu Brezinski

This study examined the educational needs of children in Thyou, Burkina Faso. The study findings from both quantitative and qualitative data reveal the need to remove barriers associated with poverty such as low income and malnutrition, which impede educational opportunities for rural children. In addition, rural life in Burkina Faso includes low-output and high-labor agriculture. The Feeding Nations Through Education (FNTE) agricultural assistance program aims to relieve famine and raise literacy among rural populations in Thyou. FNTE beneficiaries reported to improvements in their lives including higher increased income, better health and less hunger, changed perceptions of education, one or more school-attending children, and plans to educate all their school-aged children. Findings from this study seek to increase the awareness of addressing both short and long-terms needs of rural families including agricultural support and educational improvements for children in rural communities such as Thyou.

__________________________________, Committee Chair
Serge Lee, Ph.D., M.S.W.

__________________________________
Date
DEDICATION

I share my sincerest and deepest gratitude to the people of Burkina Faso I met, learned from, served alongside, laughed with, and been inspired by, for allowing me to be a part of your lives in so many ways. I am honored to have had the opportunity to travel to your country and met such honest, humble, and hospitable people such as yourselves who greatly reflect your country’s heart as the land of the upright as well as God’s heart for others.

I dedicate this project to the families and children represented in this study and to countless others from rural areas of Burkina Faso who have yet to share their stories. May others see your strength and sense of ease in spite of great difficulty as a testament to the human spirit of your people. And may your hope be evident to others near and far, and spur on change at all levels both for this generation and future ones to come. And one day may these changes lead all children of Burkina Faso to be given the same educational opportunities as other children experience throughout the world for a better and brighter Burkina Faso.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy.”
— Father Henri J.M. Nouwen

I am grateful to a host of people both in my personal and academic life. First and foremost, I want to acknowledge God’s clear presence and care in my life before, during, (and after) my time in the MSW program. He has provided me a life with great joy, purpose, and blessings including the opportunity to return to school as a graduate student of social work and to focus my thesis project on the country of Burkina Faso. My path to this field and to serve internationally is largely due to my pursuit of becoming more like Christ in His service and compassion toward others. Thank you, Lord.

Next, I am thankful to my family, Mom, Dad, and Joe, for being tremendously supportive and encouraging to me throughout my time as a graduate student. Mom, especially for being so caring and loving at all times, especially when I visited home to my favorite Korean foods! Dad, for being so understanding and always willing to listen to me through all my ups and downs during my program. And Joe, for being my one and only brother who is there for me no matter what happens. Thank you, family!

And now, a special thank you to my friends both near and far. For the constant prayers, encouragement, and support to me, and for always trying to keep me sane and reminding me to maintain the right attitude and perspective when things got a little crazy. Special thanks to Stacy Yang for being a faithful friend and study buddy over the last two years in our program. You are awesome, enough said! Thank you, friends!
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And lastly, thank you to the individuals and families of Thyou who provided me greater insight into your daily lives, the opportunity to share in your joys and struggles, and an incredible and memorable experience during my time in Burkina Faso. Barka! Until next time…
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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The importance of education is well regarded throughout much of the world. It is an essential part of society that leads to greater development in individuals, communities, and nations. The United Nations (UN; 2011b) reflects this fundamental belief that education is of universal importance and a right for everyone. As stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Everyone has the right to education…it shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages” (UN, 2011b, article 26, para. 1).

Despite promotion of universal primary education and efforts to achieve educational equality on a global scale, developing nations throughout the world continue to face barriers in meeting this goal, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP; 2007), while most regions met a net enrollment ratio of over 90% in 2006, sub-Saharan Africa still lagged behind with only 71% enrollment, which left about 38 million children of primary school age still out of school. In particular in Burkina Faso, one of the poorest countries on the continent, low rates of primary school enrollment, completion of schooling, and adult and youth literacy rates are widely apparent, most notably in rural areas throughout the country (UNDP, 2012). Educational access, especially for girls, is also limited throughout most rural populations. This is not to say progress has not been made throughout this region, but
greater improvement is still needed for the advancement of human development, particularly in terms of childhood education.

**Background of the Problem**

Sub-Saharan Africa is characterized by both significant progress and continual need for educational improvement. Klugman (as cited in UN, 2010a) reasons that many countries throughout this region “still face many challenges but…have made significant, and sometimes overlooked, progress, most notably in education, despite severe economic and political adversities” (p. E-5-1). Sub-Saharan Africa is burdened with the highest number of multidimensionally (beyond material poverty) poor in the world, with totals as high as 458 million people or 65% of the total population of the 37 sub-Saharan African countries studied. With respect to educating their children, poor families are presented with overwhelming challenges. Nearly a quarter of a poor family’s income is consumed by school fees – direct and indirect – throughout sub-Saharan Africa, which prevents many children from attending school (UNDP, 2007). A lack of educational opportunities for children throughout sub-Saharan Africa continues to be widely evident, especially in rural areas where greater levels of poverty exist.

Most families in the rural areas of Burkina Faso, a sub-Saharan country located in the western part of Africa, rely on subsistence farming as a means of provision and a way of life. Most of what is produced from the land is primarily consumed by the immediate family and then possibly sold for income. This type of farming and herding is seen as a principal way to combat poverty in rural areas (Hagberg, 2008). Feeding Nations
Through Education (FNTE), a non-profit organization spearheaded by a native of Burkina Faso and incepted in the U.S. since 2009, has implemented an empowering and agriculturally based program which delivers support to such rural families. Families are provided with vaccinated oxen, farming equipment, and training in sustainable agriculture to accomplish two main goals: relieve famine and raise literacy within their country. These rural areas are populated by the most vulnerable people with high-risk exposure and levels of poverty. As a main strategy implemented by FNTE, providing sustainable farming methods and equipment as a means to support families ultimately increases their ability to fund their children’s education. This further advances the twin goals of famine relief and increase in literacy rates (Mittman, 2010).

As throughout the region of sub-Saharan Africa, Burkina Faso shows both educational progress and immediate concerns. The World Bank (2011a) reported that gross primary school enrollment in Burkina Faso has steadily increased from 57% in 2005 to 72.4% in 2008 to 74.8% in 2010 and 77.6% in 2011. The World Bank (2012) reports that gross enrollment ratio is the number of enrolled children, regardless of age, to the total number of children in the official school age group; it may exceed 100%. Additional educational improvement includes an increase in access to secondary education, 20% in 2005 to 30% in 2010.

Despite increases in enrollment and secondary educational access, the youth literacy rate was only 28.7% in 2010, compared to the rate in the larger region of sub-Saharan Africa of 71.5% (World Bank, 2011a). Additionally, primary and secondary
school facilities are often poor in quality throughout Burkina Faso, as throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Theunynck, 2009). These classrooms are often without potable water, working sanitary facilities, school furniture, and other working space such as an office or storage space. Research suggests these conditions negatively impact the children’s attendance and completion of primary and secondary school. In spite of overall progress in primary enrollment and access to secondary education, Burkina Faso continues to struggle with literacy rates, educational attainment, and quality of schools in rural areas.

The urgency of educating children in rural areas, notably the village of Thyou which is located in central Burkina Faso, has been more pronounced through the work of FNTE, U.S. based non-profit organization. More specifically, FNTE addresses three main issues in Burkina Faso: famine, illiteracy, and orphans. The aim of FNTE is to relieve famine and raise literacy throughout the country by providing farming equipment to self-supporting families with adopted children in Thyou and other rural areas. This initial support from FNTE equips families with the necessary means to increase crops through sustainable agricultural methods. The hope of FNTE is that the increase of crops will provide enough food and generate income for the families to fund their children’s education. Without additional income, many families are unable to send their children to school, thus preventing them from an increased quality of life without famine and illiteracy.
Statement of the Research Problem

Burkina Faso is one of the most underdeveloped countries in the world, which places a great limitation on the welfare of its people, particularly in rural areas where poverty is most prevalent. Many proponents of universal education reason that it is possibly the most successful way to reduce poverty for a population (Bruns, Mingat, & Rakotomalala, 2003). Furthermore, children who are able to attend school and receive an education have greater opportunities enhancing human capital and possibly leading to less poverty throughout their life. Yet, millions of children continue to lack a basic education, especially in rural areas throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In a country where the literacy rate is significantly less than that found elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, Burkina Faso is a critical location in which to address the educational needs of children in rural areas. It is also important to address any barriers that families may face which limit the educational success of children in these areas.

Thyou, as noted, is a rural village in Burkina Faso that serves as the focus area of FNTE’s work to support families in rural communities. FNTE, as previously mentioned, aims to relieve famine and raise literacy throughout the country with an emphasis on promoting education for all children. Educational empowerment and agricultural assistance are main strategies of FNTE to help rural families address their immediate and larger issues, specifically in overcoming barriers to send their children to school. Despite its short history, FNTE has made significant contributions at the individual, family, and community levels by providing both short- and long-term support to families and the
wider community in culturally sensitive and empowering ways. It is essential to assess the overall quality of FNTE’s program to better understand how families benefit from its services and identify any areas in need of improvement.

**Rationale**

This research study aims to address the educational needs of children and to identify barriers to their educational success in Thyou, Burkina Faso. Thyou is a rural village, which, like most other rural areas throughout Burkina Faso, shows lower rates of school enrollment and completion as compared to urban settings in the country, other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and throughout the world. It is hypothesized that poverty is a key ubiquitous factor which greatly limits economic opportunities for families in Thyou. This limitation prevents many families from sending their children to school, even at the most primary level.

The author explored rural Burkinabe Africans’ perspectives on education and what barriers they or their children may have faced in accessing and completing school. The research setting was in the village of Thyou, in collaboration with the Thyou AD Maranatha Wendogo (TADMW) Church community. The significance of this study to rural community development programs, both governmental and non-governmental, is important as rates of educational enrollment and attainment continue to be low in rural areas of Burkina Faso, with limited research on education being conducted in the village of Thyou.
A secondary purpose of the study is to assess the work of FNTE as an organization based on their given objectives which include employing sustainable development, empowering locals, reducing famine, reducing illiteracy, and supporting orphans and their adoptive families. Part of FNTE’s purpose includes promoting education for children through an agricultural support program for village families. FNTE selects families as beneficiaries of agricultural support and training in order to increase educational access and attainment for children in the village of Thyou. It is hypothesized that families who received agricultural support from FNTE have a higher likelihood of gaining a better understanding of the importance of education and sending their children to school at the primary level.

The researcher explored some of the beneficiaries’ experiences of life before and after participating in the agricultural support program. The significance of this study is important to FNTE and other local and international efforts, as well as national development agencies, since the rural communities of Burkina Faso remain limited in resources while children continue to face barriers to educational opportunities. The implications of this study are also crucial to the FNTE organization, and similar non-profit organizations and rural programs, which focus on rural community development and education. The study provides insight into how FNTE has impacted the lives of families who are initial beneficiaries of the program and to identify any needed areas of improvement to continue promoting education for children in Thyou and similar areas like itself.
Understanding the level of poverty and its impact on rural families is important to the researcher of this study in order to address the educational needs of children in rural areas of Burkina Faso. Therefore, it was critical that the study take place within the focus community, in this case Thyou, include local Africans’ perspective on education, and focus on an organization which addresses educational issues related to children in rural areas of Burkina Faso.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study integrates the ecological perspective to guide a culturally sensitive practice of social work, which is critical for this population and their environmental context. Robbins, Chatterjee, and Canda (2006) assert, “goodness of fit between people and their environments enables [both] to reciprocally adapt to one another” (p. 35). Furthermore, this perspective views systems as reciprocal influences on one another and includes external environmental factors or conditions that may be contributing to the present problems of the specific population, in this case the families within the village of Thyou. As an underdeveloped nation, Burkina Faso is greatly impacted by external environmental factors that contribute to widespread poverty throughout the country, most notably in rural areas.

Within the ecological perspective direct practice methods involve work with the client or client system at the micro level, but it also promotes institutional change to find systemic solutions at the macro level. This is congruent with the global importance of addressing widespread poverty, which is experienced in large numbers by rural
communities throughout Burkina Faso and regionally across sub-Saharan Africa. Because of the complex nature between people and the environment, problems arise and the goodness of fit is compromised, especially among vulnerable families and communities. In spite of the complexity that exists between people and the environment, people have the ability to seek out goals, have a sense of purpose, and make decisions within their environmental context (Robbins et al., 2006). This theoretical perspective touches on the growth, development, and potential of individuals and families, which is an important framework when focusing on the population in rural Burkina Faso. The philosophy of FNTE seeks to promote the growth, development and potential in the families they support in Burkina Faso. The rural populations are faced with greater levels of poverty and less access to education than urban populations throughout Burkina Faso, sub-Saharan Africa, and more developed nations. This view is important as it considers the multiple impacts of poverty and the environmental factors that Burkinabe people face, especially children who are in need of greater educational opportunities.

**Definition of Terms**

Community: A village, in various sizes, comprised of a group of people whose rural territory is recognized as their own and includes some form of governance of their collective affairs; Pantanali (as cited in Holmen, 2010) further shares that a community is “associated with the idea of a group of people, a territory, and some common institution, is the idea of a community as a locus where direct participatory democracy is a practical option” (p. 21).
Famine: “Abnormal food shortages” or unusually large food deficits due to crop failures from drought or other ecological crises, often impacting areas that normally have adequate food supplies and can be “associated with political strife that disrupts normal economic activity” (Stock, 2004, pp. 229-231). Famines have been reported almost annually from the late 1960s to the present in some part of Africa, which have led to urgent appeals to provide afflicted countries with emergency food aid, especially in the country of Ethiopia.

Multidimensional Poverty: More than material poverty which includes “multiple interlocking dimensions” that “combine to create and sustain powerlessness, a lack of freedom of choice and action, [and] each compound can cause or compound the others” which may not apply all the time but many apply most of the time. “For those caught in multiple deprivations, escape is a struggle…to describe this trap poor people use the metaphor of bondage, of slavery, of being tied like bundles of straw…the psychological experience of multiple deprivations is intense and painful” (Narayan, Chambers, Shah, & Petesch, 2000, p. 2).

Non-government Organization (NGO): “Characterized primarily by humanitarian or cooperative, rather than commercial, objectives… that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development” in developing countries (World Bank, 1995, p. 1). NGOs are a component of the larger nonprofit sector that “engage
specifically in international development, thus excluding many of the nonprofit actors in developed countries such as hospitals and universities” (Werker & Ahmed, 2007, p. 3).

Non-profit Organization (NPO): “Provides some service to the community and often includes the planning and creation of projects or programs for the community’s general welfare” in areas such as healthcare, education, the environment, and economic development (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] Rural Development, 2008, para. 2).

Orphan: A child who has lost one or both parents including having lost their father but have a surviving mother or having lost their mother but have a surviving father. UNICEF estimated over 132 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean in 2005. Of those children classified as orphans, only 13 million lost both parents with a majority of orphans living with a surviving parent or family member. The broader definition of orphan was widely adopted by numerous international agencies due to the increase of HIV/AIDS-related deaths in the mid-1990s which left an increasing number of children growing up without one or more parents (UNICEF, 2009).

Limitations

This study only involved 34 community participants and four of the 10 total families supported so far by FNTE in Thyou, Burkina Faso. Access was limited to other community members in differing parts of the village so the study may not fully reflect the general population of Burkinabe people in Thyou. Participants were aged 20 years or older so data is limited in providing younger persons’ perspective about education.
Therefore, data collected and analyzed for this study may not be generalized to the larger village population and other rural communities throughout Burkina Faso. In addition, the researcher relied upon translators to conduct the surveys and interviews. This may have affected accurate interpretation of the participants’ responses as well as possible omission and editing from the translator. Also, some of the participants did not understand all of the questions from the survey and had difficulty providing answers. Consequently, cultural differences may have also affected the participants’ responses during the surveys and interviews since many of the participants had limited or no understanding of the general idea of research and its related components.
Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Educational improvements are truly needed for the poorest regions in the world. The international community places education in a fundamental role for greater socioeconomic development in these poor regions, enhancing individual human capital and fighting poverty (World Bank, 2011b). Global campaigns, most notably the Educational for All (EFA) movement and the Millenium Development Goals (MDG), highlight the importance of achieving universal primary education (Lewin, 2007). Both campaigns established universal primary education as the second highest of their goals to be achieved by 2015 (Right to Education Project, 2008). In addition, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) generated the 2011-2015 Education Strategy (2011) to pursue global educational goals including increased access to education for 15 million learners in crisis and conflict areas by 2015. Moreover, the goals are fundamental to the idea that education is “foundational to human development and critical to broad-based economic growth and democratic governance” (p. 2). Global efforts to promote free, basic quality education for all children are still underway for the millions of children still excluded from receiving an education.

UNESCO (2005) estimated 115 million children of primary school age were not enrolled in school in 2001-2002. The regions with the greatest absolute numbers of children out of school were sub-Saharan Africa (45 million) and South Asia (42 million).
These regions show the greatest educational shortfalls, among other socioeconomic inequalities, based on several factors. According to Birdsall, Levine, and Ibrahim (2005), the rural/urban education gap provides the greatest explanation for education differentials. Other factors include low levels of enrollment among poor households, gender disparities, and a large percentage of children who never enroll from the bottom 40% of the income distribution (in countries such as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, India, and Niger). Without focused efforts to promote free basic education for all children, regions like Sub-Saharan Africa will continue to face challenges in human development and economic growth.

Sub-Saharan Africa includes several of the least developed countries in the world including Burkina Faso. A landlocked country located in the middle of West Africa and largely agricultural economy, Burkina Faso includes a majority of its population living in rural areas with only a small percentage directly involved in industry and services (Grimm, 2011). The country ranks low on socioeconomic indicators such as human development, per capita gross domestic product, and literacy rate while facing longstanding problems including drought, poor soil, and lack of infrastructure (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Burkina Faso, in particular in rural areas, shows deprivation in educational attainment and completion of schooling as well as quality of education and gender parity. Many children at the primary level of education are excluded from schooling and in turn miss other educational opportunities to enhance human capital and
reduce likelihood of poverty. Burkina Faso still faces challenges to ensure every child has equal access to a basic, quality education.

Few key themes have emerged upon review of available literature regarding the educational needs of children in rural areas of Burkina Faso. A brief review of the general socio-demographic indicators of Burkina Faso as well as its culture and history will be provided. Secondly, poverty and other related factors in the country and throughout the sub-Saharan context are examined. As a third point, education in Burkina Faso is addressed as well as literacy rates among nations – developed, developing, and least developed. Lastly, the role and impact of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is reviewed. The literature explored within each theme serves to raise greater awareness of the educational improvements desperately needed throughout the poorest regions in the world, in particular in Burkina Faso. It also addresses considerable factors in promoting greater development, particularly, education for children, in rural areas of Burkina Faso.

**General Socio-demographic Indicators**

Burkina Faso stands for *land of the upright (incorruptible) people*, formerly known as Upper Volta until 1984 (Kally, 2011; McFarland & Rupley, 1998). Geographically, it is a landlocked country located in the Sahel region in West Africa, surrounded by six other countries (Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Mali, and Niger). The country lies within the tropical wet and dry climatic region throughout Africa. It has both tropical and arid climates with higher rainfall in the southern region and more semi-
dry climate in the central to north regions (Hagberg, 2008; Stock, 2004). National hazards include limited rainfall and recurrent droughts, which pose as an environmental issue affecting agricultural activities, population distribution and the economy (Grimm, 2011; Okolo, Reidpath, & Allotey, 2011).

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported in 2011 an estimated total population of 16,751,455 for Burkina Faso. Urban areas accounted for 26% of total population with a 6.20% annual rate of urbanization and population growth rate of roughly 3.08%. In addition, other social indicators such as birth and death rates were provided for most countries and ranked from highest to lowest. Rates were compared between Burkina Faso and the U.S. including the following: estimated total population, birth rate, death rate, life expectancy at birth, infant mortality rate, and total fertility rate. The findings are summarized in Table 1.
Table 1

*Social Indicators and Country Ranking for Burkina Faso and the U.S.*

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<tr>
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<th>Burkina Faso</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated Total Population</td>
<td>16,751,455</td>
<td>313,232,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Ranking (Highest to Lowest Rate out of 238 countries)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Rate (Number of Live Births per 1,000 Population)</td>
<td>43.59</td>
<td>13.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Ranking (Highest to Lowest Rate out of 221 countries)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Rate (Number of deaths per 1,000 population)</td>
<td>12.74</td>
<td>8.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Ranking (Highest to Lowest Rate out of 223 countries)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy at Birth (Number of years)</td>
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<td>78.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
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<td>75.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>80.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total Fertility Rate (Number of Children Born per Woman)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Country Ranking (Highest to Lowest Rate Out of 222 countries)</td>
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<td>122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate (Number of Deaths per 1,000 Live Births)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
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<td>175</td>
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Table 1 (continued)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Burkina Faso</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maternal Mortality Rate (Number of Deaths per 1,000 Live Births)</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Ranking (Highest to Lowest Rate Out of 172 countries)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>121</td>
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</table>

*Note.* The data on social indicators and country rankings are mostly 2011 estimates for Burkina Faso and the U.S. and taken from “The World Factbook” reported by the CIA, retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html.

According to the CIA’s socioeconomic indicators in 2011, the population of Burkina Faso reflects a low literacy rate below 50%. Total school life expectancy from primary to tertiary education is only six years. Agriculture accounts for 90% of the labor force by occupation with a 77% unemployment rate, and 46.4% of the entire population lives below the poverty line of less than $1 U.S. per day. Issues of unemployment and lack of work and literacy skills are commonly faced by young people in Burkina Faso (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2007).

Burkina Faso fares poorly in economic indicators as similarly throughout sub-Saharan Africa. The region is “markedly worse than would be predicted on the basis of the region's woeful economic performance alone” (Eberstadt, 2010, p. 19). According to the World Economic Outlook Database, Burkina Faso showed low GDP per capita figures (in U.S. dollars) in recent years: $452.7 in 2006; $495.0 in 2007; $589.5 in 2008; $582.0 in 2009; and $609.8 in 2010; (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2011). In comparison, the U.S. showed GDP per capita of $46,860.2 in 2010 (over 75 times that of...
GPD per capita of Burkina Faso in 2010). Overall, from 2006 to 2010, GPD per capita of Burkina Faso increased by $175.0, or 35.35%.

**Culture and History**

Burkina Faso is an ethnically diverse country with approximately 60 ethnic groups, compared to over 300 race and ethnic groups combined in the U.S. (Hagberg, 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Most groups live peacefully as one nation with few, if any, ethnic hostility between one another. The Mossi remain the single largest group accounting for over 40% of the total population (mostly in the central region). The Fulani and Tuareg nomads comprise 20% of the population (in the northern border territories) while other ethnic groups include the Gourmantche (in the west), the Bobo and Lobi (in the southwest), and the Gurunsi (in the south), each making up less than 10% of the population (CIA, 2011; Hagberg, 2008; Kally, 2011). French is the official language while Moore (from the Mossi group), Diola, Gourmantche, and Peulh are considered the most widely spoken local languages (Kally, 2011).

Present-day Burkina Faso was once ruled by the Mossi kingdoms from the 15th century to colonization in the late 19th century. The French colony of Upper Volta was created in 1919, however it was abolished in 1932 and its territory split between three French colonies, Mali, Niger, and the Ivory Coast. Later in 1947, Upper Volta was reformed as it was in 1932. Burkina Faso finally gained its independence from France on August 5, 1960 by the country’s first president Maurice Yaméogo (Hagberg, 2008).
country faced challenges as a postcolonial nation in rapid development once gaining independence from French rule in the early 1960s.

Burkina Faso’s independence began at a time of great political transition for Africa. During the 1960s, 31 countries became independent, 17 of them solely in 1960 including Burkina Faso (Stock, 2004). Newfound independence experienced by these countries generated great optimism and “associat[ion] with control of their own destinies” (Stock, 2004, p. 3). However, lack of development by the early 1970s faded the optimism that once was shared throughout the continent. Africa was on the decline by the 1980s and then experienced crisis with the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in the 1990s.

As the political landscape of Africa was gradually changing throughout the latter part of the 20th century, Burkina Faso also experienced similar changes. Several political regimes existed throughout the postcolonial era in the country (Kally, 2011). The 1970s and 1980s were marked by repeated military coups. One such military coup, known as La Révolution, brought the revered Thomas Sankara into power in 1983, although political unrest continued (Englebert, 1996). Sankara was killed and overthrown by another military coup, led by Blaise Compaore in 1987. It was not until Compaore’s presidency that multiparty elections began in the early 1990s. Since that time, President Compaore has won every election and remains in power today (CIA, 2011; Englebert, 1996). Burkina Faso’s postcolonial independence includes several political regimes, which ultimately brought President Compaore into power since the last 24 years.
Poverty throughout sub-Saharan Africa and Burkina Faso

Sub-Saharan Africa is significantly impacted by poverty and its related issues. Research indicates unfavorable outlook for growth and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa when compared to other regions in the world. For example, the Global Monitoring Report (2007) positively assessed the world as a whole is on track to meet MDG1 of halving poverty by 2015 based on the projection of reducing the extreme poor population from 29% in 1990 to 12% in 2015. But it also showed significant regional differences with respect to sub-Saharan Africa. While the report indicated a 4.7% decline (to 41%) in share of people in extreme poverty between 1999 and 2004, the number of absolute poor remained the same at nearly 300 million due to higher population growth. Additionally, 30% of the world’s extreme poor is located in this region, with fewer percentages in earlier decades, 19% (1990) and 11% (1981) (World Bank, 2007).

The UN (2011c) characterized the least developed countries (LDC) as the most vulnerable- poor and weak- sector in the global community. The classification of LDCs was developed by the UN General Assembly in 1971 seeking to draw international support for these particular countries. Burkina Faso is identified not only as one of 48 LDCs, but also as a landlocked developing country (LLDC) (UN, 2011d). These statuses show the country’s instability and continued need for significant improvements in major areas of development.

Burkina Faso is one of 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, which remains to be the poorest region in the world. The UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) provides
a way to measure human development in most of the countries in the world (Okolo et al., 2011). The HDI is a summary measure of human development in three basic human dimensions: longevity and health of life, access to knowledge and an adequate standard of living. According to the UNDP HDI (2010), “the [index] is the geometric mean of normalized indices measuring achievements in each dimension” (p. 216). Burkina Faso remains as one of the least developed and poorest countries in the world, ranking 161 out of 169 countries. Grimm (2011) reasoned the low HDI performance is particularly “caused by a very low education index” (p. 742). The following is the HDI for Burkina Faso over recent years: 0.285 (2005); 0.289 (2006); 0.295 (2007); 0.301 (2008); 0.303 (2009); 0.305 (2010); a 0.02 gradual increase over the last five years. Burkina Faso continues to maintain a position as one of the lowest ranked countries reported by the HDI.

Poverty is not solely material but has multiple dimensions. The definition is largely defined by experts who are professionals and removed from the ongoing struggles experienced by millions of poor people throughout the world. The voices of the poor are not considered in dominant discourse regarding poverty, thus limiting the perspective from the true experts (Hagberg, 2008; Narayan et al., 2000). To gain a more thorough understanding, Hagberg (2008) provided three dimensions when determining poverty: (1) contextual, (2) situational, and (3) relational. He explained that poverty should be contextually determined by taking into account poor people’s perceptions and their daily life experiences. Secondly, poverty is situational since a person may not experience
poverty until circumstances arise and leads them into poverty in specific situations. 

Lastly, poverty is relational as “one is poor in relation to someone else [and] depend[ing] on one’s relations to other people, be they kinsfolk, neighbors, government agencies or NGOs” (Hagberg, 2008, p. 8). Despite the lack of attention on the voices of the poor, their perceptions of poverty are documented to some degree, as conveyed by Narayan et al. (2000).

According to the World Bank (2007b), approximately 80% of the population in Burkina Faso live in rural areas, and of the total rural population, 51% live below the poverty line (compared to 16% of the urban population). An increase in the proportion of poor people living in the rural population was noted from 92.2% (2003), to 93.0% (2005), to 94.1% in 2007 (World Bank, 2009). There was an overall substantial increase of 1.9% between 2003 and 2007. Additionally, household surveys, conducted in 2003, 2005, and 2007, revealed a close relationship between “risk exposure, vulnerability, and poverty in rural areas” (p. 8). Development in this country begins with agricultural development to fight against the vicious cycle of poverty and other critical issues such as illiteracy and poor health. To promote development in these vulnerable areas, El-Hai, Diab, and Ahmed (2009) emphasized greater focus on increasing productivity and incomes of poor African farmers and peasants. As a predominantly village-based and agricultural-dependent population, Burkinabe people will continue to experience vulnerable life conditions without community-based development and targeted approaches to address poverty and other related issues.
Burkina Faso includes an economy mostly based on low-input agriculture, and the majority of its people are vulnerable to agricultural production complications that significantly impact their nutritional status and means of support (Rader et al. 2009). The Economist Intelligence Unit (Rader) indicated the country relies heavily on rainfall in agricultural production and identified food security as a major cause of vulnerable life conditions. Furthermore, agricultural methods are low-input, labor-intensive, and rain-fed with minimal use, if any, of chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Very few farmers, fewer than 30%, own plow equipment or animals for soil traction. Rader et al. noted resource-poor farmers can benefit from precipitation forecasts by using relevant climate information when making critical agricultural decisions. By implementing this tool, many village farmers with so few resources can reduce risk of food insecurity and unstable income due to disruptions to agricultural production.

Rural areas in low-income countries like Burkina Faso show inequalities in the use of both improved drinking water and sanitation facilities (World Health Organization [WHO], 2010). Country income and place of residence are factors to use of improved drinking water and sanitation facilities. People living in rural areas in low-income countries have the least accessibility to improved drinking water and sanitation facilities. Rural areas showed median rate of 56% for use of improved drinking water and 28% for sanitation, compared to uses in urban areas at 85% and 50%, respectively. The UN (2011a) reported in all regions surveyed throughout the world, coverage in rural areas lags behind that of cities and towns. In 2008, approximately 141 million people from
urban settings and 743 million from rural areas “continued to rely on unimproved sources for their daily drinking water needs” (p. 54). In sub-Saharan Africa, an urbanite is 1.8 times more likely to access clean, drinking water than a person living in a rural area. Rural areas lack accessible water resources at higher rates than urban areas, which are vital to a higher quality of life.

Other disparate services are evident in rural areas, where the majority of people live in Burkina Faso. Coverage of key health services such as skilled birth attendant and measles immunization are different between rural and urban areas and even more pronounced in low-income countries compared with middle-income countries. Major differences between urban and rural areas were noted in the coverage of skilled birth attendant in low-income countries in 2008; 80% of urban births occur with skilled health staff compared with only 35% of births in rural areas. In Burkina Faso, rate of births covered by skilled health personnel increased from 42% (1990-1999) to 54% (2000-2008). By contrast, immunization rates between urban and rural areas were less marked at 77% and 70%, respectively. However, rate of measles immunization in Burkina Faso showed decreases: 79% (1990); 51% (2000); and 75% (2008). The majority of the Burkinabe population who live in rural areas, continue to lack services important for healthy development (WHO, 2011).

Okolo et al. (2011) identified socioeconomic inequalities in health care based on multivariate analysis of the World Health Survey data for Burkina Faso. They agreed the wealthy are able to access and utilize health services at a greater capacity than the poor.
Also, concerns about cost and quality of health care services were reported due to poverty and very high out-of-pocket costs. They further reasoned that while Burkina Faso has free basic care, patients are still responsible to pay for drugs at private pharmacies, making it unaffordable to the poor.

Burkina Faso also shows poor levels in health status among children. According to WHO (2010), the country showed a higher child mortality rate (probability of dying by age five per 1,000 live births) of 166 deaths/1,000 live births, compared with median child mortality rate of 117 deaths/1,000 live births in low-income countries and WHO Africa Region rate of 127 deaths/1,000 live births in 2009. These numbers were higher than the 1990 global child mortality level of 89 (per 1,000 live births). The report identified that poorer countries have higher levels of child mortality than wealthier ones. Additionally, between 1990 and 2008 the median child mortality rate decreased by 50% in lower middle-income countries but by only 31% in low-income countries. Burkina Faso continues to face poor health status in terms of higher child mortality rates.

A high prevalence of malnutrition among rural schoolchildren was reported in recent national surveys in Burkina Faso (Dabone, Delisle, & Receveur, 2011). According to Delpeuch, Traissac, Martin-Prevéle, Massamba, and Maire (as cited in Dabone et al., 2011), child malnutrition is due in part to poverty and low maternal education. A study by Dabone et al. assessed the nutritional status among urban and peri-urban schoolchildren in central Burkina Faso. The study revealed malnourished schoolchildren; 40.5% of the children were vitamin A deficient and 43.7% were anemic, many of whom
were from rural areas. Zeba, Martin-Prével, Somé, and Belisle (as cited in Dabone et al.)
reported similar findings of malnourished schoolchildren from eastern and north-central
Burkina Faso; more than 40% of the children were vitamin A deficient. School-aged
children in Burkina Faso were found to be vulnerable to micronutrient and overall
malnutrition. The prevalence of malnutrition is higher in rural than in urban areas, where
poverty exists the most. The findings in both studies showed high prevalence of
malnutrition in schoolchildren from peri-urban areas, where poorer people reside and
where schools include children from the neighboring villages.

The AIDS epidemic is a considerable issue to countries in sub-Saharan Africa
including Burkina Faso. The disease has impacted the health of millions of lives
throughout the region and shows both positive outcomes and major concerns. The Joint
United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS [UNAIDS] (2011) reported that HIV epidemics in
sub-Saharan Africa were stable or declining; the number of newly HIV-infected people
fell from 2.2 million people in 2001 to 1.8 million in 2009. In addition, HIV prevalence
in West and Central Africa maintained a relatively low number at or under 2% in 12
countries in 2009. UNAIDS (2008) recognized some West African countries including
Burkina Faso to have median HIV prevalence. While Burkina Faso and parts of West
Africa have lower HIV/AIDS prevalence than other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the
subcontinent encounters at least one million AIDS-related deaths annually since 1998
(UNAIDS, 2011). Overall, HIV prevalence is among the highest in the region of sub-
Saharan Africa.
HIV prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa continues to negatively impact children, those infected by HIV or orphaned by HIV/AIDS infected parents. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (as cited in Sanou, Turgeon-O’Brien, Ouedraogo, & Desrosiers, 2008) expressed orphans or abandoned children are at greater risk of experiencing poor health, material vulnerability, and psychological distress. While orphans have traditionally been cared for by the larger community through relatives and other social networks, recent attempts to implement institutional care have occurred by some organizations. Audemard, Vignikin, and Desgrees du Lou (2006) and Makame, Ani, and Grantham-McGregor (as cited in Sanou et al., 2008) argue that institutional care does not meet the psycho-social needs of children.

Additionally, the number of children living with HIV younger than 15 years of age increased from 1.6 million in 2001 to 2.0 million in 2007 with approximately 90% who live in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2008). However, AIDS-related deaths among children have decreased since 2003 due to expanded treatment and prevention of mother-to-child transmission. Children affected by HIV/AIDS are at increased risk of experiencing vulnerable life conditions, in particular poor health and orphanhood.

The AIDS epidemic poses continued challenges for millions of children throughout sub-Saharan Africa and in Burkina Faso. The highest levels of HIV/AIDS prevalence in the world occur throughout this region, creating millions of orphans and even more vulnerable communities. Approximately 12 million children (under age 18) have lost one or both parents to AIDS in this region, with the number of orphans on the
rise (UNAIDS, 2008). A household survey among 56 countries revealed orphans who lost both parents to AIDS had 12% less likelihood of attending school than non-orphan children. Although, in countries with HIV prevalence greater than 5%, orphans on average had only 4% less likelihood of being in school than non-orphan children, suggesting countries with high HIV prevalence are decreasing the educational disparities that were largely present.

Many of these orphans face higher risk of poor health and social outcomes, including education. Kurzinger et al. (2008) reported a comparison study of educational status and delay between orphans and non-orphans in AIDS-affected communities in Burkina Faso and Tanzania. The study suggested orphans were significantly more likely not to attend school and be delayed when in school than were non-orphans, although after controlling confounding variables, orphans and non-orphans were relatively equivalent in educational status. Additionally, the study showed 64.8% of orphans were not attending school in Burkina Faso compared to 27.3% in Tanzania. Differences were observed in schooling rates between the two countries, and various school fees applied to school attendance were considered, with Tanzania offering fee-free education while Burkina Faso implements various fee structures. They concluded high mortality related to high rates of HIV/AIDS leads to lower educational attainment for children since orphanhood is associated with lower probability of attending and completing schooling.


**Education and Literacy in Burkina Faso**

Education continues to be regarded as a high priority throughout many international humanitarian organizations as a way to combat poverty in developing nations. In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand set a goal for universal primary school completion to be achieved by 2000. The goal remained unfilled by the target date of 2000, and so the World Education Forum, which was held in Dakar, Senegal, reaffirmed and extended the agreement that took place in Jomtien (Bruns et al., 2003). Likewise, the UN (2010b) adopted a global plan of action called the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to ensure all children will be able to receive basic quality education by 2015. Both goals aim towards universal primary education for all children, boys and girls alike by 2015. However, without effective measures by the international community to improve education in the most vulnerable regions in the world, millions of children will continue to lack education, even at the most basic level. According to the MDG Report (UN, 2010b), “Hope dims for universal education by 2015, even as many poor countries make tremendous strides; Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia are home to the vast majority of children out of school; inequality thwarts progress towards universal education” (pp. 16-18).

Basic education in Burkina Faso includes preschool, primary education, and secondary school, comprised of general or technical curriculum (Grimm, 2011). Preschool classes have a maximum duration of three years with school age attendance from three to six. Primary school officially begins at age seven and lasts six years.
Secondary school includes lower secondary education, which lasts four years and higher secondary education, which lasts three years for general curriculum or two (short) to three years (long) for technical curriculum. Normally, school is compulsory for children aged 6-16. However, the requirement is only conditional based on “the availability of schools, teaching material and teachers” (p. 744). Consequently, many children never go to school or only attend for a few years, particularly in rural areas. Furthermore, other resulting factors include delayed enrollment, high repetition rates, and notable, although decreasing, gender gap in rural areas.

Part of educational improvements includes increasing youth and adult literacy rates in the world. According to Burkina Faso, literates are those “who declare they can read and write in any language” (as cited in UNESCO, 2011a, para. 42). One of the EFA goals is to improve adult literacy levels by 50% between 2000 and 2015. UNESCO (2011b) reported the global literacy rates for adults and youth in 2009, 83.7% and 89.3%, respectively. Despite increased literacy rates over the past decade, 793.1 million adults are still deficient in reading and writing skills. Of this total, women represent 64.1%, or 508.4 million adults. And 127.3 million youth lack reading and writing skills with 60.7% representing females, or 77.3 million. Disproportionate rates are evident among women, despite improved literacy rates over the last decade. In addition, adult literacy rates for males are higher than adult females, 88.3% and 79.2%, respectively. The same pattern was revealed of higher literacy rate for youth males than youth females, 91.9% and
86.8%, respectively. Improvements are still needed for increased global literacy rates for adults and youth, especially among females.

Adult literacy rates were compiled from six regional categories to assess global literacy by the UN. Rates were compared between developed, developing, landlocked developing, and least developed countries, according to UN MDG categories from 1985 to 2009 (UNESCO, 2011a). In addition, adult literacy rates for sub-Saharan Africa and the world are provided. The findings are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Regional Literacy Rates for Adults (15+)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Adult (15+) Literacy Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDG: Developed Countries</td>
<td>98.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG: Developing Countries</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDG:</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDG: World</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDG: Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Burkina Faso was identified as both a landlocked developing country and least developed country according to UN MDG regional categories.
Literacy rates for adults and youth fare the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite only 21.4% of all illiterate adults in the world who live in sub-Saharan Africa, only 71% of male adults and 53% of female adults are literate in this region, while only 76% of male youths and 66% of female youth are literate. However, the adult literacy rate ranges in the region from 26% in Mali to 93% in Equatorial Guinea. Burkina Faso showed a rate of 28.7% (2007 est.), one of 11 countries where adult literacy rates were below 50% throughout the world. As expected, a higher rate was observed for males, 36.7%, than females, 21.6%. By contrast, adult and youth literacy rates greater than 90%, on average, were found in regions including North America and Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO, 2011b).

Low literacy rates in Burkina Faso have a dramatic effect not only within the country but on the larger goal of universal primary education. UN reports have indicated that while primary schools are allocated over 60% of Burkina Faso’s total education expenditures, the country has a school enrollment rate below 50% with even lower rates of literacy below 30% (UNDP, 2012). These considerably low rates have resulted in a lack of teachers at the primary school level. Consequently, several issues have emerged throughout the country including school year interruptions and large class sizes, sometimes more than 100 students in one classroom. In response to the serious need to raise Burkina Faso’s literacy rates and the immediate issue of a lack of teachers, the Burkina Faso National Volunteers Program (PNVB) was established to enlist workers to
volunteer in primary schools throughout the country. These workers are trained at the National School for Primary School Teacher and awaiting a test to become qualified teachers. PNVB initially began as a pilot program from 2006-2010 with support from the UNDP, the United Nations Volunteers Program, and the Government of Burkina Faso to further assist Burkina Faso in achieving the MDGs through volunteer service. Currently the program is fully run by the Government of Burkina Faso with a total of 250 volunteers also serving in various fields to make significant contributions to their country and to gain practical experience through their volunteer service. Of those 250 volunteers, 80 now work in the primary schools to teach children who are in desperate need of a basic education in order to tackle the significant rates of illiteracy throughout the country (UNDP, 2012).

Significant improvements in education continue to be examined for developing nations. The UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality was commissioned to develop recommendations on how to reach universal primary education and gender parity (Birdsall et al., 2005). The Task Force concluded there were two main challenges of increasing access and improving quality to those countries unlikely to reach universal primary education by 2015. In addition, three strategies were provided to help enroll out-of-school children, taking into account influential factors affecting parents’ tendencies to send their children to school. First, special interventions such as removing school fees and using school feeding programs indicated, in some settings, to enroll unlikely children in school. Secondly, increased educational opportunities for girls and
women such as literacy programs for uneducated mothers helped to increase children’s participation in school, as suggested by some data. And lastly, increased access to post-primary education was considered, as some countries show limited, inequitable access to secondary educational settings. Countries with low primary education enrollment and completion are less likely to achieve universal primary education by 2015 unless effective strategies are implemented that lead to more successful educational outcomes.

As previously mentioned, improving the quality of education is an important objective to ensure universal access to primary education by 2015. Buckler (2011) recognized this objective includes “training, recruiting, and retaining good quality teachers,” which remains a key challenge throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa, including Burkina Faso (p. 244). Additionally, Moon (as cited in Buckler, 2011) concluded that teacher education, both during training and while serving, is a key component to the overall achievement of good quality education for all children. Reports from UNESCO (as stated in Buckler, 2011) also indicated that an additional 4 million primary school teachers are required throughout sub-Saharan Africa to meet the EFA objectives. For example, Lewin and Stuart (as cited in Buckler, 2011) revealed low numbers of existing qualified teachers in the region, with only 25% of needed qualified teachers in Ghana and only 20% in Lesotho.

Multiple studies from Cogneau and Jedwab (2008), Deininger (2003), and Glewwe and Jacoby (2004) stressed the importance of household income on the propensity of parents to send their children to school (as cited in Grimm, 2011).
Similarly, Grimm identified a causal relationship between household income and school enrollment in rural sub-Saharan Africa in a study conducted in Burkina Faso. He reported that recurrent stress on household income impacts parents’ decision to withdraw their children from school or not to enroll them at all. The study suggested that a 10% decline in income causes enrollment rates to decline by 2.5% for boys and 3% for girls among children aged 6-13. Kazianga (as cited in Grimm, 2011) also determined in rural Burkina Faso that the educational investment in children, particularly girls, decreased for households unable to absorb the frequency of income shocks, as measured by the predicted income variance. These studies demonstrated that adequate household income level and variance are necessary requirements for investments in children’s human capital, especially in households that have limited insurance and reliance on credit and savings. Long-term returns on education far outweigh the returns on child labor, which is often overlooked in rural areas of Burkina Faso and throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

**Role and Impact of Non-Governmental Organizations**

The global aim for free and uninterrupted education has led to a wide range of efforts, which focus on the poorest regions of the world including Burkina Faso. Hagberg (2008) revealed that most public investment in Burkina Faso is funded by international aid from European countries as well as the U.S. and other prominent international organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, and the IMF. He also noted several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work in the country as well. An estimated 150 are registered on the national level, and many work jointly under larger
movements such as The Secretariat Permanent de ONG (SPONG), which unites 88 NGOs throughout Burkina Faso (Hagberg, 2008). The NGOs, both local and international groups, work collaboratively with numerous voluntary and village groups to promote greater development in the most needed areas of the country.

Several organizations are dedicated to education development in the neediest areas of the world including Burkina Faso, and throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Basic Education in Africa Program (BEAP) takes a holistic approach to basic education development by promoting the right to education to some 43 million school-aged children currently without it (Hoppers, 2009). Factors such as poverty, emergencies, early marriage, and child labor there prevent children from enjoying their right to education. BEAP emphasizes expansion of basic education through greater access, quality, relevance, and equity, and promotes a 9 to 10-year free and continuous basic quality education, along with two years of early childhood education. Currently, this country-driven program is implemented in a dozen African countries including Burkina Faso.

Other organizations are committed to assisting the development of poor countries such as Burkina Faso, particularly in the areas of education and gender parity. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), an independent agency, implemented a pilot program designed to improve the country’s performance on the rate of girls’ primary education completion (USAID, 2009). The Burkinabe Response to Improve Girls’ Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) project, funded under a multi-million dollar grant from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, another U.S. based agency, was carried out
through a collaborative partnership of local agencies. The program relied on local knowledge and expertise to improve educational achievement among Burkinabe children, specifically girls. It focused on building 132 girl-friendly schools (with 400 classrooms), enhanced local agencies’ capacities, and organized local communities in the 10 provinces with the lowest education rate among girls. Close to 19,000 children, of which more than 12,000 were girls, attended BRIGHT schools in 2007-2008. In addition, 859 small children were placed in childcare centers. The project aimed at increasing girls’ enrollment in the 10 provinces, which was achieved based on data gathered two years later; the prior girls’ education rate of 37.1% increased to 50.1%. The program was hugely successful, although some targets including a literacy and mentorship program for uneducated mothers and schoolgirls were unmet (USAID, 2009). The program, in its approach to improving education among girls along with early engagement with parents and collaboration with local partners, positively impacted the neediest communities in Burkina Faso by increasing educational achievement among their children.

Educational improvements in Burkina Faso and throughout sub-Saharan Africa must take into account effective policies, which, in their current state, need further design, revision and implementation. In relation to education policy development, Buckler (2011) identified that teacher education, which is essential to good quality education for all, has been a neglected area. She also recognized that current educational policies have not reflected the teachers’ voices, which can play a vital role in informing teacher education policy. Bonnet and Pontefract (2008) noted that existing policies
related to teacher education largely draw on statistical data that have some limitations, or, as Harley et al. (2000) and Jansen (2003) reported, on Western contexts such as America, Europe, and Australia (as cited in Buckler, 2011). For example, large-scale statistical data do not reflect differences between urban and rural areas, and data from rural areas are at times excluded due to complicated data collection procedures (Buckler, 2011).

In response to the gap between data and policy in sub-Saharan Africa, UNESCO developed the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA), “a 10-year (2006-2015) initiative to increase the quantity and improve the quality of the teaching force in sub-Saharan Africa” (Buckler, 2011, p. 245). TTISSA assists in areas of policy development, data collection, knowledge sharing, and quality assurance within and between African ministries of education while partnering with the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) research and development program, the largest teacher education community in Africa (Buckler, 2011). TESSA began a research initiative known as Teachers’ Lives, which focused on female teachers working in schools in rural or remote areas in five countries across Africa. This was based on an ethnographic and narrative approach in order to reposition the dominant voice and provide a platform for the voice perceived as most hidden: rural female teachers. The initiative highlighted individual stories of rural teachers from across the broader community and provided an insider’s perspective into the relational dynamics between the teacher and their school, colleagues, students, and the larger community environment. The stories shared the importance of making training opportunities more relevant for rural teachers and
considering subsidized courses due to financial constraints of rural teachers. In addition, identifying rural teachers’ perceptions of their particular learning needs and their challenges could determine which courses are available and which are subsidized for them while better preparing future teachers with uniquely designed curricula (Buckler, 2011).

It is important for development programs and organizations to work as policy advocates, especially in the arena of education, for greater and more equal provision of educational opportunities for all people in Africa. Organizations and programs that seek to enhance gender parity in the educational setting must also reflect gender equality within their own efforts. Assie-Lumumba (2000) asserted that higher educational enrollment in Africa is reflective of gender disparities, which limit policy changes that aim to reduce such gaps supported by local agencies such as Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). She argued unless public policies strongly and consistently “promote permanent gender parity” major changes cannot be achieved despite assistance from larger international agencies (p. 116). Educational improvements in Africa cannot be achieved at all levels until gender disparities are addressed in public policy.

Burkina Faso, much like other African nations, presents challenges to overall development of its country. The sub-Saharan context remains predominantly rural, and so consequently, development must begin in its rural areas (Holmen, 2010). Bernard Ouedrago, founder of the Naam Movement in Burkina Faso in the 1970s, a notable farmers’ association composed of grassroots organizations emphasizing community-
driven development, embraced the importance of working directly with rural farmers. “The danger for many Africans is that the erosion of our ways by the aggressive ways of others, our own values by foreign values, will destroy our sense of responsibility for solving our communities’ problems” (Holmen, 2010, p. 3).

Holmen (2005) and Larsson (2005) further reasoned that the region of sub-Saharan Africa, while markedly poor and underdeveloped, “has a great but untapped potential to increase significantly its agricultural productivity” (as cited in Holmen, 2010, p. 228). It is important to acknowledge that rural organizations do have important parts to play in the development of sub-Saharan Africa, but those organizations must consider a supportive, and not controlling, role in the development process (Holmen, 2010). Furthermore, development of a people cannot be adequately addressed without the inclusion of its majority and their voices. As international and African NGOs continue to press for further development of sub-Saharan Africa, including countries like Burkina Faso, the people whom they serve must take center stage in creating a transformation that is beneficial to the overall development of their rural communities.

Basic education is not only a key factor in alleviating poverty, but it is also a tremendous asset in rural development. Moulton (2001) reinforced the idea that various proponents have argued for the importance of basic education and primary schools in improving individual lives (i.e., literacy, acquired skills, and increased health), agriculture (i.e., farmer productivity and improved practices), and national development (i.e., social and economic development). She argued that rural development programs
should reflect a strong emphasis on basic education, and consider problems unique to rural conditions and the strategies to overcome these problems. These problems include various community perceptions such as parents unwilling to send their young children off to walk long-distances to schools and the existing challenges faced by the ministry of education including fewer teachers wanting to serve in rural schools (Moulton, 2001). Furthermore, she indicated that “rural schools are more likely to be effective when they have strong links to the community” and reflect a “local ownership element” whereby those involved in the institution’s success are more willing to support it (pp. 17-18). However, organizers of community schools face a dilemma in local control of schools as government resources are not distributed equitably so long as poor, rural communities continue to finance their own schools. She concluded “there must be a balance between government support and community ownership of the school” (Moulton, 2001, p. 18).

Burkina Faso is undoubtedly a country in serious need of development. But there are effective ways in which foreign organizations and international agencies can foster a bottom-up approach to development, removing barriers and leaving development in the hands of Africans and their organizations. A strong emphasis on empowerment implies local ownership at the rural grassroots, which are integral to the development process in terms of identifying needs and finding solutions to those needs (Holmen, 2010). In addition, policy changes within their own global communities would help in the development process for sub-Saharan Africa to improve human capital and reduce poverty for millions of people in rural populations. Approaches that are truly
empowering and capacity building for poor communities distinguish community-based NGOs from the dominant “supply-driven, demand-driven” development, as Mansuri and Rao (2004) assert (as cited in Holmen, 2010, p. 212). Rural development, in its actuality, must come from the people, from the grassroots and by the grassroots, according to their willingness and terms.

Summary

Education is arguably the single most important factor in reducing poverty, increasing human development, and broadening socioeconomic growth for all regions in the world. However, education is still not available to millions of children at the most basic level, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The region includes the poorest countries in the world, including Burkina Faso, which is one of the least developed countries in the world desperately in need of improvements not only in education but also in other socioeconomic and health sectors. Burkina Faso has the highest incidence of poverty among rural populations, who need significant improvements in all areas of development, specifically in education. Rural children are less likely to enroll in and complete schooling and to experience a quality education, equally available to boys and girls alike. Numerous goals have been created by both local and international organizations to promote universal primary education for all. Such targeted aims for educational improvements among the poor, namely in rural areas of Burkina Faso and throughout sub-Saharan Africa, are only achievable to the degree in which participation and sense of ownership is experienced by the rural communities. Education, no matter how forcefully
encouraged, cannot be promoted for children in the poorest areas of Burkina Faso unless community-based, empowering work alongside rural families is apparent and at the forefront of any organization’s agenda and programs.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter includes the research design, sampling and data collection procedures and instruments used in the study. The chapter also discusses the preparation of data analysis and the procedure for the protection of human subjects in this study.

Research Design

The design of this research study was exploratory and both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Exploratory research is a strategy used to achieve greater understanding of a relatively unknown topic of study. Mauch and Park (2003) describe exploratory research as “investigations into new or relatively unknown territory for the purpose of searching out or closely scrutinizing objects or phenomena to lead to a better understanding of them” (p. 129). While literature supports a continued need for basic education among children in rural areas throughout sub-Saharan Africa, very few studies have been conducted on smaller-scale, non-governmental efforts to promote education in these places, namely in Burkina Faso. Exploratory design is most suitable for this study as smaller, non-governmental efforts are relatively unknown in promoting education for children in rural areas of Burkina Faso.

Quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied to this study. Quantitative research was applied through close-ended portions of the survey to represent the community of Thyou, Burkina Faso (see Appendix A). Participants of this study
provided critical information regarding educational information. Other demographic variables included in this study were sex, age, marital status, level of awareness of FNTE, highest educational level completed by the individual and that of their immediate family members, number of children and adoptees of participants, years of schooling for each child, and number of children who completed both primary and secondary schools.

Qualitative research was applied through open-ended portions of the survey with community participants and interviews with FNTE beneficiaries (see Appendix A). Participants of the survey questionnaire provided information regarding past and current perceptions on education, the education system in Thyou, barriers to educational access and completion (both personally and for their children), and desired changes to the current education system. Participants of the interview provided information regarding daily life conditions before and after receiving support from FNTE, educational status of their children before and after receiving FNTE support, knowledge and utilization of FNTE support, perceptions about receiving FNTE support, and identified needs not addressed by FNTE (see Appendix B).

**Sampling Procedures and Data Collection Procedures**

The research participants were selected in a nonrandom manner from the rural population of Thyou, Burkina Faso. The researcher utilized a convenience sampling method to select participants who were available for the study rather than selecting from the entire population, consequently excluding an unknown portion of the population. The researcher collected data for this study during summer volunteer work with FNTE in
Thyou, Burkina Faso. The total sample population consisted of 40 participants, of which 36 were survey participants and four were interview participants. Two of the participants’ surveys were not included in this analysis due to both being incomplete surveys, thus yielding to the final sample of 34 survey participants. The study participants are Africans from Thyou, Burkina Faso (or other rural location) 20 years of age or older. Interview participants are specifically from families who have received agricultural support from FNTE. Surveys were conducted in community gatherings at the local church (see below) or other locations in Thyou. Most interviews were conducted at participants’ homes or nearby location. Participation of this study was completely voluntary, and no inducements were offered to the participants.

Participants of this research study were recruited by the lead pastor Daniel Rouamba (thereafter Pastor Rouamba) of Thyou AD Maranatha Wendogo (TADMW) Church and by the president of FNTE Koudougou Alfred Koala (thereafter Mr. Koala) during the researcher’s visit to Burkina Faso. The research proposal was approved by Pastor Rouamba and Mr. Koala (see Appendix C). TADMW Church and FNTE have a working relationship to provide various support/s to families in Thyou. Their established work in the community provided greater participation among adults in Thyou for this study.

Prior to obtaining consent, the church pastor conducted a brief presentation on the research study to church members and non-members in the community. Information regarding the research study was also presented by Mr. Koala during initial visits to
The presentation included the research purposes and voluntary nature of the study. Additionally, an oral presentation was given to prospective participants by the researcher and Mr. Koala (for translation purposes) once arriving in Thyou. This presentation informed the participants once again of the research purposes as well as an explanation of western cultural norms related to research (taking into consideration the target population’s environmental and sociocultural context). It also included procedures of the survey or interview, an explanation of potential minimum risk, anonymity, confidentiality, and audio taping of the interview (for interview participants only). Verbal consent was obtained from prospective participants of the study prior to the researcher conducting the survey or interview with the assistance of a translator. Interview participants also signed a consent form (see Appendix D) agreeing to be audio taped for the interview.

**Instrumentation**

The primary method for gathering data for this study included surveys and interviews. Survey questionnaires and interviews were developed for this study due to limited data on assessing the educational needs of children in rural areas of Burkina Faso and to conduct a needs assessment on the FNTE organization to identify both the strengths and areas in need of improvements for families in the agricultural assistance program. The questionnaire was designed in two parts. The first part included 12 questions, which identified basic demographic information of local Africans in Thyou, Burkina Faso as well as their own educational experience (and their children’s
educational experience, if any, which determined if participants were able to proceed to the next part). The second part included 11 questions, which explored perceptions that local Africans from Thyou, Burkina Faso have on education.

For the interviews, a set of eight questions was developed to examine the experiences of some of FNTE’s beneficiaries (families who have received agricultural support). Both questionnaires and interview questions were written in English. While translation in Moore was required for both the surveys and interviews, the researcher thoroughly reviewed all questions on both forms with the translators. Survey times and locations (mainly by the church or near the participant’s home) were scheduled by the church pastor or by the researcher and translator during visits to the village. The surveys and interviews were both conducted orally with the assistance of translators. And participants’ answers were recorded on the survey questionnaire form and audio recorded for the interviews while the researcher took notes as well.

**Human Subjects Protection**

The researcher followed the protocol for Protection of Human Subjects, as required by California State University, Sacramento. The researcher completed the application for Protection of Human Subjects with the advisement of the researcher’s project advisor. Once completed and reviewed by the researcher’s project advisor, the researcher submitted the application for review by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects of the Division of Social Work of California State University, Sacramento. The Committee notified the researcher by email for the approval of the
research proposal, survey questionnaire, and interview questions and found minimal risk to the subjects of this study with one addition to be included to obtain written consent of interview participants. The researcher made revisions as instructed by the committee by including a line on the consent form to obtain the interview participants’ signatures. Once completed, the researcher resubmitted the application for final approval. The study was finally approved with the approval number 10-11-113.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were considered greatly throughout this study. The subjects’ privacy was protected by the use of numbers for each participant when reporting the results of the surveys and interviews. Identifying information of the participant, their family or children were not reported in this study. Each participant of this study provided verbal consent to the researcher via translator. Additionally, interview participants signed a written consent form agreeing to be audio taped during the interview for purposes of transcription. Audio taped interviews are stored in a secure location and will be destroyed once the research study is completed.

Surveys and interviews were conducted by the researcher with the assistance of a native translator and in a manner with, at most, minimal level of emotional, psychological or social risk to the participants. All responses of the participants are kept confidential and made available only to the researcher for the purpose of this study. Participants of this study have been informed that although the outcome of the research study will not directly affect them in any way, it may provide some benefit to FNTE organization based
on the assessment of their work in rural areas of Burkina Faso to promote education for children in these areas.

**Data Analysis Plan**

The researcher utilized the SPSS software program and the Microsoft Office Word 2010 program for the purposes of coding, analyzing, and recording data related to the study. Survey and interview questions provided both quantitative and qualitative data to be analyzed by the researcher, which is presented in further detail in the following chapter.

For the first part of the survey, the researcher ran statistics on variables regarding participants’ demographic information including sex, age, and marital status, as well as on their own educational background including their children’s educational background, if any. The researcher also used Pearson Correlation, the most widely used type of correlation coefficient, to examine whether there was a relationship between two variables both with interval level of measurement. Lee and Nam (2011) explained that “correlation is the numerical statement about the strength of a relationship between two variables” based on their level of measurement, which is depicted as a correlation coefficient ($r$) valued anywhere from -1.00 to +1.00. According to Rubin and Babbie (2010), a positive relationship exists between two variables when the $r$ value is between 0.0 and 1.0; likewise a negative relationship exists when the $r$ value is between 0.0 and -1.0.
The second part of the survey and interview questions provided qualitative data to be analyzed and presented by the researcher. For the second part of the surveys, questions were related to participants’ perception on education-related issues, as well as their children’s educational experience. For the interviews, questions were related to FNTE beneficiaries and their experience before and after receiving agricultural support.

Upon careful examination of survey and interview findings, the researcher presented common themes that emerged from the responses which are reported in further detail in the following chapter.
Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the research study examining educational needs of children in a rural sub-Saharan African context. The aims of the study are twofold: to address the educational needs of children from the rural community of Thyou, Burkina Faso, and to assess how the Feeding Nations Through Education (FNTE) organization is promoting education for children in these rural areas through their agricultural assistance program for families. Findings from this study, based on participants’ responses to survey questionnaires, present both demographic information of adult Africans who live in Thyou and their perceptions on education. Findings were also derived from interviews, which were utilized for this research study. Participants’ responses were based on their experiences as beneficiaries of FNTE who were provided with food, two oxen and a plow, and additional agricultural training.

The presentation of findings is divided into three major sections: (1) demographic characteristics based on participants’ answers on the survey questionnaires, (2) key variables derived from responses on the survey questionnaires, and (3) open-ended questions which were included in both the survey questionnaires and interviews. The first section presents demographic information of participants including sex, age, and marital status as indicated on the questionnaire. The second section includes key findings related to the research purpose based on information provided on the questionnaire.
These findings include the following: level of awareness about FNTE, highest level of education completed by the participant and their immediate family member, combined total number of children and adopted children (if any), years of schooling completed by children, and total number of participants’ children who completed primary and secondary school (including a high school level equivalency).

The third and final section includes participants’ answers to open-ended questions both from the survey questionnaires and interviews. Based on questionnaire findings, this section presents a qualitative data summary of responses to education related questions including value of education, education systems in Thyou, barriers to educational attainment for children in rural areas, and recommendations for educational improvements. Lastly, this section includes information that participants provided during interviews, which is presented as a qualitative data summary on responses to questions related to families’ experiences as beneficiaries of FNTE.

**Demographic Characteristics**

**Participants’ Sex and Age**

This study included a total of 34 participants, all of whom are African adults from the village of Thyou, Burkina Faso. Of the total participants, 50% (n = 17) are male and 50% (n = 17) are female (see Table 3). Participants’ ages are categorized from between 20 to 44 years or older. Of the total individuals, 38.3% (n = 13) are 44 years or older, while 20.6% (n = 7) are between the ages of 20-25 years, 17.6% (n = 6) are between 32-
37 years, 14.7% (n = 5) are between the ages of 26-31, and the remaining 8.8% (n = 3) are between 38-43 years (see Table 4).

Table 3

Participants’ Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Participants’ Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid 20-25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 or older</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 displays the marital status of participants. The findings show that the majority of the study participants are married, 76.5% (n = 26), followed by 14.7% (n = 5) of individuals who are single and 8% (n = 3) who are widowed.

Table 5

*Participants’ Marital Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>85.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Findings Related to the Research Purpose**

A key component of the study was to determine what level of impact FNTE has had on the village of Thyou, Burkina Faso, given its short history as an organization. To assess this, participants were asked to identify the level of awareness of the organization. Overwhelming 90% (n = 31) of the participants reported that they have heard of the program and have utilized it to some degree, while only 5.9% (n = 2) have heard of the program but have not utilized it in any way. Lastly, 2.9 % (n = 1) of participants reported never having heard of the program (see Table 6).
Table 6

Awareness of Feeding Nations Through Education (FNTE) Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Have heard of the program and have utilized in some way</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have heard of the program but have not utilized it in any way</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have never heard of the program before</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational Background

Another significant goal of the study was to determine the educational needs of children and to identify any barriers that prevent or limit them from attending school in the village of Thyou. To document the participants’ educational background, they were asked about the highest level of education they have completed. The next several tables display results related to education attainment of the participants and their families.

Table 7 displays findings of the participants’ highest level of completed education. Seventy-three and one-half percent (n = 25) identified other for educational level. Of those 25 participants, over 90% reported as having no education at all, while
14.7% (n = 5) stated to have completed primary school, 5.9% (n = 2) completed secondary school and the remaining 5.9% (n = 2) completed post-secondary school.

Table 7

**Highest Level of Completed Education of Participant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar question asked the participants to identify the highest level of education completed by any one of their immediate family members (see Table 8). Finding shows that 11 out of 34 (32.4%) of the participants had immediate family members whose highest level of completed education was primary school, while 8 out of 34 (23.5%) had family members that completed secondary school, another eight (23.5%) had completed post-secondary school. Of the participants, 20.6% (n = 7) reported other as the highest educational level completed by a member of their immediate family. Of those participants, 85.7% specified that none of their immediate family members had completed a basic level of education.
Table 8

*Highest Level of Education Attained by Participants’ Immediate Family Members*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Household Composition**

The next few tables display information regarding the participants’ household composition. Table 9 shows the number of children the participants reported whether or not they have children.

Table 9

*Participant Has Children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>85.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The primary focus of the study was related to children’s educational needs. Thus, participants were asked to indicate whether they have any children or not. The findings in Table 9 shows that the majority of the participants (n = 29, 85.3%) reported they have children while only 14.7% (n = 5) reported having none.

Table 10

Total Number of Children of Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing System |
| Total       | 34      | 100.0         |
Based on the study’s educational focus on children, it was important to ask the total number of children of each study participant who reported having children. Table 10 presents the findings of the total number of children of each participant. The number of children ranged from 1 to 16 with an average of about six children per participant (mean of 6.3 children with a standard deviation of 3.6 children).

**Participant Has Adopted Children and Total Number of Adopted Children**

To reiterate, this study was conducted in a rural sub-Saharan African context. And so it was imperative to consider the impact of the AIDS pandemic in this region, particularly in the result of the high numbers of orphans. Consequently, since Thyou is located in sub-Saharan Africa, participants were asked whether or not they have adopted children. Findings show that 35.3% (n = 12) of participants have adopted children (see Table 11), and the total number of adopted children they have ranged from 1 to 10 (see Table 12) with an average of nearly four children per participant.

Table 11

*Participant Has Adopted Children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35.3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>64.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12

*Total Number of Adopted Children of Participant*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>22</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>64.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>76.5</td>
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<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>82.4</td>
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<td>85.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>5.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 presents the number of school years completed by children, including adopted children. Participants were asked to report the number of school years for each child. Participants’ answers show that over 50% of the reported children have zero years of schooling. In addition, the average number of years which children attended school was found to be 2.8 years with a standard deviation of 3.6 years. Literature clearly shows that rural areas throughout sub-Saharan Africa maintain one of the lowest rates of school enrollment and educational attainment for children throughout the world. Thyou, Burkina Faso is a rural village, which similarly reflects low rates of enrollment and educational attainment for children.
Table 13

Total Number of School Years Completed by Participants’ Children Including Adopted Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>57.3</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>60.0</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14

*Total Number of Participants’ Children and Combined Total Number of Children’s School Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Participants’ Total Number of Children Including Adopted Children</th>
<th>Combined Total Number of School Years of Participants’ Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 presents the total number of children of each participant and combined total number of school years of their children. Findings show that there are a total of 225 reported children and 620 combined school years as indicated by the participants. Average combined school years of participants’ children were 20.7 years with a standard deviation of 20.4 years.

Table 15 displays the number of participants’ children who completed primary and secondary school.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion of Primary and Secondary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings show that the number of children ranged from 0 to 3, and the majority of participants, 76.5%, reported having no children who completed both school levels. However, one considerable factor that was not taken into account during this study is the
age of the children. This information would have provided for a more in-depth analysis of the rates of primary and secondary school completion of children as indicated by the participants of this study.

Table 16

*Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Number of Children and Adopted Children</th>
<th>Combined Years of Schooling of Participants’ Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including Adopted Children</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Years of Schooling of Participants’ Children</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.368*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson Correlation bivariate analysis was conducted in order to examine the relationship between total number of children including adopted children in a family and the total number of combined schooling years of the children. Table 16 shows a statistically significant difference between the two variables (r = .368, p < .046). The
correlation coefficient (r= .368) shows that number of combined schooling years of children can only explain 13.54% (.368 x .368 x 100%) of the variations with respect to the total number of children including adoptees in a family. The findings show a weak correlation between the total number of children including adopted children and the total number of combined school years of children in a family. This finding indicates that factors used to explain the educational needs of children in Burkina Faso remain unclear due to many unknown factors this research study did not explore.

Qualitative Responses by the Participants

Survey Participants’ Responses

The following section presents findings based on survey responses of participants. It was important for the researcher to learn from local members from Thyou in order to gain a greater awareness of educational needs for children in rural communities. Participants were asked to share their perceptions of education, the educational system, and barriers to educational access and attainment for children in Thyou. Many of the questions asked participants to compare and contrast their own educational experiences and any challenges they faced when they were young with their own children’s educational experiences as well as the general child population in Thyou. Lastly, participants responded to any changes they would like to see happen overall in the education system of their country.
Perception of Education as a Child

This section presents findings related to participants’ perception of education as children. According to participants’ responses, individuals expressed both similar and contrasting views on education as a child. Some individuals shared how they had heard about education but had very little to no understanding of the concept. A few noted how they learned of what education was only by seeing a school for the first time while visiting a city. Some had placed an importance on education and showed a desire to attend school while others never considered its importance nor desired to go. A few shared they had a desire but lacked the opportunity to attend school.

Perceptions of Education as an Adult

The findings in this section reveal a common theme of changed perceptions of participants over time on education, as well as placing a higher value on education now than once before. Some individuals attributed education with success and greater opportunities in life. They also noted the difference between educated and non-educated children. They expressed that they are now sending their children to school or hoping to do so. In addition, some of the participants shared a desire to go back to school. A participant revealed he and some others are attending evening classes to learn how to read.

Perceptions of the Educational System as a Child

This section included responses of participants who expressed their views on the educational system as children. Findings show a variety of views from participants.
Many noted that school was not accessible to everyone and rather selective of students. Some shared negatively that school education was a forced and unorganized system that included long distances for children, and was and not valued by parents. Others provided positive attributes to the system as being good and well organized and where children could receive food.

**Perceptions of the Educational System as an Adult**

This section reports findings of participants’ perception of the educational system as adults. Many of the individuals expressed that they had a changed perception of education now as adults and many placed an importance on it. They shared how teachers and parents are interested in the future of their children and how they can see students’ progress throughout the year. Some criticisms shared by individuals included education costs, teacher absenteeism, lack of food for children, long distances for both teachers and students, and a need for more progress to be made by teachers and the administration.

From a teachers’ perspective, an individual shared how teachers are not paid well, leading to discouragement including of herself. She also indicated that teachers themselves buy school supplies rather than the government supplying it for them. Lastly, she expressed that students are encouraged to learn on their own rather than being told in a dogmatic way.

**Barriers to Primary School Enrollment and Attainment in Thyou**

The findings show that a majority of the individuals indicated some aspect of financial struggle as a barrier that prevents children from attending and completing
primary school. In addition, poverty was noted as a main barrier provided by participants and the lack of food for children which prevents them from attending and completing school. Participants also shared that some parents don’t value education or desire to have their children work at home. One of the participants is a teacher and reported that 400 children were expected to attend school, but due to lack of money and children working at home, they were unable to do so. There was mention of orphans, sicknesses, and lack of support while in school that were also identified as barriers for children to attend and complete primary school.

**Perception of Children who do not Attend Primary School**

This section reports findings of participants’ views of children who do not attend primary school. Various responses were provided by the individuals to this question. Participants expressed emotional responses of sadness, regret, and pity for children without a basic education. Some other responses included missed opportunities for children to succeed or have a better future, a violation of rights by parents not to send their children to school, lack of solutions for children without a basic education, and second opportunities like night school to get a basic education.

**Reasons Why Participants’ Children May Have not Been Able to Attend School**

The findings in this section present participants’ responses as to why their children may not have been able to attend school. A majority of individuals reported that lack of financial means prevented their children from attending school. Also, some participants indicated that due to a lack of valuing education, they did not send their
children to school. Furthermore, they stated that they needed to rely on their children as workers for agricultural work.

**One Major Barrier which Prevents Participants’ Child/ren from Completing an Education**

Findings in this section show participants’ responses to identifying one major barrier which prevents their children from completing an education. A common theme of poverty emerged from participants’ responses as a major barrier for their children’s schooling. While not a shared response from the participants, a couple of them stated how gender roles were a barrier; men are designated as the decision-makers of the family including whether or not children are sent to school.

**Same Barrier which Prevented Participants from Completing an Education**

This section reports findings of participants’ responses, which compared their identified barrier to completing an education to their earlier response of their own children’s barrier to completing an education. More participants expressed that the barriers were not the same and provided various responses including parents’ lack of value for education, no access to schools, selection process to attend school, parents’ inability to pay for children’s schooling. The other participants revealed that the barrier they experienced as a child was the same barrier they stated earlier for their children today. Every response provided included the issue of poverty while a few additionally provided a secondary response of parents’ lack of understanding of education.
Reasons Why it May be Difficult for Children to Attend Schools in Thyou

This section provides findings, which display participants’ views on why it may be difficult for children to attend schools in Thyou. Many of the individuals reported reasons of poverty and lack of money as the most common reasons. Other responses included lack of food at school, parents’ lack of knowledge of education or their attitudes towards education.

Suggested Changes in the Educational System

Findings in this section report participants’ views on any changes they would like to see take place in the educational system. A common emerged from participants’ responses of providing a free education for all children or lowering school fees. Many of the individuals reported to increasing the number of teachers, hiring more qualified and positive teachers, having more academic and emotional support, providing technical skills training at a younger age, and better curriculum and school conditions for the children. Some also revealed to having increased salaries and better home and school conditions for teachers as well as free school materials for both teachers and children. Individuals also revealed to having more schools built and in closer proximity to the children as well as having food provided for at the schools. Other common themes of promoting gender parity and importance of education was found among participants’ responses.
Interview Participants’ Responses

This section presents findings based on interview responses by FNTE beneficiaries whose families live in the village of Thyou. Participants’ responses were a reflection of their families’ experience given the collective nature of the familial system in Burkina Faso. In addition, FNTE provides support in a holistic manner that not only benefits individuals short-term but regards families long-term in these rural areas. Interview participants provided information regarding their families’ lives before and after participating in the FNTE agricultural assistance program, the educational status of their families’ children before and after receiving FNTE support, how their family first learned of FNTE, how their family initially received support from FNTE, participants’ perceptions about being a beneficiary of FNTE, and any identified needs of participants’ families that have not been addressed by FNTE. Findings presented in this section are based on common themes found within participants’ responses and any shared experiences stated by the participants. Responses regarding identified needs of participants’ families were individually reported to provide a broader scope of various needs felt by members within the same rural community who are FNTE beneficiaries.

Daily Life of Participants’ Families Before Receiving FNTE Support

Among participants who are FNTE beneficiaries of agricultural support and training, common themes of struggle emerged for their families. More specifically, agricultural difficulty was widely noted by the participants. Some of the difficulties expressed by the participants were their unused land due to lack of farming equipment as
well very little crops yielded during each harvest season. Participants shared that their families have worked hard on their land yet very few results have shown from it.

Another common theme of poor health emerged from the participants’ responses. Most of them stated their children were sick including the individuals themselves. They also shared that their families would get sick often. Much of the sickness was associated with lack of food for their families, especially the children.

Lack of food is a prominent theme revealed by participants’ responses to their families’ daily life before receiving any assistance from FNTE. Families shared that they did not have enough food to eat and were often starving. The lack of food was associated with not having any harvested crops since most families in rural areas rely on subsistence farming, living off of what is directly produced on their land.

**Children’s Educational Status Prior to Receiving FNTE Support**

Participants were asked to state if any of their families’ children had attended or are currently attending school. A couple of themes emerged from their responses. The first is that all participants reported that prior to receiving support from FNTE, most, if not all, of their families’ children had not been able to attend school. At the time the interviews were conducted, most of the school-aged children of the participants’ families were not attending school. Secondly, it was reported that some of their families’ children had already been attending school prior to receiving FNTE support. But none of the participants reported having all of their families’ children attending school or who completed both primary and secondary schooling.
How Participants’ Families First Learned of FNTE

Interview participants responded to how they first heard about the FNTE program. These responses included the acknowledgment of the FNTE program as a first of its kind in the village and some having learned of it only after being informed of the program’s selection of their families as beneficiaries. Responses also included the selection and notification processes whereby FNTE local representatives, one of whom is the pastor of the village church, selects families with at least one adopted child, which is a program criterion, and informs selected families personally at their homes or by other means of notification. Most of the families mentioned they were invited to attend a meeting after being initially informed of it with FNTE representatives from the city (Ouagadougou) to learn more about the program. Participants’ families were provided two vaccinated oxen, a plow, hands on training, and a short food supply as part of the FNTE program.

How Participants’ Families Came to Receive FNTE Support

Participants responded regarding how they came to receive the agricultural support from FNTE. Most of the participants expressed being greatly surprised when they were initially informed of the news. Additionally, they reported that the gifts of the oxen and plow provided by FNTE are not affordable to any of the families in the village. FNTE was able to deliver the gifts of two oxen and a plow along with a supply of food. It was mentioned that the animals and equipment were purchased from within the country and delivered into the village from another area. Participants reported that the three local representatives were there to officially provide the gifts to their families and that the
delivery of supplies was made public with other members from the community and local church present during the families’ acceptance of the gifts.

Participants’ Perceptions about Their Family Being a Beneficiary of FNTE

Participants were particularly expressive in sharing their thoughts and feelings regarding the assistance that their families received from FNTE. Participants shared how thankful they were on behalf of their families for receiving support from FNTE and what a positive impact it has made on their families. Participants commonly expressed having received more than just the materials provided to them by FNTE, but additionally an enlightened outlook on the future through this program. They described the type of learning they received that was beyond the agricultural training necessary for increased crops which was focused on their future. Many of them touched on various concepts including future possibilities, goal-setting, long-term planning, and an anticipated hope for the future that they had not considered much before, if at all. They also revealed they were about being less worried now in terms of their children’s wellbeing, the family going hungry, and their children not attending school. Some viewed the support as a way to solve their families’ problems. At the time the interviews were conducted, a couple of the participants’ families had only recently been selected as FNTE beneficiaries. They suggested that despite not yet having seen immediate results, they are still able to overlook the past, endure the present, and hope for changes in the future as they have now become FNTE beneficiaries.
Ways FNTE has Helped to Change the Lives of Participants’ Families

Interview participants provided responses about any ways FNTE has brought about changes in their families’ lives. Participants talked about the notable agricultural improvements made after receiving the oxen, plow, and additional training. Families indicated that they were able to expand their fields in order to produce a greater harvest of crops. A couple of the families reported to having more food than in years past due to a larger yield of crops (since they had received support prior to the year’s planting season). Additionally, outcomes such as extra money, small trade opportunities, ownership of oxen, and provision of food to family, especially to their children, were indicated by participants.

Another common theme emerged from participants’ responses centered on a greater sense of hope and a new and changed outlook, as previously mentioned. They expressed their hope in sending their families’ children to school as soon as they could afford to do so. Participants also voiced that they worry less, especially about food insecurity, and are now able to plan, set goals, imagine new ideas, and hope for a better future. For participants’ families who had yet to see the harvest results since acquiring the new agricultural support, they still expressed having a changed view of their future with hope and anticipation of a better one.

Children’s Educational Status after Receiving FNTE Support

Common themes emerged from participants’ responses of participants in regards to the educational status of their families’ children after receiving support from FNTE.
One shared response of several participants is their families’ plan to send all their children to school who are school-aged. FNTE has required families to send at least one child to school by the third year after receiving initial support. Many of the families reported wanting to send their children to school prior to the three year time limit.

Another common theme is that some of the participants’ families planned to send the youngest child of the family to school initially, followed by the other children. Families did not report an exact number of children they want to send to school but hoped to send all of their children to school. A final theme of understanding the importance of education was noted based on the responses of the participants. They insisted that they have a newfound value for education through participating in the FNTE program and desired that all of their families’ children attend school.

**Identified Needs not Addressed by FNTE**

Participants’ responses were based on any identified needs of their families not addressed by FNTE. Responses were varied but a common theme that emerged first was how thankful each participant was to have the support from FNTE. They acknowledged that the program has been contributing to positive changes in their families’ lives. They also explained that what they have learned and experienced so far in the FNTE program has empowered them to take ownership of sending their children to school for an education and addressing potential issues currently and in the future, and to see their future with great hope. Many participants also recognized how FNTE has assisted their families in various ways which include greater provision of food, healthier family
members, more planning and goal-setting, access to clean water from the well that was contributed by FNTE, increased support and training to produce more crops, and a means to fund their children’s education. One of the participants shared how no one is perfectly satisfied but the program has enabled change for their family, not just today but for the long term. Also the participant expressed having happiness and the ability to smile now, having not known what it meant to smile before, as well as seeing that change in their children who laugh and run around while having enough to eat now. Another revealed that at the age of 60, he had never before seen people in his village more educated as they are today through the FNTE program and still eager to learn and be further challenged. The last participant indicated thankfulness to the founder of FNTE and all the supporters who made it possible for their families to receive assistance. The participant stated that the government was not able to do what FNTE has accomplished in Thyou for its people and shared a blessing on the founder and FNTE supporters to continue this program and to support even more families.

One of the identified needs of this participant involved the long distance to the newly built well from the family’s home. The participant acknowledged that despite the distance, the water is clean and accessible. Another issue is the high costs of education for his children, but through higher yields of crops with the assistance his family received, they can eventually afford the education costs of their children.

Another participant talked about the difficulty in transporting crops during the harvest season. The participant suggested that having a donkey and a cart would alleviate
this burden. Another issue addressed by the participant was health concerns. She stated once her family can generate more crops, and now that they have access to clean water, they can become much healthier. They admitted that life is still very difficult, but they know things can improve for their family.

The last participant first expressed thankfulness for the rice they received to feed the family and how helpful the oxen and plow have been to them. This participant talked about a difficulty with their housing since there are many people in the family and not enough room for everyone. Also, parts of the house fall down due to the rain. The participant, while openly sharing this need, expressed having no expectation for FNTE to help his family in this way.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the research study’s key findings that address the educational needs of children in Thyou, Burkina Faso, and assess the education-focused work of Feeding Nations Through Education (FNTE). Additionally, an overall conclusion of the research study will be offered followed by practical implications for social work practice, and recommendations for future research.

Summary

Education is regarded as a valuable component in the socioeconomic development of individuals, communities, and countries, as well as a key strategy to fighting poverty. This view is further reiterated by global campaigns for universal primary education from major international organizations including the UN and the World Bank. These efforts largely address the overall educational needs of children in places like rural sub-Saharan Africa where extreme poverty and undernourishment is most prevalent and has continued to increase over the past 20 years (World Bank, 2005). Additionally, many rural areas remain underdeveloped and without any means to overcome the barriers which limit the education of their children. However, research is limited in addressing the educational needs of children from specific rural areas. Despite the overwhelming number of villages which have significant educational needs, it is still important to be able to focus individually on one of these villages in order to recognize the local perspectives on
educational issues and their solutions, as well as to identify any community-driven and education-focused development in these villages.

As mentioned before in Chapter 3, survey participants were asked to provide their views on education, their own educational experience and their children’s experience, if any, as well as any barriers they or their children may have faced in accessing and completing school. Interview participants were also asked to provide their account of their families’ lives before and after becoming beneficiaries of FNTE by participating in their agricultural assistance program. Findings that were significant included the educational background of the participants and their children, barriers to accessing and completing school for children, and suggestions for change in the educational system in Thyou, Burkina Faso. Other key findings consisted of participants’ accounts of their families as FNTE recipients of agricultural support in order to provide an evaluative study on the organization. The following section expands on these major findings relevant to the literature review found in Chapter 2, as well as other findings and observations that emerged from the research study.

**Conclusion**

**Key Findings**

The researcher examined the educational background of local Africans of Thyou, as well as their perceptions of education, the educational system, and barriers to their children’s education in order to address the educational needs of children in Thyou. The researcher also explored local Africans’ accounts of their families’ lives before and after
receiving agricultural assistance from FNTE in order to assess the organization’s program to promote education for children in villages like Thyou. The researcher identified major findings based on the data provided by local Africans who live in this village. The significant findings are described below.

One of the important findings revealed that most participants had a limited educational background. According to the data in Table 7, only 14.7% (n = 5) had completed primary school. Also, over 90% of participants who indicated other reported having no education at all. The findings proved to be consistent with the data from the literature review indicating the least developed countries maintain the lowest adult literacy rates compared to the wider region of sub-Saharan Africa, throughout the world, and developed countries. While literacy rates were not directly measured in this study, literacy is strongly associated with the level of one’s education. Table 2 revealed that the least developed countries showed the lowest literacy rate of 58.5%, while Burkina Faso showed a much lower literacy rate of less than 30% (UIS, 2011a).

The researcher included the adults’ educational background to identify any differences or similarities between their level of education, as well as their children’s educational level. Many of the participants, who indicated having little to no educational background, reported that many of their children were also not able to attend or complete schooling. Table 13 showed that of the participants who indicated having children including adopted children, over half of their children were reported as having zero years of schooling. While some improvement was noted between participants’ level of
education and their children’s educational level, most of their children were not able to complete an education. The findings in this study showed an average of only 2.8 years of schooling for children (with a standard deviation of 3.6 years). This finding is considerably lower than data found in the literature review. Regarding the total life expectancy from primary to tertiary education for children in Burkina Faso, an average of six years was reported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (2007). These findings further demonstrate the difficulty for children not only to access primary school but to complete schooling in Thyou. Greater commitments and community-driven efforts must be established from both governmental and non-governmental sectors with respect to rural development in order to increase school enrollment and completion rates of children in villages similar to Thyou.

Another considerable theme included participants’ reports of the number of children they have. Table 10 indicated an average of about six children per participant, which is consistent with the findings from the literature review. Table 1 reported an average of 6.14 children born per woman in Burkina Faso, which is the sixth highest total fertility rate in the world, compared to 2.06 children in the U.S. This finding is an important factor to consider with respect to rural families in sub-Saharan Africa and lower educational enrollment and completion rates of children in these areas. Villages like Thyou are predominantly comprised of families who rely on subsistence farming for their provision of food, as discussed earlier in the literature review (Hagberg, 2008). This, perhaps, is a reason why families struggle with the idea of educating their children.
Families often choose which child or children will attend school, if at all possible, since the majority of children are expected to be involved as farmers or agricultural workers due to the low-output and labor-intensive nature of subsistence farming in such areas.

This study considered prevalent issues of sub-Saharan Africa including the AIDS pandemic and the subsequent result of orphans. This factor was addressed, since families with orphans are targeted to participate in the agricultural assistance program of FNTE. These families share the burden of caring for another child whose parent or parents are no longer living. Although the literature review noted Burkina Faso as having a median HIV prevalence, the result of orphans, due, in part, to AIDS, is still an issue faced by many families. Findings from the sample group revealed that 35.3% of the total participants have adopted children with a total average of nearly four children per participant. In addition, participants reported total number of children including adopted children. Furthermore, participants of this study reported that school fees were one major barrier for their children’s education including adopted children. This finding was consistent with the literature findings, which showed that orphans are disadvantaged in numerous ways, including in education. Kurzinger et al. (2008) showed in a comparison study of AIDS-affected communities in Burkina Faso and Tanzania that a higher number of orphans were out of school in Burkina Faso than in Tanzania due to schooling rates. Tanzania was described as offering fee-free education while Burkina Faso included varying fees. They further concluded, suggested by other studies, that orphans’ educational status is quite comparable to non-orphans, possibly due to safety nets of
families or community programs, when looking at particular communities in sub-Saharan Africa. The study findings are similar with the previous studies’ suggestion of possible safety nets of families in that over one third of participants had at least one adopted child, although participants were not asked to provide the educational status of their adopted children in the study.

Another major finding consisted of a lack of food for schoolchildren. Many participants reported that lack of food at school is a reason why children are not able to attend schools. This is closely related to another response from the study of a lack of means to pay for direct and indirect schooling costs. The findings were shown to be similar with data from the literature review. In a recent study by Dabone et al. (2011), a high prevalence of malnutrition was reported among rural schoolchildren based on data from national surveys in Burkina Faso. One of the participants, a schoolteacher, described how students would often remain at the school during lunch breaks because there was no food to eat at their homes. She further reported that there was a burden to feed these students as much as she was able to in order to provide them some nutrition for the day. Hunger, or malnutrition, is a leading facet of poverty, which is experienced at a higher prevalence among rural schoolchildren. But many schools lack the resources or ability to provide a nutritious meal for students each day. This is a considerable issue in regards to educational improvements for schoolchildren in Thyou, as well as to the larger issue of rural development in Burkina Faso.
Another key finding included the prevalence of poverty as a major barrier to participants’ education, as well as a current barrier to their children’s education. A majority of participants identified poverty as the reason for their limited or lack of educational experience as well as their children’s current experience. As a country with one of the lowest primary school enrollment rates, under 50%, and adult and youth literacy rates, both under 30%, it is absolutely critical to address the high incidence of poverty experienced by those in rural areas of Burkina Faso in order to find solutions from the government and within the community for significant educational improvements for the current generation of children and future generations to come (CIA, 2011; UIS, 2011a).

The findings related to poverty are significant not only as it coincides with data found in the literature review, but it draws attention to its complexity as having multiple layers when addressing the issue as related to Thyou, Burkina Faso. As mentioned in the literature review, poverty is a multidimensional issue experienced by millions of poor people throughout the world. Hagberg (2008) carefully examined poverty in contextual, situational, and relational ways to bring out the lived experiences of the poor of Burkina Faso in a more ethnographic and honoring manner. The researcher of this study also took into account, as much as possible, the contextual, situational, and relational aspects when conducting the study with local residents of Thyou. The simplicity of the village life provided insight for the researcher into the participants’ cultural and traditional ways of life beyond the material poverty that was observed there. For example, during the
researcher’s stay in Thyou, FNTE provided the village community with a newly built and advanced water well for potable water for all to enjoy freely and as a way to empower and train locals to maintain their new water system. The researcher observed an uplifted spirit and expressed joy among villagers during the dedication ceremony, taking into account their perceptions and daily life experiences of what it meant to finally have clean, drinking water accessible to them. This, much like what Hagberg (2008) noted, is a contextual determination of one’s poverty. As Narayan et al. (2000) declared, the poor are the true experts whose voices should be more pronounced, and not limited, in the discourse of poverty.

**Evaluation of FNTE**

Significant findings are noted from interview participants whose families are FNTE beneficiaries. The findings from this component of the study serve to complete an evaluation of FNTE, or a needs assessment, in order to review the existing program services made available to families in Thyou, Burkina Faso and “to determine the current status and service needs” of this particular area (Yuen, Tereo, & Schmidt, 2009, p. 75). The researcher used a qualitative approach by asking participants to describe their daily life before and after becoming involved in FNTE’s agricultural program. Prior to receiving support from FNTE, a notable theme of struggle was indicated by the responses of the interview participants. They described the agricultural limitations they experienced while farming, including no reliable or efficient equipment or animals, as well as unused land for crops. These findings are supported by the literature review that
most families in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa face difficulties in farming with fewer than 30% owning plow equipment, as discussed by Rader, Kirshen, Roncoli, Hoogenboom, and Quattara (2009). In terms of evaluation, FNTE has identified a need within the rural community of Thyou in terms of agricultural support including animals, equipment, and training. This was a major need reported by many of the interview participants. Even though agricultural support does not immediately or directly enable families to send their children to school, it is a long-term strategy used to address the educational needs of children, which is the main focus of FNTE in their work with rural families.

Participants’ provided various descriptions of change in their families’ lives post FNTE support. In general, the findings indicated change with greater provision of food, healthier family members, more planning and goal-setting, access to small assets such as clean water with the recently built well by FNTE, increased support and training to yield higher crops, and a means to fund their children’s education. These findings are evidence that families are benefitting from FNTE’s program and that its services are related to many, but not all, of the needs of rural families in Thyou. Overall, the program served the target population in several ways and provided a needs-based service to rural families, which resulted in positive reports in the initial evaluative study.

Another prominent theme is the educational status of the families’ children prior to and after receiving FNTE support. The findings showed that the majority of the children from participants’ families were not able to attend school. This finding is
consistent with other data that show children in rural settings are considered to have less favorable educational outcomes than children in urban settings (Mugisha, 2006). While some participants reported that some of their families’ children had already been attending school prior to receiving FNTE support, not all children had attended school. Additionally, participants reported that none of the children in their family had completed primary and secondary schooling. Post FNTE support findings showed that participants have planned as much as possible to send all their children to school who are school-aged. This exceeds the program’s requirement that each family send at least one child, whether a boy or girl, to school by the third year after the initial support is received by the families. Due to the early evaluative study of the program, findings were mixed as to whether or not their children’s educational status had changed from the time they received agricultural support. Some families who began the program earlier were now able to send at least one child to school, while newer families had not been able to send a child to school since they had just began participating in the program. Due to the recently developed program, the researcher could not effectively assess the program’s initiative to educate at least one child from every family they have selected to support as an organization. Of the initial families who had received support, they have now since been able to support one of their children’s schooling.

Participants also reported having a newer understanding of and greater value for education. This finding is significant since social, cultural, and environmental aspects of rural life include the perception that education is regarded as less valuable and relevant to
an agricultural-based life in Thyou. These reported changed perceptions about education from participants are evidence that FNTE has met its goal to some extent in promoting education for children in Thyou. A follow-up study of these participants’ families is recommended in order to adequately assess the program effectiveness of FNTE in helping families to educate their children in the village of Thyou.

Lastly, FNTE beneficiaries were asked to identify any needs not yet addressed by FNTE for their families. The findings showed needs that are socially and environmentally relevant to an agricultural way of life in rural Burkina Faso. Participants’ responses included educational costs of schooling for their children, current health concerns of the family, additional agricultural equipment including a donkey and cart to transport harvested crops, long distances for some families to the newly built well for potable water, and housing difficulties for families due to large numbers of family members and weak housing structures. Some of these needs are beyond the scope of the program’s aims to support rural families, but they do present a more comprehensive understanding of these families’ life experiences in Thyou. These findings can shape future aid programs implemented by FNTE or other community-driven development programs in this rural community or similar areas.

The findings from the study aided in an initial assessment of FNTE’s agricultural assistance program which aims to address the educational needs of children in Thyou, as well as the needs of the community including agricultural support, increased income, and access to potable water. Overall, FNTE’s program has enabled families, to some degree,
to increase their ability to fund their children’s education through the agricultural assistance provided to them. While FNTE is limited in the number of families it serves, it includes an initial high cost to support a family, and involves a lengthy time period for families to begin sending their children to school, it is a community-and education-focused assistance program which considers the rural context in which the families they support live. FNTE has addressed the target population in Thyou of families with adopted children and delivered services related to many of the needs of the target population to meet one of its goals of famine relief. In addition, FNTE steadily continues to promote education for children within the rural context of Burkina Faso to achieve its other primary goal of raising literacy among rural populations.

**Implications for Social Work Practice**

To restate, the goal of the researcher was to bring awareness to social workers and organizations focused on community development work of the urgency of education for rural children in areas such as Thyou, Burkina Faso. The research study’s aims were to examine the educational needs of children in the village of Thyou and to assess the FNTE agricultural assistance program for families in their focus to promote education for children in these rural communities. The researcher hopes this research project will promote greater awareness and understanding of the educational needs of children developing nations such as Burkina Faso and throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, the researcher hopes that with support from the international community, rural development programs among under-developed and developing nations will better
serve their rural population. Knowledge gained from this research project can be used as baseline development guidelines.

On a micro level, the findings from this research study can serve as a guide for rural development program planners and workers when engaging locally with individuals from rural areas like Thyou. The research study provides an ecological perspective so that individuals are considered with respect to their environment, including prevalent issues they face. To be able to understand the daily life experience of a person with respect to their social, cultural, familial, and environmental contexts is essential to rural development. On a mezzo level, community development workers can work collaboratively with locals and families to address the educational needs of children so that their solutions are carried over ultimately into the development of their village. This community-driven approach in working side by side with villagers is both empowering for them and sustaining in terms of locals carrying on the developmental changes that have taken place in their community. Lastly, on a macro level, the findings presented in this study can be utilized by rural development organizations and community development workers to advocate for greater educational opportunities for children in Thyou and other similar areas. Greater equity in education, as well as other social and economic justice issues, is imperative for children throughout sub-Saharan Africa, and must be addressed through legislation and organizations that are focused on rural development.
Recommendations

The key findings from the previous section indicate that children continue to struggle in accessing and completing schooling in Thyou, Burkina Faso. There is a specific need to increase the development in rural communities like Thyou in order to make educational improvements for children in these areas. Another finding of poverty and considerable factors as a barrier to children’s education was also indicative of findings from the literature review of this study. Findings included individuals’ responses to suggested changes to the educational system, which are considered as part of the researcher’s recommendations for this study.

Findings suggest that a lack of income was a major reason as to why families cannot send their children to school. Based on other findings from this study related to the recommended changes provided by the participants, it is highly suggested to lower any costs related to schooling or totally eliminating a fee structure in order to alleviate the financial problems that are prevalent for most rural families with school-aged children. Food insecurity was another major finding of the study reported by individuals. Malnutrition was a problem among schoolchildren as evidenced by reports that families were not able to send food with their children to school or help pay for food costs at the school. A strong recommendation, based on reported changes as suggested by individuals from the study, is the provision of a nutritious meal to all students on school days. This would lessen the burden that families carry which limit their ability to send their children to school.
Lastly, educational improvements for children in Thyou and similar areas must integrate a community-driven approach in terms of rural development. This includes listening to and establishing trust with village locals while assessing their needs. This is necessary in order to deliver services and implement empowering programs which meet the needs of the target population while developing local leadership, active participation, and ownership from community members. For example, FNTE was initiated by a local native of Thyou, Burkina Faso who not only understood the challenges and life experiences of rural life in Burkina Faso, but also assessed the current needs of the community. He took into account the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of rural life and strategically designed and implemented an agricultural assistance program, which emphasized the importance of education on both children and adults, as well as encouraged local leadership and participation from FNTE beneficiaries of the program. The programs’ goals of famine relief and increased literacy among rural populations touch on agricultural training and support desperately needed by families while providing families a way to afford their children’s schooling. This agricultural-based and education-focused program considers village locals in their context, which is an important aspect of community development. Other rural development programs should uphold locals’ perspectives and involvement in the developmental work in their communities in order to effect change sustainably and improve the livelihood of families and children currently and for future generations in rural areas of Burkina Faso and throughout sub-Saharan Africa.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaires

(In English)

Survey Questionnaire – Part I
(Please state your answers.)

1. Sex
   a. Male
   b. Female

2. What is your age category?
   a. 18-24
   b. 25-31
   c. 32-38
   d. 39-45
   e. 46 or older

3. Marital Status
   a. Married
   b. Separated/Divorced
   c. Widow
   d. Single

4. What is your level of awareness about the organization Feeding Nations Through Education?
   a. Have heard of the program and have utilized it in some way
   b. Have heard of the program but have not utilized it in any way
   c. Have never heard of the program before

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   a. Primary school
   b. Secondary school
   c. Post-secondary school
   d. If other please specify_____________________________
6. What is the highest level of education completed by any one of your immediate family members?
   a. Primary school
   b. Secondary school
   c. Post-secondary school
   d. If other please specify ____________________________

7. Do you have any children?
   a. _____ Yes _________ How many?
   b. _____ No

8. Are there any adopted children living in your family?
   a. _____ Yes _________ How many?
   b. _____ No

9. How many years of schooling has each child in your family received?
   Child #1
   Child #2
   Child #3
   Child #4
   Child #5
   Child #6
   Child #7
   Child #8
   Child #9
   Child #10
   Child #11
   Child #12
   Child #13
   Child #14
   Child #15

10. Of the children listed above, how many have completed primary and secondary school?
If one or more children listed above have not completed primary and secondary school, please continue with Part II of this survey questionnaire.

Survey Questionnaire – Part II
(Please state your answers.)

1. As a child growing up, what was your perception about education?

2. Has your perception about education changed over time? If so, how?

3. What was your perception about the educational system as a child?

4. What is your perception about the education system now in Thyou?

5. What are some major reasons why children are prevented from attending and completing primary school in Thyou?

6. What is your perception about children who do not attend school at the basic level?

7. What are some of the reasons why your child/ren have not been able to attend school?

8. What is one major barrier that prevents your child from receiving an education?
9. Was this barrier the same barrier that prevented you from receiving an education while growing up as a child?

10. What are some of the reasons why it may be difficult for children to attend schools in Thyou?

11. What changes would you like to see happen in the education system?
APPENDIX B

Interview Session

(In English)

Interview Session
(Please state your answers.)

1. Please describe what daily life was like with your family before receiving support from Feeding Nations Through Education (FNTE)?

2. How many children in your family were attending school prior to receiving support from FNTE?

3. How did you first hear about FNTE?

4. How did you come to receive support from FNTE?

5. How do you feel about receiving support from FNTE?

6. In what ways has FNTE changed your family’s life? Please provide examples.

7. How many children are able to attend school after receiving support from FNTE?

8. Are there any current needs that your family still faces that have not been addressed by FNTE?
APPENDIX C

Approval Letter from Thyou AD Maranatha Wendogo Church

(In English and French)

Burkina Faso – Thyou
Thyou AD Maranatha Wendogo
April 20, 2011

To Whom It May Concern

I, Pastor Daniel ROUAMBA, Lead pastor of Thyou AD Maranatha Wendogo, consent to the research study which will focus on educational access for children in the community of Thyou, Burkina Faso. I speak on behalf of the community, including the village chief, to fully approve this study which will be conducted by graduate student Jamie Bezziński with the assistance of Koudougou Alfred Koola, founder of Feeding Nations Through Education.

Thyou AD Maranatha Wendogo will recruit all potential participants of the study who are members of the church, which will be done on a voluntary basis. In any case potential participants are non-members of the church, the church will speak directly with such persons first to inform them that the study will be done on a voluntary basis. I fully acknowledge the support of this research study during the visitors’ length of stay in Thyou, Burkina Faso.

Sincerely,

The Lead Pastor

Pastor Daniel ROUAMBA
Burkina Faso – Thyou
Thyou AD Maranatha Wendogo

Yummi tusi a yib la pitig la yembre, Avril kiugu, rasm pissi

Eb Ramba Seri Be
Etats-Unis

Mam. Pasteur Daniel Rouamba, Thyou AD Maranatha Wendog Karemab Kansenga,
Kort ni ti kareng sen kend ne kamba wouba baob yele toen mane Thyou ka, Burkina Faso. Ne
nimbuïda. Tenga naabu la m wendogo yura yingga, la ne Feeding Nations Through Education
Fondateur Koudougou Alfred Koala masem yingga, la d regeda Karembi kasenga Jamie Brezinski ta a
wa n zams Thyou woubra kibare.

Thyou AD Maranatha Wendoga neba la tenga nimbuïda na n sak n songa nê yamleogo ti zamsga yi
neere. Ed na togse neba tie b song tumda ne yamleogo. Ne ed suri faa, ed regda samba faa Thyou,
Burkina Faso.

Y barks,

Karemab Kansenga
Pasteur Daniel Rouamba
APPENDIX D

Consent to Participate in Research

(In English)

California State University, Sacramento

Consent to Participate in Research
(Written Statement of Oral Presentation)
(Written Consent for Interview)
(English)

Hello to you all. My name is Jamie Brezinski. I am a student in Social Work at California State University, Sacramento, United States of America. One of my purposes as a student is to study about a social issue that affects humans anywhere in the world. I have decided to begin a research study that focuses on the educational needs of children in rural communities such as Thyou, Burkina Faso. I am also interested in understanding the impact that Feeding Nations Through Education (FNTE) has because one of their primary purposes is to promote education for children in this community.

Part of a research study includes asking individuals such as yourselves to participate in answering questions related to the topic of the study. The name of this study is Promoting Education for Children in Rural Communities: A Perspective in Thyou, Burkina Faso. You are being asked to participate in this research, which will be conducted by Jamie Brezinski, with the assistance of translators. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to stay in order to complete a verbal questionnaire about some information about yourself and then questions in regard to your perceptions about education and your children’s education, if any. You may also be asked if there were or are any barriers for you or your children in attaining education, and if so, to explain the reasons.

Some of the questions in the survey may seem personal, but you do not have to answer any question if you do not wish to. Please state so if that is the case.

You may gain additional insight into factors that prevent education attainment for children, but you may not personally benefit from participating in this research. It is hoped that the results of the study will be beneficial to programs designed to promote greater education for children in rural communities throughout Burkina Faso.

Your responses on the verbal questionnaire will be anonymous (no one will be able to know what statements you have made). All information that is collected for the
study will remain confidential and kept in a secure location. Only the author and author’s advisor will have access to the information collected during the study. The collected data from the survey questionnaire will be destroyed once the study is completed, and in any event no later than one year that it was collected.

*For interviews only

With permission of participants, the interview session will be audio taped. A signature will be required by any participant who agrees to be audio taped during the interview. Those tapes will be destroyed as soon as the discussions have been transcribed, and in any event no later than one year after they were made. Until that time, the tapes will be stored in a secure location and remain confidential, locked safely away. Only results related to education and any barriers to educational attainment for the project will be reported in the study.

*For verbal survey questionnaire and interview sessions

You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact the church pastor Daniel Rouamba or the president of FNTE Koudougou Koala during the researchers stay in Thyou, Burkina Faso or at a later time. The researcher may also be contacted by phone at (001-253-241-8382) or by email at jb4673@saclink.csus.edu. In case you have additional questions and you want to specifically contact my advisor in the United States, you may call him at (001-916-278-5820), or email to him at leesc@csus.edu.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your verbal consent now indicates that you have heard all the information in this oral presentation and agree to participate in the research on this date_________________________ at this time_______________________.

*For participants in the interview, please sign your name below agreeing to be audio taped during the interview.

Name__________________________________________________________.

Thank you,
Jamie Brezinski
REFERENCES


