

# **‘A Comparative and Narrative Investigation into the Contribution of the Assemblies of God Church and Christian NGOs to Overcoming Obstacles to Female Education in Burkina Faso’**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Many obstacles, historical, social, cultural/religious and economic, have hindered, and continue to hinder, the development of female education in Burkina Faso. However, Faith-Based Organisations, especially Evangelical ones like the Assemblies of God, have shown, and are continuing to show, innovative ways to improve girls’ and women’s education in the country.

The aim of the thesis is to examine the place of female education in the context of Burkina Faso. A literature review is used to explain the position of girls and women in BF and to explain the importance of educating girls and women in socio-economic development. Quantitative data from official documentation is used to show from national examination results that the evangelical and Roman Catholic schools are far more successful than the state schools. Qualitative data has been collected through interviews, focus groups and face to face discussions with government and church leaders, and from key figures who have benefited from education, to find out their views on both girls' education and the role played by the evangelical churches. Using narrative research also allows many people, villagers, pastors' wives, and government officials, to tell their own stories in their own ways. This adds richness to the data. The evidence from these sources shows in what ways evangelical churches have led, and continue to lead, the development of female education; and reflects on whether their approach points to the future. The thesis also seeks to make a contribution to the debate by investigating what contribution the Evangelical churches in particular the Assemblies of God and Christian NGOs, such as AEAD and ANTBA, ACTS and CREDO, made in overcoming obstacles faced by girls and women in education.

The new insights brought about by this thesis in a globalized world are twofold: first it seeks from a religious community level to document the history and practices of the Evangelical church communities that have contributed to girls’ and women’s education. Secondly, the thesis puts forth an educational innovation that uses first the mother tongue to bridge the non-formal to formal education with a potential of accelerating higher women’s literacy, thus making some of the MDGs a reality in the near future in Burkina Faso and the Sahel region. The evidences and conclusion from the case studies will hopefully inform policy makers such as governments (UNICEF, DFID, FTI), the churches and NGOs and the civil society at large as a way forward.