



Fund for Innovation and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation et la transformation



WORLD NEIGHBOURS CANADA SOCIETY

## Empowering Women in Burkina Faso

### Context

The eastern province of Gourma in Burkina Faso is experiencing frequent and worsening droughts. This destabilizes the single season of rain-fed subsistence agriculture that provides the basis of most people's livelihoods in the region. Decreasing agricultural production and food security have led to acute malnutrition, exceeding critical thresholds in many areas. As a result, agricultural production and food security suffer, making it difficult to raise healthy animals. In addition, few women in rural Gourma are literate, and most women aged 16 and older have no formal education. Illiteracy, innumeracy and lack of skills training means their inclusion in income-generating activities and decision-making power in the household is limited.

### The Innovative Solution

Supported by FIT, World Neighbours Canada Society and their local partners Association d'Appui à la Promotion du Développement Durable des Communautés (APDC) tested an innovative solution aimed at increasing women's full and equitable economic participation in the livestock smallholder sector and at the household level. The innovation provided women with the funds to purchase livestock (sheep) as well as professional training in animal-fattening, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and gender equality. It also provided men, as well as adolescent girls and boys, with age and gender-specific sensitization workshops that allowed them to critically reflect on changes to the existing notions of gendered power relations and labour roles, and to recognize the potential benefits of women's economic empowerment.

### Advancing Gender Equality

Collaborating with a local gender consultant, the innovation was designed to address the issues of gender inequality through awareness activities capacity-building. This included women's income, decision-making, gender equality knowledge, and literacy. The active participation of women in all aspects of testing, evaluation, and reporting, was central. All forms of training took women's needs and priorities into account. For example, childcare was offered during the workshops, as were provisions for safety during times of increased conflict in the region.



**COUNTRY**  
Burkina Faso

**AMOUNT**  
\$ 221,275

**TESTING PERIOD**  
15 months  
Ended August 2022



**GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE (GE3)**

**THEME: AGRICULTURE**

# Testing Framework

The testing methodology used an experimental approach including two control groups and three innovation groups. The control group (CG) consisted of 30 women, and their household members. CG women got training only in animal-fattening techniques and skills as this represented the baseline practice in the local context. The total innovation group (IG) consisted of 110 women, and their household members. The other members of their households –men, and adolescent girls and boys –received gender sensitization workshops. Baseline and endline data were collected on women’s capacities and attitudes of household members.

# Results and Impact

The innovation saw increases across nearly all gender-sensitive indicators in the PMF. Innovation group women have: developed an increased income-generation capacity; upgraded their professional knowledge and skills; structured animal-fattening activities as informal and family-based businesses; secured increased support from household members for tasks related to the care and purchase of animals; and begun to identify themselves as agents of development and as economic actors who merit greater decisional authority and respect within the household and the village. Though innovation group women worked in difficult conditions -including COVID-19 measures, rising armed conflicts, food security together with women’s low levels of literacy and lack of access to assets, the family-based animal-fattening enterprise approach did produce the hypothesized impact: it resulted in increases in women’s full and equitable economic participation in households, and in the livestock smallholder sector.

% of women who have increased capacity to manage the financial aspects of animal-fattening increased from 18% at baseline to 42% at endline.

- At baseline some 34% of women had support from family members in managing their animal-fattening enterprise rising to 91% at endline.
- Women who demonstrated the capacity to manage the purchase and sale aspects of animal-fattening increased from 19% to 32% by endline.
- The % of women, girls, men and boys who better understand the benefits of women’s economic empowerment increased from 12% to 99% for women and girls and 18%, to 98% for men and boys.

# Key Lessons

1. The issue of illiteracy could have been approached more explicitly to ensure women with little or no literacy could have participated more fully in the training.
2. Participants felt that the presence of APDC staff at the cattle market, and the practice of a large group of women attending the market at the same time, was negatively impacting their ability to negotiate with sheep vendors. This feedback was considered in subsequent markets.
3. Gender awareness sessions had a larger impact than expected. Though it was assumed that practical training skills would be most valued by participants, the gender sessions were deeply appreciated by both men and women.

“Before [the FIT project], women did not have money to achieve certain things. But, thanks to the support of APDC, there is respect between our husbands and us. Through the training we received, we learned that women are marginalized in Burkina Faso. They encouraged us to stand up and fight to become autonomous. At this moment, we are very brave.” - Woman participant

## PARTNER ORGANIZATION

Association d’Appui à la Promotion du Développement Durable des Communautés (APDC)

## TARGET PARTICIPANTS

110 women and their household members

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Fund for Innovation and Transformation](#)

[World Neighbours Canada Society](#)

## ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.



In partnership with  
**Canada**

