



## Burkina Faso and MCC Foster Learning through Girl-Friendly Schools

Safoura is among the lucky children recruited last year in Koutoula Yarce, one of the 132 communities receiving elementary school funding from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in Burkina Faso. As a nine-year old, Safoura should already be in third grade. However, when she was seven, the age of enrollment in Burkina Faso, her village had no school, and her parents were reluctant to allow her to walk several kilometers to the nearest school.

Although she started school late, Safoura is still among a privileged minority in Burkina Faso, where fewer than half of all girls attend school. Long walking distances from schools, early and forced marriages, time-consuming household chores and lack of interest in educating girls are some of the barriers that keep thousands of girls like Safoura from going to school.

The two-year MCC project, called BRIGHT, provides incentives to remove these barriers and encourages increased enrollment and regular attendance of

children, particularly girls. The program is simple, but grand in its scope: to build, equip, and support 132 schools in 10 of the 45 provinces

Three-classroom schools, boreholes for drinking water, separate latrines for girls and boys, and teacher housing are being constructed in remote communities that have no education infrastructure. Each school will be provided with sufficient desks to allow children to sit comfortably, free textbooks and school supplies, and a mid-day lunch. An incentive will be provided to girls who have at least a 90% attendance rate in the form of a take home food ration worth \$4 per month. An awareness raising campaign will be organized with students' parents and community leaders during the two-year project period to fight the various obstacles that keep girls from attending school.



*"Last year we had no class room. We were under temporary shelter. This year we are glad to have a brand new school. We also have desks and can sit properly. We have got notebooks and manuals for reading."*

*—Safoura Bagnan*



*Safoura Bagnan, 9 years old, raises her hand to answer a question in her new school.*