

EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION IN OLUNO  
CIRCUIT, OSHANA REGION, NAMIBIA

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION (LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY STUDIES)  
OF  
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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APRIL 2023

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## **ABSTRACT**

Namibia implemented several educational reforms following its independence in 1990, intending to provide education for all [EFA]. To meet the EFA objectives, the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture [MoEAC] implemented Free Secondary Education [FSE] in 2016. The goal of this study was to evaluate the implementation of FSE in Namibia using Oluno Circuit in the Oshana Region as a case study. The study employed qualitative research and a case study to address the research questions. To collect data for the study, document analysis and a semi-structured interviews were used as research instruments. Purposeful sampling was employed to select four secondary schools, 16 Grade 12 learners' Representative Council [LRC] 4 teachers, 4 Heads of Departments [HODs] and 4 chairpersons of school boards based on their leadership abilities. The study used content analysis to analyse the data.

The major findings of the study were insufficient and untimely funding, high learners enrolment, school dropout, lack of teaching and learning materials, a lack of parental sensitisation, as well as the government's failure to cover all educational expenses. The study recommended that the MoEAC should employ qualified secondary school teachers to provide quality FSE and adequate and timely funding to schools, purchase teaching and learning materials, and provide enough infrastructure to accommodate all secondary school learners. Lastly, the MoEAC should formulate the free secondary education policy framework to guide the schools on how to use the funds and should sensitise parents on the importance of free secondary education.

**KEY WORDS:** *Free secondary education, evaluation, implementation, Oluno Circuit, Namibia.*

## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to my lovely wife Saara Ligoleni Shikoha and our children, Martha Tangi Kalapuste Shikoha, Maria Magano Tulonga Shikoha, and Vili-Sarti Twapewa Shikoha.

## DECLARATIONS

I, Vilho Mekondjo Tangeni. Shikoha, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost, I would like to give my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr John Mushaandja, for his support, guidance, and encouragement. Without his guidance and direction, incredible patience, and marvellous sense of honour, I would not have made it through this worthwhile journey. Dr Mushaandja helped me get ethical clearance from the University of Namibia, Department of Research and Publications Unit after being deserted by another supervisor, while Dr Amaambo helped me to finalise my thesis. My gratitude goes to Ms. Steenkamp, the Executive Director, Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture; and to Ms. Amukana, the Director of Education, Arts, and Culture, Oshana Regional Council, for allowing me to conduct my academic research at secondary schools in the Oshana Region.

During my studies, I also enjoyed the company of my employer (The Rössing Foundation), who provided me with a conducive learning environment and assisted me in various ways. My colleagues and friends for supporting me and often lending a hand and moral support when I needed it most. My lovely wife, Saara Ligoleni, and my children for their love and inspiration through physical support to make sure I was coping with the pressure.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to God the Father and my Lord for His grace, strength, and talent in bringing me this far. Last but not least, I would like to further extend my thanks to my parents for the solid educational foundation they provided me with, which I continue to value. Thank you to everyone who helped me in any way along the journey.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

EFA	-	Education for All
COVID	-	Coronavirus disease
FSE	-	Free Secondary Education
HoD	-	Head of Department
LRC	-	Learner Representative Council
MoEAC	-	Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
NAMCOL	-	Namibia College of Open Learning
PMS	-	Performance Management System
PPPs	-	Public-Private Partnerships
PTC	-	Parents Teacher Association
SBC	-	School Board Committee
SDF	-	School Development Fund
SSA	-	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSG	-	Secondary School Grand
TES	-	Times Educational Supplement
UNAM	-	University of Namibia
UNICEF	-	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPE	-	Universal Primary Education

USA - United States of America

USE - Universal Secondary Education

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

#### **1. Introduction**

This chapter provides a brief background of the study landscape, the statement of the problem, research questions, the significance, limitations, and delimitations of the study. The chapter ends with the definition of the main terms used in the study.

#### **2. Background of the study**

After independence in 1990, Namibia took several educational reforms aimed at providing education for all [EFA]. To achieve the goals for EFA, the new education system has been striving to advance the accessibility of Free Secondary Education [FSE] (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1993). Most notable of the developments was the implementation of circular ED.07/2015, which directed the introduction of FSE. The emergency of FSE followed a Cabinet resolution of 9th 17.06.14/001 that abolished compulsory payment of the School Development Fund [SDF] and called for the implementation of FSE by 2016 (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC, 2015). FSE was a national development agenda established in response to increasing access to free and quality secondary education for all as stipulated in Article 20 of the Namibian Constitution. Article 20 states that all persons shall have the right to education and the state shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia by

establishing and maintaining schools. The implementation of FSE in Namibia was a remarkable idea, given the fact that the influx of learners to FSE was tremendous. However, Vries (2019) reveals that proper consultations were not done during the planning and implementation of FSE.

Initially, only primary education was declared free, as a result, parents, guardians, and other community members started demanding the provision of FSE to offset the burden of contributing to the SDF for their school children (UNICEF, 2016). Also, it has been established that “FSE was characterised by a variety of challenges, namely, over enrolment of learners, high teacher-learner ratio, limited teaching materials, delayed funding, and poor quality of education” (Mutahi, 2008, p. 47). FSE in Namibia was received with mixed feelings as not all were in support of it (Mogane, 2016). Teachers in the Oluno Circuit, amongst others, were overwhelmed and could not provide quality teaching and learning to learners. This implied that the implementation of FSE might have not provided quality education as opposed to free education in the circuit.

The initial proposed funding for FSE was estimated at N\$ 240.00 per learner per term. For example, Andimba Toivo ya Toivo Secondary School in the Oluno Circuit with 943 learners could receive N\$ 226 320.00 per term and N\$ 678 960.00 per annum. With these funds, the school could run its programmes without much support from the regional office (Shapaka, 2019). Due to inadequate funding, a secondary school with a total number of 943 learners only qualified to get N\$100.00 per learner per term which totalled N\$282 900.00 per annum. Due to the deficiency in funding, some schools in the circuit did not meet the intended objectives of FSE. The teacher-learner ratio equally contributed to the

low morale of teachers thus, affecting the quality of education. It was therefore observed that an educational programme that was meant to access FSE and quality education, had been seemingly neglected, hence, believed to have been taken from the residues of other programmes (Lewin, 2008). Parents' and guardians' demand for access to FSE created controversy as it became mandatory to provide free education.

In Oluno Circuit, delayed funding appeared to have been the biggest barrier, however, the benefits accrued during the implementation showed a significant increase in enrolment. The attainment registered so far was partially the fulfilment of one of the principles of Article 20 in the Namibian Constitution. Additionally, the FSE role out, supported the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture's strategic plan to provide access and equitable education at all levels, as well as Namibia, Arts and Culture's National Agenda for Children (2012-2016), which called for all children to access quality FSE and Vocational Training (Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture [MoEAC], 2016).

The Namibian government trusted that the expansion of FSE would strengthen access, and improve completion, survival, and retention rates of all learners at the secondary schools' level (MoEAC, 2015). The introduction of FSE sought to abolish compulsory contributions, however, parents, guardians and community members could make voluntary contributions towards SDF. Nevertheless, as was later established, some community members were voluntarily willing to contribute to enhancing increased access.

### 3. Statement Problem

Although the government of the Republic of Namibia through the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture made efforts to improve the access and retention of learners and to provide affordable secondary education to the children, there seem to be hindrances related to the implementation, which contributed to dwindling academic performance in the circuit after the introduction of FSE. Secondary phase admission statistics for the Oluno Circuit in Oshana Region between 2015 and 2019, academic year shows a general increase in total enrolment from grade 8 to 12 from 2015 to 2019 in the Oluno Circuit (MoEAC, 2019).

The MoEAC (2019) reveals that the total number of teachers decreased from the year 2015 to 2016 and increased in 2017 and 2018. Furthermore, the total number of teachers decreased by 9.3 % for the 2019 academic year. In general, the total number of learners and teachers kept on fluctuating after the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit.

The achievement in enrolment created some challenges during the execution of FSE. It was noted that FSE was associated with challenges such as poor-quality education, monitoring and evaluation and a lack of FSE policy framework. As a result, the goal of this study was to evaluate the challenges that came with implementing FSE. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit.

#### 4. Research questions

1. What are the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit?

2. How does FSE promote access to quality education in the Oluno Circuit?
3. How do schools mitigate challenges faced by FSE in the Oluno Circuit?
5. Significance of the study

If the challenges of FSE were to be taken care of, comprehensive studies were mandatory. The study delivered information that could ensure effective and efficient deployment of resources towards FSE. The information would be useful to parents in determining the necessary contributions they sought to make, they could in turn be aware of the extent of the government's support towards FSE and equally be willing to do their part. Leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in secondary schools could utilise information from these studies to appraise the position of FSE, address appropriate bottlenecks or recommend alike. Strategists may find the outcomes useful in ensuring adequate and timely funding, efficient use of resources in secondary schools, and enhancement of quality education, hence, motivating the nation towards the realisation of Vision 2030. The FSE being a recent development, limited studies were available to this effect, making it an invaluable project to invest in. The outcome of this study will help shed more light on the issues mentioned above.

6. Limitations of the study

According to Best and Kahn (1998), limitations are conditions outside the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and their application

to other situations. The data gathering process in this qualitative study was time-consuming due to factors, such as national lockdown because of the pandemic coronavirus disease [COVID-19]. Fortunately, the sample was small, especially while conducting interviews even though the schedule was determined by the time and availability of participants. At times, the responses of the participants were found to be ambiguous, as such, the researcher applied document analysis to mitigate such instances.

#### 7. Delimitations of the study Delimitations

of the study, according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), are the boundaries of the study. The study focused on the institutional factors influencing the implementation of free secondary education in Oluno Circuit, Oshana Education Region. The study was confined to the Oluno Circuit in Oshana Region and focused on only public secondary schools. Private schools were not incorporated in the study since they are managed differently. The study delineated the physical confinements of the Oluno Circuit in the Oshana Region of Namibia. The four selected secondary schools provided participants with a radius of 10km from Ondangwa. The results of this study may not be generalised to all schools in the circuit as well as the region.

#### 8. Definition of terms

This section contains definitions of various terms that were used in the study to provide a common understanding among readers of the study phenomenon. The terms are as follows:

(a) **Evaluation** refers to the process of assessing whether the programme's intended goals and objectives were achieved (Bobby, 1998). In the context of the current study, evaluation refers to whether the implementation of FSE by the line Ministry in Oluno Circuit was achieved.

(b) **Implementation** refers to the execution of FSE in Oluno Circuit as per the expectations of the Ministry of Education.

(c) **Free Secondary Education (FSE)** refers to the programme of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, which abolished compulsory contributions to school development funds by the parents and guardians (UNICEF, 2017).

(d) **Free education** refers to the government's effort to make secondary education more accessible by making parents not pay tuition fees (MoEAC, 2016) Parents cater for boarding facilities' contributions only.

(e) **Physical access** refers to learners accessing classrooms physically and the provision of good teaching and learning environment at secondary schools (Morrow, 2007).

(f) **School Development Fund (SDF)** refers to money contributed by parents and guardians for tuition fees (UNICEF, 2017).

(g) **Education for All (EFA)** refers to the provision of education for everybody regardless of age (MoE, 1993).

(h) **Enrolment refers** to those pupils who were admitted/re-admitted and fully recorded in the school's register at the beginning of the first term (UNICEF, 2015). This includes all pupils whose names appear on the school register (including repeaters and those temporarily absent).

## 9. Summary

This chapter introduced the study and presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, the research questions, the significance, limitations, and delimitations of the study. The chapter concluded by giving definitions of the technical terms used. The next chapter will present the literature review.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### 2.1 Introduction

A literature review is a survey and discussion of the literature given in books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of those works in relation to the research problem being investigated (Onwuegbuzie & Anthony, 2016). Literature reviews are designed to provide an overview of sources a study has explored while researching a particular topic and demonstrated to your readers how your research fits within a larger field of study. The review describes the relationship of each work under consideration, identifies new ways to interpret prior research and reveals any gaps that exist in the literature.

This chapter reviewed existing literature on the FSE undertaken so far in Namibia and elsewhere beyond borders. It also drew on the experiences of the countries, which may have tried or implemented FSE. It seeks to establish how various stakeholders, especially teachers and the international community have received the programme. Furthermore, it strived to find out the challenges that the government encountered in its quest to provide Education for All. Furthermore, the chapter reviews various literature on the key research questions, namely, what are the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in Oluno Circuit? How does FSE promote access to quality education in Oluno Circuit? How do schools mitigate challenges faced by FSE in Oluno Circuit? In addition, the chapter

presents various studies undertaken on FSE in Africa and finally deliberated on various actions that can be taken for the smooth implementation of free secondary education in Oluno Circuit.

## 2.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is a “blueprint” for the entire dissertation inquiry which serves as a guide on which to build and support the study, providing a structure on which to define, how to approach the dissertation philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically (Grand & Osanloo, 2013). The framework is the foundation from which all the knowledge is extracted for research. It allows the research to be strong, structured and organised from chapter to chapter (Grant & Osanloo, 2013).

The chapter discussed the theoretical framework and reviews the relevant literature that informed this study. The study is informed by Rene Descartes’ Theory of epistemological access to education. Descartes supports the basic knowledge and practice in a manner that respects learners’ dignity. Historically, the term, access to education can be traced back to the early 19th century in Europe and America, and earlier also during the reformation movement, when “compulsory mass schooling became part of the legal framework in the nation-state building process”. Because of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the right to free basic education became part of the policy framework of most developing countries (Gamede, 2005; Chandani, Balan, Smith ,Donahue, 2007 & Alexander, 2008).

Alexander (2008) notes that setting up infrastructures for universalising basic education is one thing; universalising genuine belief in a pattern of basic education which is well-conceived in its own terms, regardless of what followed. It was further noted that they focused on the “generic and philosophical” level, on what quality means, but not on how it could be operationalised (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2011). It appeared that the focus was on classroom and school-based processes as confirmed by Alexander (2008, p.7), “pedagogy was often the missed ingredient in EFA discussions on quality”. Borrowing from Gamede (2005, p.4), access to education is understood to mean “both the means of entry, which is the first step, and post-enrolment access that is reflected in the outcomes” of schooling, since this definition would encapsulate both physical access and access to quality education.

Morrow (2009) stresses that the term epistemological access was first coined by a South African scholar who played a notable role in educational reform. The term appeared to have been constructed while Morrow grappled with real concerns pertaining to higher education policy making and practice. The philosophy of epistemological access, for Morrow, was bounded by the past and present context in South African education. Shanyanana (2014) affirms that access to high education needs to specify the type of access either formal or epistemological. Morrow (2017) illustrates the two forms of access that may offer formal access and epistemological access. Formal access emphasises expanding the university to the externally excluded by using various means, such as affirmative action and quota systems, to enable women’s statistical representation. Shanyanana (2014) further expresses that epistemological access contributed to knowledge production, engagement in deliberation and decision making and policy

formulation. Epistemological access led to the substantive inclusion when women, like men, possess the skills and cognitive ability that will make their voices heard. The meaningful contributions (epistemological access) to decision making and policy formation and articulating their views on issues that might concern them by creating enabling opportunities for women to grow intellectually and contribute to knowledge, which afforded them epistemological access, are indispensable.

Morrow (2009), however, asserts that epistemological access cannot be supplied or “delivered” or “done” to the learner; nor can it be “automatically” transmitted to those who pay their fees, or even to those who collect the handouts and attend classes regularly. The reason for this is that epistemological access is learning how to be a successful participant in academic practice. Morrow acknowledges that learners come from different backgrounds and that having certain things can facilitate one’s epistemological access, but it still does not guarantee it. Morrow (2009, p.79) simply states that “in the same way in which no one else can do my running for me, no one else can do my learning for me”. As a result, the researcher maintained that the implementation of free secondary education in the Oluno Circuit was based on Morrow's belief that FSE education provides learners with access to secondary schools and quality secondary education. However, epistemology was not automatic, so teachers ensured that learners have access to high-quality teaching and learning materials, while learners were expected to put in more effort to gain knowledge and improve their performance.

Mutorwa (2002,p.21) clarifies that in Namibia “access to education was principally and fundamentally, understood meaning bringing into the system, those learners, who had been deprived of educational opportunities. Providing education for and to all. The need

to create more physical infrastructures and thereby ensure more places in schools. Initially, access concentrated more on numbers. The eradication of barriers (physical and psychological) that prevent children from going to school. The establishment of adult literacy programs, distance, and open learning education programs for the provision of quality teaching and learning.

According to the researcher, the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit ought to provide access to physical infrastructure (classrooms) and access to quality secondary education, as well as ensures epistemological access and systematic learning of basic skills, knowledge, values, and practices. Furthermore, epistemological access and systematic learning recognised that teaching and learning at the school, cluster, regional, and national levels should be structured to develop coherent ways of understanding and engaging with various learning areas. The MoEAC's recent transformation of the educational curriculum from Ordinal Level to Advance Subsidiary Level implied access to carefully designed learning programs and materials that enable learners to gradually develop different competencies that not only provide access to physical facilities (classrooms) but also access to quality (epistemological access) secondary education in the Oluno Circuit.

### 2.3 Overview of FSE in Africa

Education was only available to a selected few country in Africa. In many African countries, the introduction of FSE increased access to secondary education. This study chose to present an overview of FSE in several African countries, including Uganda,

Tanzania, Ghana, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Namibia may benefit from learning about the opportunities and challenges that came with the implementation of FSE.

### 2.3.1 Free Secondary Education in Uganda

Uganda was the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to introduce Universal Secondary Education.

The scheme was part of Yoweri Museveni's (President of Uganda) election assurance during the 2006 elections. It was illustrated that one cannot rule out political undertones in the existence of policies. Therefore, the execution of Universal Secondary Education in the context of Uganda could best be described as a political motivation to gain votes from the electorates. The programme was run on a pilot basis before its full-scale application in 2007 (Assuman, 2018). The rollout in Uganda was motivated by a number of students from poor families who did not have access to secondary education, targeting mainly low-income dwellers.

To ease the challenges nurtured by the programme and increased efficiency, the Ministry of Education and Sports adopted an education curriculum that combined subjects and emphasised students' competence for a workforce and further education. The execution of Universal Secondary Education in Uganda led to an increased teacher-learner ratio, the introduction of doubled class shifts and multi-grade classrooms. Its implementation increased enrolment from 412,367 in 2007 to 1,194,000 in 2010 (Jacob & Lehner, 2011).

### 2.3.2 Overview of free secondary education in Ghana

Ghana started Universal Secondary Education in 2007, whereby the Government paid tuition fees, while parents paid boarding fees and other education costs. High enrolment in universal primary education, resulted in an increase in the secondary phase from the year 1997 to 2006. Universal Secondary Education in Ghana aimed at increasing access to secondary education and increased in the quality of education, it was also meant to gear at sustaining the gains of the universal primary education (Assuman, 2018).

In anticipation of the challenges associated with the implementation of free secondary education, the Ministry of Education and Sport put in place strategies that aimed at reducing the unit cost of secondary school education, creating more spaces for the students to increase effectiveness. The strategies included rationalisation of teachers' workloads and the number of subjects each teacher taught and decentralising the school management and curriculum planning to the schools. As a result, the programme improved access to secondary education, increased enrolment in secondary school education and access to education for students from poor families.

### 2.3.3 Overview of free secondary education in Tanzania

UNESCO (2000) reveals that many countries have invested a lot in the education sector, particularly at the primary and secondary levels. Primary education is regarded as basic education and the right that every country should guarantee its citizens. The realisation of basic education as a link to economic and social development has led several countries to provide FSE, including Tanzania.

The idea of abolishing enrolment fees and other compulsory contributions in the primary and lower secondary schools in Tanzania came from the International Education and other conventions to which the country is a signatory. The international commitments and agreements included the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien and the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar which required making basic education a basic human right for every child. On the other hand, Kayombo (2011) responds that various education and developmental policies such as the Education and Training Policy of 2014 and the Tanzanian Development Vision 2025 recognised education as a goal that brings development to other sectors of the economy. Further, Tanzania has taken initiatives to guarantee all children access to FSE. As a result, the government launched its Education and Training Policy to provide 10 years of free primary and lower secondary education in 2014.

The introduction of free education in Tanzania eliminated all fees to lower secondary schools. To avoid the challenges encountered by other Sub-Saharan African countries, the government prepared an education policy that faced the challenges related to equity, quality, politics, and sustainable financing (Godda, 2018). The abolition of the SDF in Tanzania brought the government to bear the cost of education for every child. The policy included financial contributions from parents as a coping strategy, to support the government in providing access to lower secondary education in times of need (Godda, 2018). The implementation phase faced numerous challenges that hindered quality education. For example, free education in Tanzania led to high secondary enrolment which in turn led to heavy load work, teacher shortages, inadequate instructional materials, and unwillingness by the parents to make a financial contribution to the education of children.

## 2.4 Overview of FSE in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

Education in Sub-Saharan Africa needed to confront the present status of education systems in terms of their capacity to sustain the growth and improvement of primary education. They also needed to confront their existing limitations in terms of capacity and financing to simultaneously expand and improve secondary education. There was consent in the literature that secondary education long-abandoned was now the fastest-growing segment of the education sector (UNESCO 2005; Mulkeen, 2005; World Bank, 2005; Gropello, 2006; World Bank, 2007). In many countries, a shift from seeing primary education as the last level of education towards policies that predict extensive completion of secondary education as the goal of education development is in progress but has just begun in Sub-Saharan Africa (De Ferranti, 2003; World Bank, 2005). Various obstacles in the way to intensifying secondary education are particularly and most evident in SSA.

Education was a keystone to economic growth and social development and a basic means of improving the welfare of individuals (World Bank, 1990). Illiteracy has been identified as a fact that imposed both relative and absolute burdens on the national economic well-being (World Bank, 2005). The idea of universal primary education can be traced to 1948 when the United Nations declared education a basic human right for all. This meant that education was to be extended to all notwithstanding social class, sex, colour, religion, tribe, or race (Mutathi, 1999). The 1948 declaration was further stressed at the 16th session of the United Nations General Assembly held between 1961 and 1962, which recognised illiteracy as the main barrier to the social and economic growth of the Third World Countries, Kenya inclusive (Micheni, 1993).

Secondary education was the stage of education following primary school. It is usually the finishing stage of compulsory education. However, secondary education in some countries involves a phase of compulsory and non-compulsory education. The next stage of education is usually college or university. Secondary education is characterised by a shift from the typically compulsory, complete primary education for minors to the optionally selective tertiary, “postsecondary” or “higher” education (e.g., university, vocational school) for adults. It is acknowledged that the elimination of poverty, promotion of human rights and the attainment of sustainable development are gracious goals, but which cannot be realised, without positioning education at the centre of the national development agenda (UNESCO, 2008). The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948), the World Conference on Education for All and the World Education Forum (2000) are a demonstration of consciousness by the international community of the tactical part that education played towards the attainment of these goals.

While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights cherished education as a basic human right, the Jomtien Conference not only built consensus on what represented EFA but also set specific EFA goals and targets. The agreement was that EFA, as a strategy for the development and provision of quality education for all, encompassed not only Universal Primary Education (UPE), which was essentially formal schooling but, also secondary education, literacy and life skill programmes and mass education (complementary learning processes that take place out of school set-up). The EFA targets, as articulated at the Jomtien Conference and reaffirmed at the World Education Forum in Dakar are a clear indication of the international community’s commitment to unreservedly educate the children of this world (UNESCO, 2008).

The National Action Plan on Education for All is a culmination of the diverse but coordinated policy initiative and implementation strategy that the government of the Republic of Namibia, as a signatory to the international protocol establishing EFA, has consistently pursued in response to the Jomtien Conference of 1990. This is reflected in several National Policy documents. Following these agreements, pressure on the Namibia government to expand secondary education grew. An increasing number of learners streamed from expanded primary education and the need to improve the educational levels of the labour force to benefit from a globalising economy made it inevitable that the Namibian government turned its attention wholeheartedly in that direction.

## 2.5 Free Secondary Education in Namibia

The MoE (1993) affirms that before independence, a few children went to school. Of those who went to school, most of them did not go up to the secondary level. Initially, there was an education for whites and black Namibians. Education for black Namibians was justified in terms of vocational utility. The German and South African era was meant to prepare the Namibian people for less important careers, which are neither technical careers nor management positions. Exceptions were for a few fortunate individuals who were to become messengers, clerks, and other functions in the administrative system. Basic literacy and numeracy were deemed to be enough, but after a few years, some citizens managed to receive more advanced education in schools which were under the leadership of missionaries in other countries. It was until 1960, when some African countries got independence, that the South African government was forced to spend more money on the education sector (MoE, 1993).

After independence in 1990, the newly elected government of Namibia inherited this fragmented, stratified, and dualist society of education policies and economy. As a result, the issue of disparity, inequity and unequal educational opportunities immediately become a central challenge for the new nation. The imbalance in the level of access to quality education among its citizens was one of the most features of the country's history (MoE, 1993).

Education in Namibia as in other African countries has come to be considered a basic human right. As indicated by Ipinge and Likando's (2013) studies, despite well-crafted legislation and constitutional provision on universal primary education in Namibia, schools continued to charge fees from from 1990 to 2012. Although such fees were referred to in the Namibian Education Act (Act 16 of 2001) as school development funds, many learners have been denied access to primary and secondary education based on the inability to meet such fees. As per the 2011 recommendations of the National Conference on Education (NCE), the Namibian Government decided to implement universal primary education in January 2013 without paying fees from Grade 0 to 7 in all public schools. It should be noted that a decision was undertaken to implement Universal Primary Education in 2013 followed by FSE in 2016. These are the constitutional obligations that Namibia should be commended for.

However, the goal may not be achieved in its totality to include all steps in both Universal Primary and Secondary Education; nonetheless, the government has made important progress compared to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Efforts to expand enrolment in the quest to achieve education for all and quality education became a concern given that they depended on each other. This has been clearly spelt out in a document titled "2005

AFA Global Monitoring, Report, The Quality Imperative”, which maintains that quality stands at the heart of Education for All (UNESCO, 2004).

Expanding access to free primary and secondary education without responding to the attention of an education system that ensured quality recognisant of the many challenges, many schools have been unable to cope with the high influx of pupils. It is common to find classes being conducted in open spaces, under the trees or in church buildings to supplement the available space. Consequently, some schools which introduced the double session/shifts in the morning sessions were particularly comfortable for many years because of the afternoon heat in some parts of the country (Iiping & Likando, 2013).

Haihambo Ya Otto (2012,p.5) notes that “The implementation of free education in Namibia was a notable idea given the fact that most of the children in this country did not have access to education before independence”. This was a noble initiative that provided chances for all children to have access to education. It was important that while free education in Namibia was at its infancy stage, citizens learned from case studies of different Sub-Saharan countries to address the shortcomings at an early stage. While high enrolments have been a success story for most countries, which may also be appropriate for Namibia in the distant future, the challenges might be massive.

Therefore, more attention must be devoted to issues related to quality, human resources, physical resources, management of the schools, teacher workloads, learning resources and the engagement of parents and other stakeholders in the sector. A few years after the implementation of free FSE, issues of quality, equity and achievements were being experienced. The year 2013 marks the start of universal primary education, while 2016 saw the launching of FSE in Namibia (MoEAC, 2015). However, how was the

government prepared to tackle issues related to quality, teacher-learner ratio, human resources, high learner enrolments and parental involvement?

The reports in the New Era on the 10th of November 2015 titled “Free Secondary Education in Namibia”, The Namibian News Paper of the 13th November 2015 titled “Mixed view on Free Secondary Education in Namibia” and, the Patriot News Paper of the 1st of April 2016 titled “Good and bad of free secondary education in Namibia”, raise concerns that Namibia might fall in the same pit that other countries have fallen. Preparedness in terms of teaching and learning resources, availability of funds, quality, school enrolment and other challenges while rolling out FSE are issues that cannot be ignored. It should be noted, however, that though free education is a fundamental human right to which every citizen is entitled, it comes with different challenges that require a holistic approach to planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Namibia, therefore, needed to tackle the challenges that stalled the implementation of FSE in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## 2.6 Factors influencing the implementation of free secondary education in the Oluno Circuit

The implementation of FSE in Namibia is commendable, its good intentions, however, have been shuttered. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2019) reveals that increased learners’ enrolments, delays in school reimbursement, physical and material resources, and the misconception of FSE by parents were some of the factors experienced during the implementation of FSE. Secondary schools’ enrolment rate shot up from 9 647 in 2015 to 10 482 in 2019 in Oluno Circuit alone. Despite the big enrolment, the

programme has been a disgrace to parents, guardians, and other stakeholders as they assumed it compromised the quality of education.

Further, there has been marred controversy as delays in paying out funds to secondary schools came from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture itself, a sign of unpreparedness. Some parents and guardians believe that FSE excluded them from all costs of raising the education of their children at public schools. Only 15- 25% of parents contributed part of their children's total education costs (Vries, 2019). Some parents observed that the year enrolment increment led to larger class sizes and a high learner-teacher ratio, as a result, the quality of education was being compromised.

#### 2.6.1 Increased learners' enrolments

The MoEAC (2015) alluded that the introduction of FSE directed the implementation of FSE in Namibia. The instruction was that the SDFs for the academic year 2016 were not compulsory, but voluntary contributions in the forms of donations and money obtained from fundraising activities could be raised at all public schools. Grade 10 and 12 full-time school learners were exempted from examination fees, while full-time learners at private schools and Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL), as well as other part-time learners, were required to pay examination fees. State and state-subsided secondary schools offering grades 0 to 12 received secondary school grants (SSG) from the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture in their respective regions (Ministry of Education, Arts, and culture, 2015).

Consequently, increased enrolment and demand for access to secondary education in Oluno Circuit were registered. With this development, Oluno Circuit secondary schools

needed to deal with issues of funding, quality and relevance of teaching and learning, retention and completion rates, provision of both human and physical resources, equity, and access. They too required creating systems that promoted economic growth, and competition and produced graduates with skills in demand by local markets. The World Bank (2005) describes secondary education as the crucial link between primary schooling, tertiary education, and the labour market. Tubaundule (2014) emphasises that FSE was an inessential link between primary schooling, tertiary education, and the labour market. At a national level, Namibia implemented policies that ensured free universal primary education particularly through waived direct costs to households creating systems that promoted economic growth, and competition, and produced graduates with skills demanded by the labour market.

Table 1 shows a general increase in total enrolment from grade 8 to 12 from 2015 to 2019 in the Oluno circuit. The total number of teachers decreased in the years 2015 and 2016 and increased in 2017 and 2018 (MoEAC, 2019). Furthermore, the total number of teachers decreased by 9.3% in the 2019 academic year. Generally, the total number of learners and teachers kept on fluctuating after the implementation of the FSE in the Oluno Circuit.

Table 1

Secondary phase admission statistics for the Oluno Circuit in Oshana Region between 2015 and 2019, and a total number of teachers for 2015 to 2019 academic years.

Source: Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2019) Oluno Circuit, Oshana Region.

Table 2 shows the learner-teacher ratio by 31% from 2015 to 2019 in the Oluno Circuit. The findings show that learner enrolment decreased by 31% in 2016 and by 1% in 2019 (Ministry of Education, 2019). The achievement in enrolment came with a multitude of challenges as observed in (Vries, 2019).

*Table 2: Learner-teacher ratio 2015-2019 Oluno Circuit, Oshana Region*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Ratios</b>
2015	9647	384	25
2016	9949	382	26
2017	10194	406	25
2018	10379	426	24
2019	10482	387	27

*Source: Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2019) Oluno Circuit, Oshana Region.*

According to Vries (2019), policy framework, program sustainability, educational quality, monitoring, and assessment are some of the challenges that the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture faced. Even though numerous research papers described the elements that influenced the introduction of FSE, there are divergent viewpoints on epistemological access to education. The extant literature, therefore, explained the introduction but leaves

a gap that the researcher intended to address by utilising the case of the Oluno Circuit in the Oshana Region to explain the evaluation of the FSE implementation in Namibia.

The introduction of FSE was expected to result in increased enrolment and retention of students (MoEAC, 2016). This was experienced and expected to continue over the years as more pupils benefiting from UPE graduate to join secondary schools (Malechwani, Murange & Amuka, 2020). Primary school enrolment in Namibia was before UPE implementation and after implementation. Nyanga (2005) asserts that if a similar influx of learners was experienced in secondary schools, the resources available would be overstretched. Even before FSE, most schools were not well equipped in terms of classrooms, furniture, and textbooks. The problem of discipline was also a matter of concern, especially around FSE, whereby school administrators are under-stressed to deny any qualifying learner an opportunity to learn.

#### 2.6.2 Physical and material resources

The management of physical and material resources entails planning, acquisition, allocation and controlling the use and maintenance of materials. Onyango (2001) states that planning for material resources entails the identification of the resource requirements, assessing quality in terms of the needs, establishing criteria for standards, determining the cost per unit and the use of the materials by individuals or groups. With the introduction of FSE, schools experienced over-enrolled, which implied that resources obtainable in schools were further constrained. This alone, was most likely to impact the quality of education (Verspoor, 2008). It was further argued that an increase in public spending will be inadequate to generate an increase in educational attainment and learning achievement

unless accompanied by reforms that are aimed at more efficient use of available resources and finding sources of additional funding. Verspoor (2008) advises that well-structured Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) diversified the sources of financial provision.

On the other hand, Mbugua (1987) reveals that it was the duty of the school principals to develop physical facilities. Additionally, he maintained that in dealing with physical facilities, a school principal bore in mind where to house the educational programme, and the population being served by the facility and ensured that financial resources were readily available for school expansion. Such factors were obstacles to quality teaching and learning in schools.

Although studies by (Vertspoor, 2008; Onyango, 2001; Barasa, 2007; Nyanga, 2005) provide important insights on specific dynamics of FSE, limited analysis has been done on the actual impact of FSE on educational attainment and performance in secondary schools in Namibia which was a gap this study seeks to address. In other words, how has FSE affected educational attainment and performance, and what were the factors that underpinned those challenges?

### 2.6.3 School principals' management capacity

The management capacity of school managers was very significant, especially for an infant programme like FSE. Warner and Palfreyman (2006) explain that to manage secondary schools, head teachers (principals) required strong, professional financial knowledge and support services for their successful management. Although the percentages were lower, they still reflected the need for training (Wanyonyi, 2004; Chepkonga, 2006). This, as a result, reflected that school principals still needed training.

For example, (Wanyonyi, 2004) found out that 85% of the participants had only attended a two-day seminar dealing with the management of finances, which was certainly insufficient training. According to Chepkonga (2006), 80.9% of the participants needed training in accounting and 93% in budget preparation. These were in line with a claim by Levacic (1995), that school principal required training in budgeting, management, and financial accounting. This problem was likely to carry the way with the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit.

Clearly, school principals required capacity building in management and financial management to administer a programme of that magnitude. Their limitations in capacity made it difficult to achieve a greater percentage of the set goals of FSE. Levacic (1995) further says 50% of the schools took two years or more before an inspection by the Ministry of Education and this alone threatened their efficiency notwithstanding their qualifications and abilities. This was comparable to what Barasa (2007) said, that the Ministry of Education was not available to make audits and even where they did, they were tainted to cover cases of mismanagement. Perpetual delays in the provision of funds for the term (as late as the third month of the term) were common. This was found to have a negative effect on learning as the schools reached levels where critical learning materials lacked.

Another challenge was that students were sent home more frequently for school levies by school principals to use this cash to manage their various schools. Consequently, several students skipped classes, and others finally dropped out. This had a negative impact on the adoption of free secondary education on its own. However, the MoEAC (2015) guarantees that the money was supposed to be in schools in December, April, and August

every year, and these are preceding months before the opening of school terms, respectively, for smooth implementation of free secondary education.

#### 2.6.4 The School board committee

Baker, Campbell and Ostroff (2015) reveal that about 89% of the participants had confidence in the management ability of their school board committee [SBC]. Simultaneously, 95% of the SBCs were found to be making positive contributions to the growth of the schools and increasing enrolment (Baker et al., 2015). Among their contributions, were sensitisation of the local communities on enrolling the children in schools, coming up with sound management policies, making financial contributions (both personal and outsourced), staff motivation and setting standards of achievement and admission in the schools. Furthermore, Baker et al. (2015) establish that 99% of the SBCs were having either a good or a very good working relationship with both the principals and the Parents Teachers' Associations [PTA]. The school principals viewed these positive relationships as having made their work of administration during the FSE implementation easier. The SBCs can be said to have a positive contribution to the implementation of FSE.

This opposes Wangatho (2007), as it was found that most of the SBCs were not making a positive contribution to the growth of the schools. It was assumed that this boiled down to the constitution of membership. It also contradicts the findings of (Kuria & Onyango, 2006; Kilemi & Osita, 1999), as SBCs did not give the necessary leadership that promoted quality management in schools and, the existed disharmony between the school principals and SBs led to the haphazard running of secondary schools.

## 2.7 Promotion of access to quality free secondary education in Oluno Circuit

The Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (2016) directs the implementation of universal primary education in 2013 while FSE was implemented in 2016. The Government of the Republic of Namibia has made drastic strides in promoting access to quality secondary education. Access to secondary schools, qualified teachers, schools' infrastructure development and parental support were identified as factors that promoted access to quality secondary education in Oluno Circuit.

### 2.7.1 Access to secondary schools

Mutorwa (2002) indicates that the directive of the Education for all reconfirmed the broad goals of equitable access to educational and cultural services, the improvement of the internal efficiency of the education system, the expansion of quality education strengthening democratic participation in education and prompt access to quality education in Namibia. The Ministry's emphasis is specifically placed more on the enhancement of the quality of the educational outcome. Mutorwa (2002, p.35) further reveals that Nahas Angula, then a Minister of Education and Culture, wrote in the MoE Directive No: 001/016/095 said, "during the year 1995, the focus of the Ministry's efforts is on quality. Improving educational quality means that all the stakeholders and role players in education must fulfil their identified obligations, assign responsibilities, and expect roles."

It was clear that the government's broad educational policy objectives of access, equity, quality, and democracy were never conceptualised, nor practised in isolation. These policies were and still are interrelated and interdependent. Access to schools and learning opportunities was a prerequisite for quality education, quality teaching and quality learning. It is now generally accepted in Namibia, that access to education was real after the implementation of FSE. Vries (2019) affirms that FSE promoted access to secondary education schools and, all learners irrespective of their parental financial status-completed secondary education.

### 2.7.2 Qualified teachers

Mutorwa (2000) claims that in Namibia today, it is apparent that there are now more and better-qualified teachers, better-equipped classrooms, relevant curricula, syllabi, and textbooks. The philosophy of learner-centred education is also well understood. The playing field has, thus, become more level and appears quite reasonable to expect that a larger number of the learners in Namibian schools can and should receive better-quality education. Based on Mutorwa (2002), the researcher observed that the Oluno Circuit is strategically in the vicinity of Ondangwa Town and, that the most qualified secondary school teachers are attracted to work at schools in Oluno Circuit. These alone contributed to the quality of teaching and learning in the circuit.

### 2.7.3 Infrastructure development

The MoEAC (2016) reveals that the government's financial contributions to the education and training sector have been the largest, if compared to allocations of other government ministries, such allocations cannot be said, nor should they be seen to be sufficient to satisfy and fund all the ever-increasing needs and demands in the education and training sector. In fact, it has become abundantly clear now that expanded equitable access to education, learning and teaching opportunities, is demanded by the implementation of FSE.

The implementation of FSE expanded access to quality education, which means high financial costs, both in terms of funding, school infrastructure, learning teaching materials, and salaries for both the professional and administrative staff. The MoEAC (2019) states that the reality was vividly brought to the fore between the 2016 and 2019 (school) years. Enormous problems were experienced, particularly in the Oluno Circuit regarding overstretching of schools' infrastructures. The researcher believes that the refurbishment of Andimba Toivo ya Toivo Secondary School was meant to promote access to quality secondary education.

#### 2.7.4 Parental support

Among other public schools, the Government of the Republic of Namibia has made drastic strides in areas like infrastructure development, which includes classrooms, libraries other significant issues like meals, and hostel fees in the Oluno Circuit. Parents relaxed to make genuine contributions to secondary schools' education (Vries, 2019). In addition, Kilonzo (2007) claims that most parents were not willing to make any contribution to schools since education was 'free'. On the contrary, the MoEAC (2015) maintains that about 15% to

25% of the parents believed that parents needed to contribute part of their children's education total costs to complement the government. Vries (2019) believes that parental involvement in children's education improved learners' performance and promoted a healthy relationship between schools and the community.

## 2.8 Mitigation of the challenges faced by FSE in the Oluno Circuit

The MoEAC (2016) states that as per the 2011 recommendations of the National Conference on Education (NCE), the Namibian Government decided to implement universal primary education from January 2013 without paying fees from Grade 0 to 7 in all public schools. It should be noted that Namibia took a noteworthy decision to implement universal primary education in 2013, while FSE was achieved in 2016, and these were the constitutional obligations that Namibia should be commended for. Muhindi (2012) identifies the following as mitigating factors that faced the implementation of FSE.

### 2.8.1 Teachers' staffing levels

The teacher resource was an important input in achieving the objectives of the Education Sector (Muhindi, 2012). The equitable distribution of teachers has remained one of the challenges in teacher management. The number of teachers remained constant over the years despite growth in enrolments and the number of educational institutions resulting in inequality in the distribution of teachers and impacted negatively quality and access to education. To mitigate the challenges that faced the implementation of FSE in Oluno Circuit, the recruitment of teachers has in the recent past mainly been done to replace those who exited through natural attrition (UNESCO, 2010; World Bank, 2010).

Muhindi (2012) further reveals that the Ministry of Education though has undertaken several measures emphasised in secondary education to mitigate challenges that are faced by FSE for example:

- decentralised employment of teachers so that they are employed at the school level for secondary education.

- restricted recruitment of new staff in the replacement of those who leave through natural attrition only.

### 2.8.2 Cost of compulsory items

UNESCO (2010) reveals that despite the abolition of tuition fees, households have been responsible for providing other mandatory costs. Unlike school fees where household contributions were reduced after the free secondary education policy, there was no change in the cost of items that parents are required to provide.

Some of the compulsory items that the parents are expected to purchase for their children include, uniforms, socks, shoes, school bag, Bible, English dictionary, Kiswahili dictionary, hymn book, mathematical table, geometrical set, atlas, spring file, t-shirt, trouser/skirt, rubber shoes, games kits, bed sheets, blankets, pillow, basin and bucket, towel, slippers, plate, spoon, mug and padlock. Since the costs associated with these items are substantial, students often shared books or used ones from fellow students who have completed secondary school. Game skits, which include standardised uniforms for sports activities, are also compulsory for all students. In addition, boarding students are required

to possess items essential for boarding and to meet the travel costs. Although costs for each item vary, it can be estimated that direct costs for compulsory items for a day scholar could be actually prohibitive. The researcher learned that learners in the Oluno Circuit were also expected to buy copy papers and have contributed to other school projects alike.

### 2.8.3 Private Tuition

According to Pearls (2008), private tuition (extra tuition or private coaching) is the main way in which households participate in the financing of education. Private tuition may be defined as the extra tuition or coaching which students may opt for outside the normal school hours and for which they must pay a fee. This coupled with the competitive environment in the education sector, causing a high percentage of parents to have recourse to private tuition for their children. Despite growing criticisms levelled against private tuition, this practice has persisted and has grown rapidly in recent years. Private tuitions helped alleviate secondary education in mitigating challenges that arose from the implementation of FSE by organising weekend and secondary schools' holiday classes.

Morrison (1997) mentions that it was widely believed (by parents, in particular) that classroom teaching was insufficient for doing well in examinations, hence, learners must take private tuition to mitigate challenges faced by FSE. Free education means that learners do not pay tuition fees. However, there are other indirect costs such as books, stationery, transport, uniforms, examination fees, etc., that are met by the students and their families. For poor households, these costs can be too high to ensure enrolment and learning. The costs of extra tuition represent a significant investment that increases, as more tuition is taken.

The growing body of the literature from the international, regional, and national levels seemed to concur that FSE faced many impediments, to both industrial and economic growth (Downes, 1998; Walmer & Palfreyman, 1996; Willis, 2009; Zahir, 2006; Oyaro, 2008; Ibrahim & Orodho, 2014). UNESCO (2000) acknowledges the importance of educational development in many countries as it has led to many of them putting a lot of investment in the provision of FSE.

Namibia, like other Sub-Saharan African countries, faced numerous challenges in implementing FSE. The literature review did not reveal how the Oluno Circuit overcame the challenges that arose during the implementation of FSE. Whether Namibia will be able to overcome those challenges in the years ahead, given available resources, it was the reason that prompted the researcher to contribute to previous studies regarding the evaluation of the implementation of FSE in the case of Oluno Circuit in Namibia. It is the factors thereof that this research study sought insight into.

## 2.9 Summary

This chapter presented the theoretical framework of the study followed by a review of literature on the implementation of FSE. The chapter discussed the theoretical framework, which informed the study and reviewed various literature regarding the evaluation of the implementation of FSE in Namibia and elsewhere in the sub-region. It was noted that the literature on FSE in Namibia was limited even though, Namibia is six years down the road since its implementation. To that extent, additional literature has been reviewed based on countries in the region and elsewhere in the world. This study evaluated the implementation of FSE in Namibia, using the case study of Oluno Circuit in the Oshana

Region. The next chapter discusses the research methodology employed to collect and analyse the data.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The methodology is a plan or a structure that researchers use during an investigation to facilitate the collection of the most valid answers to research questions (Creswell, 2012). This chapter outlines the research methodology used in the study to collect and analyse the data. It presents the research design, population, sampling techniques, the research instruments, data collecting procedures and the methods of data analysis. Finally, it concludes with the ethical issues, which were adhered to in this study.

#### **3.2 Research design**

Research design is defined as a procedure for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies (Creswell & Clark, 2007). It is an overall outline plan or strategy a researcher uses to find an answer to a research question. This study adopted a qualitative approach. Qualitative research focuses on phenomena that occur in natural settings and studying them in their complexity (Christensen & Johnson, 2012). Qualitative research methods can reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, and relationships. It enables the researcher to gain new insights into a phenomenon.

Qualitative research also helps to develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about a phenomenon. The qualitative method is useful when seeking to describe human experience. Furthermore, the qualitative approach was used to provide a deeper

understanding of the factors that contribute to the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit.

The research study applied a case study research design. A case study research design is a description and analysis of an individual matter or case with the purpose to identify variable structure, forms, and order of interaction to assess the performance of work or progress in development (Creswell, 1994). A case study research design helps the researcher to explain the alternative outcome because the analysis of the technologies focuses on experimental events. The researcher was keen to know how the Oluno Circuit implemented FSE, and what the opportunities and challenges facing the circuit during its implementation were. However, its relevance depends on its usefulness and the quality of the evaluation, skills, and expertise of the researcher. The study was set to evaluate the implementation of FSE, a case study of the Oluno Circuit.

### 3.3 Population

Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2004) state that a population is a group of individuals with one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. In the present study, the population comprised all secondary school teachers, heads of departments, school principals, chairpersons of school boards and Grade 8-12 LRC secondary school learners from Oluno Circuit. The Oluno Circuit consists of 11 secondary schools, 11 chairpersons of secondary school boards, about 255 teachers and 5720 secondary school learners (MoEAC, 2015).

### 3.4 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of items from a defined population for inclusion in a study (Guest, Namely & Mitchell, 2013). In research studies, researchers select small portions of the total population to participate in the studies. A qualitative sample is usually smaller in size (Christensen & Johnson, 2012). In the current study, the participants were selected from secondary schools in the Oluno Circuit, hence, four secondary schools from the Oluno Circuit were made part of the current study. The inclusion criteria used to select secondary schools were two low-performing secondary schools and two high-performing secondary schools in the past five years. While research participants were chosen based on their experience and leadership abilities because of their involvement in school decision-making.

A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Saunders & Thornhill, 2012). Purposeful sampling was used to select secondary schools based on the richness of information to be investigated. For secondary schools in Oluno Circuit, the following was done; names of secondary schools were written on small pieces of paper and all papers were put into a box from where four names were drawn. The researcher used purposeful sampling to identify the four secondary schools from which participants were selected.

Since each secondary school has only one school principal and one chairperson of the school board, all four school principals and four chairpersons were automatically included in the sample. Purposeful random sampling was used to select participants from teachers, learners, and heads of departments. The purposeful sampling technique is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2011). It was used because the selection of

teachers, learners and heads of departments was based on their leadership skills, experiences, and the ability to share about the phenomenon to be investigated. A purposive sampling at each secondary school was applied to select teachers, and heads of departments, i.e., long-serving teachers and heads of departments were selected, while Grade 8- 12 LRC learners with leadership skills and experience were also selected. Therefore, the sample size comprised 32 participants (four secondary school teachers, four heads of departments, four school principals, four chairpersons of school boards and 16 Grade 8-12 secondary school learners from each secondary school's learner's representative council).

### 3.5 Research instruments

Research designs are defined as a procedure for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies (Creswell & Clark, 2007). It is an overall outline plan or strategy a researcher intends to use to find an answer to the research problem. Qualitative research instruments are interview guide, observation, archival documents and governmental sources, laboratory experiments and scales. The study used two qualitative research instruments, semi-structured interview, and document analysis to collect the data for the study. A semi-structured interview guide combines a set of open-ended questions that prompt discussions with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore responses further (Laforest, 2009). The interview guide prompts information on the participant's views, experiences, and feelings and promoted positive rapport between interviewer and interviewee. While document analysis (Education Act 16 of 2001, Education for all and MoEAC 15 days Statistics 2015-2019) was used to address ambiguous questions that

provided reliable institutional information. Briggs (2012) reveal that document analysis provides valuable information about the culture of the institution.

### 3.6 Semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the interviewer asks only a few pre-determined questions while the rest of the questions are not planned (Given, 2008). Interview guides were used to conduct one-to-one interviews. Interview guides provide a list of basic open-ended questions that are used in a one-to-one interview. Open-ended questions were asked to answer short questions. Open-ended questions were also asked to answer research questions that required more thoughtful answers to gather in-depth information regarding opportunities and threats of FSE. The interview guides carried a set of open-ended questions that prompted discussions which created an opportunity for the interviewer to explore responses further (Laforest, 2009). The one-to-one face to face interview also provided informants with the freedom to express their views and generate data. They also encouraged two-way communication between the interviewer and the interviewee that encouraged the interviewee to provide reliable and comparable qualitative data.

The one-to-one interview was applied to the teachers, heads of departments, school principals and chairpersons of school boards, while learners were interviewed using a focus group discussion. Grade 12 LRC learners (one school - one focused group) from four secondary schools were involved in the focus group discussions. Focus groups were used to provide space for clarifying questions and allow a face-to-face dialogue between learners and the institution. In addition, focus groups encouraged learners' interactions

that revealed issues not addressed in the discussion and promoted discussion of practical solutions. Brandl, Rabadia, Chang & Mandel (2018). The other advantage was the group dynamic nature of focus groups and the useful information that could not be obtained from individual-based data collection methods being obtained. The focus group was also found to help to improve the validity of data collected by encouraging learners to participate equally in the discussions.

### 3.5. Document analysis

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research that uses a systematic procedure to analyse documentary evidence and answer the specific research question (Guest, Namely, & Mitchell, 2013). Document analyses are important because sometimes what people say differs from the information-packed in documents. Briggs et al. (2012) reveal that document analysis provides valuable information about the culture of the institution. For this study, documents such as learners' admission statistics, learners' examination results statistics, teachers' self-evaluations, education act, and school evaluation assessments were some of the public secondary school documents the researcher reviewed. Document analysis assisted the researcher to address ambiguous responses that were posed by the participants.

### 3.6 Data collection procedures

According to Most, Craddick, Crawford, Redican, Rhodes, Rukenbrod and Laws (2003), data collection procedures is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated

research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. In this study, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the Research and Publication Unit of the University of Namibia. He also obtained permission to collect data from the Regional Director of the Oshana regional education directorate in the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture. The researcher introduced himself and the purpose of the study to the inspector of the Oluno Circuit. At each school, the researcher introduced himself to the school principal and explained the purpose of the study. Given consent to conduct the study, the researcher made appointments with participants and briefed them on the nature of the study, and its importance.

The researcher ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants' responses. During the interviews, the researcher asked questions, listened attentively, and recorded the conversations. The researcher also assured the participants that the data will be transcribed, stored on a memory stick, and locked up. The recordings taken during data collection were then destroyed. The data will be stored securely for at least five years after the completion of the study. The researcher repeated important information to confirm what the participants were saying. When necessary, the researcher probed for clarity and encouraged participants to continue speaking to obtain more detailed data.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

According to Smith (2011), data analysis is the process which involves ordering, summarising, and organising the raw data for easy use and management to answer the research questions. Creswell (2012) indicates that things occur during data analysis where data were organised, data were reduced through summarisation and categorisation, and

patterns and themes in the data were identified and linked. In this study, the data were analysed employing content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic examination of interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis, identifying, and analysing the presence of words, concepts, or common themes (Creswell, 2012).

Content analysis also allows the researcher to reduce a large amount of data and present the important aspects of the content (Creswell, 2012). The researcher analysed the data by grouping and categorising them into thematic and patterns. The thematic captured and unified the nature and basis of the experience into a meaningful whole. The researcher then interpreted the data to draw meanings and conclusions from data evidence.

### 3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research are a set of principles that guide your research designs and practices. Scientists and researchers must always adhere to a certain code of conduct when collecting data from people. These protect the rights of research participants, enhance research validity, and maintain scientific integrity (Bhandari, 2021).

#### 3.8.1 Ethical Form

An ethical form is a document that prompts a researcher to provide research information to ensure you are meeting set standards (Oliver, 2010). Readers usually expect to see ethics in a research proposal or mentioned in your writing, even if it appeared not to be any problematic ethical issues to be addressed. An ethical form was obtained from UNAM and a permission letter from the Executive Director Ministry of Education, Arts and

Culture, Oshana Directorate of Education before the commencement of data collection in the Oluno Circuit.

### 3.8.2 Consent

Informed consent is one of the founding principles of research ethics. It intended that human participant can enter research freely (voluntarily) with full information about what was meant for them to take part and that they give consent before they enter the research (Nijhawan, Manthan, Jonodia & Musmade 2013). Consent should be obtained before the participant enters the research (prospectively), and there must be no undue influence on participants to consent. The minimum requirements for consent to be informed are that the participant understands what the research was and what they are consenting to. Consent forms to participate in the current research study were sought and obtained from the research participants. Participants were first informed about the purpose and value of the research. Further, they were informed of their right to withdraw at any time if they were not comfortable with the research studies. Permission from school principals for targeted schools to conduct the research was obtained. Written consent was provided to the participants with sufficient detailed information on the study to make informed decisions.

### 3.8.3 Anonymity

Anonymity is the primary way that researchers seek to protect research participants from the accidental breaking of confidentiality through the process of anonymisation, which occurs using pseudonyms applied to research participants, organisations, and locations

(Wiles, 2013). The anonymity of the research participants is a central feature of ethical research practice which is written into the various guidelines to which social researchers work. The researcher always assured all respondents of anonymity during the study as a way of accepting responsibility to protect them and further informed them of their right to withdraw anytime if uncomfortable with the study. Schools were given the following pseudo names: S1, S2, S3, and S4.

The research participants were also given codes for easy referencing for example principals, P1, P2, P3,4, for the head of departments, H1, H2, H3, and H4, for teachers, T1, T2, T3 and T4, chairperson of school boards, C1, C2, C3, C4, while, learners, Ls1, Ls2, Ls3, and Ls4.

#### 3.8.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is commonly understood as akin to the principles of privacy and respect for autonomy (Oliver, 2003; Gregory, 2003). This is taken to mean that information given to another person will not be repeated without their permission. In the research context, confidentiality is taken to mean that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed and that the identity of research participants would be protected through various processes designed to keep them anonymous. The researcher always assured all respondents confidentiality during the study as a way of accepting responsibility to protect them. The participants were also assured that notes were taken only for research purposes.

#### 3.8.5 Data ownership

Data ownership refers to both the possession of and responsibility for information. Ownership implies power as well as control. The control of information included not just the ability to access, create, modify, package, derive benefit from, sell or remove data, but also the right to assign these access privileges to others (Loshin, 2002). In this study, the research data belong to UNAM. The university will take custody of research data in a manner specified by the university. The interview records and transcriptions were kept in a locked filing cabinet at least for three years, until no reasonable possibility may be required to question the data.

### 3.9 Summary

Chapter Three presented the research methodology that was used in this study. It presented the research designs of the study, the population, the sample, and the sampling procedures that were used. This chapter further presented the research instruments, the data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. The next chapter will discuss the presentation and discussion of findings for the present study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS**

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on data presentation, analysis, summary, and conclusion. The data were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis in four public secondary schools in the Oluno Circuit. The participants of this study were the three (3) chairpersons of school boards, four (4) school principals, four (4) Heads of Departments, four (4) teachers and fifteen (15) school Learner Representatives Council (LRCs). A total of 30 respondents participated in this study. The data are presented in themes that emerged from the study and are presented in accordance with the three research questions as outlined in Chapter 1, a) How FSE promoted access to quality education in the Oluno circuit; b) Factors that influence the implementation of FSE in the Oluno circuit and c) How the schools mitigated the challenges they experienced during the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit?

#### 4.2 Background information of the schools

Data were collected from four secondary schools in the Oluno Circuit, in the Directorate of Education, Arts, and Culture in the Oshana Region, Namibia.

School 1 is a Senior Secondary School established in 1970 and has been led by a male school principal for nine years. It consists of three heads of departments (Languages, Mathematics & Science, and Commence), and thirteen school board members. The school runs from Grades 8-12 and accommodates 963 learners.

School 2 is a Senior Secondary School, which opened its doors in 1984. The school has grades 8-12. During the study, School B was being managed by a male school principal, three heads of departments, namely, Language, Mathematics and Science Department, a School Principal and nine members of the school board.

School 3 was established in 1994. The school management is made up of a male school principal, two heads of departments, the Languages Department as well as the Mathematics and Science Department. There are nine school board members and about 340 learners. The school has grades 8-11.

School 4 is a Junior Secondary School, which was established in 2013. It accommodates 670-day learners from grades 8-12. The school has a school principal and two heads of department, one head of department for the Languages and Science Department. The school has nine school board members.

#### 4.3 Biographical information of participants

Table 3 Ages, qualifications, and years of experience of the participants

<b>Anonymous Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Qualificatio n</b>	<b>manage ment</b>
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						<b>Experi ence</b>
Participant 1	School 1	Principal	44	M	Bed H in Edu	15
Participant 2	School 1	HOD	38	M	Bed in Edu	6
Participant 3	School 1	Teacher	58	F	Higher Ed-D	29
Participant 4	School 1	Chairperson of School board	59	M	Bed Hon ED	9
Participant 1	School 2	Principal	39	M	Master Degree	8
Participant 2	School 2	HOD	37	F	Master Degree	8
Participant 3	School 2	Teacher	34	F	Bed in ED	8
Participant 4	School 2	Chairperson of School board	62	F	Diploma in adult Ed	1
Participant 1	School 3	Principal	37	M	Bed Hon ED	12
Participant 2	School 3	HOD	34	F	Master	6
Participant 3	School 3	Teacher	57	F	Diploma in management	35
Participant 4	School 3	Chairperson of School board	62	F	Diploma in nursing	14
Participant 1	School 4	Principal	43	M	Master Degree in Education	20

Participant 2	School 4	HOD	50	F	Master Degree in Education	9
Participant 3	School 4	Teacher	48	M	High Certificate in Ed	20
Participants 16	School 1/2/3/4	Learners	16-23	M-10 F-5	N/A	1-3

*Table:3 Ages, qualifications, and years of experience of the participants.*

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit, to find out how FSE promoted access to quality education and how the schools mitigated the challenges they faced during the implementation period of free secondary education.

The researcher sampled 30 participants to acquire rich data about the study. Table 3 indicates the ages, qualifications, and years of experience of the participants who took part in this study. The table further indicates that participants varied regarding their sex/gender, ages, qualifications, and years of work experience. The study revealed that there were more male participants compared to their female counterparts. Regarding ages, most of the participants who were LRC members were younger than 18 years of age.

The rest of the participants fell into the following five age groups, namely, those who were under 35, those who were between 36-40, those who were between 41-50, those who

were between 51-59 and those who were above 60 years (chairpersons of school boards). All school staff members involved in the study had qualifications ranging from master's degrees, bachelor's degrees, diplomas, and certificates in education. This suggested that they could understand and explain administrative factors influencing the implementation of FSE in their areas of jurisdiction in the Oluno Circuit.

The management experiences of the participants were also obtained and showed that the majority were learners and had 1-3 years of management experience. A sizeable part of the study participants had experience of 6-10 years. Most school principals and teachers had experience ranging from 11-40 years while only a minority of the participants had less than 1 year of experience.

Table 4 Information about the participants

<b>Position of participants</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Total</b>
Principal	P1-P4	4
Teacher	T1-T4	4
HOD	H1-H4	4
Chairperson of School Board	C1-C3	3
Learners	Ls1-Ls4	16

Table 5 Presentation and discussion of data: Themes and sub-themes

Theme 1: Factors that promoted access to quality education in the Oluno Circuit

Sub-theme 1: Promote access to quality education

Sub-theme 2. Learners' enrolment

Sub-theme 3. Finance

Table 6 Presentation and discussion of data: Themes and sub-themes

Theme 2: Factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit

Sub-theme 1: Access to secondary education

Sub-theme 2. Teaching and learning materials

Sub-theme 3. Community participation

Table 7 Presentation and discussion of data: Themes and sub-themes

Theme 3: Strategies that mitigated the challenges experienced during the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit.

Sub-theme 1: Income generating activities

Sub-theme 2. Donations

Sub-theme 3. Involvement of parents as partners

#### 4.4 Factors that promoted access to quality education in the Oluno Circuit

The following paragraphs addressed the first research question, which seeks information regarding the promotion of access to quality secondary education. The introduction of FSE in the Oluno Circuit was expected to result in increased enrolment and retention of students (MoEAC, 2016). This was experienced and expected to continue over the years as more learners benefited from UPE graduates to join secondary schools (Malechwanz, Murange & Amuka, 2020).

##### 4.4.1 Promote access to quality education

The participants of this study were asked to explain how FSE promoted access to quality FSE in the Oluno Circuit, participants replied as follows:

P1, P2, P3, P4, T1, T2, T3, T4, H1, H2, H3, H4, C1, C2 and C3 mentioned that *“the announcement of the implementation of free secondary education arrived with both advantages and disadvantages. Most Participants of this study explained that the implementation of free secondary education was inclusive to all the learners irrespective of their parental financial status.”* P1, P2, P3, P4, H1, H2, H3, H4, C1, C2 and C3 explained, *“we took the lead in advocating for free secondary education in our circuit, we emphasised the importance of quality free secondary education (FSE) especially, elementary education.”*

*P4 expressed that “immediately after we were informed that learners are no longer going to pay the school fees. I started emphasising for vulnerable learners to be admitted in our schools...mhh...yes and other learners who are not mentioned in the first group and we*

*did the awareness through parent's meetings and through medias such as radio, WhatsApp, Facebook, girl child mother." P1, H4, D stated "when the Minister announced the implementation of free secondary education, we started using various platforms such as meetings, announcements through local radios and social media to raise awareness of the admission process of learners into school and inform parents that secondary schools' education is now provided for free. The issue of free secondary education has alleviated financial burden and special commitment by parents from paying school development fees."*

The C1, C2 and C3 explained that *"the message of free secondary education gave all the learners access to education because every child was allowed to pursue his/her studies freely". In addition to that, T3 stated that "the fact was the payments of school development funds, resulted into learners dropping out of school because some parents could not afford. Thus, I feel free secondary education motivated all learners to attend the school including those who dropped out really, this is a good move our children are now attending school with no compulsory payment including free entry to examinations. The school principal makes sure that all the funds and or the grants provided by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture are well spent on the learners' benefits."* The researcher discovered that many participants in this study described how well free secondary education promoted access to quality education in the circuit. It is believed that the school management encouraged both the parents and learners to enrol and complete their secondary education. Ls1, Ls2, ls3 and Ls4 expressed their joy by saying *"most of the learners who dropped out of secondary school were given a chance to further their secondary education and improved their performance."*

On a positive note, C2 stated that *“school camping has been introduced to give extra classes to learners that’s why many schools in the circuit produced good learners with good Grade 12 examination results...our teachers-initiated holiday classes to impart learners with quality education. Many schools have study schedule for Secondary School [SS] learners 3 days a week”*.

P2 emphasised that *“to contribute to the quality of free secondary education teachers in the circuit go an extra mile organized secondary school classes during weekends and public holidays. Many learners access quality secondary education, which made them to obtain good results in examinations and made them to be admitted at universities, while some of them get employed.”*

The research findings regarding access to quality free secondary education confirmed the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The literature clearly states that the introduction of FSE was expected to result in increased enrolment and retention of students. This was experienced and was expected to continue over the years as more pupils benefit from UPE graduates to join secondary schools. If a similar influx of learners was experienced in secondary schools, the resources available would be overstretched. Even before FSE, most schools were not well equipped in terms of classroom furniture and textbooks (Nyanga, 2005).

The researcher further observed that most of the research participants appreciated the Ministry of Education, Arts, and culture for the implementation of FSE. All learners from different backgrounds have access to quality education. Furthermore, the researcher assumed that the school management played important roles by reaching out to parents and community members to explain why FSE was important.

#### 4.4.2 Learners enrolment

According to Vries (2019), the learner-teacher ratio increased by 31% from 2015 to 2019 in the Oluno Circuit after the implementation of FSE. The achievement in enrolment came with a multitude of challenges. In this regard H1, H2, H3 indicated that *“secondary schools’ enrolment in Oluno circuit have increased since the implementation of FSE, parents are only contributing basic needs to the education of their children thus most of the parents send their children freely to secondary schools with no burden of paying school fees.”*

The finding was supported by C1, C2 and C3 as they indicated that *“the decision of MoEAC coming up with free secondary education motivated and, is keeping the learners in school full time and concentrate on their lessons and, learned the skills that will help them in their real lives”*. In addition, P1, P2, H3 and H4 affirmed that *“the enrolment of learners at secondary school has increased especially for learners from poor families. Schools have the responsibilities in providing teaching and learning materials and make them accessible to all learners at school”*. Further, in support of the free secondary education participants, C1, C2, C3 and C4 revealed that *“most learners from poor families do have access to education and understand that parents with no income can send their children to secondary schools.”*

T1 said, *“since our learners are excluded from paying school fees, they should be encouraged to study very hard to get good results”*. Furthermore, Ls1, Ls2, Ls3 and Ls4 revealed that *“we were part of the organising committee for parents meeting whereby the*

*new promotional policy was explained which allows learners not to repeat grades and another policy of free secondary education which was against children staying home without attending school.” T4 explained that “after the implementation of free secondary education, many learners took challenging fields of studies, for example, Engineering, Accounting, and other courses of studies”. Contrary, C1 revealed that “It is true free secondary education provides learners with quality education...however, learners have got more freedom and, teachers are not committed to promote deliver quality of education”.*

*In agreement with C1 and C3, “free secondary education brings many negative issues, such as school over enrolment, learner-teacher ratio, lack of accommodation at boarding schools. Learners are housed in corrugated iron classrooms, I feel that learners are not safe and, they are really exposed to health challenges. Children engage in sexual activities because they are on their own. I might say some learners did not even manage to complete grade 12 due to what I have mentioned.”*

Upon close analysis of the evaluation of the implementation of FSE, the task of the MoEAC was to sustain and secure the sustainability of FSE in Namibia, and to secure extra funds from other sources to support it now and then. The findings further indicated that learners increased from 9 647 in 2015 to 10 482 in 2019 in the Oluno Circuit alone (MoEAC, 2019). Over-enrolment of learners pressured the school infrastructure and supported the implementation of FSE. This alone raised more concerns about the implementation of FSE as it implied that the more the learners are enrolled in secondary schools, the lesser the teaching and learning materials. This was also found to be true by

the researcher that FSE overstretched teachers with daily workloads and, some of them were overwhelmed by the number of learners in a single classroom as they were unable to mark all learners' activities.

#### 4.4.3 Finance

According to Haihambo Ya Otto (2012), “the implementation of free education in Namibia was a notable idea given the fact that most of the children in this country did not have access to education before independence”. A few years after the implementation of FSE, issues of quality, equity and achievements were being experienced. Therefore, more attention should be devoted to issues related to quality, human resources, physical resources, the management of the schools, teacher workloads, learning resources and the engagement of parents and other stakeholders in the sector.

T3 indicated that *“free secondary education relieved parents from paying school development fund. Learners were feeling happy for inclusive education.”* Ls1, Ls2, Ls3 and Ls4 clarified that *“free secondary education motivated us to study irrespective of our parental status, we are satisfied in a way that we are included in free secondary education. Children from different backgrounds and families do attend secondary school before FSE. We are happy the government provided the schools with quality teaching and learning materials.”*

On the contrary, P1, P2, P3, T1, T2, T3, T4, H1 and H4 explained that *“although we are advocating for free secondary education that learners are not paying school fees, there is*

*a portion that learners still have to contribute to teaching and learning materials...parents and learners must buy textbooks, pens, exercise books, copy papers and others items ...therefore, in terms of teaching and learning aids there is no free education, as secondary education, on the other hand, is not hundred per cent free.”*

Ls1 explained that *“after the introduction of free secondary education by the government, my parents can have little money to buy for our school uniform, exercise books, pay for hostel fee, pay for photocopies and other learning materials.”* Similarly, Ls2 indicated that *“free secondary education motivated us to put more effort on our studies as many unemployed parents no longer worry about school fees but rather, they get me some sources, for example, the learning materials so that I can acquainted the skills and knowledge”*.

Ls1, Ls2, Ls3 and Ls4 said the following with joy, *“this is a life change they saved most of the learners who were about to drop out, they remained in school because at times money was the reason they were dropping out. The decision taken made our learning run smoothly and we felled at ease because we have no worries of our school account not being settled however, our parents must use the little they have to buy us textbooks.”*

C1, C2, and C3 indicated that *“learners have access to free secondary education, but the quality of education was compromised. Grade 12 learners failed due to lack of teaching and learning materials at secondary schools and textbooks that are being shared.”*

The researcher observed that all learners in public secondary schools have access to education. The data analysis revealed many that research participants welcomed the notion of free secondary education, which understood that all learners have access to secondary education at the secondary schools of their choice, learners reached and completed Grade 12, as there are no financial implications.

Furthermore, the study revealed that some parents failed to meet their obligations. This led to some of the students dropping out of school (Kilonzo, 2007). Contrary to this, the study revealed that FSE has alleviated the financial burden and special commitment on parents from paying school development fees. Most of the school board members (C1, C2, C3, C4) explained that *“FSE gave all the learners access to quality secondary education because every child was allowed to pursue his/her studies freely. The payments of school development funds resulted in learners dropping out of school because some parents could not afford it”*.

Thus, FSE motivated all learners to attend secondary schools with no compulsory payment including free entry to examinations.

#### 4.5 Factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit

The purpose of the second research question was to seek information regarding the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE. The analysis of data established factors that influenced the implementation of FSE for example, access to secondary education, culture, beliefs, education curriculum and public policies. The participants of this study are school principals, heads of departments, teachers, learners, and school board members

and they expressed their views on the factors that influenced the implementation of free secondary education.

#### 4.5.1 Access to secondary education

P1, P2, P3 and P4 mentioned that *“well, there are many factors influenced free secondary education, is more inclusive to all learners, it provided all learners with equality, equitable and access to FSE in Oluno circuit more especial learners from poor and marginalised families.”* Further, P2, P4, H2, T1 and H1 stated that *“before the introduction of FSE there was a massive drop out of learners, however, after the introduction of free education many learners returned to school which led to over crowdedness of the classrooms which also made it difficult to provide individual attention to all learners, especially those that are struggling with difficulties in learning.”*

The Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture ought to fulfil the constitutional right as per Article 20 of the Namibian constitution that mandated compulsory education for all. Therefore, allowing learners to access secondary education has attracted many learners and encouraged parents to send their children to enroll on public schools (MoEAC, 2016). Furthermore, researcher maintained that the implementation of free secondary education in the Oluno Circuit was based on the theoretical framework that FSE education provides learners with access to secondary schools and quality secondary education. P4, T2, T3, T4 indicated that *“to facilitate access to FSE the schools conducted a meeting to emphasis the importance of FSE to parents and community. Schools also organised admission campaigns through churches and other communities gathering. They also do admission campaigns through other medias for example radio and WhatsApp groups.”*

H3 stated *“he encouraged learners to study very hard to pass with good examination results and become employable to improve their living standards. While P1, P3 and T4 explained “I found it a bit challenging, the changes in the curriculum are challenges to teachers as they cannot articulate the subject well, they need the training, the curriculum is packed”. The schools reached a point where they do not have power to procure the teaching and learning materials. This was due to the late financial distribution to secondary schools”*.

#### 4.5.2 Teaching and learning materials

According to Godda (2018), the provision of free Education to lower secondary education has been accompanied by numerous challenges that hindered the quality of education. For example, free Education led to high secondary enrolment which in turn created heavy-load work, teacher shortages, inadequate instructional materials, and unwillingness by the parents to make a financial contribution to the education of their children.

T1, T2 and T4 agree with the literature that *“it is a challenge when it comes to practical activities subjects, for example, Biology and Physical Sciences learners must do some experiments no equipment and no money to purchase equipment, unlike before whereby, we use to buy while waiting for the budget, however, the implementation of FSE depends on how schools utilised financial resources.”*

T1 said *“I have a problem with FSE, after its implementation our school experienced the followings; lack of funds, teaching and learning material and the unwillingness of parents to contribute to the schools of children. If these problems are not addressed well on time FSE will be meaningless to parents.”*

For example, H1, H2 and H3 pointed out that *“there are no positive changes brought by free secondary education, I see almost everything is being paid by parents like now, some parents are confused, parents are no longer motivated to help the schools since it becomes too much”*. Although the participants outlined some of the confusions among the parents’, C1 and C3 emphasised that *“what we do is only to motivate the parents to continue assisting their children by providing a needed financial contribution to buy teaching and learning materials in the classroom, encourage learners to share textbooks, instruct learners to work in groups and share their knowledge and skills in different subjects.”*

By comparing the answers from the research participants, the researcher agrees with Mutahi (2008), when it was remarked that, *“the government is unable to fund secondary school education without the contributions from parents”* (p. 38). P1, P2, P3, P4 noticed the differences in the financial distribution since in most cases money received might not be enough to cater for all teaching and learning materials and sometimes schools do not get anything at all. In addition, H1, H2, H3 and H4 pointed out that *“they were afraid of the unknown about the introduction of free secondary education with the country’s economic situation and continuous changing of the secondary school curriculum while there are not enough funds to facilitate the new curriculum. They specifically stated that they do not know what they should do, and they have noticed the confusion among the management and some parents”*.

The findings supported by the literature reports in the New Era on the 10th of November 2015 titled *“Free Secondary Education in Namibia”*, The Namibian News Paper of the 13th of November 2015 titled *“Mixed view on Free Secondary Education in Namibia”* and, in the Patriot News Paper of the 1st of April 2016 titled *“Good and bad of free*

secondary education in Namibia”, all raised concern that Namibia might fall in the same pit that other countries have fallen in. Preparedness in terms of teaching and learning resources, availability of funds, quality of education, school enrolment and other challenges while rolling out FSE are issues that cannot be ignored.

Supported by L1, L2, L3 and L4, *“since the implementation of free secondary education, school expenses have more than doubled.” Parents were asked to purchase stationery and other teacher supplies. They had no idea if there was any free secondary education at all.”*

The study findings revealed that the enrollment rate shot up from 9 647 in 2015 to 10 482 in 2019 in Oluno Circuit alone (Ministry of Education, Arts, and culture, 2019). Despite the big enrolment, the programme has been a disgrace to parents, guardians, and other stakeholders instead as it compromised the quality of education. There has been marred controversy as delays in paying out funds to secondary schools coming from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture itself, a sign of unpreparedness. Some parents and guardians believe that FSE excluded them from all costs of raising the education of their children at public schools. Only 15- 25% of parents contributed part of their children’s total education costs (Vries, 2019).

P1, P2, P3, P4, H1, H2, H3, H4, T1, T2, T3, T4, C1, C2 and C3 agree with the literature that late financial distribution to secondary schools delays the development of schools because schools do not have the budget to buy teaching and learning materials and they must wait. The literature further affirmed that enough finance and its effective management determined the way a school was managed and whether the school would meet its objectives or not. Furthermore, if finances from the government were not

adequate, then schools would not be able to procure all the necessary goods and services to meet their objectives (Orlosky, 1984).

Besides the delays in school financing, the MoEAC (2015) revealed that the funds were supposed to be in schools in December, April, and August every year, which are preceding months before the opening of school terms respectively. However, the current study's findings disclosed that the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, does not release enough funds to the schools nor release them on time. Therefore, the researcher criticised the government for its inability to fund secondary schools' education without the contribution from parents.

#### 4.5.3 Community participation

Muchiri (2012) explored that the provision of quality Education is community participation. Community participation plays an important role in influencing the implementation of free secondary education. Families are the main social system for children, parental involvement being associated with high academic achievements.

Research participants were asked to explain the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit. T1, H2 and P2 explained that *“mhh...the implementation of FSE reduced the school dropout by our children, the government assisted us to send our children to school we maintained that.”*C1, C2 and C3 expressed that *“the school organise parents' meetings every three months whereby the principal informed us issues related to free education, tuition fees are no longer be paid, except for the school hostels. However, we have noticed that most parents do not aware what was covered by free secondary education.”*

The researcher acknowledged that community participation is a cornerstone in disseminating information to the community. It is believed that community participants are associated with positive outcomes. Therefore, if communities were informed, the school could not face problems in the process of implementing FSE.

#### 4.6 Strategies on how schools mitigated the challenges experienced during the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit.

The third research question sought to understand how secondary schools dealt with obstacles encountered when implementing FSE. The study participants identified ways in which schools attempted to offset the problems encountered during the implementation of FSE through data analysis, for example:

- income-generating activities.
  
- donations; and
  
- involvement of parents and communities as partners.

##### 4.6.1 Income generating activities

During the implementation of free secondary education, the study revealed that the main challenge that the secondary school faced was the delay in financial distribution to secondary schools. To mitigate the difficulties encountered during the implementation of FSE, research participants P1, P2, P3, P4, C1, C2 and C3 reported that “*in their circuit, they initiated income-generating projects such as tuck shops, school gardens, renaming of school building blocks, sports including concerts and gala dinners to raise funds for the schools.*” For example, H2 stated that “*through the parents’ meetings we proposed*

*coming up with some activities so that we could generate money. Income-generating activities are those activities, which can be undertaken by an organisation to raise income to enhance school finances”.*

In addition, P2 suggested that *“there is a need for our schools to have additional activities which may generate income to support and to supplement the fees paid by learners”*. C3 established that *“I feel that was a great idea the activities that we proposed and are in places include school buses... hire of the hall which is being used by outsiders and other social activities for example wedding ceremonies meetings, crusades, horticulture. Some schools raised vegetables and fruits horticulture for use...this happens within and outside the school and societies.”*

The findings above revealed that income-generating activities were a great idea that mitigated challenges faced during the implementation of FSE in Oluno Circuit. In the literature review section, Onyango (2001) criticises that with the introduction of FSE, schools could have over-enrolled, implying that resources obtainable in schools were further constrained. Verspoor (2008) states that government spending will be inadequate to generate enough funds for educational attainment and learning achievement unless accompanied by reforms that are aimed at more efficient additional funding.

The researcher concurs with Mbungua (1987), who states that well-structured Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) can diversify the sources of financial provision for secondary schools' funds. The school principals must be empowered to house the educational programs in order to ensure that financial resources were readily available for school expansion as such factors are obstacles to the implementation of FSE.

#### 4.6.2 Donations

The participants of this study were asked to explain how schools mitigated challenges experienced from FSE. P1 explained that *“it was utmost important to consult different organisations for the donations to supplement the little the school has.”* C1, C2 and C3 revealed that *“secondary schools requested for support from business community and corporate entities to render financial and material support for schools’ developmental programmes.”* P3 explained that *“the society was willing to assist with the little they have, they feel schools need to be supplemented, they have our learners at heart, therefore, socio-economic factors such as school income projects as well as donor funds helped many of our learners to stay in school.”*

In addition, Ls1 expressed their appreciation and stated that *“we received textbooks and other stationaries from a local businessman, we are very thankful. Having a support from local people showed a positive impact towards the achievement of FSE goals of increasing enrolment and retention in secondary schools”.*

The researcher assumed that donation is one of the remedies to overcome challenges facing the implementation of FSE. The study findings affirmed that while the Government of Namibia has made drastic strides in areas like infrastructure development that include classrooms, and libraries other significant issues like meals, hostel fees and purchasing of school uniforms for their children while at school. However, some parents were feeling that the government provided free education, therefore, they relaxed regarding making genuine contributions to schools.

According to Kilonzo (2007), most of the parents were not willing to make payments to schools since education was 'free'. However, study participants C1, C2, C3 and P4 revealed that *"there are common understandings and believed that donations and other social contributions from individuals and business community assisted schools to cater for other secondary schools' activities."* Considerably, this observation has been found consolidating prior findings from the literature that there is no common agreement on whether parents must continue and, or not continue to support the school learners after the implementation of FSE.

#### 4.6.3 Involvement of parents and communities as partners

P1, P2, P3 and P4 stated that *"involving parents from the beginning of the implementation of free secondary education made every process of development smooth with the positive impact on the programme implementation. Parents and community members were involved in both physical and financial support of their children's education. Parental involvement plays an important role in learners' success."* In addition, T1 stated that *"parents were involved from the beginning. They suggested good ways to generate the money. Parental involvement not only enhances academic performance, but it also has a positive influence on learner's attitude and behaviour in support of the statement"*.

In support of P1, P2, P3, P4 and T1, C1 explained that *"parent's interest and encouragement in a child's education affect the child's attitude toward school, classroom conduct, self-esteem, absenteeism, and motivation... parental involvement made a positive difference at all age levels"*.

The study findings have shown, however, that the involvement of parents of middle and high school learners is equally important.

P2 highlighted that *“during our parent’s meeting events that took place in our school, we involved parents as key notes speakers, they encouraged learners to study hard and behave in the society, they are our pillars onto which we lean”*.

The researcher suggested that parents’ encouragement can be influential, whether a child stays in school or drops out. Similarly, a child may consider going to college more seriously when parents show interest in the child's academic achievements and talk with the child about the benefits of a college education. Reading improves greatly when parents and children read together at home. Reading aloud with a child contributed significantly to the child's reading abilities. Schools and teachers benefit from parental involvement because it involved parents developing a greater appreciation for the challenges that teachers were faced within the classroom.

Further, the study findings also explained how schools mitigated the challenges experienced during the implementation of FSE. The research participants admitted that the implementation of FSE was also affected by factors related to community participation. This was because a family is the primary social system of the community. Rollins and Thomas (2002) further agree with the literature that high parental involvement was associated with high academic achievement.

In addition, Cassidy and Lynn (1991) further established that a less physically crowded environment, along with motivation and parental support, were associated with higher

educational levels in children. Community influences have been identified as an important factor affecting school success (Lezotte, 2001).

#### 4.7 Summary

The following were the major factors in the implementation of FSE in terms of quality education, the teaching and learning resources, the school infrastructure, and the school environment. Regarding the factors that influenced FSE, the study participants established the factors namely, adequate, and timely funding, learners' enrolment, roles of parents, and teaching and learning materials.

All the participants consented that government subsidies need to be disbursed on time. Adequate funds should be dispatched so that schools do not experience a lack of purchasing power throughout the year, hence, reducing the increase in prices by suppliers due to the delayed payments. Free secondary education requires government preparedness in terms of budget allocation. Since the launch of the free secondary education system, parents who mainly paid school fees and other contributions direct to schools have stopped. This means that the whole burden falls on the government as the main funder. The question to ask is how sustainable is FSE in Namibia? In this endeavour, is it a task of the government to secure extra funds from other sources to support FSE now and then? The availability of a good learning environment was desirable for any teaching and learning situation.

After the introduction of FSE, "poor families in the communities surrounding Oluno Circuit think everything was for free. Parents were not sensitised. FSE was seen as a government offer. In other words, many parents expected the government to provide

everything for their children's education. The way in which the FSE program was understood was crucial, particularly the role of the politicians who created this impression, while the government failed to properly sensitise the population about the actual content of FSE. The implementation of the FSE program as a political capital was rather damaging, especially given the importance of parental engagement in the FSE program's implementation.

The lack of sensitisation fed into an existing situation in which certain categories of parents only had a limited interest in the education of their children. The underprivileged background of FSE learners meant that many family heads of FSE learners only had limited education and, as a result, did not always fully realise the importance of secondary education. The textbook was important and indispensable teaching and learning material. Research findings show that several learners were found to be crowded around one textbook as they struggled to do their homework. This made it hard for them to understand the content. This situation was in secondary schools with a ratio of one textbook to four students and more. They struggled to acquire textbooks from those who had and sometimes were unable to complete their homework to be handed in for marking the following day.

The study findings further revealed that remedies to the challenges that faced the implementation of FSE include income-generating activities, donations, and involvement of parents and communities as partners. Moreover, the researcher criticised the absence of the FSE policy framework by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture that hindered FSE delivery. Hence, the urgent need for the FSE policy compilation. The next chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations made in this research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study. The study aimed at evaluating the challenges that faced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit. The study was guided by the following research questions: What are the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit? How does FSE promote access to quality education in the Oluno Circuit? How do schools mitigate challenges that faced FSE in the Oluno Circuit? Several discussions have been made and the researcher summed them up as follows.

#### 5.2 Summary

The study adopted a qualitative approach using a case study design, which looked at evaluating the implementation of FSE in Namibia. Purposive sampling was used to select the research participants. All research participants were selected on the basis that they have experience in the implementation of FSE. Thematic analysis was also used to analyse the data.

The study discussed various challenges and opportunities that faced the implementation of free secondary education in Oluno Circuit. The study delivered information that could ensure effective and efficient deployment of resources towards FSE was made. The

information would be useful to parents in determining the necessary contributions they sought to make, they could in turn be aware of the extent of the government's support towards FSE and equally be willing to do their part too. Legislators, teachers, and other stakeholders in secondary schools could use the information from this study to appraise the position of FSE, address appropriate bottlenecks or recommend alike. Strategists may find the outcomes useful in ensuring smooth implementation of FSE that enhances, motivates, and compliments the nation towards the realisation of Vision 2030 and beyond. FSE being a recent child, limited studies were available to this effect, making it a valuable project to invest in. The outcome of this study may help leaders, educators, and other stakeholders in education to address emerging issues and adapted sustainable implementation of FSE in Namibia and elsewhere.

The summary of the findings of this study was subdivided into the following subheadings as per the research questions.

#### 5.2.1 How does FSE promote access to quality education in the Oluno Circuit?

Through the analysis of data, the study identified major factors that contributed to the implementation of quality FSE, namely, teaching and learning materials, and inadequate funding.

The findings from the study established that teaching and learning resources, secondary schools in Oluno Circuit were yet to achieve a ratio of one textbook one learner, as schools do not have enough textbooks, which is critical teaching and learning resource. The study

revealed that a good school environment comprises two major characteristics namely school buildings and, the presence of qualified teachers. The findings further showed that most school principals agreed that over-enrolment was a key consequence of inadequate staffing in their schools, while few participants observed heavy workloads and a lack of teaching and learning materials. The study further revealed that over-enrolment has several spillover effects, including overloading and overstretching of resources, including infrastructure.

### 5.2.2 What are the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit?

The study identified the following factors that influenced the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit:

1. inadequate funding,
2. school dropout,
3. learner enrolment,
4. role of parents
5. teaching and learning materials

Adequacy and timeliness of disbursement of government subsidies to schools, all study participants thought the subsidies were enough to cover all schools' expenses. While disbursement of funds to schools was not done on time to purchase teaching materials. Some of the study participants indicated that secondary school enrolment had an adverse

effect on school performance. The findings show a gradual increment in the enrolment of secondary school learners from 2015 to 2019 in the Oluno Circuit. The study further indicated that there was an increased enrolment of learners each year, due to the pressure of many learners finishing primary school and because of the support of the government through FSE funds. It was found that parents were not sensitised on the matter of FSE. Since it was a government offer, parents felt that the government would provide everything, therefore, they did not care much to support their children with their school's needs after the implementation of FSE.

### 5.2.3 How do schools mitigate challenges that faced FSE in the Oluno Circuit?

The findings on how secondary schools mitigated the challenges faced during the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit are:

1. Income-generating activities,
2. donations,
3. involvement of parents and communities as partners.

The schools-initiated income-generating projects like tuck-shops, school building renaming, sports, and other fundraising projects for generating extra income. The participants also said several measures that could be taken to improve FSE included teaching and learning resources, and donor funds, which included the alumni of the respective schools. Implementing FSE has trickled down effects in the overall

management systems of secondary schools. It should not only be the number of learners enrolled and having completed their secondary education but the quality they have after completing their secondary education was also of critical importance. Free Secondary Education required government preparedness in terms of budget allocation. Since the launch of the FSE system, parents who mainly paid school fees and other contributions directly to schools had stopped. This means that the whole burden has fallen on the government as the main funder.

Moreover, the research participants offered suggestions that there was a crucial need to provide the necessary facilities and equipment to schools to facilitate the rising numbers of learners enrolled in secondary schools in the circuit. They further indicated that the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture needs to improve secondary schools' infrastructures to cater for the high number of learners.

### 5.3 Conclusions

The study findings revealed that there were numerous challenges and opportunities the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture faced during the implementation of FSE. The study further found that since the implementation of the FSE in 2016, the following improvements were observed in the education system. These are the increased enrolment number of secondary school learners, poor and lack of parental contributions to schools' development programmes.

Further, some challenges faced the implementation of FSE. Some of these are learning and teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, late delivery of education materials,

delayed and insufficient funding, and a high teacher-learner ratio. The study further indicated that the knowledge of the implementation of FSE was only limited to teachers and school principals, while parents and community members were not well sensitised. The study further concludes that some of the schools' environments in the Oluno circuit are presently under pressure from the high number of learners. The school environment might not be conducive enough to promote quality education to secondary school learners.

## 5.4 Recommendations

### 5.4.1 Recommendations for improvements

The goal of this study was to evaluate the implementation of FSE in Namibia using the Oluno Circuit in the Oshana Region as a cases study. The study clearly states that there were challenges facing the implementation of FSE in Namibia. Therefore, the study made the following recommendations:

1. For schools' performance and the provision of quality education to secondary school learners, the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture should provide adequate and timely funding allocated to the schools to run their programmes.
2. To minimise school dropouts, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should introduce learners', parents', and teachers' forums to educate them on the importance of FSE.
3. To eliminate the high number of learners enrolled and reduced the learner-teacher ratio, the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture should allocate enough funds to

schools' infrastructure development to accommodate all the learners. The Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture must raise the funds given to secondary schools to hire enough skilled secondary school teachers to effectively administer FSE.

4. The parents served as community education watchdogs by working through school board committees to ensure that learners have access to a high-quality education. As a result, the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture must implement regular educational programs through the Regional Education Forum and School Board Committees to educate parents and the community about the concept of free secondary education and its implementation.

5. Teaching and learning materials are critical for quality teaching and learning in schools. As a result, the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture should provide secondary schools with adequate teaching and learning materials for conducive teaching and learning to take place at schools.

#### 5.4.2 Recommendations for further research

The study aimed at evaluating the implementation of FSE in selected secondary schools in the Oluno Circuit of the Oshana Region. Whereas the implementation of FSE has been identified as a national issue, it has not been investigated in Namibia. As a result, studies should be conducted in all 14 regions of Namibia to investigate the extent to which FSE has been implemented, the challenges encountered, and the solutions thereof.

This study only evaluated the implementation of FSE in the Oluno Circuit, without involving the Directorate of Education or the legislators who were the primary custodians of FSE. Therefore, other studies are needed to find out the extent to which learners,

teachers, parents, school board committee members and school principals in Namibia have been affected by the implementation of FSE.

The FSE was expected to have a positive impact on secondary school enrolments and reduce school dropout rates. Many efforts for improvement might be needed in terms of the quality of secondary education. Therefore, one possible area for future research is to examine how the Namibian government should deliver quality education under the ambit of FSE.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



#### ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE-014-2020

Date: 30-06-2020

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

**Title of Project:** EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA: A CASE STUDY OF OLUNO CIRCUIT.

**Nature/Level of Project:** MASTERS STUDY-HON-HEALTH

**Researcher:** VILHO MEKONDIJO TANGENT SHIKOHA

**Student Number:** 201118289

**Faculty:** FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**Supervisors:** DR J MUSHAANDJA

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
  - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
  - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

UREC Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CJ Wilders".

Prof CJ Wilders

## APPENDIX B: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

### CENTRE FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia  
340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneers Park  
☎ +264 61 206 3275/4662; Fax +264 61 206 3290; URL: <http://www.unam.edu.na>



28 September 2020

### RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

**Student Name:** VILHO MEKONDJO TANGENI SHIKOHA  
**Student number:** 201118289  
**Programme:** Master of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy Studies

**Approved Research Title:** EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA: A CASE STUDY OF OLUNO CIRCUIT

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that the above mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Seth J. Eiseb", written over a horizontal dashed line.

**Dr. Seth J. Eiseb**  
**Acting Director**  
**Centre for Postgraduate Studies**  
**Tel: +264-61-206 3414**  
**Email: [directorpgs@unam.na](mailto:directorpgs@unam.na)**

## APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61 -2933202  
Fax: +264 61- 2933922  
Enquiries: G. Munene  
Email: Gibson.munene@moe.gov.na  
File no: 13/2/9/1

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park  
Private Bag 13186  
Windhoek  
Namibia

Mr Vilho Mekondjo Tangeni Shikoha  
P. O. Box 3003  
Ondangwa  
Email: Vilho.Shikoha@rf.org.na  
Cell: No. 081 291 0002

Dear Mr Shikoha,

#### SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN OSHANA REGION

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge receipt of your email seeking permission to conduct an academic research at schools for your Masters Degree study which is focussing on: "*Evaluating the Implementation of Free Secondary Education in Namibia.*"

Permission is hereby granted to you provided you seek for further clearance from the Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture at the Oshana region where you wish to conduct your research to ensure that:

- That permission is sought from the school principals and parents;
- Should not interrupt teaching and learning;
- That all participation is voluntary.

Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry after completion of the research project. You may contact Mr G. Munene at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of a summary of your research findings at the above indicated details.

We wish you the best in conducting your research and the Ministry looks forward to hearing from you upon completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Sanet L. Steenkamp  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE DORECTORATE OF EDUCATION OSHANA REGION



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL  
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE  
ASPIRING TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOR ALL

Tel: 065 - 229800/25

Fax: 065 - 229834

Private Bag 5518

Oshakati

Enquiries: Hileni M Amukana

Ref. 13/2/9/1

Mr. Vilho M. T. Shikoha

P. O. Box 3003

Ondangwa

Cell: 0812910002

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN OSHANA REGION**

Your letter dated 25 September 2020 on the above caption bears reference.

Kindly be informed that permission is hereby granted to conduct research study at Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo Secondary School, Ondangwa Secondary School, Olukoko Secondary School and Nangolo Secondary School in Oluno Circuit, Oshana Region.

This permission is subject to the following strict conditions; (i) There should be minimal or no interruption on normal working schedule (ii) Ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity should be respected and retained throughout this activity i.e. Voluntary participation, and consent from participants

Both Parties should understand that this permission could be revoked without explanation at any time.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture, Oshana Region. You may contact Ms. Nuunyango-George, the Acting Deputy Director; Programs and Quality Assurance (PQA) for the provision of summary of your research findings.

We wish you the best in conducting your study.

Yours sincerely,

  
HILENI M. AMUKANA  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR



Cc: Inspector of Education: Oluno Circuit

All Official Correspondence must be addressed to the Regional Director

## **APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, this interview seeks to find out your views about the implementation of Free Secondary Education (FSE) in the Oluno Circuit.

Instructions to the interviewees:

1. There is no right or wrong answer to the following interview questions.
2. Please respond to the questions as honest as possible by answering all questions as per your understanding.
3. Your responses will be used only for research purposes, therefore, your name or any other form of identification is not needed.

Research Topic: Evaluating the implementation of Free Secondary in Education in Oluno Circuit, Oshana region, Namibia.

SECTION: A

Biographical data

1. What is your gender? Male\_\_\_\_\_
- Female\_\_\_\_\_

2. In which age group do you fall?

Under 18      19-25    25-30

3. What is your current grade?

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification\_\_\_\_\_

Year obtained\_\_\_\_\_

4. How many years have you been at this school?

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**SECTION: B**

How free secondary education promotes access to quality secondary education.

5. As a learner's representative council, how does FSE provide you with access to secondary education?

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6. How does FSE help learners to gain more knowledge and learn better?

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**SECTION C:**

Factors that influence the implementation of free secondary education:

7. What do you think negatively affect the implementation of free secondary education?

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8. What do you think are the factors that bring about improvement in the implementation of free secondary education?

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SECTION: D

What schools do to mitigate challenges experienced during the implementation of free secondary education.

9. What do you think are the challenges learners face when your school implements free secondary education?

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10. How does your schoolwork address such challenges?

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11. As a secondary school LRC, what do you think should be done to improve the implementation of FSE?

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12. Do you have any other comments regarding the implementation of FSE at your school? If yes, what are they?

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Thank you very much for your responses

**APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS, HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, AND SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, the interview seeks to find out what your views concerning the implementation of free secondary education in the Oluno Circuit are:

Instructions to the interviewees:

1. There is no right or wrong answer to the following interview questions.
2. Please respond to the questions as honest as possible by answering all questions as per your understanding.
3. Your responses will be used only for research purposes, therefore, your name or any other form of identification is not needed.

Research Topic: Evaluating the implementation of free secondary education in Oluno Circuit, Oshana region, Namibia.

**SECTION: A**

Biographical data

1. What is your gender? Male\_\_\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_\_\_

2. In which age group do you fall?  
Under 35      36-40   41-50   51-59   60+

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

Qualification\_\_\_\_\_ Year obtained\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your highest professional qualification?

Qualification\_\_\_\_\_ Year obtained\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many years of teaching experience do you have in education as a teacher/HOD/principal?

**SECTION: B**

How free secondary education promotes access to quality secondary education.

6. How does FSE provide learners with access to secondary education?

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7. What role did you play as a teacher/HOD/principal in facilitating learners to access FSE at your school?

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**SECTION C:**

Factors that influenced the implementation of free secondary education:

8. What are the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE?

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9. For each factor, you stated in 8, why do you think they influenced the implementation of FSE?

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10. Among the factors you mentioned in 8, which ones positively influenced the implementation of FSE?

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11. Among the factors you mentioned in 8, which ones negatively influenced the implementation of FSE?

SECTION: D

What schools do to mitigate the challenges experienced from FSE?

12. What challenges did your school face while implementing FSE?

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13. How did your school mitigate the challenges mentioned in answer 12?

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14. Do you have any comments regarding the implementation of FSE at your school?

If yes, what are they?

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Thank you very much for your response.

## **APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHAIRPERSON OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, this interview seeks to find out your views concerning the implementation of Free Secondary Education in the Oluno Circuit.

Instructions to the interviewees:

1. There is no right or wrong answer to the following interview questions.
2. Please respond to the questions as honest as possible by answering all questions as per your understanding.
3. Your responses will be used only for research purposes, therefore, your name or any other form of identification is not needed.

Research Topic: Evaluating the implementation of Free Secondary Education in Oluno Circuit, Oshana region, Namibia.

### **SECTION: A**

Biographical data

1. What is your gender?      Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. In which age group do you fall?  
Under 35      36-40   41-49   50-59   60+
3. What is your highest academic qualification?

Qualification\_\_\_\_\_ Year obtained\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your highest professional qualification?

Qualification\_\_\_\_\_ Year  
obtained\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many years of working experience do you have in educational support as a chairperson of the school board?

\_\_\_\_\_

#### SECTION: B

How free secondary education promotes access to quality secondary education.

6. How does FSE promote access to quality secondary education?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Why do you think FSE provides learners with access to quality secondary education?

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\_\_\_\_\_

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8. As a chairperson of the school board, why do you think FSE provides learners access to quality secondary education?

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9. What are the indicators of learners' access to quality secondary education at your school?

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10. Why do you think the indicators you mentioned in 9 influence access to quality secondary education?

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11. Why do you think the indicators you mentioned in 9 provide access to quality secondary education?

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SECTION: C

Factors that influenced the implementation of free secondary education.

12. What are the factors that influenced the implementation of FSE at your school?

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13. Why do you think the factors you stated in 12 influenced the implementation of FSE?

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SECTION: D

How did schools mitigate challenges experienced during the implementation of Free Secondary Education?

14. What challenges did your school face when implementing FSE?

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15. As a chairperson of the school board, why do you think the challenges stated above influenced the implementation of FSE at your school?

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16. How did your school mitigate the challenges it experienced when implementing FSE?

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17. Do you have any comments regarding the implementation of FSE at your school?  
If yes, what are they?

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Thank you very much for your response.

**APPENDIX H: ANNEX 5 CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPALS, HoDs, TEACHERS AND CHAIRPERSON OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, this interview seeks to find out your views concerning the implementation of Free Secondary Education in the Oluno Circuit

1. What is this research study all about?

The study aims to evaluate the implementation of access to free secondary education in Namibia, using the case study of Oluno Circuit in the Oshana Region. The study will be conducted at selected public secondary schools in Oluno Circuit and, the total number of participants will be 32.

2. Why have you been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this research to share with me the knowledge, skills and expertise involved in the implementation of free secondary education as a teacher/ head of department/ school principal or a chairperson of a school board in the Oluno circuit.

3. What will your responsibilities be?

You will be asked to answer interview questions. The interview will be audio-recorded and will last for about 50 minutes.

4. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

There are no direct benefits of taking part in the research, but the findings of this study will be beneficial to all stakeholders in the selected secondary schools, as it will provide insight into how free secondary education is implemented.

5. Are there any risks involved in taking part in this research?

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

6. If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?

If you do not agree to take part, there will be no consequences. You can withdraw at any time at any point.

7. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

This is a voluntary exercise, and no participant will be entitled to benefit in form of any payment either in cash or in kind. However, data collected might assist teachers and education officials to address challenges encountered when free secondary education is implemented.

8. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at +264 061 2063061; [pclaassen@unam.na](mailto:pclaassen@unam.na) if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator. You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

I declare that:

I have read or have been read this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.

I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.

I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

I may be asked to leave the study before it is finished if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) ..... on (date) .....

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

Declaration by investigator

I, VILHO M. T. SHIKOHA, declare that:

I explained the information in this document to.....

I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.

I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above

I did/did not use an interpreter. (If an interpreter is used then the interpreter must sign the declaration below.

Signed at: .....

.....

.....

Signature of investigator

Witness signature

## **APPENDIX I: ANNEX 5 ASSENT PARTICIPTION FORM FOR LEARNERS UNDER 18 YEARS OLD**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, this interview seeks to find out your views concerning the implementation of Free Secondary Education in the Oluno Circuit

1. What is this research study all about?

The study aims to evaluate the implementation of access to free secondary education in Namibia, using the case study of Oluno Circuit in Oshana Region. The study will be conducted at selected public secondary schools in Oluno Circuit and, the total number of participants will be 32.

2. Why have you been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this study to tell me as an LRC secondary school learner what you experienced as your school implement free secondary education.

3. What will your responsibilities be?

You will be asked to answer open-ended questions the interview will be audio-recorded and, the interview will last for about 50 minutes.

3. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

There will be no direct benefit from taking part in the research but, the findings of this study will be beneficial to all learners in the selected schools, as it will give an

understanding of the effects of the implementation of free secondary education in your school.

4. Are there any risks involved in taking part in this research?

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

5. If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?

If you do not agree to take part, there will be no consequences. You can withdraw at any time, at any point.

6. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

This is a voluntary exercise and, no one will be entitled to benefit in form of payment in cash or kind. However, data collected might assist teachers, parents, and learners to address challenging issues as you implement free secondary education.

7. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at +264 061 2063061; pclaassen@unam.na if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator. You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

I declare that:

I have read or have been read this information and consent form and it is written in a language which I understand.

I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part. I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

I may be asked to leave the study before it is finished if the researcher feels it is in my best interests as a learner, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) ..... on (date) .....

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

Declaration by investigator

I, VILHO MT. SHIKOHA declare that:

I explained the information in this document to.....

I encouraged the learner to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.

I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above

I did/did not use an interpreter. (If an interpreter is used then the interpreter must sign the declaration below).

Signed at: .....

.....

.....

Signature of investigator

Witness signature

## **APPENDIX J: ANNEX 5 CONSENT PARTICIPATION FORM FOR LEARNERS WHO ARE 18 YEARS AND ABOVE**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, this interview seeks to find out your views concerning the implementation of Free Secondary Education in the Oluno Circuit

1. What is this research study all about?

The study aims to evaluate the implementation of access to free secondary education in Namibia, using the case study of Oluno Circuit in Oshana Region. The study will be conducted at selected public secondary schools in Oluno Circuit and, the total number of participants will be 32.

2 Why have you been invited to participate?

You will be invited to take part in this research to share with me your knowledge as an LRC secondary school learner involved in the school management and implementation of free secondary education in your school.

3 What will your responsibilities be?

You are requested to take part in this study about the above research topic. The interview will be audio-recorded and, the interview will last for about 50 minutes.

4. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

There is no direct benefit for you as a learner taking part in the research study. However, the findings of this study will benefit you, as the study will try to evaluate the implementation of free secondary education at your school.

5. Are there any risks involved to take part in this research?

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the study.

6. What if you do not agree to take part in this research?

There will be no consequences if you do not agree to take part in this study. You can withdraw at any point, at any time.

7. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

This is a voluntary exercise, and you are not entitled to any benefit in form of money or kind. However, data collected might assist your school to address difficulties because of the implementation of free secondary education.

8. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at +264 061 2063061; [pclaassen@unam.na](mailto:pclaassen@unam.na) if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator. You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

I declare that:

I have read or have been read this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.

I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part. I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way. I may be asked to leave the study before it is finished if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) ..... on (date) .....

.....

.....

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

Declaration by investigator

I, VILHO MT. SHIKOHA declare that:

I explained the information in this document to.....

I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them. I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above. I did/did not use an interpreter. (If an interpreter is used then the interpreter must sign the declaration below.

Signed at: .....

.....

.....

Signature of investigator

Parent signature

## **APPENDIX L: ANNEX 5 CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS OF LEARNERS WHO ARE UNDER 18 YEARS OLD**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, this interview seeks to find out your views concerning the implementation of Free Secondary Education in the Oluno Circuit

2. What is this research study all about?

The study aims to evaluate the implementation of access to free secondary education in Namibia, using the case study of Oluno Circuit in Oshana Region. The study will be conducted at selected public secondary schools in Oluno Circuit and, the total number of participants will be 32.

3. Why have you been invited to participate?

With your permission, your child will be invited to take part in this research to share with us the knowledge as an LRC secondary school learner involved in the school management and implementation of free secondary education in your school.

4. What will your responsibilities be?

You are requested to grant permission for us to ask your child open-ended questions about the topic of the research. The interview will be audio-recorded and, the interview will last for about 50 minutes.

5. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

There is no direct benefit for the child taking part in the research study. However, the findings of this study will be benefitting your child, as the study will try to evaluate the implementation of free secondary education in your circuit.

6. Are there any risks involved for my child if he/she takes part in this research?

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the study.

7. What if you do not grant permission for your child to take part in this research?

If you do not agree to take part, there will be no consequences. Your child can withdraw at any time, at any point.

8. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

This is a voluntary exercise, and your child is not entitled to benefit in form of money or kind. However, data collected might assist your school to address difficulties because of the implementation of free secondary education.

9. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at +264 061 2063061; [pclaassen@unam.na](mailto:pclaassen@unam.na) if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator. You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

I declare that:

I have read or have been read this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.

I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.

I understand that my child taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.

My child may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

My child may be asked to leave the study before it is finished if the researcher feels it is in my child's best interests, or if my child does not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) ..... on (date) .....

.....

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

Declaration by investigator

I, VILHO MT. SHIKOHA declare that:

I explained the information in this document to.....

I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.

I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above

I did/did not use an interpreter. (If an interpreter is used then the interpreter must sign the declaration below.

Signed at: .....

.....

.....

Signature of investigator

Parent signature