FREE BASIC EDUCATION POLICY AND PROMOTION OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: A CASE OF BUNIA

LIKA PRISCA KASEMIRE

S21M07/007

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF RESEARCH AND PUBLIC POLICY OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

October, 2025

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

DECLARATION

I, Kasemire Lika Prisca, hereby declare that this dissertation titled "*Free basic education policy and promotion of girl child education in DRC, a case of Bunia"* is my original work and effort and has not been presented in this or any other University for any award. All other sources of information and data used in this study, in the form of ideas and words quoted directly or indirectly, have been duly acknowledged.

Signature:  **Date: 01/10/2025**

KASEMIRE LIKA PRISCA

S21M07/007

APPROVAL

This dissertation, titled "*Free basic education policy and promotion of girl child education in DRC, a case of Bunia,*" was done under the supervision of the university supervisor and approved for submission to the School of Social Sciences, Uganda Christian University.

Signature:_____ **Date:** 01/10/2025

AMANIYO MERCY

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my family, particularly my parents, Jacques Lika Sombo and Birungi Kabaseke Abooki, as well as my dear friend, Solomon Mwije, for their love, encouragement, and unwavering support. I am deeply grateful for both the direct and indirect support they have provided throughout this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I take this opportunity to thank the Almighty God for guiding me throughout this work. I acknowledge the support of my supervisor, Madam Mercy Amaniyo, for her patience and understanding throughout the process.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my research support team that helped me in data analysis, Allan Naimwaga and Kenneth Kakuba, who gave their all to support me, even when I felt I could not bear it any longer. I am forever grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIDE:	Centre for International Development and Education
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
FBE:	Free Basic Education
FBEP:	Free Basic Education Policy
MoES:	Ministry of Education and Sport
NGO:	Non-Government Organizations
SPSS:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSA:	Sub-Saharan Africa
UCU:	Uganda Christian University
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPE:	Universal Primary Education
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effect of the free basic education policy on girl-child education in primary schools in DRC, a case of Bunia. The study was guided by four study objectives which included investigated the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child retention in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on gender disparity in schools in Bunia and the challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia. The study used a cross-sectional survey approach that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The study found that while the Free Basic Education Policy has contributed to improving access for girls, its impact remains weak and statistically insignificant across enrollment, retention, and gender disparity. Quantitative results showed low correlation and regression values, while qualitative interviews highlighted persistent structural, financial, and social barriers.

The study recommended increased funding for rural schools, community sensitization on girl-child education, and targeted support for girls with special needs. It calls for financial aid to cover hidden education costs, mentorship programs, and school feeding initiatives. Policy enforcement on gender-sensitive education, sanitary pad distribution, and safe transport for girls is also advised. Lastly, it emphasizes anti-corruption oversight, improved teacher remuneration, and parental engagement in school governance.

Key Words: *Free Basic Education Policy, Girl-Child, Education, Enrollment, Retention, Gender Disparity*

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

There is sufficient evidence that educating girl child has a corresponding positive outcome in terms of economic growth, increase women's wage, improves women's health; reduce child marriage and increases individual and community empowerment (Murphy & Lloyd, 2016). However, not every girl-child has an opportunity to enroll into formal education. Challenges such as gender discrimination and harmful cultural practices are still barriers to girl child access to education in most developing countries. Therefore, this study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the free education policy in promoting girl child education in Bunia, DRC. The research will focus on assessing how the policy influence girl child access to formal education services in Bunia. The researcher focused more on assessing how basic education policy enhanced girl-child enrollment and retention at primary level. This chapter includes background, problem statement, researcher objective, research questions, scope, significance, justification and operationalized definition of key terms.

1.2 Background of the study

For years, the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) education system was heavily reliant on school fees, making education unaffordable for many, particularly children from low-income families (World Bank, 2005). Recognizing that high tuition costs were a major barrier to literacy and economic development, the government introduced Free Basic Education (FBE) as a strategy to increase school enrollment and ensure equal access to education for all children, regardless of their financial background (Latif & Adelman, 2021). This policy was further

influenced by global education goals, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims for inclusive and quality education for all (Marchais et al., 2020).

Under President Félix Tshisekedi's administration in 2019, the DRC government fully implemented free primary education, after years of slow progress despite previous promises (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). International organizations, including UNICEF and the World Bank, played a crucial role in supporting these reforms and pushing the government to fulfill its commitment to free education (Marchais et al., 2020). The need for social stability and national development was another driving force behind the policy, as the country faced prolonged conflict and economic instability, which negatively impacted education (Brandt, 2017). By introducing FBE, the government aimed to reduce child labor, improve literacy, and foster a more educated workforce essential for long-term economic growth and national stability.

The global context of Free Basic Education (FBE) reflects a broader effort to ensure education for all, especially in low- and middle-income countries. The objective of FBE is to provide free and compulsory primary education to all children, regardless of their gender, socio-economic background, or geographic location (Falisse et al., 2021). Although FBE policies have successfully increased school enrollment rates, significant challenges persist, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. According to UNESCO (2015), an estimated 58 million primary school-aged children worldwide remain out of school. Despite the progress in abolishing school fees, retention and completion rates are still low, and vulnerable groups like girls, children in rural areas, and those from marginalized communities face substantial obstacles (Vivuya, 2021).

Gender disparity is one of the most critical barriers to FBE's global success. In many developing countries, girls face compounded challenges such as early marriage, pregnancy, and societal norms that prioritize boys' education over girls (Thamba, 2018). For instance, in India and Indonesia, families often prioritize boys' education, with significant proportions of parents (46%) keeping their sons in school rather than their daughters when faced with financial difficulties (Yarrow & Afkar, 2020). In Latin America, traditional gender roles that confine women to domestic duties further widen the educational gap, particularly in rural and indigenous communities (United Nations, 2022). Furthermore, conflict-affected and remote areas pose severe challenges to the implementation of FBE, as insecurity and displacement lead to school closures, with girls disproportionately affected (UNESCO, 2021).

In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), despite the widespread implementation of FBE, challenges like poor school infrastructure, teacher shortages, and gender disparities persist. According to UNESCO (2015), 28 million girls aged 6-15 were out of school in 2015, with gender gaps widening as children progress through education levels (Biale, 2020). Rural areas in SSA are particularly affected, where girls are more likely to be kept at home due to traditional gender roles and responsibilities (Winthrop & King, 2015). Additionally, even though school fees have been abolished, hidden costs like uniforms and transportation remain significant barriers for impoverished families, contributing to high dropout and low completion rates (Cide, 2015).

In the DRC, FBE has faced unique challenges due to ongoing conflict and widespread poverty. Despite significant gains in primary school enrollment, particularly in rural areas like Bandundu and Kikwit, dropout and completion rates remain high, especially among girls (Mokonzi, 2012; USAID, 2018). The DRC's illiteracy rate is stark, with a significant gender gap, as men’s literacy

rates are higher than women's (UIS, 2016). Conflict-affected regions like Eastern DRC exacerbate the challenges, with many schools destroyed or repurposed as shelters for displaced families. In cities like Bunia, gender disparities in education are particularly pronounced, with girls facing multiple barriers due to ongoing conflict and displacement (Biregeya, 2021; UNICEF, 2019). The introduction of FBE in the DRC, while a positive step, has not adequately addressed the deeper socio-economic, cultural, and structural factors hindering educational access, particularly for girls in conflict-prone areas.

1.3 Problem Statement

Girl-child education plays a critical role in enhancing social, economic, and health outcomes at both the family and national levels (Murphy & Lloyd, 2016). Recognizing this, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) launched multiple initiatives to promote girl-child education, such as the 2003-2010 "Toute la Fille à l'école" campaign and the 2010 introduction of the free basic education policy. While these efforts have resulted in improvements in some provinces, such as Kinshasa, Kikwit, and Bandundu (Tom & Emmanuel, 2013), challenges persist in conflict-prone regions like Ituri.

In Ituri, and particularly in Bunia, the rollout and implementation of the free basic education policy in 2019-2020 have significantly yielded for the people of Congo specifically Bunia. There has been a reduction on the cost of education, increased school enrollment and has also improved on the literacy rate in the country. However, the most recent available data from the Ituri Provincial Ministry of Education (2020) showed that the gender gap in enrollment rose from 13% in 2018 to 15% in 2020 besides having the free education policy in place with strategies to reduce the gender disparity gap. Additionally, approximately 20% of school-aged girls, totaling

around 3,135,000 individuals, remain out of school and the primary education completion rate stands at 62%, with a disparity between boys (78.5%) and girls (72.5%). This gap is attributed to factors such as early marriage, household responsibilities, gender-based violence, and discrimination (UNICEF, 2024). Despite the policy's goal and efforts to reduce gender disparities and increasing equal access to education, deep-rooted undesirable socio-cultural factors, conflict-related disruptions, and negative socioeconomic challenges continue to disproportionately affect girls' ability to access and complete their education in the region (Brandit, 2020).

The discrepancy between the policy's success in some parts of the country and the ongoing challenges in Ituri could be attributed to factors such as persistent insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, socio-cultural barriers, economic hardships, and gaps in policy implementation. There is limited literature that specifically addresses the barriers affecting girl-child education in conflict-prone regions like Bunia, despite the implementation of national policies aimed at promoting equality in education. Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the effect of the free basic education policy on girl-child education in Bunia, DRC.

1.4 General Objective

The main aim of this study is to assess the effect of the free basic education policy on girl-child education in primary schools in DRC; a case of Bunia.

1.5 Specific Objectives

i) To investigate the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment in Bunia
ii) To establish the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child retention in Bunia
iii) To examine the effect of free basic education policy on gender disparity in schools in Bunia

iv) To assess the challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia.

1.6 Research Question

i) What is the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment in Bunia?

ii) What is the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child retention in Bunia?

iii) What is the effect of free basic education policy on gender disparity in schools in Bunia?

iv) What are the challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia?

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Content Scope

The study looked at the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child education in primary schools. However, more emphasis was put on examining the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment, the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child retention, the effect of free basic education policy on reduced gender disparity and the challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia.

1.7.2 Geographic Scope

This study was conducted in Bunia, Ituri province, DRC. Bunia is a city that still experiencing multiple armed conflicts and high level of insecurity. Also, the surrounding villages of Bunia have been in conflict since 2002 until today. The absence of peace and security has affected the education of not only girl child but also boys. However, for many girls, resuming school after conflict is challenging. This is as conflict destroys supporting factors such as economy, infrastructures which could facilitate the education. In this context, despite the culture trying to

favorer both girls' and boys' education, the economic status of the region disfavored more girl-child education. In addition, Bunia city has also welcomed internal displaced (IDP) people.

1.7.3 Time Scope

Time frame was limited to the period between to 2010 to 2021. This time frame is based on the first and second implementation phase of free basic education policy which began in academic year 2010-2011(first phase) and 2019-2020 academic years as the second phase.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Policymakers in DRC may use the findings to refine existing education policies, allocate resources more effectively, and design targeted interventions to address barriers such as socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, and infrastructural limitations that hinder girls' access to quality education. Additionally, the study may inform government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on education reforms, helping them develop strategies to enhance gender equality in primary education.

For schools, the study may offer valuable insights into the impact of the FBE policy on enrollment, retention, and academic performance of girls. School administrators may use the findings to identify challenges faced by female students, such as inadequate learning facilities, teacher shortages, or socio-economic barriers that affect attendance. By understanding these issues, schools can implement tailored support systems such as mentorship programs, safe learning environments, and community engagement initiatives to improve girl-child education outcomes.

Academically, the study may contribute to the body of knowledge on education policy and gender equity in schooling, particularly within the context of the DRC. Scholars and researchers may use the findings as a basis for further studies on the effectiveness of free education policies and their long-term implications on female education. The study also provides comparative insights for researchers examining similar policies in other African countries, fostering discussions on best practices for improving girls' access to education.

Furthermore, the study findings may serve as a reference for academic institutions, helping educators design curricula and research programs that address gender disparities in education and inform future educational reforms.

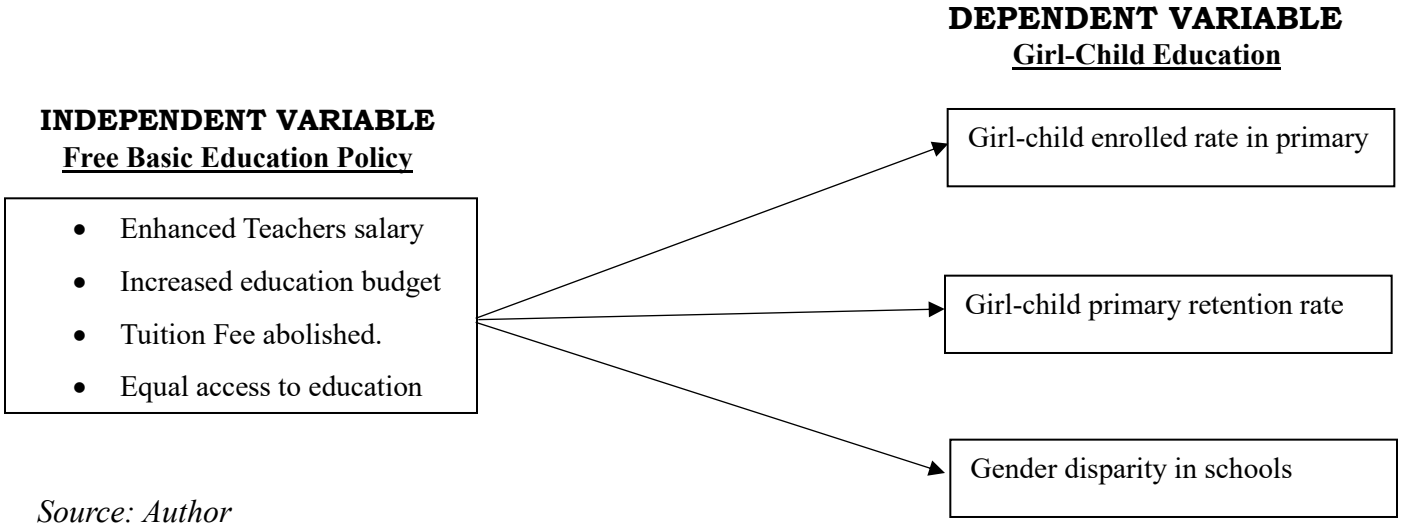
1.7 Justification to the Study

The assessment of the effect of the free basic education policy on girl-child education in primary schools is a critical area of study, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo where there is low girl-child enrollment, low girl child retention rate and where gender disparities in education remain a socio-economic concern (Adelman, Trako, Faron de Goër & Sallami, 2021). Various researchers, such as Ugwu and Ugwu (2024), Covert (2024), Kissi and Issaka (2023), Ayeh (2022), Mikisa (2019), Awinia (2019), Peters (2018), Chaudhuri and Roy (2017), Iddrisu (2016), Makate (2016), Patterson and Schäfer Elinder (2014) and Kamuli, Younger and Warrighton (2012) have explored the effect of free education policies on school enrollment and retention in different African contexts. However, these studies have largely examined general educational outcomes or focused on broader national perspectives, often overlooking the specific barriers affecting girls' education in conflict-prone regions like Bunia. In the DRC, limited research has been conducted on how the free basic education policy influences

girl-child education at the local level, particularly in Bunia, where socio-cultural, economic, and infrastructural challenges significantly impact school attendance and completion rates for girls. This creates a notable knowledge gap in understanding the extent to which the free basic education policy has addressed gender disparities in education in such settings. Therefore, by conducting this study, the researcher filled this gap by examining the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child education in primary schools in Bunia. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge and provide practical insights for policymakers, education stakeholders, and community leaders on how to strengthen educational interventions to promote gender equality in primary education in the DRC.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows the link between the independent variable and the dependent variable.



Source: Author

The conceptual framework captured the link between independent variable which was free basic education policy which was measured in terms of enhanced teacher's salary, increased education budget, tuition fee abolished and equal access to education and it is hypothesized that it

influences the dependent variable was measured in terms of girl-child enrolled rate in primary, girl-child primary retention rate and reduced gender disparity (Nagira Consultants Limited ,2016; Tamagnan & Samer, 2017). It was hypothesized that with was free basic education policy it leads to increase girl-child enrolled rate in primary, girl-child primary retention rate and reduced gender disparity.

1.9 Definition of Key Term

The following terms are used in this study:

Enrollment: This refers to the admitted or registered student into an education institution.

Retention rate: This refers to the rate of the fulfillment of one academic year after being admitted in an education institution.

Gender disparity: This measures the gap or inequality between males and females in the school.

Contingency: This refers to any variable that influences the effectiveness of free basic education policy implementation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This research effort is targeted to assess the free basic education policy and promotion of girl-child education in Bunia. Therefore, the literature review discusses relevant literature from e-books, journals, articles, and government reports that relate to the objectives of the research. The research is based on the following aspects: the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child retention in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on reduced gender disparity in Bunia and the challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in the feedback loop mechanisms through which systems self-regulate…" → should bepromotion of girl-child education in Bunia.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Social Systems Theory that was developed by the Austrian biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1940s and later expanded into the field of social sciences by scholars such as Talcott Parsons (1951) and Niklas Luhmann (1995). Bertalanffy (1968) initially conceptualized systems theory as a framework for understanding the interdependence of components within biological systems, but its application soon extended to human and social systems.

The theory postulates that individuals, organizations, and societies function as interconnected systems where changes in one component affect the entire system. In social science, Parsons (1951) applied the theory to sociology by emphasizing that human behavior is influenced by social structures, institutions, and interactions. Luhmann (1995) further refined the theory by exploring how communication acts as the primary mechanism for maintaining social systems.

A central assumption of Social Systems Theory is that problems do not exist in isolation but rather emerge from interactions within a broader system (Bertalanffy, 1968). The theory assumes that social structures, including family, community, schools, and government policies, interact dynamically, influencing individual and collective actions. Another assumption is that systems strive for equilibrium, meaning that changes in one part of the system necessitate adjustments in other parts to maintain stability (Parsons, 1951). Furthermore, Social Systems Theory recognizes feedback loops as mechanisms through which systems self-regulate and adapt to external influences (Luhmann, 1995). This means that policies or interventions must address multiple factors within the system to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Despite its widespread applicability, Social Systems Theory has faced several criticisms. One major critique is that it often lacks precise mechanisms for predicting social outcomes, making it more of a descriptive rather than predictive framework (Easton, 1965). Additionally, critics argue that the theory overemphasizes stability and system equilibrium while underestimating the potential for radical change and disruptions (Scott, 2003). Others contend that it can be overly abstract, making it difficult to apply to specific social issues, particularly in complex and dynamic environments such as education and policy implementation (Giddens, 1984).

In the context of the study on the effect of the free basic education policy on girl-child education in primary schools in Bunia, DRC, Social Systems Theory provides a useful analytical framework. The theory highlights how girl-child education is not solely determined by school policies but is instead shaped by a broader network of social influences, including family background, community norms, poverty, and political structures (Lee, 2011). For instance, if the family and community support a girl's education, the likelihood of her enrolling and remaining in

school increases. Conversely, if poverty, cultural beliefs, or political instability create barriers, the effectiveness of free basic education in improving girl-child education is significantly weakened. This systemic perspective underscores the necessity of addressing multiple social dimensions simultaneously rather than focusing solely on policy interventions.

Moreover, Social Systems Theory helps explain why the implementation of free basic education policy alone may not be sufficient to enhance girl-child retention rates in school. As the theory suggests, systems function as interconnected entities, meaning that education policies must work in harmony with other social support mechanisms such as parental engagement, community sensitization, and economic empowerment programs (Parsons, 1951). The theory, therefore, reinforces the idea that ensuring the success of free basic education in Bunia requires a holistic approach that considers the interaction of various factors influencing education.

2.3 Free basic education policy and girl-child enrollment in schools

The implementation of Free Primary Education policies in various African countries has significantly influenced girl-child enrollment rates. In Malawi, the introduction of FPE in 1994 led to a substantial increase in primary school enrollment, rising from 1.9 million students in the 1993–94 academic year to almost 2.9 million in 1994–95 (Grant, 2015). This surge included many overage students who either enrolled for the first time or re-enrolled after dropping out, which suggests that while FPE policies improved initial enrollment. Similarly, in Uganda, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy introduced in 1997 which was for free education resulted in a dramatic increase in primary school enrollment, from 3.1 million children in 1996 to about 8.7 million in 2014 (Makate, 2016).

The implementation of free basic education policies has had a significant impact on the enrollment of girls in primary schools. Iddrisu (2016) argued that since the introduction of the basic education policy in Ghana, there has been an increase in girl-child enrollment, although it remained lower than that of boys in the 2012/2013 academic year. One of the key factors contributing to the effectiveness of the policy was the removal of indirect fees, which made education more accessible to disadvantaged children. This suggests that where implementation is effective, it influences not only enrollment rates but also student retention.

In Uganda, Mikisa (2019) reported that government funding of school fees resulted in enrollment rates for poor children nearly equalling those of children from higher-income families, while also reducing parental school fee costs by 60%. However, wealthier families often opted to withdraw their children from government schools in favor of private institutions (Izarua, 2015). The UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (2014) similarly revealed that affluent parents preferred private schools over universal primary education (UPE) schools due to concerns regarding the quality of education in public institutions. This preference was driven by perceptions that private schools offered superior educational standards compared to government-funded schools (UNESCO, 2014).

In the United States, for instance, the introduction of universal pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs has been a notable development. In 2014, New York City launched a groundbreaking initiative to provide free, universal, full-day pre-K to every child in the city. This program rapidly expanded, benefiting around 73,000 children and significantly improving early childhood education outcomes (Covert, 2024). The success of this initiative underscores the positive impact of free early education on enrollment rates and educational attainment among young girls.

Similarly, in Sweden, the provision of free school meals has been linked to improved educational outcomes. These nations have long-standing policies offering free breakfast and lunch to all public-school students, which has contributed to better nutrition, increased attendance, and enhanced academic performance among children, including girls (Patterson & Schäfer Elinder, 2014). Such comprehensive support systems play a crucial role in encouraging school enrollment and retention among female students.

In India, the Right to Education Act (RTE) of 2009 mandated free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14. This policy led to a notable increase in overall enrollment rates, particularly among girls from marginalized communities. Chaudhuri and Roy (2017) observed that post-RTE, there was a substantial rise in female enrollment in primary schools, attributing this trend to the removal of financial barriers and the introduction of supportive measures like free textbooks and uniforms. Similarly, Afridi, Barooah, and Somanathan (2020) found that the midday meal scheme, integrated with the RTE, not only improved nutritional outcomes but also enhanced school attendance among girls, as it alleviated the burden on families to provide meals during school hours.

In Bangladesh, the Female Secondary School Stipend Program (FSSSP), initiated in the 1990s, aimed to increase female enrollment by providing financial incentives to girls attending secondary school. Asadullah and Chaudhury (2009) reported that this program significantly boosted girls' enrollment and delayed early marriages by keeping girls in school longer. Khandker, Pitt, and Fuwa (2003) supported these findings, noting that the stipend program reduced the direct costs of schooling and compensated families for the opportunity costs of sending girls to school, thereby encouraging higher enrollment rates.

2.4 Free basic education policy and girl-child retention in schools

A study conducted by Ayeh (2022) revealed that free basic education policies can enhance girl-child retention in primary schools by alleviating the financial burden on parents. In terms of completion rates, the implementation of free basic education has contributed to improved outcomes in countries such as Nigeria. For instance, female students in Nigeria had higher completion rates than their male counterparts in both 2010 and 2011 (Ayeh, 2022). Similarly, in Ghana, Iddrisu (2016) found that girls in treatment groups exhibited higher retention and completion rates, which showed the policy's positive influence.

In Kenya, Mulinya and Orodho (2015) discuss how the introduction of Free Basic Education in 2003 led to a significant increase in girls' enrollment and retention in schools. Similarly, in Uganda, Torsu (2024) reports that the policy has increased female participation in education, particularly at the primary level. Both studies emphasize the significant strides made in improving educational access for girls, which has directly contributed to higher retention rates, especially in rural areas where education was previously considered a luxury due to economic constraints.

In Ghana, the introduction of Free Basic Education in the early 2000s had a profound impact on girls' retention in school (Kissi & Issaka, 2023). The research highlights that the removal of school fees and the provision of learning materials alleviated the financial burden on families, leading to more girls staying in school. This shows that Free Basic Education has contributed to a decline in dropout rates among girls, particularly in rural areas, as families no longer have to prioritize boys' education over girls.

In Tanzania, Free Basic Education implementation has also led to improvements in girl-child education (Shukia, 2020). They highlight that, following the policy's implementation, there was a marked increase in the number of girls enrolling in primary schools and staying in school. Similarly, in Zambia, Mwanza (2015) shows that Free Basic Education has contributed to greater educational stability for girls, particularly in the face of societal pressures that traditionally discouraged girls' education.

In Nigeria, the introduction of Free Basic Education has seen varied effects across different regions, with evidence from the northern part of the country showing promising results in girl-child retention. According to Bello (2021), the policy has contributed to higher retention rates for girls in schools, especially in regions where girls traditionally had limited access to education. Similarly, in southern Nigeria, Ene, Adedigba, and Edungbola (2024) point out that Free Basic Education has positively influenced the retention rates of girls in schools, particularly in urban areas, where schools have better infrastructure and support systems.

Research from Malawi also supports the argument that Free Education contributes to better retention of girls in school. According to Munthali (2014), the policy has enabled more girls to access education without the barrier of school fees, which has led to higher retention rates, especially among adolescent girls. Furthermore, in Mozambique, Burbano de Lara (2020) highlights that free education policies have played a significant role in the retention of girls, particularly by providing incentives such as school feeding programs, which have helped keep girls in school. This underlines the importance of free education not only in increasing enrollment but also in ensuring that girls remain in the educational system longer, contributing to improved academic outcomes.

According to Ikpuri and Ikpuri (2024), free education policies at the federal and state levels have ensured that education is accessible to all children, including girls, regardless of socio-economic status. These policies have reduced the financial burden on families, leading to increased school retention rates, particularly in historically underserved regions. In a similar study, Anderson and Lee (2022) found that free education provisions, such as free school meals and transportation, have had a particularly positive effect on girls, encouraging their continued attendance and reducing dropout rates. In Latin America, the introduction of free education policies has also had a positive effect on girl-child retention (Ferrão, 2022). They note that the policy has led to significant gains for girls, particularly in rural areas, where educational access was historically limited.

2.5 Free basic education policy and gender disparity in schools

The implementation of free education policies across nations has significantly influenced gender disparities in education. Research by Anyanwu & Erhijakpor (2015) indicates that girls' enrollment increased significantly following the policy's implementation, with the gender gap in primary school enrollment being nearly closed within the first few years. This has contributed to a substantial reduction in gender disparity, especially in rural and marginalized areas where girls previously had limited access to education. These findings highlight that the policy's financial relief, through the elimination of school fees, has directly improved girls' access to education, thus reducing gender inequality in school attendance.

In Tanzania, the fee-free primary education policy, implemented in 2016, has had a similar effect on gender parity in education. Studies by Awinia (2019) demonstrate that female enrollment rates at the primary level significantly increased following the introduction of the policy.

Luhanga and Kamala (2023) reported that the policy was especially impactful in rural areas, where gender disparities had been more pronounced. Similarly, Ugwu and Ugwu (2024). noted that the policy has played a crucial role in ensuring that girls, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, are now able to access education without the financial constraints that previously existed. These studies show that the policy has successfully contributed to narrowing the gender gap in primary school attendance.

Uganda's Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy, introduced in 1997, has also been credited with reducing gender disparities in education. Research by Mukasa, Mirembe, and Kabugo (2024) confirms that the UPE policy has led to a significant increase in female enrollment rates, with the gender gap in primary school enrollment substantially narrowing over time. The UPE policy has particularly benefited girls from rural areas, where education for girls was previously less prioritized. Similarly, Kiyingi (2024) argues that by eliminating school fees, the policy has created an environment where both boys and girls can equally access education, contributing to a marked reduction in gender disparity in school attendance across Uganda.

In Ghana, the introduction of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in 2017 has had a profound effect on gender parity in secondary education. Research by Kwadwo and Vincent (2024) highlights that the policy has led to a sharp increase in female enrollment at the secondary school level, with gender parity nearly achieved by 2020. The elimination of school fees in secondary education allowed more girls to continue their studies beyond primary school, especially in rural areas where girls had previously been underrepresented in secondary education. Aidoo (2024) similarly notes that the policy has enabled girls to remain in school and continue their education, contributing to reduced gender disparity in secondary education.

In the United States, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which provided federal funding to public schools, played a pivotal role in promoting educational equity. According to a study by Dee (2005), the ESEA led to increased educational attainment among girls, thereby narrowing the gender gap in education. Similarly, a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 2018 highlighted that federal funding initiatives have been instrumental in supporting programs that encourage female participation in STEM fields, further contributing to gender parity in education.

In Canada, the introduction of the Universal Access to Education policy in the 1970s aimed to provide free education to all children, regardless of gender. Research by McLeod and Yates (2019) indicates that this policy has been effective in reducing gender disparities in education, with female enrollment rates in primary and secondary schools reaching near parity with male enrollment. Additionally, a study by Chan, Handler and Frenette (2021) found that the policy has facilitated greater female participation in higher education, particularly in fields traditionally dominated by men, such as engineering and technology.

While the policy has demosntrated a positive impact in reducing gender disparity in some part of the world, the situation of DRC reflects both opportunities and challenges. As reported by Titeca and De Herdt (2011), free basic education policy introduced in 2019 has increased overall school enrolment, but the evidence suggest that gender disparities persist. The report of UNICEF (2022) highlighted that although enrollment rates for girls improved in urban centres, many rural and conflict affected areas continue to see higher dropout rates for girls.

2.6 Challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of Girl-Child Education

Societal attitudes and cultural norms play a significant role in shaping girls' access to education. Traditional gender roles and expectations often lead to the prioritization of boys' education over that of girls (Challender, 2015). Early marriage, prevalent gender stereotypes, and deep-rooted norms can result in limited opportunities for girls to attend school (Kamuli, younger, & warrighton, 2012).Addressing these socio-cultural factors is crucial for promoting gender parity in education.

A study by Challender (2015) established that the Socio-cultural barriers affect girl-child enrollment in basic education. Parents' demand for the education of their daughters is low, reflecting both cultural norms and girls' work in and around the home. This is worsened by cultural perceptions of girls as child minders, marriage material and a burden to the family.

In most of cases, African culture influence parents' decision when comes to education. Girl-child education is not prioritized in many African culture. In 2016, BBC reported that, the patriarchal African viewpoint does not favor girl-child education at any stage. Boy are the lineage keeper, while girls are the complimentary (BBC, 2016). Additionally, Challender, (2015) affirmed this assumption, he denounced that for some parent's girl-child education does not stand as a priority however when it could affect the bride price it is given a second thought. Furtehrmore, Kamuli, younger & Warrington (2012) argued that in region such as Karamoja girl-child is more vulnerable to child marriage because of the ultimate value of the bride price that involve the number of cows. Such culture odd seems to be not only harmful but prevent girl-child to access education despite it being free.

According to Mikisa (2019), gender inequality in society is harmful treats to the education of girls. Lack of access to education increases their vulnerability to early marriage and other health related issues. This implies that when parents are biases on girl-child education the probability of girl child to access education significantly reduces. Additionally, the level of parental education does influence their perception of girl-child education. Children born in a family where parents are educated, there is great probability of both genders to access education evenly (Madika, 2011).

Adequate funding is a fundamental requirement for the successful implementation of free basic education policies (OECD, 2015). Insufficient budget allocation can result in resource constraints, affecting the availability of infrastructure, teaching materials, and qualified educators. Socio-economic disparities within countries can also contribute to unequal access to education, particularly for girls from marginalized backgrounds.

Relatedly, the socio-economic disparities affect access to education, particularly for girls. Factors such as the economic status of families have shown a significant influence on the education of girl-child. As the economy influences the direct and indirect education's expenses, girl-child education is constantly at risk. For instance, Bolton (2020) revealed that, in DRC, especially in rural areas, families with low income or those living in strict poverty girl-child is constantly at risk of dropping out or not enrolling. The direct and indirect expenses of the education of children are a significant contributor to gender disparity (Tamagnan & Samer , 2017).

Financial constraint seems to be a challenge to girl-child education; This implies that when there is financial limitation, boy is much more likely to be sent to school. However, UNESCO (2011) and UNESCO (2015) added that the most vulnerable girls are those living in rural areas, when

access to services is different than those living in urban settings. Service accessibility in rural areas thus increases the risk of girl-child accessing education compared to those living in urban settings.

Nagira Consultants Limited (2016) revealed that in Somalia, financial challenges, early marriage, insecurity, and house chores are the main issues surrounding girl-child education. This case has not only been seen in Somalia, but other researchers such as Bolton and Ine affirm this report (Bolton, 2020; Ine, 2020). These studies affirm that the financial capacity and the economic status of parents do influence girl-child education at all levels. Not only for those living in rural areas but also in urban settings, girl-child still stand vulnerable to the economic status of their parents.

Other factors, such as indirect education-related cost, appeared to influence girl-child education. Indirect education fees are other expenses that parents must provide for the education of their children. This includes examination fees, admission fees, uniform, report fees and lunch fees. Iddrisu (2016) revealed that, in Ghana, public schools that eliminated indirect fees such as admission, examination fees and entrance examination fees experienced high enrollment and retention of girls in primary education. In other words, the elimination of indirect cost on parents promotes girl-child education. Meanwhile, its presence seems to be a danger for girl-child.

Furthermore, one of the primary determinants of the success of free basic education policies is the level of political will and commitment demonstrated by governments. Strong political support is essential for allocating adequate financial resources, designing effective policies, and implementing necessary reforms (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). The commitment of governments to education is often reflected in the proportion of the national budget allocated to

the education sector. A lack of political will results in underfunded and poorly executed education programs, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, including girls (Peters, 2018).

Allocation of financial resources for education in national budgets has a great impact on the policy. As many Sub-Saharan African countries have adopted basic education policy, the issue of inadequate funding is still an immense determinant of the effectiveness of the policy (UNICEF, 2015). When a policy is not well funded, its implementation becomes a hardship that will encounter a lot of obstacles. This issue has been seen in many Sub-Saharan African countries such as Uganda and Tanzania. For instance, when UPE was introduced in Uganda, it was elaborated that they will need at least 20% of the local resources to support it, however, only 15% was allocated (UNICEF, 2015; MoES, 2016). Not well-funded policies tend to be a direct burden to the parents (Mikisa, 2019). As in Tanzania, inadequate funding becomes an extra burden that parents must carry. Especially for poor families, they influence the retention and completion rate (Luvanga & Mhagana, 2022).

Challenges related to school location and transportation, particularly in rural areas. School-related factors such as distance have been revealed as an important factor that challenges girl-child education around the world. Often, most parents are scared of sending their female children to school in distant places and would rather keep them at home (Omede , 2016). In Uganda, school distance is one of the determinants that influence girl-child retention and completion. For instance, in Bududa and Karamoja region, school distance is one of the factors that influences girl-child to drop out and retention (Kamuli, Younger & Warrighton, 2012).

Teacher shortage and absenteeism have been as one of the factors since they influence mostly those in the last grade (Mikisa, 2019). UNICEF (2015) argued that low-income countries faced severe teacher shortages that influence girl-child education. Teacher shortage is even worse when the classroom is overcrowded. Relatedly, UNICEF (2014) reported that in countries such as Uganda and Kenya, teachers' absenteeism has significantly influenced girl-child drop out, repetition, and discouraging completion in their last grade.

Corporal punishment has been identified as one of the challenges that influences the effectiveness of the policy. Kamuli, Younger & Warrington (2012) revealed that corporal punishment has influenced girl-child school dropout in many primary schools in Bududa. It says that girls who experienced corporal punishment tend to be discouraged and feel humiliated as a result; they drop out. This study is aligned with Omede (2016), who argued that corporal punishment at high grades in primary level discourages girl-child school attendance and as a result some girls preferred to drop out.

Additionally, girl-child perception toward education is also one of the challenging aspects. Girl perception can influence mostly retention and completion. When a girl-child has a negative attitude, her perception toward education tends to change its course. Mikisa (2019) argued that one of the causes of girl-child school dropout in eastern Uganda was based on their perception of education.

Furthermore, different countries have different ages at which a child should enroll in primary education. For instance, in DRC the required age to enroll in primary level is 6 years old, while in Tanzania it is 7 years old. With the introduction of basic education policy, not get the change to enroll at the same age. For some, they may be older, while others may be younger or have the

required age. However, for the older one, age tends to influence their retention. For instance, in Uganda, the enrollment age has been seen in education. Around 2010, they were a great number of late enrollments among students compared to the normal enrollment age (MoEs, 2010; Mikisa, 2019). The reason linked to late enrollment includes incapacity of parent to send their children to school, the distance, the loss of a parent, and many others (Tumusanze, 2011).

However, DRC is not an exception to late enrollment in the primary level. Following the economic crisis and several arm conflicts happening in the country, many young girls enroll much late in primary school. The average around 2003-2005 was around 10-15 age of enrolling in primary (Mabika, 2011). This shows late enrollment and these girls later fill like they are old not fitting the school environment hence end up dropping out and get married.

2.7 Literature Gap

The literature review revealed that several scholars had researched the effect of the free basic education policy on girl-child education. However, it also highlighted certain gaps in the existing body of literature. One significant gap was the limited number of studies from the perspective of the DRC. A substantial portion of the research in this field such as Ugwu and Ugwu (2024), Covert (2024), Kissi and Issaka (2023), Ayeh (2022), Mikisa (2019), Awinia (2019), Peters (2018), Chaudhuri and Roy (2017), Iddrisu (2016), Makate (2016), Patterson and Schäfer Elinder (2014) and Kamuli, Younger and Warrighton (2012) among others had been conducted in foreign countries, resulting in a noticeable dearth of literature from a DRC perspective. That said, most of the studies did not focus on primary schools where this study was conducted. Additionally, some of the studies were qualitative in nature, hence ignoring the quantitative aspect, which this study captured. To bridge this gap, the present study exclusively focused on

DRC and primary schools, with a strong emphasis on assessing the effect of the free basic education policy on girl-child education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was employed in this study. It covers the approaches used to assess free basic education policy and promotion of girl child education. It also outlines the research design, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection techniques, data quality control, data analysis techniques, ethical presentation, and limitations and delimitations of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional survey, which allowed for the collection of data from various individuals at a specific moment, utilizing a consistent data collection tool (Kothari, 2014). The decision to adopt a cross-sectional survey design was driven by its effectiveness in efficiently obtaining a substantial volume of field data using the same data collection tool. Furthermore, a mixed-method approach was considered, where both quantitative and qualitative data were used. The quantitative approach allowed the researcher to solicit measurable or quantifiable information, while the qualitative approach was used to collect non-measurable or non-quantifiable information (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). The mixed-method approach was utilized in a way that allowed triangulation of numerical and non-numerical data by ensuring that the strengths balanced the limitations of one type of data.

3.2. Study Area

This study was carried out in Bunia city, which is in the northeast of the country, Irumu district under Ituri province, DRC. Bunia is the capital city of Ituri province. The city is divided in 3 communes, which include Shary, Mbunyia, Nyakasanza. Bunia is more of an urban setting than a

rural center. The rationale of choosing this city is that Bunia is one of the most affected regions in Ituri province, which has lower girl-child enrollment and high school drop-out for the past two years ((MESPT, 2021). Also, Bunia is home to over 6.9 million of internally displaced people (International Organization for Migration, 2024). In addition, for security reasons, Bunia seems to be a safer place to conduct a study. This study focused only on the commune of Shary. Shary is a commune that scored lower girl-child enrollment and retention compared to the rest (Provincial ministry of education, 2021).

3.3 Target Population of the Study

This study targeted a total of 603 population considered schools in Shary commune, which include 526 girls (P4 to P6) because children in those classes were the only ones benefiting from the free basic education policy, 60 teachers, 10 parents, 03 local government officials and 04 Headteachers (Education Report, 2021)

Table 3.1: The Study Population

Category	Target Population	Accessible Population
Girls (P4 to P6)	526	526
Teachers	452	60
Parents	10	10
Local Government Officials	03	03
Head Teachers	04	04
Total	**995**	**603**

Source: Education Report (2021)

3.4 Study Sample Size

The sample size refers to the number of participants chosen to participate in the study (Mbabazi, 2011). The numbers of respondents considered (Girls and Teachers) were determined using Yamane's formula, which was developed in 1967 while for (Parents, Local Government

Officials, and Head Teachers), the sample size was determined using the table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as presented below.

Yamane's formula: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Sample size for girl-child

n- sample size = ?

N- population = 526

e- margin error or precision level (10% or 0.1)

Thus:

n= 526/1+526(0.1)^2= **84.02** ≈ **84 Girls**

Sample size for teachers

n- sample size = ?

N- population = 60

e- margin error or precision level (10% or 0.1)

Thus:

= 60/1+60(0.1)^2=**37.5** ≈ **38 Teachers**

Table 3.2: The Study Sample Size Distribution

Category	Population	Selected sample	Sampling technique	Data Type
Girls (P4 to P6)	526	84	Simple random sampling	Quantitative
Teachers	60	38	Simple random sampling	Quantitative
Parents	10	10	Purposive sampling	Qualitative
Local Government Officials	03	03	Purposive sampling	Qualitative
Head Teachers	04	04	Purposive sampling	Qualitative
Total	**603**	**139**		

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The study employed simple random and purposive sampling techniques.

3.5.1 Simple random sampling

In this study, a simple random sampling technique was utilized, giving an equal chance for all participants within the targeted categories to be included (Kombo & Tromp, 2016). The sampling method was used to focus on Girls (P4 to P6) and Teachers. By employing this technique, the aim was to minimize sampling bias and ensure that all members have an equal opportunity to participate in the study. The researcher self-administered the instruments and used papers labeled 'Yes' and 'No', and each accessible participant was requested to pick a paper. The 'Yes' papers matched the sample size. Therefore, those who picked 'Yes' were considered, while those who picked 'No' were dropped.

3.5.2 Purposive sampling

The research utilized a purposive sampling technique, where the researcher specifically selected individuals from the field who possessed highly relevant and in-depth information related to the study objectives (Amin, 2005). For this study, members from the categories of parents, local government officials, and head teachers were targeted to provide qualitative data. Purposive sampling was chosen because it focused solely on respondents who could offer comprehensive insights regarding the study objectives (Amin, 2005). Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that only individuals with specialized knowledge and experience relevant to the research objectives were included. This approach allowed the researcher to gather rich, meaningful, and context-specific qualitative data, which might not have been achievable through random sampling methods. Moreover, by selecting key informants such as parents, local government

officials, and head teachers, the study was able to capture diverse perspectives critical to understanding the research problem comprehensively.

3.6 Data Collection Method and Tools

The researcher used mixed methods of data collection. These included surveys and key informant interviews.

3.6.1 Survey

A survey is a research method that utilizes a structured questionnaire to gather information from respondents (Mugabe & Mugabe, 2003; Katamba & Nsubuga, 2014). This approach involved a series of pre-designed written questions aligned with the study's research objectives (Katamba & Nsubuga, 2014). It served as the primary method for collecting quantitative data. In this study, the survey comprised both closed and open-ended questions. The selection of the survey method was based on its cost-effectiveness and ability to minimize biases. A closed-ended questionnaire was administered to girls and teachers, ensuring that participants' consent was obtained before data collection. The survey method was chosen because it is an efficient and structured way to collect large volumes of data from multiple respondents within a short period. It also ensures consistency in responses, allowing for easier analysis and comparison. Additionally, the study used a closed-ended questionnaire format that provided standardized responses, reducing the risk of subjective interpretation. Ensuring informed consent further enhanced the ethical integrity of the study.

3.6.2 In-depth Interview

An in-depth interview is a technique used to gain and understand the underlying reasons and motivations for people`s attitude or behavior (Mugenda, 2003). Qualitative information was

collected while using an in-depth interview guide. Parents, head teachers, and local officials were the key informants. Those respondents were interviewed because of their deep level of knowledge and understanding of how the free basic education policy affects girl-child education in primary schools in DRC. Key informant interviews were conducted face-to-face, guided by an in-depth interview guide drawn from research questions. The interview guide stood as a principal qualitative data tool throughout the research process.

3.7 Data Quality Control

The study ensured data quality control by ensuring the validity and reliability of the study tools (Yin, 2014).

3.7.1 Validity

3.7.1.1 Validity for Quantitative Data

The validity of a data collection instrument is its appropriateness to measure a variable or construct and yield intended results (Amin, 2005). The supervisor assessed the tools for face validity and accuracy to provide feedback on the questionnaires (Golafshani, 2003).

3.7.1.2 Validity for qualitative data

Validity testing of the qualitative data tool involved assessing the accuracy and appropriateness of the instrument in capturing the intended constructs. The supervisors evaluated the tool's items for relevance and clarity. This helped to establish the trustworthiness and appropriateness of the instrument for capturing the intended qualitative information.

3.7.2 Reliability

3.7.2.1 Reliability for Quantitative Data

Reliability concerns the degree to which a set of variables consistently measures the aspects they are intended to evaluate (Amin, 2005). To ensure reliability, a pilot study involving 20 individuals who were not part of the main study was conducted. The data from the pilot study will be entered into SPSS Ver. 23 and subjected to reliability testing, utilising Cronbach's alpha values. The research instrument was deemed reliable because the study constructs achieved alpha values that exceeded .70, in accordance with the recommended threshold (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013).

Table 3.3: Reliability Test of Tool

Construct	Item tested	Alpha values
Free Basic Education Policy	06	.747
Girl-Child Enrollment	06	.841
Girl-Child Retention	04	.790
Gender Disparity in School	05	.710
Challenges affecting Free Basic Education Policy	14	.781

3.7.2.2 Reliability for Qualitative Data

To conduct a reliability test for qualitative data, triangulation methods, such as comparing findings with existing literature, keeping the interview diaries and member checks was employed. This ensured trustworthiness of their qualitative findings and affirming the relevance and resonance of the data within the studied context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

After the approval of the research proposal and data collection instruments by the research supervisor, the researcher sought for clearance to proceed to the field for data collection. The

researcher obtained and an introduction letter was obtained from the School of Social Sciences, Department of Postgraduate Studies at Uganda Christian University. A clearance was given by the provincial ministry which supported the introductory letter to schools. Then the researcher administered the questionnaire and conducted interviews immediately after getting the clearance.

3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis

3.9.1 Quantitative Data

The collected data underwent a comprehensive editing process and cleaning to ensure both consistency and accuracy after inputting into SPSS Ver. 23 for analysis. The analysis encompassed the application of descriptive and inferential statistics, recognised and widely used in research. Descriptive statistics were utilised to present the frequencies and percentages of respondents' demographic data. Moreover, means and standard deviations were applied to offer a clear presentation of the study variables. To delve into the relationships between variables and to predict the effect of independent variables on dependent variables, the analysis included Inferential Statistics on Correlations and Regression Analyses. Pearson correlation was used over other methods because it specifically measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables, providing a clear, interpretable coefficient. The quantitative findings were organised and presented in tables.

3.9.2 Qualitative Data

The study analysed the collected data through embedded analysis and content analysis deemed appropriate for such studies (Michigan Government, 2014; Cresswell, 2013). Embedded data analysis allows analysis of specific aspects of the cases under inquiry, and content analysis permits analysis of data into themes that generate from the collected data. The interpretations

coded data was discussed in the context of the study interview guided by the study objectives. The generated interpretations were also discussed about findings of previous studies. It was from this discussion that conclusions to study the problem and recommendations were generated.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

To ensure ethical issues are observed, the researcher sought approval from the research ethical committee of UCU (REC), and the School of Social Sciences prior to data collection. Participation of the respondents was voluntary in this research and the respondents were not mentioned by name or tribe as far as confidentially is concerned. For qualitative participation, the consent form was given to the respondent. All the information used in this study was purely for academic purposes and was acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

3.11 Study Limitations

Non-response: During the study, some participants (Teachers) preferred not to respond to the questionnaire citing that the questionnaire is too long for them. As a solution, the researchers interviewed some of the teachers to get their insight.

During the data collection, P7-P8 were not included, as it was found during the pilot study that these two classes have not yet started benefiting from the program despite being part of the policy. Some of the cases associated were a lack of funds from the government to support P7-P8 and the high cost of education related to the two classes compared to other primary levels. As a solution, the researcher only collected data from P4-P6 classes.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter captures the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the study findings. The chapter includes the presentation of the descriptive statistics of the study, specifically on the demographic characteristics of the respondents and followed by findings on the study objectives which included the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child retention in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on reduced gender disparity in Bunia and the challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia.

4.2 Response Rate

The section illustrates the count of participants who submitted successful responses compared to those who did not.

Table 4.1: Showing the response rate

Category	Targeted sample	Responded	Didn't Respond	Response Rate (%)
Girls (P4 to P6)	84	70	14	83.3
Teachers	38	35	03	92.1
Parents	10	10	0	100
Local Government Officials	03	03	0	100
Head Teachers	04	04	0	100
Total	**139**	**122**	**17**	**87.8**

Based on the data presented in Table 4.1, the study targeted a total sample of 139 participants across different respondent categories. Out of this target, 122 participants successfully provided

responses, yielding an overall response rate of 87.8%, while 17 participants did not respond. Among the categories, girls (P4 to P6) had a response rate of 83.3%, with 70 out of 84 targeted respondents participating, while 14 did not respond. Teachers had a high response rate of 92.1%, with 35 out of 38 participants responding and only 3 non-respondents. Parents, local government officials, and head teachers all achieved a 100% response rate, meaning all targeted participants in these categories fully engaged in the study. The overall response rate of 87.8% significantly surpasses the recommended 70% threshold established by the Guttmacher Institute (2006), indicating a highly satisfactory level of participation, ensuring the reliability and credibility of the study findings.

4.3 Background Information on the Respondents

Based on the quantitative data collected, respondents' demographic information to assess various factors, gender, age, and education level of girl child and teachers that took part in the quantitative study. The findings are presented in table 4.2 below, showing frequencies and percentages.

Table 4.2: Background Information on the Respondents

Bio-data Information	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age bracket of Girl – Child	8-12	03	4.3
	13-16	29	41.4
	17-18	38	54.3
	Total	**70**	**100.0**
Education of Girl-Child	Primary Four	12	17.1
	Primary Five	30	42.9
	Primary Six	28	40.0
	Total	**70**	**100.0**
Gender of Teachers	Male	21	60.0
	Female	14	40.0
	Total	**35**	**100.0**
Age of teachers	18-30	03	8.6
	31-40	12	34.3
	41-50	16	45.7
	Above 50	04	11.4
	Total	**35**	**100.0**
Education of Teachers	Certificate	05	14.3
	Diploma	21	60.0
	Degree	09	25.7
	Total	**35**	100.0

Source: Field data, 2024

The findings from Table 4.1 provide insightful demographic information about the study participants. Regarding the age distribution of the girl-child, the majority of respondents were aged 17-18 years 54.3%, followed by those aged 13-16 years 41.4%, while only 4.3% were between 8-12 years. With most of girls' respondents being in their late teenage years, it likely gives them a broader understanding of the issues under investigation.

In terms of education levels among the girl-child respondents, a significant proportion were in Primary Five 42.9%, Primary Six 40.0% and lastly Primary Four with 17.1%. This distribution suggests that a substantial number of participants were in middle primary school levels, which may influence their perspectives on school-related issues.

Regarding teachers' gender distribution, 60% of the respondents were male, while 40% were female, indicating a moderate gender gap in the teaching profession. The age distribution of teachers revealed that the largest group fell within the 41-50 age range 45.7%, followed by those aged 31-40 years 34.3%. A smaller proportion were above 50 years 11.4%, while the least representation came from teachers aged 18-30 years 8.6%. This suggests that most teachers were in their mid to late career stages, likely contributing substantial experience to the study.

Concerning educational qualifications of teachers, the majority held a diploma 60.0%, followed by those with a degree 25.7%, while 14.3% had a certificate. This distribution indicates that most teachers possessed formal training, equipping them with the necessary expertise to provide informed insights into the study’s focus areas.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

4.4.1 Responses for free basic education policy

The respondents were asked to share their knowledge on free basic education policy and guided to rate their responses. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to interpret the results. For the interpretation of mean score, mean value below 3.0 indicates disagreement, mean value = 3.0 indicates undecided while mean value above 3.0 indicates agreement.

Table 4.3: Free Basic Education Policy

Statement	*Strongly Disagree*		*Disagree*		*Neutral*		*Agree*		*Strongly Agree*		*Mean*	*S.D*
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
The free basic education policy cover fees for girl-child	24	23.5	22	21.6	19	18.6	19	18.6	18	17.6	**2.85**	**1.431**
Girl-child are given special bursaries which are not given to boys	16	15.7	31	30.4	25	24.5	14	13.7	16	15.7	**2.81**	**1.286**
Girls are offered free textbooks and stationery	21	20.6	30	29.4	16	15.7	14	13.7	21	20.6	**2.86**	**1.449**
There is construction of new building to support girl-child education	14	13.7	33	32.4	16	15.7	07	6.9	32	31.4	**3.10**	**1.486**
There policy caters of girl-child with special needs	18	17.6	35	34.3	26	25.5	09	8.8	14	13.7	**2.67**	**1.261**
Teachers are always at school because they are paid well	22	21.6	29	28.4	23	22.5	14	13.7	14	13.7	**2.70**	**1.326**

Source: Field data, 2024

The responses regarding the coverage of fees for the girl-child under the free basic education policy indicate a moderate perception among the respondents. Specifically, majority 45.2% of the respondents disagreed, then36.2% agreed with the statement while 18.6% were neutral. This indicated that the policy doesn't fully cover the fees for girl-child education.The mean score of 2.85 and the standard deviation of 1.431 suggest that there is some uncertainty and mixed perceptions regarding the extent to which the policy fully covers the fees for girl-child education. The responses imply that while some participants believe the policy does offer financial support, others are skeptical, highlighting a need for further clarification or improvement in the execution of this aspect of the policy.

Regarding the provision of special bursaries exclusively for girls, majority 46.1% of the respondents disagreed, 29.4% agreed with the statement and 24.5% remained neutral,. With majority disagreeing, it indicated that not all girls are provided with special bursaries. With a mean of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 1.286, the responses indicate that there is a significant

divide on whether girls receive special bursaries that boys do not. This suggests that while some perceive that there are gender-based financial incentives, others feel this may not be the case, or that the policy is not implemented as effectively as expected.

The provision of free textbooks and stationery to girls also generated mixed responses. Results revealed that majority 50.0% the respondents disagreed, 34.3% agreed with the statement and 15.7% were neutral . Since majority of respondents disagreed with the statement, it indicated that not all girls are provided with free textbooks and stationery. The mean score of 2.86 and the standard deviation of 1.449 suggest that there is a relatively low level of consensus regarding the adequacy and fairness of textbook and stationery distribution. Some respondents may not have access to or may not be aware of the program, implying a need for clearer communication or more equitable distribution of resources.

Regarding the construction of new buildings to support girl-child education, majority 46.1% disagreed, 31.4% agreed while 15.7% remained neutral. However, majority of the respondents having disagreed, it indicated that there has been little progress in infrastructure development for girls' education. The mean score of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 1.486 suggest that while there is positive feedback from a portion of respondents, there is still significant concern and a need for further improvements in this area.

In terms of policy catering for the girl-child with special needs, majority 51.9% of the respondents disagreed, 25.5% were neutral while a small portion of 22.5% just agreed with statement. Since majority disagreed with the statement, it meant that the policy was not fully catering for the girl-child with special needs. The mean score of 2.67 and the standard deviation of 1.261 suggest that many respondents feel that the policy does not adequately address the needs

of girls with special needs. This indicates a potential gap in the implementation of the policy, requiring more targeted efforts to include this demographic effectively.

Lastly, when asked about teachers being consistently present due to fair pay, majority 54.0% of the respondents disagreed, 27.4% agreed with the statement while 22.5% remained neutral . The mean score of 2.70 and a standard deviation of 1.326 suggest that many do not believe teacher absenteeism is linked to fair compensation. The responses imply that issues with teacher attendance may not solely be related to salary but could involve other factors such as working conditions or motivation, which could be addressed to improve the situation.

From the interviews with different stakeholders which included parents, local government official and headteachers, different views were pointed out and results revealed that;

> *....as a parent, I believe the free basic education policy offers some support for the girl-child, but there are still many gaps. For instance, my daughter's fees are sometimes not fully covered, and there's no clarity on what the policy actually includes. (Parent 1)*

> *.... the issue of textbooks and stationery distribution seems inconsistent. Some schools provide adequate resources, while others struggle, which creates inequalities among students. (Local Government Official 1)*

> *.... I think the policy does not adequately cater to girls with special needs. We lack the resources and training to provide the necessary support for these girls in our school. (Head Teacher 1)*

The interviews with various stakeholders, including parents, local government officials, and headteachers, highlighted significant concerns regarding the implementation of the free basic education policy. Parents expressed uncertainty about the policy's coverage, noting that fees for

the girl-child are often not fully met, and there is a lack of clarity about what the policy entails. Some parents also disagreed with the notion of special bursaries for girls, believing that both genders have equal financial support opportunities. Local government officials pointed out inconsistencies in the distribution of textbooks and stationery, which leads to inequalities among schools, while also acknowledging slow progress in infrastructure development for girl-child education. Headteachers expressed concerns about the policy's failure to adequately support girls with special needs due to a lack of resources and training.

Additionally, while teacher attendance is often linked to pay, some headteachers identified other challenges, such as poor working conditions and low motivation, as contributing factors. These results suggest that while the policy has made some strides, significant gaps remain in its execution, particularly in ensuring equitable access to resources, improving infrastructure, and addressing the needs of girls with special needs. These gaps call for better clarification of the policy's components, more equitable distribution of resources, increased investment in infrastructure, and enhanced support for teachers and students with special needs.

4.4.2 Responses for girl-child enrollment

Respondents were instructed to evaluate and rank their responses regarding girl-child enrollment which were then analyzed through the use of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to facilitate interpretation of the data. For the interpretation of mean score, mean value below 3.0 indicates disagreement, mean value = 3.0 indicates undecided while mean value above 3.0 indicates agreement.

Table 4.4: Responses for Girl-Child Enrollment

Statement	*Strongly Disagree*		*Disagree*		*Neutral*		*Agree*		*Strongly Agree*		*Mean*	*S.D*
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
High girl-child enrollment was only registered in the beginning of the implementation of free basic education policy	22	21.6	38	37.6	22	21.6	03	2.9	17	16.7	**2.56**	**1.324**
Parents enrolled positively their girl-child when the program stated.	19	18.6	41	40.2	14	13.7	12	11.8	16	15.7	**2.66**	**1.339**
The enrollment increased when financial burden reduced	22	21.6	36	35.3	26	25.5	11	10.8	07	6.9	**2.46**	**1.149**
The girl-child enrollment increased regardless of age	19	18.6	35	34.3	27	26.5	10	9.8	11	10.9	**2.57**	**1.195**
Even girl children with disabilities enrolled due to free basic education policy	12	11.8	25	24.5	21	20.6	20	19.6	24	23.5	**3.19**	**1.355**
Free basic education policy reduces girl-child inequality in access education.	15	14.7	20	19.6	18	17.6	21	20.6	28	27.5	**3.25**	**1.447**

Source: Field data, 2024

The responses regarding high girl-child enrollment at the beginning of the free basic education policy indicate mixed perceptions. Specifically, 59.2% disagreed with the statement, 21.6% remained neutral, while 19.6% agreed. Given that majority disagreed with the statement, implied that there was no high girl-child enrolment at the beginning of the free basic education policy. The mean score of 2.56 and a standard deviation of 1.324 suggest a general disagreement about the sustainability of the high enrollment figures. This implies that while the policy initially saw a positive response, its long-term impact may not have been as significant or sustained, possibly due to issues such as continued financial barriers or other external factors affecting enrollment.

Regarding parental support for enrolling their girl-child when the program started, 58.8% disagreed with the statement, 27.5% agreed, while 13.7% remained neutral. Since majority of the respondents disagreed, it meant that parental support for enrolling the girl-child didn't start with

the program. The mean score of 2.66 and a standard deviation of 1.339 reflect a moderate level of uncertainty or disagreement regarding the initial enthusiasm of parents for enrolling their daughters. This suggests that although some parents did engage positively with the program, many were either reluctant or faced challenges that prevented active participation in the enrollment process.

The statement about increased enrollment due to reduced financial burdens saw 56.9% of the respondents disagree, 25.5% remain neutral, while 17.7% agreed with the statement. Therefore, since majority disagreed with the statement, it implied that there was no increased enrollment due to reduced financial burden because of the policy. With a mean of 2.46 and a standard deviation of 1.149, the responses indicate that financial reduction did not have a strong or widespread impact on enrollment. This implies that while the reduction of financial barriers may have been a factor, it was not the primary driver for increased girl-child enrollment, suggesting that other factors may have been more influential.

In terms of enrollment regardless of age, 52.6% disagreed with the statement, 26.5% were neutral, while 20.7% agreed. Given that majority disagreed, it showed that besides the policy, the enrollment regardless of age didn't increase. The mean score of 2.57 and a standard deviation of 1.195 suggest that while there was some enrollment across various age groups, a significant portion of respondents disagreed with the idea that age did not influence enrollment. This indicates that age might still be a factor in enrollment, with respondents potentially seeing age-based restrictions or challenges that affected broader participation.

The enrollment of girls with disabilities due to the free basic education policy received a more positive response. Results revealed 26.3% disagreed, 43.1% agreed with the statement, while

20.6% remained neutral, which showed the enrollment of the girls with disabilities increased as a result of free basic education. With a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 1.355, this suggests that the policy had a positive impact on the inclusion of girls with disabilities, with a notable portion of respondents affirming that the policy helped reduce barriers for these girls. The responses reflect a more optimistic view of how the policy has addressed inclusivity in education.

Lastly, regarding the reduction of girl-child inequality in access to education, 34.3% disagreed, while majority of the respondents 48.1% agreed with the statement, 17.6% remained neutral, showed that with the policy, there was reduction of girl-child inequality in access to education. The mean score of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 1.447 suggest a generally positive view of the policy's impact on enrolment. This indicates that a majority of respondents believe that the free basic education policy has been effective in increasing enrolment in educational access for girls, despite some differing opinions.

The interview findings provided valuable insights into the girl-child enrollment and different Key Informants revealed that;

> *.....I believe that the free basic education policy initially provided significant support for the girl-child, helping many families, including mine, to send their daughters to school. However, over time, I've noticed a decline in the enrollment numbers, especially as the policy's benefits became unclear and inconsistent (Parent 3)*

> *.... infrastructure development has certainly made some progress, with a few new schools being built and others being renovated. However, the overall pace has been slow, and there is still much more to be done. ...many schools, particularly in rural areas, continue to face inadequate facilities, such as overcrowded*

classrooms, lack of toilets, and insufficient classrooms." (Local Government Official 3)

....one of the critical gaps in the free basic education policy is its failure to adequately address the needs of girls with special needs. In our school, we lack the necessary resources, such as specialized learning materials, and the training required to support these students effectively. Although there is a general awareness of the importance of inclusivity, without proper training and resources, it becomes extremely difficult to cater to these students' needs (Head Teacher 2)

The interview findings reveal a mixed response regarding the effectiveness of the free basic education policy in promoting girl-child enrollment. While some parents noted the initial positive impact of the policy, including helping them send their daughters to school, the benefits became less clear over time, with enrollment numbers declining and financial burdens remaining. Local government officials pointed out the slow progress in infrastructure development, particularly in rural areas, where schools still struggle with overcrowded classrooms and lack of basic facilities. Head teachers highlighted the policy's failure to adequately address the needs of girls with special needs, citing a lack of specialized learning materials and training for teachers.

Furthermore, despite teachers being paid, poor working conditions and low motivation, exacerbated by insufficient professional development, hindered their ability to engage students effectively. These results suggest that while the free basic education policy made strides initially, its long-term sustainability is challenged by inconsistent implementation, lack of resources, and inadequate support for both teachers and students.

Table 4.5: The relationship between Free Basic Education Policy and Girl-Child Enrollment in Bunia

		Free Basic Education Policy	Girl-child enrollment
Free Basic Education Policy	Pearson Correlation	1	.161
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.106
	N	102	102
Girl-child enrollment	Pearson Correlation	.161	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.106	
	N	102	102

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field data, 2024

The results indicate a positive but weak and insignificant relationship between Free Basic Education Policy and girl-child enrollment, with a Pearson correlation of r = 0.161 (P = .106 > 0.01). The significance value exceeding the established threshold of 0.01 suggests that the relationship is not statistically significant. The correlation coefficient of 0.161 indicates a weak association, meaning that improvements or changes in the Free Basic Education Policy do not strongly influence girl-child enrollment in Bunia. This implies that other factors beyond the policy might play a more substantial role in determining girl-child enrollment rates.

4.4.3 Responses for Girl-Child Retention

Respondents were asked to rank their responses regarding girl-child retention and the results were interpreted using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. For the interpretation of mean score, mean value below 3.0 indicates disagreement, mean value = 3.0 indicates undecided while mean value above 3.0 indicates agreement.

Table 4.6: Responses for Girl-Child Retention

Statement	*Strongly Disagree*		*Disagree*		*Neutral*		*Agree*		*Strongly Agree*		*Mean*	*S.D*
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
The number of girls staying in school has increased due to free basic education policy	18	17.6	15	14.7	25	24.5	22	21.6	22	21.6	**3.15**	**1.389**
The girls attend school regularly because of free basic education policy	13	12.7	22	21.6	23	22.6	30	29.4	14	13.7	**3.10**	**1.255**
Gild-child who is under free basic education policy is more likely to complete primary level.	14	13.7	8	7.8	13	12.7	20	19.6	47	46.1	**3.76**	**1.450**
For a girl-child that living in poverty, basic education policy is a remedy that protect her education.	08	7.8	16	15.7	13	12.7	19	18.6	46	45.1	**3.77**	**1.371**

Source: Field data, 2024

The responses regarding the increase in the number of girls staying in school due to the free basic education policy indicate a generally positive view, with 43.2% agreed with the statement, 32.3% disagreed, while 24.5% remained neutral, which meant that there was actually increase in the number of girls staying in school due to the free basic education policy. The mean score of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 1.389 suggest a moderate level of agreement, with some variability in responses. This implies that while a significant portion of respondents believes the policy has led to increased retention of girls in school, there are varying opinions on its overall effectiveness in ensuring long-term retention.

Regarding the regularity of school attendance among girls due to the free basic education policy, 43.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 34.3% disagreed, while 22.6% were neutral, which meant there was increased regularity of school attendance among girls due to the free basic education policy. The mean score of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 1.255 suggest a

slightly positive but mixed response. This indicates that while many respondents believe the policy has encouraged regular school attendance, there is still a notable proportion that remains uncertain or disagrees, implying that factors beyond the policy may also influence attendance patterns.

The statement about the likelihood of a girl under the free basic education policy completing primary school received a positive response, 65.7% agreed with the statement, 21.5% disagreed, 12.7% remained neutral, which showed that there was increase in girl under the free basic education policy completing primary school The mean score of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.450 suggest a high level of agreement that the policy positively impacts the completion of primary education for girls. This implies that the majority of respondents believe the policy plays a crucial role in increasing the likelihood of girl-child completion at the primary level, reflecting confidence in its effectiveness.

In the case of girls living in poverty, the perception of free basic education as a remedy to protect their education showed strong support. while majority 63.7% agreed with the statement, only 23.5% disagreed and 12.7% remained neutral, which showed that increase the free basic education was a remedy to many girls living in poverty. With a mean of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 1.371, this indicates a significant majority of respondents believe that the policy has been beneficial for girls in poverty, offering them a protective measure for their education. This suggests a strong perception that free basic education helps address educational inequality, particularly for disadvantaged girls.

Furthermore, the interview findings provide critical insights into the girl-child retention and different Key Informants pointed out that;

.... the policy seemed promising at first, with an increase in girl-child enrollment, but the expected financial relief did not materialize. The pressure of school-related costs still remains a challenge for many families which lead to girls dropping out of schools. (Parent, 1)

.... while there has been some progress in distributing educational materials like textbooks and stationery, inconsistencies persist, leaving many schools in rural areas still facing resource shortages. This inequality negatively impacts the quality of education for girls." (Local Government Official, 3)

.... despite teachers being paid, poor working conditions, lack of teaching materials, and low motivation are significant issues. These factors lead to low retention of learners. (Head Teacher, 3)

The interview findings reveal a mixed perception of the effectiveness of the free basic education policy on girl-child retention, with key informants pointing out several challenges that affect girl-child retention. Parents highlighted initial positive impacts but noted a decline in enrollment due to unclear support and continued financial burdens, indicating that the policy did not fully alleviate school-related costs. Local government officials reported ongoing inequalities in resource distribution, particularly in rural areas, which hampers the quality of education for girls. Additionally, head teachers emphasized poor working conditions, lack of teaching materials, and low teacher motivation, all of which contribute to low retention rates. These findings suggest that while the policy has made some progress, significant gaps remain in terms of consistent support, infrastructure, and teacher morale, all of which are critical to improving the retention and success of the girl-child in education.

Table 4.7: The relationship between Free Basic Education Policy and Girl-Child Retention in Bunia

		Free basic education policy	Girl-child retention
Free basic education policy	Pearson Correlation	1	.114
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.888
	N	102	102
Girl-child retention	Pearson Correlation	.114	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.888	
	N	102	102

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field data, 2024

Based on the data presented in Table 4.7, there is a positive but weak and insignificant relationship between the Free Basic Education Policy and girl-child retention, with a Pearson correlation of r = 0.114 (P = .888 > 0.01). Since the p-value is greater than the established significance level of 0.01, this relationship is not statistically significant. The correlation coefficient of 0.114 indicates a very weak association, suggesting that changes in the Free Basic Education Policy have little to no direct impact on girl-child retention in Bunia. This implies that other factors beyond the policy may play a more crucial role in influencing girl-child retention rates.

4.4.4 Responses for Gender Disparity in Schools

Participants were asked to rank their responses regarding gender disparity in schools and the data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for interpretation. For the interpretation of mean score, mean value below 3.0 indicates

disagreement, mean value = 3.0 indicates undecided while mean value above 3.0 indicates agreement.

Table 4.8: Responses for Gender Disparity in Schools

Statement	*Strongly Disagree*		*Disagree*		*Neutral*		*Agree*		*Strongly Agree*		*Mean*	*S.D*
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
There are girl-child in school than boys	25	24.5	35	34.3	23	22.5	10	9.8	09	8.8	**2.44**	**1.215**
The number of girls and boys are same in the schools	29	28.4	34	33.3	17	16.7	09	8.8	13	12.7	**2.44**	**1.332**
The number of girls is still low besides the free basic education policy being in place	31	30.4	27	26.5	15	14.7	13	12.7	16	15.7	**2.57**	**1.439**
The completion of girls and boys is almost the same	26	25.5	24	23.5	30	29.4	13	12.7	09	8.8	**2.56**	**1.247**
The free basic education policy offers same benefits to girls and boys	23	22.5	25	24.5	21	20.6	20	19.6	13	12.7	**2.75**	**1.346**

Source: Field data, 2024

Regarding the statement that there are more girl-children in school than boys, majority of the respondents 58.6% disagreed, 22.5% were neutral while 18.6% agreed. Since majority of the respondents disagreed, it implied that besides the free basic education policy didn't lead more girl-child in school than boys. The mean score of 2.44 and a standard deviation of 1.215 indicate a general disagreement among respondents, with significant variability in opinions. This suggests that most respondents do not believe that there are more girls than boys in school, and there is considerable uncertainty about gender disparity in school enrollment. It reflects a perception that gender disparity might not be as pronounced as one might expect, and this could indicate a need for further gender-focused educational policies.

The statement that the number of girls and boys is the same in schools received responses of majority 61.7% disagreeing, 16.7% being neutral, 21.5% agreeing. With majority disagreeing, it

showed that the number of girls and boys was the same in schools. With a mean score of 2.44 and a standard deviation of 1.332, the responses indicate a widespread disagreement with the notion that girls and boys are equally represented in schools. This suggests that respondents perceive a gender imbalance in enrollment, which may point to an ongoing issue with achieving gender parity in education.

On the statement that the number of girls is still low despite the free basic education policy being in place, majority of the respondents 56.9% disagreed, 28.7% agreed, while 14.7% were neutral. Since majority disagreed with the statement, it meant that number of girls increased due to free basic education policy. The mean score of 2.57 and a standard deviation of 1.439 suggest that a larger portion of respondents disagrees with the idea that the policy has fully resolved gender disparities in enrollment. While some respondents acknowledge progress, the data suggests that a significant number still see a gap in the number of girls enrolled in schools, even with the policy in place.

Regarding the statement that the completion rate of girls and boys is almost the same, majority of the respondents 49.0% disagreed, 29.4% were neutral, while 21.6% agreed with the statement. Given that majority of the respondents disagreed, it showed that the completion rate girls was not the same as that of boys. The mean score of 2.56 and a standard deviation of 1.247 suggest that there is a general perception that the completion rates for girls and boys are not equal. This reflects some skepticism or uncertainty about whether the completion rates for girls are on par with those for boys, highlighting that there might still be barriers affecting the educational outcomes of girls.

Lastly from the table 4.8, the statement that the free basic education policy offers the same benefits to girls and boys was met with responses of 47.0% disagreeing, 32.3% agreeing and 20.6% being neutral. Since majority disagreed with the statement, it showed that free basic education policy was not offering the same benefits to girls and boys. With a mean score of 2.75 and a standard deviation of 1.346, the results indicate a divided perception about the policy's impact on both genders. While a substantial proportion of respondents disagrees with the statement, a significant number also believe the policy provides equal benefits to both girls and boys. This suggests that there may be differing views on the effectiveness and equity of the policy in addressing gender disparities in education.

Additionally, the interview findings provide critical insights into the gender disparity in school after the introduction free basic education policy and different Key Informants pointed out that

> *.... I don't believe there are more girls than boys in school. ...even though the free basic education policy helped many girls enroll, the disparity still seems to exist, and the numbers for girls are not as high as expected. (Parent 1)*

> *.... there's still a gender gap in school enrollment, despite the policy's intention. ...even with free education, the number of girls enrolling and completing education is still lower compared to boys." (Local Government Official 1)*

> *...the free basic education policy might be helping, but it's not providing equal benefits to both genders. There are still barriers, especially for girls, when it comes to full participation and completion. (Head Teacher 4)*

The interview findings highlight a persistent gender disparity in school enrollment and completion, despite the introduction of the free basic education policy. Key informants, including parents, local government officials, and head teachers, consistently emphasized that while the

policy has facilitated girls' enrollment, the expected equality between genders in terms of both enrollment and completion rates has not been fully realized. Parents and education officials pointed out that a noticeable gender gap remains, with girls still underrepresented in schools and facing additional barriers to completing their education. The implication of these findings is that while the policy has made significant strides, there is still a need for targeted interventions to address gender-specific challenges and ensure that girls benefit equally from the educational opportunities provided.

Table 4.9: The relationship between Free Basic Education Policy and Gender Disparity in Schools in Bunia

		Free Basic Education Policy	Gender disparity
Free Basic Education Policy	Pearson Correlation	1	.125
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.801
	N	102	102
Gender disparity	Pearson Correlation	.125	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.801	
	N	102	102
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Based on the data presented, there is a positive but weak and insignificant relationship between the Free Basic Education Policy and gender disparity, with a Pearson correlation of r = 0.125 (P = .801 > 0.01). Since the p-value is greater than the significance threshold of 0.01, the relationship is not statistically significant. The correlation coefficient of 0.125 suggests a very weak positive association, indicating that changes in the Free Basic Education Policy have minimal influence on gender disparity. This implies that other factors beyond the policy may have a more substantial impact on addressing gender disparities in education.

4.5 Regression Analysis

This study employed a multiple regression analysis to evaluate the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment, girl-child retention and reduced gender disparity.

4.5.1 Regression analysis on the effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Enrollment

This study employed a multiple regression analysis to evaluate the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment.

Table 4.10: Regression analysis on the effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Enrollment

Regression Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.299	.312		7.361	.000
Free basic education policy	.171	.105	.161	1.630	.106
Model Summary					
Adjusted R Square	.116				
ANOVA[b]					
F	2.655				
Sig. (P)	.106[a]				

Source: Field data, 2024

The results from the regression analysis indicate that the Free Basic Education Policy explains 11.6% of the variance in girl-child enrollment (Adjusted R Square = .116). This suggests that while the policy has some influence on enrollment, the majority (88.4%) of the variation is explained by other factors not included in this study. The F-value (F = 2.655, P = .106 > 0.05)

suggests that the overall regression model is not statistically significant, meaning that the Free Basic Education Policy does not reliably predict girl-child enrollment. Additionally, the Beta coefficient (.161, p = .106) indicates a weak and statistically insignificant positive effect of the Free Basic Education Policy on girl-child enrollment. This suggests that while an increase in the policy's implementation is associated with a slight increase in enrollment, the effect is not strong enough to be considered meaningful in this study.

4.5.2 Regression analysis on the effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Retention

This study employed a multiple regression analysis to evaluate the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child retention.

Table 4.11: Regression analysis on the effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Retention

Regression Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.493	.348		10.031	.000
Free basic education policy	.116	.117	.114	.141	.888
Model Summary					
Adjusted R Square	.110				
ANOVA[b]					
F	.020				
Sig. (P)	.888[a]				

Source: Field data, 2024

The results from the regression analysis indicate that the Free Basic Education Policy explains 11.0% of the variance in girl-child retention (Adjusted R Square = .110). This suggests that while the policy has a minimal influence on retention, the majority (89.0%) of the variation is explained by other factors outside the scope of this study. The F-value (F = 0.020, P = .888 > 0.05) suggests that the overall regression model is not statistically significant, meaning that the Free Basic Education Policy does not reliably predict girl-child retention. Additionally, the Beta coefficient (.114, p = .888) indicates a weak and statistically insignificant positive effect of the Free Basic Education Policy on girl-child retention. This suggests that while an increase in the policy's implementation is associated with a slight increase in retention, the effect is too weak and statistically insignificant to be considered meaningful in this study.

4.5.3 Regression analysis on the effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Gender Disparity in Schools

This study employed a multiple regression analysis to evaluate the effect of free basic education policy on gender disparity.

Table 4.12: Regression analysis on the effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Gender Disparity in Schools

Regression Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.492	.253		9.852	.000
Free basic education policy	.122	.185	.125	.253	.801
Model Summary					
Adjusted R Square	.119				
ANOVA[b]					
F	.064				
Sig. (P)	.801[a]				

Source: Field data, 2024

The results from the regression analysis indicate that the Free Basic Education Policy explains 11.9% of the variance in gender disparity (Adjusted R Square = .119). This suggests that while the policy has some influence on gender disparity, the majority (88.1%) of the variation is explained by other factors outside the scope of this study. The F-value (F = 0.064, P = .801 > 0.05) suggests that the overall regression model is not statistically significant, meaning that the Free Basic Education Policy does not reliably predict gender disparity. Additionally, the Beta coefficient (.125, p = .801) indicates a weak and statistically insignificant positive effect of the Free Basic Education Policy on gender disparity. This suggests that while an increase in the policy's implementation is associated with a slight reduction in gender disparity, the effect is too weak and statistically insignificant to be considered meaningful in this study.

4.6 Responses for challenges affecting the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy in promotion of Girl-Child Education

Participants were requested to rank their responses regarding challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia and the data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for interpretation. For the interpretation of mean score, mean value below 3.0 indicates disagreement, mean value = 3.0 indicates undecided while mean value above 3.0 indicates agreement.

Table 4.13: Responses for challenges affecting the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy in promotion of Girl-Child Education

Statement	*Strongly Disagree*		*Disagree*		*Neutral*		*Agree*		*Strongly Agree*		*Mean*	*S.D*
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Culturally, girls are not supposed to go to school but look after the young ones.	41	40.2	34	33.3	18	17.6	04	3.9	05	4.9	**2.00**	**1.090**
Girl-child do not go to school because they have to work in and around home.	42	41.2	43	42.2	09	8.8	06	5.9	02	2.0	**1.82**	**.899**
The higher the bridal price payable, the more education a girl has that's why some parent educate their girls	32	31.4	35	34.3	19	18.6	06	5.9	10	9.8	**2.28**	**1.246**
Boys maintain the family lineage that why they are educated.	40	39.2	32	31.4	11	10.8	14	13.7	05	4.9	**2.11**	**1.191**
When money is tight, boys are favored to attend education	26	25.5	39	38.2	17	16.7	16	15.7	4	3.9	**2.34**	**1.139**
When policy is not well funded girl-child education is most influenced	26	25.5	19	18.6	29	28.4	17	16.7	11	10.8	**2.68**	**1.329**
Embezzlement of funds makes the implementation of free basic education policy difficult	13	12.7	07	6.9	24	23.5	34	33.3	34	23.5	**3.48**	**1.280**
The distance of school from home influence enrollment and retention of girl-child in a school	14	13.7	25	24.5	32	31.4	21	20.6	10	9.8	**2.88**	**1.180**
The higher the level of parental education, the more girls attend school.	08	7.8	06	5.9	12	11.8	47	46.1	29	28.4	**3.81**	**1.150**
Corporal punishment discourages gild-child from staying at school	24	23.5	31	30.4	13	12.7	20	19.6	14	13.7	**2.70**	**1.384**
Teacher shortage discourage girl child to attend school	43	42.2	27	26.5	17	16.7	07	6.9	08	7.8	**2.12**	**1.253**
Girls who perform bad academically prefer to drop out from school	28	27.5	42	41.2	10	9.8	06	5.9	16	15.7	**2.41**	**1.367**
Because government is not well-paying teachers that's why teachers don't come to school	17	16.7	26	25.5	32	31.4	13	12.7	14	13.7	**2.81**	**1.257**
Community members are not fully engaged in promoting girl child education under the free basic education policies	08	7.8	12	11.8	12	11.8	46	45.1	24	23.5	**3.65**	**1.191**

Source: Field data, 2024

The findings indicate that cultural beliefs are not a significant barrier to girl-child education under the Free Basic Education (FBE) policy. A substantial proportion 73.5% disagreed with the statement that girls were staying at home to care for younger siblings, 17.6% were neutral while

only a small percentage 8.8% agreed. This shows that girls staying at home was not a challenge. The low mean score of 2.00 (S.D. = 1.090) suggests that while traditional norms persist, many respondents reject the notion that girls should stay home instead of attending school. However, the variation in responses indicates that this belief still influences some communities, potentially limiting girls' enrolment and retention rates.

Similarly, the perception that girls do not attend school because they are required to work at home garnered strong disagreement, with 83.3% strongly disagreeing. The low mean score of 1.82 (S.D. = 0.899) further reflects a strong rejection of this notion. However, a small proportion of respondents 7.9% agreed, acknowledged that household labor expectations might still contribute to school dropout rates among girls. These findings suggest that while progress has been made in addressing domestic labor responsibilities for girls, some families still prioritize household contributions over education.

Regarding the influence of bride price on girls' education, the results indicate divided opinions. Results showed that 65.7% disagreed, 18.6% remained neutral while 15.7% agreed with the statement. This showed the some parents did not believe that a higher bride price encourages parents to educate their daughters. With a mean score of 2.28 (S.D. = 1.246), the responses suggest that while many respondents reject this belief, economic incentives tied to marriage still influence some parents' decisions on educating their daughters.

The findings further highlight the preference for educating boys due to their role in maintaining the family lineage. A significant proportion of respondents 70% disagreed which showed that they rejected this notion, yet only 18.6% agreed. However, since majority rejected, it showed that there was also preference for girl education as opposed to the boys case only. The mean

score of 2.11 (S.D. = 1.191) suggests that while this perception is not dominant, it still affects decision-making in certain communities, potentially disadvantaging girls' access to education.

When financial constraints arise, many respondents agreed that boys are prioritized for education. Majority of the respondents 63.7% disagreed while only 19.6% agreed leading to a mean score of 2.34 (S.D. = 1.139). Since majority disagreed, it implied that financial hardships were not a result in gender-based disparities in educational opportunities, with boys receiving preferential treatment over girls.

The effectiveness of the FBE policy in promoting girl-child education is also influenced by funding adequacy. Results revealed that 44.1% disagreed with the statement that inadequate funding negatively impacts girls' education, than 28.4% remained neutral, and 10.8% agreed. With a mean score of 2.68 (S.D. = 1.329). The results indicate mixed reactions on whether inadequate funding affects the effectiveness of the FBE policy in promoting girl-child education, implying that while a significant portion of respondents do not view funding as a major barrier, the presence of neutrality and some agreement suggests lingering concerns that may require policy attention.

Wrong Corruption and embezzlement of funds emerged as significant challenges to implementing the FBE policy. A considerable proportion 56.8% agreed acknowledging the negative impact of corruption in the implementation of the free basic education policy, with only 12.7% disagreeing. The relatively high mean score of 3.48 (S.D. = 1.280) suggests that mismanagement of funds remains a major obstacle to the policy’s effectiveness, potentially affecting infrastructural development and resource availability for girl-child education.

School accessibility also plays a role in girl-child enrollment and retention. Results revealed that 38.2% disagreed that distance influences girls' attendance, 31.4% were neutral, while 30.4% agreed with the statement. With mixed reactions, it implied that participants may not fully understand the connection between school accessibility and the enrollment and retention of girls.. The mean score of 2.88 (S.D. = 1.180) suggests that although opinions vary, long distances to school may still bea barrier for some girls, especially in rural areas, but the general disagreement and neutrality suggest a degree of uncertainty or a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding this relationship.

Parental education was identified as a strong determinant of girls' school attendance. A significant proportion 74.5% agreed and believed that higher parental education levels correlate with increased girls' enrollment against only 13.7% who disagreed and 11.8% who remained neutral. The high mean score of 3.81 (S.D. = 1.150) underscores the importance of parental awareness and education in influencing positive attitudes toward girls' education.

The role of corporal punishment in discouraging girls from staying in school received mixed responses. Results showed that majority 53.9% of the respondents disagreed, 33.3% agreed, and 12.7% remained neutral. However, since majority disagreed with the statement, there were no corporal punishments that may discourage girl-child from going to school. The mean score of 2.70 (S.D. = 1.384) suggests that although corporal punishment is not universally seen as a deterrent, it remains a factor influencing school dropout rates among girls.

Teacher shortages being a barrier to girls' education received 68.7% of the respondents disagreeing, 16.7% remained neutral while 14.6% agreed. Given that most of the respondents opposed that statement, it implied that there was not teacher shortage which meat that the issue

of teachers was not a barrier. The mean score of 2.12 (S.D. = 1.253) indicates that while many respondents do not see this as a primary issue, inadequate staffing may still affect the quality of education and student retention.

Girls' academic performance also influences dropout rates. While 68.7% disagreed with the statement that academically weak girls prefer to drop out, 21.6% agreed while 9.8% remained neutral. Therefore, since majority opposed that statement, it implied that girls' academic performance didn't lead to dropout of schools. The mean score of 2.41 (S.D. = 1.367) suggests that while academic struggles contribute to school dropout, other factors also play a role.

Regarding poor teacher remuneration, majority 42.2% disagreed, 31.4% of respondents remained neutral while 26.4% agreed. Which mixed responses, teacher remuneration could be a challenge but not that serious. The mean score of 2.81 (S.D. = 1.257) suggests that inadequate salaries may impact teacher motivation and presence in schools.

Finally, community engagement in promoting girl-child education under the FBE policy received positive feedback. A significant proportion of 68.6% agreed and believed that community involvement is crucial against 19.5% that disagreed and 11.8% that remained neutral. The high mean score of 3.65 (S.D. = 1.191) indicates that strengthening community participation could enhance policy implementation and improve girl-child education outcomes.

Additionally, the interview findings reveal significant insights into the challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia which included;

Early School Dropout and Marriage Pressures

> In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), many girls are forced to leave school at an early age due to the pressures of early marriage. .....*some girls are also victims of sexual*

violence, which compounds their challenges. The lack of essential infrastructure, such as classrooms, desks, chairs, and toilets, further discourages girls from staying in school, making education inaccessible to many. (Local Government Official 1)

Misappropriation of Educational Funds

The misallocation of funds intended for education is a pervasive issue. ....*schools suffer from broken infrastructure, and teachers' salaries are delayed, further exacerbating the problem. This mismanagement of resources creates an environment where educational success becomes increasingly difficult, as it undermines both the quality of teaching and the learning environment for students. (Parent 2)*

Hasty Policy Implementation Without Supporting Infrastructure

The implementation of education policies is often rushed, with little consideration for the necessary infrastructure to support them. ....*in some schools, classrooms are overcrowded, with hundreds of students being taught by a single teacher. This situation leads to poor educational outcomes, as the classroom environment becomes overwhelming and unsustainable. (Parent 4)*

Overcrowded Classrooms and Teacher Demoralization

The combination of inadequate infrastructure and insufficient teacher salaries creates a challenging environment for both educators and students. .....*teachers are forced to manage large classes in small spaces, and the lack of resources makes it difficult for them to effectively engage with students. The low salaries further demoralize teachers, leading to a decline in teaching quality. As a result, girls, in particular, are discouraged from attending school, perpetuating the cycle of educational inequality. (Headteacher 4)*

The Key Informant Interview (KIS) highlight significant challenges that undermine girl-child education in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Participants identified early marriage, often linked to sexual violence, as a critical barrier to girls' continued education. Additionally, embezzlement of fund, diversion of resource, the lack of adequate infrastructure such as

classrooms, tables, chairs, and toilets was repeatedly mentioned as a deterrent, with girls particularly disadvantaged by these shortcomings. The discussions also pointed to the issue of low teacher salaries, which not only demoralizes educators but also exacerbates the challenges within overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms. This combination of poor infrastructure and inadequate teacher compensation creates a discouraging environment for both students and teachers, ultimately threatening the retention and success of girls in the education system. These findings suggest that without addressing these systemic issues, efforts to improve girl-child education in the DRC may be significantly hindered. In summary, this implies that efforts to promote girl-child education in Bunia might be more effective if they focus on enhancing parental education and community engagement, alongside addressing systemic issues like teacher training, miss allocation of resource and educational infrastructure.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a detailed discussion of the study findings based on the study objectives which include the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child retention in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on reduced gender disparity in schools in Bunia and the challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia.

5.2 The effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Enrollment in Schools in Bunia

The findings of the study indicate a weak and statistically insignificant relationship between the Free Basic Education Policy and girl-child enrollment in Bunia, DRC, which suggests that while the policy has a positive direction in influencing enrollment, its impact is not strong enough to be considered significant. This contrasts with findings where Grant (2015) reported that the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) led to a surge in enrollment from 1.9 million students in the 1993-94 academic year to almost 2.9 million in 1994-95.

However, similar to the current study, Grant (2015) also highlighted that despite the initial increase in enrollment, high dropout rates among girls remained a significant issue due to socio-cultural pressures such as early marriage. This suggests that while the Free Basic Education Policy can create initial access opportunities, other socio-economic barriers may limit its long-term effectiveness in sustaining girl-child enrollment.

Furthermore, it was revealed that the Free Basic Education Policy explains little variance in girl-child enrolment. This indicates that other factors beyond the policy play a crucial role in

influencing enrollment rates. Similar trends have been observed in Uganda, where Makate (2016) found that the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy led to an increase in primary school enrollment from 3.1 million in 1996 to about 8.7 million in 2014.

Despite this increase, Mikisa (2019) highlighted that financial constraints, quality concerns, and socio-cultural attitudes continued to hinder sustained participation of girls in school. The weak explanatory power in the current study aligns with these findings, suggesting that while free education policies can improve access, they need to be accompanied by complementary interventions such as financial assistance for school-related expenses, improvements in school infrastructure, and community awareness programs to address gender disparities.

Additionally, some respondents acknowledged the initial positive impact of the policy in reducing financial burdens and enabling them to send their daughters to school. However, over time, they noted that enrollment numbers declined due to persistent financial challenges such as the cost of school supplies, uniforms, and examination fees. Similar observations were made in India, where Chaudhuri and Roy (2017) found that while the Right to Education Act (RTE) of 2009 significantly increased female enrollment, financial barriers such as the cost of transportation and supplementary materials continued to deter full participation. The mixed perceptions in the current study highlight the need for policy enhancements to ensure sustainability in enrollment rates, particularly by addressing hidden schooling costs.

The findings also resonate with findings from Bangladesh, where Asadullah and Chaudhury (2009) reported that the Female Secondary School Stipend Program (FSSSP) significantly improved female enrollment by providing financial incentives, but still faced challenges in addressing the needs of girls with disabilities. Khandker, Pitt, and Fuwa (2003) also noted that

while stipend programs reduced direct schooling costs, they did not fully compensate for the opportunity costs of sending girls to school, particularly for low-income families. The current study underscores the need for targeted interventions to support girls with special needs, ensuring that free education policies are inclusive and effective for all students.

5.3 The effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Retention in Schools in Bunia

The findings of the current study indicate a weak and statistically insignificant relationship between the Free Basic Education Policy and girl-child retention. This suggests that while the policy has a positive direction, its actual impact on retention is minimal. These findings contrast with studies such as Ayeh (2022), who found that free basic education policies enhance girl-child retention by alleviating financial burdens on parents. Furthermore, Ayeh (2022) documented increased female completion rates after policy implementation. However, the current study suggests that while financial relief is provided, other barriers such as hidden costs and socio-cultural factors may continue to impede retention. This highlights the need for policymakers to address non-financial barriers that still hinder the effectiveness of Free Basic Education.

Additionally, results indicate that the Free Basic Education Policy explains little variance in girl-child retention. This suggests that other factors beyond the policy significantly influence retention rates. Previous studies, such as those by Mulinya and Orodho (2015) in Kenya and Torsu (2024) in Uganda, emphasized that Free Basic Education significantly increased female participation in education. However, the current study's weak relationship suggests that while enrollment may have improved, sustained retention remains a challenge due to factors such as inadequate resource distribution and poor school conditions. This discrepancy indicates that

while Free Basic Education policies have created access, ensuring continued attendance requires a holistic approach that includes quality improvement and socio-economic support.

They also revealed mixed perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the Free Basic Education Policy on girl-child retention. While parents acknowledged initial positive impacts, they noted a decline in retention due to ongoing financial burdens and unclear support structures. These concerns align with findings from Bello (2021) in Nigeria, where free education policies showed varied effects depending on regional socio-economic conditions. In wealthier areas with better infrastructure, retention improved, whereas in resource-limited regions, girls continued to drop out due to hidden costs and economic pressures. This reinforces the argument that policy implementation must be accompanied by targeted resource allocation to maximize its benefits for vulnerable populations.

Additionally, the current study reported diverse perceptions regarding inequalities in resource distribution, particularly in rural areas, and their effect on the quality of education for girls. This contradicts studies such as Kissi and Issaka (2023) in Ghana and Mwanza (2015) in Zambia, both of which found that uneven resource allocation undermines the effectiveness of Free Basic Education policies. While financial barriers may not be perceived as a major barrier by the majority of the respondents, issue such as the absence of essential learning materials, trained teachers, and adequate school facilities may still influence retention. This suggests that simply making education free is insufficient; additional investment in school infrastructure and equitable resource distribution may still be important for meaningful improvements in retention rates.

Moreover, studies such as Munthali (2014) in Malawi and Burbano de Lara (2020) in Mozambique found that incentives such as school feeding programs significantly contributed to

improved retention rates for girls. The current study, however, does not indicate the presence of such complementary initiatives, which could explain the weak policy-retention relationship. This underlines the importance of a multi-faceted approach, where Free Basic Education policies are reinforced by social protection programs that directly address barriers preventing girls from staying in school.

5.4 The effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Gender Disparity in Schools in Bunia

The study findings revealed a weak and statistically insignificant relationship between the Free Basic Education Policy and gender disparity. This suggests that while the policy may have had some influence, it has not been a decisive factor in eliminating gender disparities in school enrollment and completion. This contrasts with the findings of Anyanwu and Erhijakpor (2015), who reported that free education policies led to a significant increase in girls' enrollment, effectively closing the gender gap in primary education. While the general expectation is that free education policies directly reduce gender disparities, the present findings indicate that financial relief alone may not be sufficient.

Moreover, the results indicated that the Free Basic Education Policy explained little variance in gender disparity in schools. This means that the large portion of the variation in gender disparity is attributed to other factors beyond the policy. This is in stark contrast to studies in Tanzania by Awinia (2019) and Luhanga and Kamala (2023), which showed that fee-free education significantly reduced gender disparities, particularly in rural areas. The weak explanatory power in the present study suggests that other persistent factors, such as deep-rooted cultural biases and gender-specific economic constraints, continue to play a significant role in shaping school enrollment trends.

The findings further emphasized the persistence of gender disparity in school enrollment and completion despite the free education policy. This aligns with studies such as Ugwu and Ugwu (2024), which found that although free education policies have played a crucial role in increasing access, girls from disadvantaged backgrounds continue to face obstacles such as child labor, early pregnancies, and parental preference for educating boys over girls. The testimonies from parents and education officials in the present study highlight that while the policy may have facilitated girls' enrollment, the deeper structural issues that hinder gender parity remain largely unaddressed.

The findings also contrast with research on Ghana's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy, which Kwadwo and Vincent (2024) found to be highly effective in achieving gender parity in secondary education by 2020. Aidoo (2024) similarly observed that eliminating school fees allowed more girls to remain in school. The difference between Ghana's success and the current study's findings may be attributed to the level of government intervention and the presence of supporting policies. This suggests that for free education policies to be more effective, they must be complemented by gender-sensitive strategies that address school retention challenges, such as providing sanitary facilities for girls, tackling gender-based violence, and promoting female role models in education.

When compared to international studies, such as those from the United States and Canada, the findings of the present study further highlight the complex nature of gender disparities in education. Dee (2005) and the National Center for Education Statistics (2018) showed that federal funding and targeted initiatives helped bridge gender gaps in education, particularly in STEM fields. Similarly, McLeod and Yates (2019) and Chan, Handler, and Frenette (2021)

reported that Canada's Universal Access to Education policy significantly reduced gender disparities at all levels of education. The key difference between these contexts and the present study is the presence of robust support systems that address gender-based challenges beyond financial barriers.

5.5 The challenges affecting the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy in the promotion of Girl-Child Education in Bunia

The findings from the survey suggest that socio-cultural factors, such as gender roles and traditional perceptions of girls' responsibilities, do not play a significant role in shaping girls' access to education. The results reveal that, although a majority of respondents disagree with the idea that girls do not stay home to care for younger siblings or engage in household chores, this belief persists in some communities. This observation diverge from the study by Challender (2015), which highlights that societal attitudes and cultural norms often lead to the prioritization of boys' education over girls' education. Despite the Free Basic Education (FBE) policy, cultural perceptions of girls as caregivers and marriage material remain locally an obstacles access to education for girls. This minor inclination is consistent with Kamuli, Younger, and Warrington's (2012) results in Uganda, which suggested that such views contribute to increased dropout rates and early marriages, especially in rural districts like Karamoja, where bride price practices are common.

The fact that a large majority of respondents disputed the notion that domestic labor tasks keep girls out of school reveals a more nuanced understanding of social-cultural norms. While Mikisa (2019) highlights that gender inequality and expectations in girls' households impede their academic possibilities, our findings indicate that this may be a less pervasive issue than

previously thought, though not entirely absent. However, the small proportion of respondents who agreed suggests that in some cases, household labor may still act as a barrier to girls' education, supporting the argument by Bolton (2020), who points out that the economic conditions and direct costs of education, such as school supplies, disproportionately affect girls in low-income areas. This factor is particularly pronounced in rural settings where families are already financially strained.

The issue of bride price also shows that, while many respondents disagreed with the belief that it influences girls' education, a significant portion still acknowledged its impact. This finding resonates with Challender's (2015) research, which suggests that, for some families, the financial aspect of a girl's education is tied to her marriage prospects, where education may be deprioritized unless it impacts the bride price. This phenomenon is exacerbated in regions where girls' educational attainment is seen as less valuable than that of boys, as reported by the BBC (2016), which points to the patriarchal systems in many African cultures that continue to undervalue girl-child education.

Financial restrictions were another area where findings revealed differing perspectives. While respondents disagreed with the notion that boys are prioritized over girls amid financial distress, the varied responses suggest that such gendered prioritization persists in some households. This partly aligns with findings by UNESCO (2011, 2015), which found that in many low-income countries, especially in rural areas, economic hardships lead to gender disparities in education. The trend found in Somalia by Nagira Consultants Limited (2016) shows in line with how poverty, early marriage, and household responsibilities influence girls' access to education.

Regarding the adequacy of funding for the FBE policy, the findings show a mixed perception, with some respondents believing that inadequate funding is a significant barrier to the success of the policy. This is consistent with the views of Mikisa (2019) and the OECD (2015), who assert that insufficient funding leads to resource shortages, which in turn affect the availability of infrastructure and teaching materials that are critical for promoting girls' education. In Uganda, similar challenges were observed during the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE), where inadequate funding led to poorly equipped schools, affecting both the quality of education and retention rates of girls (UNICEF, 2015).

Teacher shortages were not seen as a major barrier by the majority of respondents, yet the findings reveal that some still saw it as an issue. This aligns with UNICEF's (2015) report that teacher shortages, especially in low-income countries, significantly affect girls' education, particularly in rural and remote areas. Mikisa (2019) further confirms this, noting that the absence of qualified teachers can lead to overcrowded classrooms and a reduction in the quality of education, which often discourages students, particularly girls, from continuing their studies.

The role of corporal punishment in discouraging girls from staying in school was also discussed, with most respondents disagreeing that corporal punishment was a major deterrent. However, some studies, such as Kamuli, Younger & Warrington (2012), reveal that corporal punishment, especially in primary school, is a significant factor contributing to school dropout, as it discourages girls from attending school due to the physical and emotional trauma it causes.

The positive role of community engagement in promoting girl-child education, as highlighted by the survey, aligns with the literature on the importance of community involvement in education.

A study by Madika (2011) suggests that when parents are educated and involved in their children's education, both boys and girls are more likely to stay in school. This is reflected in the survey's finding that respondents believe community involvement is crucial for improving girl-child education outcomes. The high mean score on this aspect further underscores the importance of collective efforts in overcoming cultural and financial barriers.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of the study findings, conclusions and provides the recommendation basing on the study findings following the order of the study objectives which include the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child enrollment in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on girl-child retention in Bunia, the effect of free basic education policy on reduced gender disparity in Bunia and the challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia.

6.2 Key Summary of Findings

6.2.1 The effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Enrollment in Schools in Bunia

The study findings showed a positive but weak and insignificant relationship between the Free Basic Education Policy and girl-child enrollment. This revealed that while the policy has contributed to the improvement of access to education for girl-child , its impact remains insignificant across enrollment. The quantitative results showed low correction and region values. These data points out to other factors apart of the free basic education policy that could also have an impact on girl-child enrolment

The qualitative data revealed a mixed response regarding the effectiveness of the free basic education policy in promoting girl-child enrollment. While some parents noted the initial positive impact of the policy, including helping them send their daughters to school, the benefits became less clear over time, with enrollment numbers declining and financial burdens remaining.

Local government officials pointed out the slow progress in infrastructure development, particularly in rural areas, and the lack of basic facilities. Head teachers highlighted the policy's failure to adequately address the needs of girls with special needs, citing a lack of specialized learning materials for girls and teachers. The qualitative data line towards other elements outside the policy itself, limiting enrollment.

6.2.2 The effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Retention in schools in Bunia

The result revealed that there is a positive but weak and insignificant relationship between the Free Basic Education Policy and girl-child retention. The regression analysis results showed that the Free Basic Education Policy explains little of the variance in girl-child retention.

From the interview findings, a mixed perception of the effectiveness of the free basic education policy on girl-child retention was recorded. Parents highlighted initial positive impacts but noted a decline in retention due to unclear support and continued financial burdens, indicating that the policy did not fully alleviate school-related costs. Local government officials reported ongoing inequalities in resource distribution, particularly in rural areas, which hamper the quality of education for girls. Additionally, head teachers emphasized poor working conditions, all of which contribute to low retention rates.

6.2.3 The effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Gender Disparity in Schools in Bunia

The study findings revealed that there was a positive but weak and insignificant relationship between the Free Basic Education Policy and gender disparity. Furthermore, the results from the regression analysis indicate that the Free Basic Education Policy explains little of the variance in gender disparity in schools. From the interview, the findings highlight a persistent gender disparity in school enrollment and completion, despite the introduction of the free basic

education policy. Key informants, including parents, local government officials, and head teachers, consistently emphasized that while the policy has facilitated girls' enrollment, the expected equality between genders in terms of both enrollment and completion rates has not been fully realized. Parents and education officials pointed out that a noticeable gender gap remains, with girls still underrepresented in schools and facing additional barriers to completing their education.

6.2.4 The challenges affecting the implementation of the Free Basic Education Policy in the promotion of Girl-Child Education in Bunia

The study's findings challenged the widely held view that cultural and economic barriers remain the primary obstacles to girl-child education under the Free Basic Education policy. Many respondents denied the commonly held opinion that cultural norms are the primary reason girls are kept out of school. Similarly, financial challenges, domestic labor demands, and the issue of bride price were found to have little effect on educational opportunities. Corruption, insufficient financing, bad infrastructure, teacher shortages, and low pay were not seen serious barriers to females' education. While school accessibility and corporal punishment have a minor impact on dropout rates, parental education and community engagement have been found as favorable factors in girls' enrollment. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, early marriage, sexual abuse, and misuse of educational resources do not fully explain the issues girls encounter, but they do contribute to limiting access to quality education.

6.2.4 Conclusion of the findings

The findings demonstrate that the Free Basic Education Policy, though well-intentioned, has not fully achieved its goals in Bunia. Enrollment, retention, and reduction of gender disparity have

all shown only minimal improvements. This suggests that the policy is undermined by inadequate implementation mechanisms, insufficient resources, and limited community involvement. Sustainable progress requires not only financial investment but also systemic reforms that address governance, teacher welfare, and gender-sensitive approaches.

6.3 Study Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward;

6.3.1 The effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Enrollment in schools in Bunia

Bading on the study findings, it was recommended that the ministry of education should enhance funding for rural schools to improve infrastructure and basic facilities, ensuring schools are more accessible and conducive to learning for girls. Additionally, the Local government authorities should implement targeted sensitization campaigns to educate communities on the benefits of girl-child education and address cultural barriers that discourage female enrollment. Furthermore, the School management committees and Ministry of Education should establish specific initiatives to support girls with special needs, such as providing tailored learning materials and training teachers in inclusive education.

6.3.2 The effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Girl-Child Retention in Schools in Bunia

The study recommended that the ministry of finance should allocate increased financial resources to cover hidden costs of education, such as school uniforms and supplies, reducing the financial burden on parents. Additionally, the local school administrators should introduce structured mentorship and counseling programs to support girls at risk of dropping out, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Lastly, the ministry of

education should work with NGOs and development partners to establish community-based feeding programs in schools, ensuring that economic hardships do not force girls to drop out due to hunger.

6.3.3 The effect of Free Basic Education Policy on Gender Disparity in Schools in Bunia

The study also recommended that the parliament of the DRC should enact policies that mandate and enforce gender-sensitive educational interventions as per the free basic education policy, ensuring equal access and completion opportunities for both boys and girls. Then, the ministry of gender should collaborate with local education boards to develop programs aimed at retaining girls in school, such as sanitary pad distribution initiatives and safe transportation services for female learners. Additionally, the local school administrators should ensure strict monitoring and enforcement of gender-equality measures in school admission, addressing disparities through targeted interventions.

6.3.4 The challenges affecting the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy in promotion of Girl-Child Education in Bunia

Based on the study findings, it was recommended that the Anti-Corruption Commission should intensify oversight of education funds to eliminate mismanagement and corruption, ensuring that allocated resources directly benefit schools and students. Additionally, the Ministry of Education should develop policies to improve teacher remuneration and address staff shortages, enhancing the quality of education and teacher commitment to supporting girl-child education. Lastly, the school governing bodies should introduce school-based community engagement programs to involve parents in school decision-making processes, promoting accountability and local solutions to girl-child education challenges.

6.4 Recommended Area for Future Study

The following areas were proposed for future studies

i) Assessing the role of community engagement in enhancing the effectiveness of Free Basic Education Policies for girls in rural areas.
ii) The influence of socio-cultural barriers on gender disparities in school enrollment and completion rates in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.
iii) The effect of government funding and resource allocation on the implementation of Free Basic Education Policies in Low-Income Communities.

6.5 Application of the Theory

The Social Systems Theory provided a useful analytical framework for understanding the complex interplay of social, economic, and institutional factors influencing girl-child education under the Free Basic Education Policy in Bunia, DRC. The theory's assumption that social structures interact dynamically to shape individual and collective actions is reflected in the study's findings, which indicate that girl-child enrollment, retention, and gender disparity in education are not solely determined by policy interventions but are also influenced by broader systemic factors such as family background, poverty, cultural norms, and political structures. However, the weak and statistically insignificant relationships suggest that addressing education disparities requires a more holistic approach beyond policy enactment.

The qualitative findings reinforce this perspective, highlighting challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, financial burdens on parents, gender-based barriers, and limited government support, all of which align with the theory's proposition that social problems emerge from broader systemic interactions. While the theory effectively explains why multiple interrelated

factors influence policy outcomes, its limitation in providing precise predictive mechanisms is evident, as the study results show that systemic influences make policy impacts less straightforward.

Therefore, while Social Systems Theory was useful in framing the study, its descriptive nature underscores the need for complementary models that offer more predictive insights into policy effectiveness**.**

6.6 General Conclusion

The study concluded that while the Free Basic Education Policy in Bunia has contributed to increasing girl-child enrollment, its impact remains weak and insignificant. Despite initial progress, financial burdens, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate provisions for girls with special needs have limited the long-term effectiveness of the policy. Similarly, the policy has not significantly improved girl-child retention in schools. While some parents acknowledged its initial benefits, ongoing financial constraints and resource inequalities have led to declining retention rates.

Poor working conditions for teachers and inadequate government support further hinder the sustainability of girl-child education. The study also concluded that gender disparity in schools persists despite the implementation of the policy. Although enrollment opportunities for girls have improved, the expected balance between male and female students remains unachieved.

Cultural barriers, economic hardships, and a lack of targeted interventions continue to disadvantage girls in education. Lastly, challenges such as corruption, poor infrastructure, teacher shortages, early marriages, and financial limitations significantly affect the

implementation of the Free Basic Education Policy. Without addressing these structural and socio-cultural barriers, the policy will struggle to achieve its intended goals of promoting equal educational opportunities for girls in Bunia.

REFERENCES

Ada, N. (2015). *Gender power and politics in Nigeria*. Aboki Publishers.

Adam, H., & Peter, W. (2020). *Stratified random sampling*. Investopedia. Investopedia:http://www.investopedia.com

Adelman, M., Trako, I., Faron de Goër, E., & Sallami, M. (2021). *Empowering girls and enhancing learning in DRC: Determinants of the basic education gender gap in DRC: Supply and demand side factors* (Note 2 of 3). World Bank.

Alhassan, E. (2010). Determinants of girl child education in Gushegu Karaga district of the Northern Region of Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Development Studies.* ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/250304018

Anyanwu, J. C., & Erhijakpor, A. E. O. (2015). *Gender equality in primary school enrolment in Africa*: Analysis of key factors. *The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, 57*(1), 1–38. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8268.12136

Avenstrup, R., Liang, X., & Nellemann, S. (2004). *Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi and Uganda: Universal primary education and poverty reduction, case studies in scaling up poverty reduction*. Paper presented at the conference Scaling Up Poverty Reduction: A Global Learning Process and Conference.

Awinia, C. (2019). *Free basic education and gender disparities in Tanzania: An empirical assessment of challenges and policy options*. Huria Journal, 26(2), 1–X.

Ayeh, R. (2022). *The impact of Education for All (EFA) and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program on girl child education in Nigeria.* ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350982

Bertalanffy, L. V. (1968). *General system theory: Foundations, development, applications.* George Braziller.

Biale, A. (2020). Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Gender disparities and solutions. *Journal of African Education, 8*(2), 35-49.

Biale, Z. (2020). Literacy: Gateway to a world of exploits. *International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies, 98*(3). Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1285566.pdf

Biregeya, P. (2021). *Challenges of education in conflict zones: The case of Eastern DRC. African Conflict Studies Review, 6*(1), 56-70.

Biregeya, U. (2021). *Ulimwengu final la gratuite de l'enseignement 2021*. ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351936864_Ulimwengu_Investir_dans_l'education_des_valeurs_aujourd'hui_Congo_emergent

Bolton, L. (2020). *Barriers to education for girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo.* K4D: Helpdesk Report.

Bolton, M. (2020). *Barrier to education for girls in DRC.* K4D: Helpdesk Report

Brandt, C. (2020). *Technical briefs education in the Democratic Republic of Congo: What works?*https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349179857_Education_in_the_Democratic_Republic_of_Congo_What_works

Brock, C., & Cammish, N. (1997). *Factors affecting female participation in education in seven developing countries*. DFID Education Paper. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED406661.pdf

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*(4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Burbano de Lara, C. (2020). *School feeding: A unique platform to address gender inequalities.* UN World Food Programme (WFP). https://www.wfp.org

Burde, D., Kapit, A., Wahl, R. L., Guven, O., & Skarpeteig, M. I. (2017). *Education in emergencies*: A review of theory and research. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(3), 619-658. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316671594

Byamugisha, A., Ogawa, K., & Nishimura, M. (2015). *UPE policy and quality of education in Uganda*. In *Comparative analysis on universal primary education policy and practice in Sub-Saharan Africa* (pp. 173-192). Brill Publisher.

Chan, P. C. W., Handler, T., & Frenette, M. (2021). *Gender differences in STEM enrolment and graduation: What are the roles of academic performance and preparation*? *Economic and Social Reports.* https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202101100004-eng

Cide, P. (2015). Gender disparities in education: A review of Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Education Policy, 10(3),* 121-135.

CIDE. (2015). *Livrable 3-document de la stratégie de scolarisation des filles en RDC et plan d'action global.* Consortium International de Développement en Éducation (CIDE Inc.).

Close, J. (2015). *Ensuring rigor and trustworthiness of qualitative research in clinical pharmacy.* New York: University of Leeds.

Cochran, W. (1963). *Sampling techniques.* New York: Wiley.

Covert, B. (2024). *The miracle of universal Pre-K: Ten years in, Bill de Blasio and his allies explain how they did it — and what future mayors could learn from them*. The City Politic.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches.* London: SAGE Publications.

Deininger, K. (2003). Does cost of schooling affect enrollment by the poor? Universal primary education in Uganda. *Economics of Education Review, 22(3),* 291–305.

Donaldson, L. (2001). *The contingency theory of organizations.* Sage Publications.

Dupuy, K., & Peters, K. (2010). War and children: A reference handbook. *Contemporary Security Policy, 31(1),* 151-153. https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260903548738

Easton, D. (1965). *A systems analysis of political life.* Wiley.

EFA GMR. (2015). *No country in Sub-Saharan Africa has achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education.* UNESCO: https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/default/files/SSA_Press_Release_English_Gender_Report2015.pdf

Ene, N., Adedigba, C., & Edungbola, A. (2024). Factors inhibiting girls' education in Northern Nigeria: A systematic review of empirical literature. *Journal Title, 13*(1), 113-132.

Ferrão, M. E. (2022). The evaluation of students' progression in lower secondary education in Brazil: Exploring the path for equity. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 75*, 101220. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2022.101220

Galimaka, L. (2008). *Policy gaps in universal primary education that contribute to school dropout in Uganda.* Netherlands: Institute of Social Science.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* University of California Press.

Governender, P., & Steven, G. (2004). *NEPAD Policy Focus Series: Back to the blackboard—Looking beyond universal primary education in Africa.* South Africa: The South African Institute of International Affairs. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1220246.pdf

Grant, M. J. (2015). *The demographic promise of expanded female education: Trends in the age at first birth in Malaw*i. Population and Development Review, 41(3), 409–438. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2015.00066.x

Iddrisu, I. (2016). *Universal basic education policy: Impact on enrollment and retention*. Journal of Education and Practice, 1-2.

Ikpuri, E., & Ikpuri, D. (2024). *Comparative analysis of access to education in the United States, Jamaica, and Nigeria.* *7*(1), 153-161. Researchgate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377749458_Comparative_Analysis_of_Access_to_Education_in_the_United_States_Jamaica_and_Nigeria

IMP Center. (2017, January). *Women education: Its meaning and importance.* Imp-center.cdn.ampproject.org

Ines, G. B. (2020, February 10). *Bridging the gender gap in the Democratic Republic of Congo.* Global Partnership for Education: https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/bridging-gender-gap-democratic-republic-congo

International Organization for Migration (IOM). (March 2024). *DTM DRC — Stability Index - Ituri. IOM, Democratic Republic of Congo.* https://dtm.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1461/files/reports/SI_Ituri_2024_FINAL_EN.pdf

Izarua, F. (2015). *The impact of universal primary education on girl child education in Adjumani District in Northern Uganda: A case study of Pakelle Sub County.* Kampala: KIU.

Jones, B. D., & Baumgartner, F. R. (2005). *The politics of attention: How government prioritizes problems.* University of Chicago Press.

Kamuli, E., Younger, M., & Warrington, M. (2012). *Gender in East Africa.* Nairobi: CCE.

Katamba, P., & Nsubuga, T. (2014). *Basic research.* MK Publishers.

Kissi, B. A., & Issaka, J. (2023). *Barriers affecting retention of girls in schools in the Amasaman Circuit in the Ga West Municipality of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana*. Ghana Journal of Geography, 15(2), 61-87. https://doi.org/10.4314/gjg.v15i2.3

Kiyingi, S. (2024). *Analyzing the long-term effects of eliminating school fees on access to and quality of education in Uganda, considering the policy's implications for gender parity and inclusive education.* African Journal of Education and Practice, 10(5), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.47604/ajep.3034

Kretzer, M. (2020). *Free education: Origins, achievements, and current situation.* Retrieved from Springer: https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-95870-5_93

Kwadwo, V. O. R., & Vincent, R. (2024). *Ghana's Free High School policy is getting more girls to complete secondary education.* United Nations University - *MERIT.*

https://unu.edu/merit/article/ghanas-free-high-school-policy-getting-more-girls-complete-secondary-education

Lee, A. (2011). *System theory.* Retrieved from Springer Link: https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9_941

Lee, J. (2011). *Social systems and human behavior: A theoretical perspective.* Cambridge University Press.

Lewin, K. M. (2009). *Access to education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Patterns, problems, and possibilities.* Comparative Education, 45(2), 151-174. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060902920518

Lincove, J. A. (2012). *The influence of price on school enrollment under Uganda's policy of free primary education.* Economics of Education Review*, 31(5),* 799-811. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2012.04.007

Lincove, J. A. (2012). *The influence of price on school enrollment under Uganda's policy of free primary education*. Economics of Education Review*, 31*(5), 799-811. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2012.04.007

Luhmann, N. (1995). *Social systems.* Stanford University Press.

Luvanga, I., & Mhagana, M. (2022). *Challenges in implementation of fee-free basic education among public secondary schools in Karatu District, Tanzania.* G-CARD.

Mabika, C. M. (2011). *School enrollment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Family economic well-being, gender, and place of residence.* Penn State University.

Machimu, G., & Minde, J. (2010, January). *Rural girls' educational challenges in Tanzania: A case study of a matrilineal society.* Retrieved from ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/250304018_Rural_Girls%27_Educational_Challenges_in_Tanzania_A_Case_Study_of_Matrilineal_Society

Maggio, J. (2016). *An analysis of study abroad as a factor to increase student engagement and reduce dropouts in higher education institutions.* ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Tintos-Model-of-Student-Retention-as-adapted-from-Tintos-Model-of-Student-Retention_fig1_303679378

Makate, M. (2016). *Education policy and under-five survival in Uganda: Evidence from the demographic and health surveys*. Social Sciences*, 5*(4), 70. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci5040070

Margo, O. (2022). *Teacher absenteeism, improving learning, and financial incentives for teachers.* Springer Link. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11125-022-09623-8

Matheiw, G. (2004). *A situation analysis of girls' education in Iraq.* UNICEF: https://www.unicef.org/iraq/

MESPT. (2021). *Programme scolaire.* MESPT: https://www.eduquepsp.education/v1/programme-scolaire/

Mikisa, I. J. (2019, May). *Retention of girls at primary school in the Busolwe Sub-County Butaleja District, Eastern Uganda.* Retrieved from Clemson University: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3331&context=all_dissertations

Ministry of Education and Sports [MoES]. (2010). *Education statistical abstract 2010.* Kampala, Uganda.

Mokonzi, G. (2012). *Gratuité et qualité de l'enseignement primaire en République Démocratique du Congo.* Retrieved from ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268149328_Gratuite_et_qualite_de_l'enseignement_primaire_en_Republique_Democratique_du_Congo

Mokonzi, P. (2012). The impact of free primary education in DRC provinces. *DRC Education Review, 4*(2), 27-42.

Mugenda, O., & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (2nd ed.). Acts Press.

Muhumuza, J. (2017). *Institutional factors and girls' child retention: A case study of selected secondary schools in Kambuga Sub-County, Rukungiri District, Western Uganda.* Retrieved from Kampala International University: https://ir.kiu.ac.ug/handle/20.500.12306/2671

Mukasa, K., Mirembe, L. N., & Kabugo, A. N. (2024). Assessing the impact of Universal Primary Education policy on gender equality in education in Uganda. *Kampala International University Journal, 3*(4).

Mulinya, L. C., & Orodho, J. A. (2015). *Free primary education policy: Coping strategies in public primary schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya*. Journal

of Education and Practice, 6(12), 162. https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/26572

Mundy, K. (2015). *Global education monitoring report: Achievements and gaps in primary education*. UNESCO GEM Report.

Mundy, K. (2015, March 6*). No girl left behind – Education in Africa. Retrieved from Global Partnership for Education*: https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/no-girl-left-behind-education-africa

Munthali, J. (2014). *The education of girls in Malawi: Access* and retention. Scottish Educational Review, 36(1), 45-57. https://doi.org/10.1163/27730840-03601006

Mwangi, G. (2010). *Factors contributing to the girl dropout of public primary school in Gitugi Zone.* Retrieved from Kampala International University: https://ir.kiu.ac.ug/bitstream/20.500.12306/9824/1/Gathogo%20C.%20Mwangi.pdf

Nagira Consultants Limited. (2016). *Barriers to girl child education in South Central Somalia.* Retrieved from Intersos: https://www.intersos.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/BARRIERS-TO-GIRLS-EDUCATION-IN_SOUTH-CENTRAL-SOMALIA-Annex-1.pdf

National, L. (2014). *Loi cadre no 14/004.* Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Ngere, J. N. (2010). *Challenges facing girl child education in an inclusive setting in Muruka Zone, Kandara Division, Kandara District, Kenya.* Kampala International University: https://ir.kiu.ac.ug/bitstream/20.500.12306/11069/1/img-0048.pdf

Ngere, T. (2010). *Gender disparities in primary and secondary education in Kenya.* Kenyan Journal of Education, 7(1), 45-58.

Nicoletti, M. (2019). *Revisiting Tinto's theoretical dropout model.* Higher Education Studies: https://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/hes/article/view/39870

Nishimura, M. Y. (2008). *Impacts of the universal primary education policy on educational attainment and private costs in rural Uganda.* International Journal of Educational Development, 28(2), 161–175.

Obeng, F. (2016). *Achieving universal primary education: A case study of dropout in Ghana.* University of Oslo, Norway.

Odhiambo, R. A. (2016). *Education policies used by principals in promotion of girl-child education in mixed day secondary schools in Rongo and Ndhiwa Sub-Counties, Kenya.*

Semantic Scholar: https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Education-Policies-Used-by-Principals-in-Promotion-Adoyo/9442306b7631f72f171bc5d4d9887647853d4b3e

OECD. (2015). *Education policy outlook 2015: Making reforms happen*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-en

Offorma, G. (2009). *Girl-child education in Africa.* Keynote address presented at the Conference of University Women of Africa, Lagos, Nigeria.

Omede, A. A. (2016). *The implications of girl-child education to nation building in the 21st century in Nigeria.* Global Journals.

Omotayo, D., Dare, M., & Ihebereme, C. (2008). *Management of Universal Basic Education Scheme (U.B.E.) for qualitative education in Nigeria.* ERIC. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ871564

Outhred, R., Portela, M. J. O., Mackintosh, A., & Keck, K. (2020). *Who are the GEC-T supported girls?* https://intdev.tetratecheurope.com/projects/gec-evaluation-global/

Pardede, P. (2019). *EFL theory & practice: Voice of EED UKI.* Jakarta, Indonesia: UKI Press.

Parsons, T. (1951). *The social system.* Free Press.

Patterson, E., & Schäfer Elinder, L. (2014). *Improvements in school meal quality in Sweden after the introduction of new legislation: A 2-year follow-up.* The European Journal of Public Health, 25(4). https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/cku184

Peters, G. B. (2018). *The politics of bureaucracy: An introduction to comparative public administration*(7th ed.). New York,NY: Routledge.

Provincial Ministry of Education. (2021). *Education de base.* Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Provincial Government.

Ranjit, K. (2011). *Research methodology* (3rd ed.). London, England: SAGE Publications.

Sawyer, D. (1993). *Basic education in Brazil.* London, England: SAGE Publications.

Scott, J. (2003). *Social theory: Central issues in sociology.* London, England: Sage Publications.

Sebates, R., Lewis, K. M., & Hossain, N. (2013). *School dropout in Bangladesh: Insights using panel data.* International Journal of Education Development,33(5),225-232.

Shiundu, A. (2018). *More must happen.* Development and cooperation: https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/literacy

Shiundu, M. (2018). *Educational inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa.* African Journal of Social Development, 5(2), 88–105.

Shukia, R. (2020). *Fee-free basic education policy implementation in Tanzania: A 'phenomenon' worth rethinking*. Huria Journal, 27(1).

Tamagnan, E., & Samer, P. (2017). *Gender equity and fee-free basic education in Tanzania.* World Bank Group. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/356111553606355438/pdf/Gender-Equity-and-Fee-Free-Basic-Education-in-Tanzania.pdf

Taratukhina, M. S., Polyakova, M. N., Berezina, T. A., Notkina, N. A., Sheraizina, R. M., & Borovkov, M. I. (2023). *Early childhood care and education in the Russian Federation*. Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report, 33.

Tibasima, M. (2017). *Africa: Make girls' access to education a reality.* Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/16/africa-make-girls-access-education-reality

Tom, D., & Emmanuel, K. M. (2013). *La gratuité de l'enseignement primaire en RDC : Attentes et revers de la médaille.* Human Development and Capabilities, Managua.

Tom, P., & Emmanuel, K. (2013). *Free education in the DRC: Progress and challenges.* Congolese Education Policy Journal, 6(1), 90–105.

Torsu, A. K. (2024). *Ugandan women still face barriers to equality in education, employment, and politics*. Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 854. https://www.afrobarometer.org

UIS. (2016). *Literacy and education data for Sub-Saharan Africa.* UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2016). *Literacy rate for DRC.* http://data.uis.unesco.org

UNESCO. (2012). *Global education for all meeting: Sub-Saharan African EFA report.* UNESCO Publishing.

UNESCO. (2014). *Global monitoring report: Uganda launch.* https://en.unesco.org/events/20134-global-monitoring-report-uganda-launch

UNESCO. (2015). *Education for all global monitoring report: Achievements and gaps.* UNESCO Publishing.

UNESCO. (2021). *The right to education: What's at stake in Afghanistan? A 20-year review* (ED/PLS/EDP/2021/062 Rev.2). UNESCO. https://doi.org/10.1234/5678

UNICEF. (2014). *Situational analysis of child poverty and deprivation in Uganda.* Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda. https://www.unicef.org/uganda/CPR_

UNICEF. (2015). *Investment case for education and equity.* United Nations Educational. www.education-inequalities.org

UNICEF. (2018). *Equitable access to quality education for internally displaced children.* UNICEF Publisher.

UNICEF. (2019). *Education in the Democratic Republic of Congo.* https://www.unicef.org/drcongo/en/what-we-do/education

United Nations (UN). (2000). *Secretary-general addresses world education forum on theme of "building a partnership for girls' education".* https://press.un.org/en/2000/20000426.sgsm7369.doc.html

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGIEI). (2019). *Strategies to end school-related gender-based violence: The experience of education unions in Africa.* https://www.ungei.org/sites/default/files/Strategies-to-end-school-related-gender-based-violence-the-experience-of-education-unions-in-africa-2019-eng.pdf

United Nations. (2022). Gender inequalities in educational and employment trajectories: Challenges and opportunities in a protracted social crisis. In *Social panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean 2022: Transforming education as a basis for sustainable development* (Ch. IV). United Nations. https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/48519

Unterhalter, E. (2007). *Gender, schooling, and global social justice.* Routledge.

USAID. (2018). *Educational access and challenges in DRC.* United State Agency for International Development.

Ussi, R. M. (2015). *Implementation of education policy in reducing school dropout in Zanzibar: A case of Tumbe ward, Pemba.* Tanzania: University of Zanzibar

Uzarua, F. (2015). *The impact of UPE on girl-child education in Adjumany district: Case of Uganda.* Kampala International University.

Vivuya, B. (2021). *In 2019, the Democratic Republic of Congo introduced free education; here's what happened.* Equal Times*:* https://www.equaltimes.org/in-2019-the-democraticrepublic-of

Winthrop, R., & King, E. (2015). *Access to education in rural Sub-Saharan Africa: Barriers and solutions.* Brookings Institution Education Review*, 18*(4), 33–50.

Winthrop, R., & King, E. (2015). *Today's challenges for girls' education.* Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/todays-challenges-girls-educationv6.pdf

World Bank. (2016). *Education global practice.* https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/212341467999691082/pdf/98450-REVISED-PUBLIC-WB-EGP-Reaching-Girls-040816-final6-web.pdf

World Bank. (2018). *Girls' education and gender equality in low-income countries.* World Bank Education Policy Report.

Yarrow, N., & Afkar, R. (2020). Gender and education in Indonesia: Progress with more work to be done. *East Asia & Pacific on the Rise.* https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/gender-and-education-indonesia-progress-more-work-be-done

APPENDICES

Appendix I: In-depth Interview Guide

Participants: Education Administration, Teachers and Parents.

The free basic education policy

1. What key educational services are provided under the Free Basic Education Policy in your school, and how do they support girl-child learning?
2. How does the Free Basic Education Policy cater to girl-child needs in terms of instructional materials, teacher availability, and infrastructure support?
3. What measures are in place under the Free Basic Education Policy to ensure that girl-child from disadvantaged backgrounds receive adequate educational support, including meals, uniforms, and healthcare?

The effect of free basic education policy on enrollment of girl-child education in primary level?

4. How have been the enrollment and retention rate of girl-child since the implementation of the policy? / Have you seen any increase or decrease?
5. Have you seen any change for the past 2 years? If yes explain more/if No please tell us more.
6. Do you think the policy has influenced parent perception on girl child education?
   If yes explain/ if not, please explain.
7. Does the policy encourage parents to enroll their girls?
8. How have been the perceptions of girl-child on education since the introduction of the policy?
9. What suggestions (if any) would you give for improving the implementation of the free basic education policy to promote girl child education?

The effect of free basic education policy on retention of girl-child education in primary level?

10. Do you think that effective implementation of the free basic education policy can increase the retention rate of girls in primary education? If so, how? / No, please tell us more.

11. Do you think the introduction of free basic education reduces gender disparities? If yes, please explain/if no, please tell us more.
12. Do you think the policy is a remedy of retention for a little girl who lives in poverty, the basic education policy is a remedy that protects her education? If yes, explain more/if no, please tell us more.

The effect of free basic education policy on gender disparity of child in primary level

13. How has the implementation of the free basic education policy influenced the enrollment and attendance rates of boys and girls in your school?
14. What challenges do you observe in the retention and completion rates of boys and girls under the free basic education policy, and what factors contribute to these disparities?
15. In your experience, how effective has the free basic education policy been in reducing gender disparities in primary education, and what additional measures would you recommend to enhance gender equality?

The challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia.

16. What is the attitude of the community toward embracing the free basic education policy?
17. Was the community sensitized about the policy?
18. How do cultural gender norms/practices influence the free basic education policy and how does this affect girl child education?
19. How does family economic status affect support of girl-child education, even with implementation of free basic education policy?
20. Have they been any Awareness campaigns to promote the value of education for girls?
21. Do you believe that community engagement and awareness campaigns play a significant role in promoting girl child education under the free basic education policies? If yes, Please explain your answer.
22. What is your though on the current teacher salary given by the government?
23. Referred to Q.8 do you think teacher salary can influence girl-child education?
24. Are government school infrastructures (Classroom, chair and desk) encouraging girls to enroll?

25. What role do you think teachers play in promoting girls' education under the free basic education policies? Are they adequately trained to address gender-specific challenges?
26. What are the major challenges or weaknesses you perceive in the implementation of free basic education policies for girls in the DRC?
27. In your opinion, how can communities and local stakeholders contribute more effectively to ensuring that girls have equal access to and benefit from free basic education?
28. What challenges, if any, have you observed in the implementation of free basic education policies for girls in Bunia?

END

Thank you!

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Girl – Child

Dear Respondent:

My name is Kasemire Lika Prisca, and I am a student pursuing a master's degree in research and public Policy at Uganda Christian University. I am conducting research on free basic education policy and promotion of girl child education in DRC, a case of Bunia. The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in DRC, a case of Bunia. I am requesting your assistance in answering the questions on this form. Your participation is important has it will inform us on the effectiveness of the free basic education policy. Your genuine responses will be kept fully anonymous and used just for education purposes.

I would appreciate your assistance.

Thank you.

Instructions:

Tick or fill in where necessary.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Category	DESCRIPTION	CODE	TICK
Age Group	8-12	1	
	13-16	2	
	17- 18	3	
	Above 18	4	
Class	Primary Four	1	
	Primary Five	2	
	Primary Six	3	

Instructions to the respondent:

For Section B-F Please tick or write your rating on the space provided at the end of each option, which corresponds with your best choice where necessary.

Response mode	Rating	Description
Strongly Agree	5	I agree with no doubt
Agree	4	I agree with some doubt
Not sure	3	Not sure about the response
Disagree	2	I disagree with some doubt
Strongly Disagree	1	I disagree with no doubt at all

SECTION B: The free basic education policy

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
The free basic education policy cover fees for girl-child					
Girl-child are given special bursaries which are not given to boys					
Girls are offered free textbooks and stationery					
There is construction of new building to support girl-child education					
There policy caters of girl-child with special needs					
Teachers are always at school because they are paid well					

If there are any other opinions, you have about the free basic education policy, please state them below.

……

……

SECTION C: The effect of free basic education policy on enrollement in primary level

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
High girl-child enrollment was only registered in the beginning of the implementation of free basic education policy					
Parents enrolled positively their girl-child when the program stated.					
The enrollment increased when financial burden reduced					
The girl-child enrollment increased regardless of age					
Even girl children with disabilities enrolled due to free basic education policy					
Free basic education policy reduces girl-child inequality in access education.					

If there are any other opinions, you have about the effect of free basic education policy on enrollment of girl-child in primary level; please state them below.

……
……

SECTION D: <u>The effect of free basic education policy on retention primary level</u>

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
The number of girls staying in school has increased due to free basic education policy					
The girls attend school regularly because of free basic education policy					
Gild-child who is under free basic education policy is more likely to complete primary level.					
For a girl-child that living in poverty, basic education policy is a remedy that protect her education.					

If there are any other opinions, you have about the effect of free basic education policy on retention of girl-child in primary level; please state them below.

……
……

SECTION E: <u>The effect of free basic education policy on gender disparity at primary level education</u>

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
There are girl-child in school than boys					
The number of girls and boys are same in the schools					
The number of girls is still low besides the free basic education policy being in place					
The completion of girls and boys is almost the same					
The free basic education policy offers same benefits to girls and boys					

If there are any other opinions, you have about the effect of free basic education policy on gender disparity in primary level; please state them below.

……
……

SECTION E: <u>The challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia</u>.

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
Culturally, girls are not supposed to go to school but look after the young ones.					
Girl-child do not go to school because they have to work in and around home.					
The higher the bridal price payable, the more education a girl has that's why some parent educate their girls					
Boys maintain the family lineage that why they are educated.					
When money is tight, boys are favored to attend education					
When policy is not well funded girl-child education is most influenced					
Embezzlement of funds makes the implementation of free basic education policy difficult					
The distance of school from home influence enrollment and retention of girl-child in a school					
The higher the level of parental education, the more girls attend school.					
Corporal punishment discourages gild-child from staying at school?					
Teacher shortage discourage girl child to attend school					
Girls who perform bad academically prefer to drop out from school					
Because government is not well-paying teachers that's why teachers don't come to school					
Community members are not fully engaged in promoting girl child education under the free basic education policies					

If there are any other opinions on factors influencing the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia.

……

……

END

Thank you very much!!!!

Appendix III: Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear Respondent:

My name is Kasemire Lika Prisca, and I am a student pursuing a master's degree in research and public Policy at Uganda Christian University. I am conducting research on free basic education policy and promotion of girl child education in DRC, a case of Bunia. The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in DRC, a case of Bunia. I am requesting your assistance in answering the questions on this form. Your participation is important has it will inform us on the effectiveness of the free basic education policy. Your genuine responses will be kept fully anonymous and used just for education purposes.

I would appreciate your assistance.

Thank you.

Instructions:

Tick or fill in where necessary.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Category	DESCRIPTION	CODE	TICK
Gender	Male	1	
	Female	2	
Age Group	18-30	1	
	31-40	2	
	41-50	3	
	Above 50	4	
Current Education level education	Certificate	1	
	Diploma	2	
	Degree	3	
	Masters	4	
	Others	5	

Instructions to the respondent:

For Section B-F Please tick or write your rating on the space provided at the end of each option, which corresponds with your best choice where necessary.

Response mode	Rating	Description
Strongly Agree	5	I agree with no doubt
Agree	4	I agree with some doubt
Not sure	3	Not sure about the response
Disagree	2	I disagree with some doubt
Strongly Disagree	1	I disagree with no doubt at all

SECTION B: The free basic education policy

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
The free basic education policy cover fees for girl-child					
Girl-child are given special bursaries which are not given to boys					
Girls are offered free textbooks and stationery					
There is construction of new building to support girl-child education					
There policy caters of girl-child with special needs					
Teachers are always at school because they are paid well					

If there are any other opinions, you have about the free basic education policy, please state them below.

……

……

SECTION C: The effect of free basic education policy on enrollement in primary level

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
High girl-child enrollment was only registered in the beginning of the implementation of free basic education policy					
Parents enrolled positively their girl-child when the program stated.					
The enrollment increased when financial burden reduced					
The girl-child enrollment increased regardless of age					
Even girl children with disabilities enrolled due to free basic education policy					
Free basic education policy reduces girl-child inequality in access education.					

If there are any other opinions, you have about the effect of free basic education policy on enrollment of girl-child in primary level; please state them below.

……

……

SECTION D: <u>The effect of free basic education policy on retention primary level</u>

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
The number of girls staying in school has increased due to free basic education policy					
The girls attend school regularly because of free basic education policy					
Gild-child who is under free basic education policy is more likely to complete primary level.					
For a girl-child that living in poverty, basic education policy is a remedy that protect her education.					

If there are any other opinions, you have about the effect of free basic education policy on retention of girl-child in primary level; please state them below.

……

……

SECTION E: <u>The effect of free basic education policy on gender disparity at primary level education</u>

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
There are girl-child in school than boys					
The number of girls and boys are same in the schools					
The number of girls is still low besides the free basic education policy being in place					
The completion of girls and boys is almost the same					
The free basic education policy offers same benefits to girls and boys					

If there are any other opinions, you have about the effect of free basic education policy on gender disparity in primary level; please state them below.

……

……

SECTION E: <u>The challenges affecting the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia</u>.

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
Culturally, girls are not supposed to go to school but look after the young ones.					
Girl-child do not go to school because they have to work in and around home.					
The higher the bridal price payable, the more education a girl has that's why some parent educate their girls					
Boys maintain the family lineage that why they are educated.					
When money is tight, boys are favored to attend education					
When policy is not well funded girl-child education is most influenced					
Embezzlement of funds makes the implementation of free basic education policy difficult					
The distance of school from home influence enrollment and retention of girl-child in a school					
The higher the level of parental education, the more girls attend school.					
Corporal punishment discourages gild-child from staying at school?					
Teacher shortage discourage girl child to attend school					
Girls who perform bad academically prefer to drop out from school					
Because government is not well-paying teachers that's why teachers don't come to school					
Community members are not fully engaged in promoting girl child education under the free basic education policies					

If there are any other opinions on factors influencing the implementation of free basic education policy in promotion of girl-child education in Bunia.

……

……

END

Thank you very much!!!!

<u>FRENCH VERSION</u>

ANNEXES

Annexe I: Guide D'Interview

Participants: Administration éducative, enseignants et parents.

La politique de l'éducation de base gratuite

1. Quels sont les principaux services éducatifs fournis dans le cadre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite dans votre école, et comment soutiennent-ils l'apprentissage des filles ?
2. Comment la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite prend-elle en compte les besoins des filles en termes de matériel pédagogique, de disponibilité des enseignants et de soutien infrastructurel ?
3. Quelles mesures sont en place dans le cadre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite pour garantir que les filles issues de milieux défavorisés reçoivent un soutien éducatif adéquat, y compris des repas, des uniformes et des soins de santé ?

L'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur l'inscription des filles à l'éducation primaire

4. Comment ont évolué les taux d'inscription et de rétention des filles depuis la mise en œuvre de la politique ? Avez-vous constaté une augmentation ou une diminution ?
5. Avez-vous observé des changements au cours des 2 dernières années ? Si oui, expliquez davantage / Si non, expliquez davantage.
6. Pensez-vous que la politique a influencé la perception des parents sur l'éducation des filles ? Si oui, expliquez / Si non, expliquez.
7. La politique encourage-t-elle les parents à inscrire leurs filles ?
8. Comment les filles perçoivent-elles l'éducation depuis l'introduction de la politique
9. Quelles suggestions (le cas échéant) donneriez-vous pour améliorer la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite pour promouvoir l'éducation des filles ?

L'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur la rétention des filles dans l'éducation primaire

10. Pensez-vous qu'une mise en œuvre efficace de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite peut augmenter le taux de rétention des filles dans l'éducation primaire ? Si oui, comment ? / Si non, expliquez davantage.

11. Pensez-vous que l'introduction de l'éducation de base gratuite réduit les disparités de genre ? Si oui, expliquez / Si non, expliquez davantage.
12. Pensez-vous que la politique constitue une solution pour la rétention d'une fille vivant dans la pauvreté, la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite étant un remède qui protège son éducation ? Si oui, expliquez davantage / Si non, expliquez davantage.

L'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur les disparités de genre dans l'éducation primaire

13. Comment la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite a-t-elle influencé les taux d'inscription et d'absentéisme des garçons et des filles dans votre école ?
14. Quels défis observez-vous dans les taux de rétention et d'achèvement des garçons et des filles sous la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite, et quels facteurs contribuent à ces disparités ?
15. D'après votre expérience, dans quelle mesure la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite a-t-elle permis de réduire les disparités de genre dans l'éducation primaire, et quelles mesures supplémentaires recommanderiez-vous pour améliorer l'égalité des sexes ?

Les défis affectant la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite dans la promotion de l'éducation des filles à Bunia

16. Quelle est l'attitude de la communauté vis-à-vis de l'adoption de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite ?
17. La communauté a-t-elle été sensibilisée à la politique ?
18. Comment les normes/pratiques culturelles de genre influencent-elles la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite et comment cela affecte-t-il l'éducation des filles ?
19. Comment le statut économique familial affecte-t-il le soutien à l'éducation des filles, même avec la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite ?
20. A-t-il eu des campagnes de sensibilisation pour promouvoir la valeur de l'éducation des filles ?

21. Croyez-vous que l'engagement de la communauté et les campagnes de sensibilisation jouent un rôle significatif dans la promotion de l'éducation des filles dans le cadre des politiques de l'éducation de base gratuite ? Si oui, expliquez votre réponse.
22. Que pensez-vous du salaire actuel des enseignants donné par le gouvernement ?
23. En référence à la question 8, pensez-vous que le salaire des enseignants peut influencer l'éducation des filles ?
24. Les infrastructures scolaires du gouvernement (salles de classe, chaises et bureaux) encouragent-elles l'inscription des filles ?
25. Quel rôle les enseignants jouent-ils, selon vous, dans la promotion de l'éducation des filles dans le cadre des politiques de l'éducation de base gratuite ? Sont-ils suffisamment formés pour aborder les défis spécifiques au genre ?
26. Quels sont les principaux défis ou faiblesses que vous percevez dans la mise en œuvre des politiques de l'éducation de base gratuite pour les filles en RDC ?
27. À votre avis, comment les communautés et les parties prenantes locales peuvent-elles contribuer plus efficacement pour garantir que les filles aient un accès égal à l'éducation de base gratuite et en bénéficient ?
28. Quels défis, le cas échéant, avez-vous observés dans la mise en œuvre des politiques de l'éducation de base gratuite pour les filles à Bunia ?

FIN

Merci !

Annexe II: Questionnaire pour les filles

Chère répondante,

Je m'appelle Kasemire Lika Prisca, et je suis étudiante poursuivant une maîtrise en recherche et en politique publique à l'Université chrétienne d'Ouganda. Je mène une recherche sur la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite et la promotion de l'éducation des filles en République Démocratique du Congo (RDC), cas de Bunia. L'objectif de cette étude est d'évaluer l'efficacité de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite dans la promotion de l'éducation des filles en RDC, cas de Bunia. Je sollicite votre aide pour répondre aux questions figurant sur ce formulaire. Votre participation est importante, car elle nous renseignera sur l'efficacité de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite. Vos réponses sincères resteront entièrement anonymes et ne seront utilisées qu'à des fins éducatives.

Je vous serais reconnaissante de votre assistance.

Merci.

Instructions :

Cochez ou remplissez où nécessaire.

SECTION A : CARACTÉRISTIQUES DÉMOGRAPHIQUES

CATÉGORIE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	COCHER
Groupe d'âge	8-12	1	
	13-16	2	
	17- 18	3	
	Plus de 18	4	
Classe	Primaire Quatre	1	
	Primaire Cinq	2	
	Primaire Six	3	

Instructions pour la répondante:
Pour les sections B-F, veuillez cocher ou écrire votre évaluation dans l'espace prévu à la fin de chaque option, en fonction de votre meilleur choix lorsque nécessaire.

Mode de réponse	Évaluation	Description
Tout à fait d'accord	5	Je suis d'accord sans aucun doute
D'accord	4	Je suis d'accord avec quelques doutes
Pas sûr(e)	3	Je ne suis pas sûr(e) de la réponse
Pas d'accord	2	Je ne suis pas d'accord avec quelques doutes
Tout à fait pas d'accord	1	Je ne suis pas du tout d'accord

SECTION B: <u>La politique de l'éducation de base gratuite</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
La politique de l'éducation de base gratuite couvre les frais pour les filles					
Les filles reçoivent des bourses spéciales qui ne sont pas données aux garçons					
Les filles bénéficient de manuels et de fournitures scolaires gratuits					
Il y a construction de nouveaux bâtiments pour soutenir l'éducation des filles					
La politique prend en charge les filles ayant des besoins spéciaux					
Les enseignants sont toujours à l'école car ils sont bien payés					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions sur la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous

……
……

SECTION C: <u>L'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur l'inscription au niveau primaire</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
Une forte inscription des filles a été enregistrée uniquement au début de la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
Les parents ont inscrit positivement leurs filles lorsque le programme a commence					
L'inscription a augmenté lorsque la charge financière a diminué					
L'inscription des filles a augmenté indépendamment de l'âge					
Même les filles handicapées se sont inscrites grâce à la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
La politique de l'éducation de base gratuite réduit les inégalités d'accès à l'éducation pour les filles					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions concernant l'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur l'inscription des filles au niveau primaire, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous.

……
……

SECTION D : <u>L'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur la rétention au niveau primaire</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
Le nombre de filles restant à l'école a augmenté grâce à la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
Les filles fréquentent régulièrement l'école grâce à la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
Les filles bénéficiant de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite ont plus de chances de terminer le niveau primaire					
Pour une fille vivant dans la pauvreté, la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite est une solution qui protège son éducation					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions concernant l'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur la rétention des filles au niveau primaire, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous.

……
……

SECTION E: <u>L'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur les disparités entre les sexes au niveau de l'éducation primaire</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
Il y a plus de filles à l'école que de garçons					
Le nombre de filles et de garçons est le même dans les écoles					
Le nombre de filles reste faible malgré la mise en place de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
Le taux de réussite des filles et des garçons est presque le même					
La politique de l'éducation de base gratuite offre les mêmes avantages aux filles et aux garçons					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions concernant l'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur les disparités entre les sexes au niveau primaire, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous.

……

……

SECTION F: <u>Les défis affectant la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite pour la promotion de l'éducation des filles à Bunia</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
Culturellement, les filles ne sont pas censées aller à l'école mais doivent s'occuper des plus jeunes.					
Les filles ne vont pas à l'école parce qu'elles doivent travailler à la maison et autour de la maison.					
Plus le prix de la dot est élevé, plus une fille est éduquée, c'est pourquoi certains parents éduquent leurs filles.					
Les garçons maintiennent la lignée familiale, c'est pourquoi ils sont éduqués.					
Lorsque l'argent est limité, les garçons sont privilégiés pour accéder à l'éducation.					
Lorsque la politique n'est pas bien financée, l'éducation des filles en souffre le plus.					
Le détournement de fonds rend la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite difficile.					
La distance entre l'école et la maison influence l'inscription et la rétention des filles à l'école.					
Plus le niveau d'éducation des parents est élevé, plus les filles vont à l'école.					
Les punitions corporelles découragent les filles de rester à l'école.					
Le manque d'enseignants décourage les filles d'aller à l'école.					
Les filles qui obtiennent de mauvais résultats académiques préfèrent abandonner l'école.					
Parce que le gouvernement ne paie pas bien les enseignants, c'est pourquoi les enseignants ne viennent pas à l'école.					
Les membres de la communauté ne sont pas pleinement impliqués dans la promotion de l'éducation des filles sous la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite.					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions sur les facteurs influençant la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite pour la promotion de l'éducation des filles à Bunia, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous.

……

……

FIN

Merci !

Appendice III: Questionnaire pour les enseignants

Chere répondante :

Je m'appelle Kasemire Lika Prisca, et je suis étudiante en master de recherche et de politique publique à l'Université chrétienne de l'Ouganda. Je mène une recherche sur la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite et la promotion de l'éducation des filles en RDC, un cas de Bunia. L'objectif de cette étude est d'évaluer l'efficacité de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite dans la promotion de l'éducation des filles en RDC, plus précisément à Bunia. Je sollicite votre assistance pour répondre aux questions de ce formulaire. Votre participation est importante, car elle nous permettra d'informer sur l'efficacité de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite. Vos réponses sincères seront entièrement anonymes et utilisées uniquement à des fins éducatives.

Je vous remercie de votre aide.

Merci.

Instructions: Cochez ou remplissez l'espace nécessaire.

SECTION A: CARACTÉRISTIQUES DÉMOGRAPHIQUES

CATÉGORIE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	COCHER
Sexe	Masculin	1	
	Féminin	2	
Groupe d'âge	18-30	1	
	31-40	2	
	41-50	3	
	Plus de 50	4	
Niveau d'étude	Certificat	1	
	Diplôme	2	
	Licence	3	
	Master	4	
	Autres	5	

Instructions pour la répondante:
Pour les sections B-F, veuillez cocher ou écrire votre évaluation dans l'espace prévu à la fin de chaque option, en fonction de votre meilleur choix lorsque nécessaire.

Mode de réponse	Évaluation	Description
Tout à fait d'accord	5	Je suis d'accord sans aucun doute
D'accord	4	Je suis d'accord avec quelques doutes
Pas sûr(e)	3	Je ne suis pas sûr(e) de la réponse
Pas d'accord	2	Je ne suis pas d'accord avec quelques doutes
Tout à fait pas d'accord	1	Je ne suis pas du tout d'accord

SECTION B: <u>La politique de l'éducation de base gratuite</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
La politique de l'éducation de base gratuite couvre les frais pour les filles					
Les filles reçoivent des bourses spéciales qui ne sont pas données aux garçons					
Les filles bénéficient de manuels et de fournitures scolaires gratuits					
Il y a construction de nouveaux bâtiments pour soutenir l'éducation des filles					
La politique prend en charge les filles ayant des besoins spéciaux					
Les enseignants sont toujours à l'école car ils sont bien payés					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions sur la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous

……
……

SECTION C: <u>L'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur l'inscription au niveau primaire</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
Une forte inscription des filles a été enregistrée uniquement au début de la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
Les parents ont inscrit positivement leurs filles lorsque le programme a commence					
L'inscription a augmenté lorsque la charge financière a diminué					
L'inscription des filles a augmenté indépendamment de l'âge					
Même les filles handicapées se sont inscrites grâce à la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
La politique de l'éducation de base gratuite réduit les inégalités d'accès à l'éducation pour les filles					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions concernant l'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur l'inscription des filles au niveau primaire, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous.

……
……

SECTION D : <u>L'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur la rétention au niveau primaire</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
Le nombre de filles restant à l'école a augmenté grâce à la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
Les filles fréquentent régulièrement l'école grâce à la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
Les filles bénéficiant de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite ont plus de chances de terminer le niveau primaire					
Pour une fille vivant dans la pauvreté, la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite est une solution qui protège son éducation					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions concernant l'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur la rétention des filles au niveau primaire, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous.

……
……

SECTION E: <u>L'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur les disparités entre les sexes au niveau de l'éducation primaire</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
Il y a plus de filles à l'école que de garçons					
Le nombre de filles et de garçons est le même dans les écoles					
Le nombre de filles reste faible malgré la mise en place de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite					
Le taux de réussite des filles et des garçons est presque le même					
La politique de l'éducation de base gratuite offre les mêmes avantages aux filles et aux garçons					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions concernant l'effet de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite sur les disparités entre les sexes au niveau primaire, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous.

……

……

SECTION F: <u>Les défis affectant la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite pour la promotion de l'éducation des filles à Bunia</u>

ARTICLE	5	4	3	2	1
Culturellement, les filles ne sont pas censées aller à l'école mais doivent s'occuper des plus jeunes.					
Les filles ne vont pas à l'école parce qu'elles doivent travailler à la maison et autour de la maison.					
Plus le prix de la dot est élevé, plus une fille est éduquée, c'est pourquoi certains parents éduquent leurs filles.					
Les garçons maintiennent la lignée familiale, c'est pourquoi ils sont éduqués.					
Lorsque l'argent est limité, les garçons sont privilégiés pour accéder à l'éducation.					
Lorsque la politique n'est pas bien financée, l'éducation des filles en souffre le plus.					
Le détournement de fonds rend la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite difficile.					
La distance entre l'école et la maison influence l'inscription et la rétention des filles à l'école.					
Plus le niveau d'éducation des parents est élevé, plus les filles vont à l'école.					
Les punitions corporelles découragent les filles de rester à l'école.					
Le manque d'enseignants décourage les filles d'aller à l'école.					
Les filles qui obtiennent de mauvais résultats académiques préfèrent abandonner l'école.					
Parce que le gouvernement ne paie pas bien les enseignants, c'est pourquoi les enseignants ne viennent pas à l'école.					
Les membres de la communauté ne sont pas pleinement impliqués dans la promotion de l'éducation des filles sous la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite.					

Si vous avez d'autres opinions sur les facteurs influençant la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'éducation de base gratuite pour la promotion de l'éducation des filles à Bunia, veuillez les indiquer ci-dessous.

……

……

FIN

Merci !

Appendix IV Informed Consent Form

Title of the Research: Free basic education policy and promotion of girl child education in DRC, a case of bunia.

Researcher: Kasemire Lika, a student of UCU pursuing MRPP.

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research interview as part of a study led by Kasemire Lika, a UCU student pursuing a Master's degree in research and public policy (MRPP). The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the free basic education policy in promoting girl-child education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), with a particular focus on the Bunia case. Your participation in this interview will provide important insights to this study.

Purpose of the Interview

The purpose of the interview is to gather details and thoughts on your experiences and perspectives on the free basic education policy and its influence on girl-child education in Bunia, DRC. Your responds will only be used for research purposes and will be kept strictly confidential.

Participation

Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. It is expected to take approximately 40 minutes and you are under no obligation to participate. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the interview at any time without consequence. Your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The information collected during the interview will be used solely for research purposes and will be anonymized to protect the participant identity. The name and any identifying information will not be disclosed in any research publications or reports. The interview will be conducted at a location convenient for you. You are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarifications at any time during the interview process.

Benefit

There will be no immediate benefit, but your input will help us understand the difficulties surrounding girl education in relation to the free basic education policy. You will profit indirectly because the findings may influence decision makers. People respond differently to inquiries, and

some of the questions we will ask may make you feel uneasy. If you feel any personal discomfort during the discussion/interview, you can interrupt the interview (withdraw from the study) at any moment or refuse to answer any questions, as described above.

Contact Person for Questions

If you have any concerns or questions about the research, please feel free to contact Kasemire Lika at [+256701656409 via WhatsApp].

Questions about Participants Rights

(If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call the Chair of the Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee (REC) (Assoc. ……..

Consent

By agreeing to participate in this interview, you acknowledge that:

1. You have read and understood the purpose and nature of the research interview.
2. You are participating voluntarily and can withdraw at any time.
3. You understand that your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.
4. You are aware of the estimated duration of the interview.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Annexe V: Formulaire De Consentement

Titre: Politique d'education de base gratuite et promotion de l'education des filles en RDC. Cas de bunia.

Auteur : Kasemire Lika, étudiant de l'UCU en MRPP.

Introduction

Vous êtes invité à participer à un entretien de recherche dans le cadre d'une étude menée par Kasemire Lika, étudiant de l'UCU en Master recherche et politique publique (MRPP). L'objectif de cette étude est d'évaluer l'efficacité de la politique de gratuité de l'enseignement de base dans la promotion de l'éducation des filles en République démocratique du Congo (RDC), avec un accent particulier sur le cas de Bunia. Votre participation à cet entretien fournira des informations importantes pour cette étude.

Objectif de l'interview

L'objectif de l'entretien est de recueillir des détails et des réflexions sur vos expériences et vos points de vue sur la politique d'éducation de base gratuite et son influence sur l'éducation des filles à Bunia, en RDC. Vos réponses ne seront utilisées qu'à des fins de recherche et resteront strictement confidentielles.

Participation à l'interview

La participation à cet entretien est entièrement volontaire. Elle devrait durer environ 40 minutes et vous n'avez aucune obligation d'y participer. Si vous choisissez de participer, vous pouvez vous retirer de l'entretien à tout moment sans conséquence. Vos réponses seront traitées avec la plus grande confidentialité. Les informations recueillies au cours de l'entretien ne seront utilisées qu'à des fins de recherche et seront rendues anonymes afin de protéger l'identité du participant. Le nom et toute information permettant d'identifier le participant ne seront pas divulgués dans les publications ou rapports de recherche. L'entretien se déroulera dans un lieu qui vous convient. Vous êtes encouragé à poser des questions et à demander des éclaircissements à tout moment au cours de l'entretien.

Bénéfice

Il n'y aura pas de bénéfice immédiat, mais votre contribution nous aidera à comprendre les difficultés liées à l'éducation des filles dans le cadre de la politique d'éducation de base gratuite. Vous en tirerez un bénéfice indirect, car les résultats peuvent influencer les décideurs. Les gens réagissent différemment aux enquêtes, et certaines des questions que nous poserons peuvent vous mettre mal à l'aise. Si vous vous sentez mal à l'aise pendant la discussion ou l'entretien, vous pouvez interrompre l'entretien (vous retirer de l'étude) à tout moment ou refuser de répondre aux questions, comme décrit ci-dessus.

Personne à contacter en cas de questions

Si vous avez des inquiétudes ou des questions concernant la recherche, n'hésitez pas à contacter Kasemire Lika à [+256701656409 via WhatsApp].

Questions sur les droits des participants

(Si vous avez des questions sur vos droits en tant que sujet de recherche, vous pouvez appeler le président du Comité d'éthique de la recherche de l'Université chrétienne d'Ouganda (REC) (Assoc. .....).

Consentement

En acceptant de participer à cet entretien, vous reconnaissez que :

1. Vous avez lu et compris l'objectif et la nature de l'entretien de recherche.
2. Vous participez volontairement et pouvez-vous retirer à tout moment.
3. Vous comprenez que vos réponses resteront confidentielles et anonymes.
4. Vous connaissez la durée estimée de l'entretien.

Nom du participant :_____

Signature du participant :_____

Date de l'entretien :_____

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT BY THE CANDIDATE (POST VIVA FORM)

Date: 01/10/2025

Name of Candidate: KASEMIRE LIKA PRISCA **Reg. No:** S21M07/007

Title of Dissertation FREE BASIC EDUCATION POLICY AND PROMOTION OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: A CASE OF BUNIA

SN	COMMENTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Well covered on theoretical literature review including a review of Free education policy. However, the study lacks empirical literature on educational gender disparity in DRC, which is the basis for research problem statement	Empirical literature on educational gender disparity in the DRC was incorporated into the literature review. Although these findings were already detailed in the background section, they have also been presented in the empirical study section to strengthen the review and provide direct evidence supporting the research problem.	Page 20 literature review added.
2	Study area: Bunia is just a town, is too small	Bunia is a city and the home of thousands of	Page 29 corrected

	to justify a policy research problem. The candidate should have even considered a province The study population excluded boys- how and why? It is important to have both genders in order to establish the gender disparity policy problem.	internally displaced people. The City is big and it is the home of Ituri Province. An extract, justification, and explanation were provided to support the readers. Although boys were not the main study population, this was due to the existing study, which already focused on boys.	

SN	COMMENTS BY INTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	The first line in the abstract has an error, the students should have done a proper editing. The abstract is unnecessarily lengthy and includes statistics that not necessary at this stage. That use should be removed and a summary of the finding given in the brief. The use of the motive language in research should be avoided for example for example in the introduction the candidate talks of barbaric practices.	Abstract was revised and edited. Motive language (Barbaric) in the research was refined to fit the research work.	Page xi, Page 1 corrected
2	A well written introduction that clearly states the background and problem statement. However, the time scope is 2020-21, when the policy had just been launched yet she says that she is assessing the effect of the policy. Are you assessing the first phase? At this point, it was necessary to give a detailed overview of the free primary education policy, what is entails and what it does not cover, since it is the independents variable. This would have then informed the reader and the conceptual framework.	The researcher focused on both the first and second phases of the policy implementation. The study covered the period from 2010 to 2021. This allowed for an assessment of the policy's effects across both phases.	Page 7, detailing the time scope
3	Chapter 2: There are grammar errors which should be sorted with a the use of a good editor.	The chapter was also reviewed for grammatical errors with the help of good editors.	Pages 11 to 27 were reviewed for grammatical errors.
4	Chapter 3: The use of cross-sectional	The researcher self-administered the instruments. The	Page 31 was refined

	mixed study design was appropriate. It is not clear though how she was able to administer questionnaires to girls in lower primary level classes. Were the study instrument self-administered? Did the candidate use research assistant? Were young people used to gather data?	section was refined to explain.	
5	Chapter 4: I find it intriguing that over 50% of the pupils in the study are over 17 years. Is it possible that there is a mistake? The absence of detail description of the policy being reviewed make it difficult to understand whether the result of the study is based on what the policy cover or not. For example, there was a question regarding the girl child being given special bursaries not given to boys. Is this part of the policy? Were you looking for pupil's knowledge of the policy or their perception? The question about free textbooks for girls needed to be informed by whether the policy set out to do this. It is not clear from the written up whether this is part if the policy. The question that remains unanswered was where this policy was supposed to be gender specific and if not, then questions asked about female pupils may have been biased. Who answered the questions about girl child enrolment/ Were pupils the best people to respond to this/ This needs to	Bunia is one of the most conflict-affected regions of DRC. Children often start school late or repeat classes because of displacement or instability. This explains why some pupils in P4–P6 are older than the usual age bracket (9–13). This is not a mistake but a reflection of the disrupted education system in the region. Free Basic Education policy is not gender-specific; it targets all children. However, this study deliberately examined its impact on the girl-child, given the persistent barriers girls face in accessing education in Bunia. This focus was intentional to assess whether a general (non-gendered) policy is having equitable effects for girls. Different categories of respondents responded to the questions of enrollment. (girls, parents, teachers, headteachers, and local officials) This was to support the answer of girl-child. Regarding qualitative data, a part of quotations, extract result of the qualitative data was presented in form of theme. Chapter 4 was refined to meet the examiner's comments.	Page 38, 42,43, 65,66 refined

	be clearly stated in the write up. The qualitative data useful was not properly analysed and presented. There are just few sentences to back up position, but it is not clear that an analysis was done and resulted collated. Presentation of qualitative data is not just a matter of pasting quotations.		
6	The result has been thoroughly discussed in reference to the studies done elsewhere. The weak link between policy and the enrolment, retention and disparity makes me wonder tough whether it could stem form the fact that the policy is new rather than the other factors being considered. Is it perhaps too early to tell the impact of the policy on these factors?	The study was conducted in the second phase of implementation of the policy. Despite It looking early, but its being the second phase, the researcher found it relevant to study it impact.	
7	Chapter Six: The chapter has mainly repeated what was presented in the previous two chapters. The content that included in the general conclusion should have been expanded to form the rest of the chapter rather than repeating the study findings. The recommendations given and suggestion for future arise the study finding.	Chapter 6 was reviewed and took into consideration the comments of the examiner.	Page 76-86 refined.
8	The referencing did not follow the recommended APA style and in some cases, the references are incopleted for example: biregeya,U(2021).ulimwengu final la gratuite de l'enseignment2021.	The reference section was reviewed and corrected.	Page 87-95 corrected.

	Researchgate Bolton,L(2020).Barrier to educator for girls inDemocratic Republic of Congo.K4D		

SN	COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANNEL	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	During presentation, the researcher kept on mentioning “we”, who were they?	This was unintentional, likely to the pressure of the room. However, all members who supported this work were fully acknowledged.	
2	Under methodology, research design, you talked about cross sectional and mixed research methods, the panelists thought that these were two different methods in nature, the cross sectional is meant for observations. You need to give the justification why you need to have these two in your study	The researcher used a cross-sectional survey as the research design, while the mixed-method approach was used as the research approach, not the research design.	
3	Why did you look at the challenges? Were they new to these people?	As mentioned in the research gap, there are few studies that have focused on this particular group of people. Yes, these challenges were new to these people, according to the literature review results.	
4	Give reasons why you took up that study design	As noted in the research gap, few studies have focused on this particular group. Therefore, these challenges were new to them, as indicated by the results of the literature review	

KASEMIRE LIKA PRISCA ..... **AMANIYO Mercy** .....

Candidate’s Name Signature Supervisor’s Name Signature