

Actualizing Free Primary Education in Kenya for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The right to education is one of the basic human rights stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. In Kenya, this right has recently been livened through the launch of the Free Primary education program (hence FPE) by the newly elected NARC government. The FPE program is faced with major challenges that range from lack of facilities, few teachers, over-age children, street children, no books, lack of finances and socio-cultural impediments such as HIV-AIDs. The FPE has been received with mixed feelings from different sections of the society. While some have expressed feelings of discontentment, failure, betrayal among others, many low income members of the population view it as a God sent opportunity. While a lot of concern has been raised, little has been advanced concerning the propagation of the actual learning itself. This paper seeks to underscore some of the pertinent issues concerning actual instruction in the FPE program. A glaring gap, which poses a major challenge to the success of the FPE, exists in terms of the language of instruction. The existing language policy disregards mother tongues as tools of disseminating knowledge and does very little to promote them. The paper suggests the training of teachers to equip them with skills in mother tongue instruction, preparation of learning materials, books and other resources. Providing money for schools without providing books in itself is a failure. This paper argues that there is need to put in place structures that enhance, promote and develop mother tongues for the purposes of actualizing the FPE program.

Key words: Early Childhood Education; Free Primary Education; Kenya

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