

Critical Perspectives on Free Primary Education in Kenya: Towards an Anti-Colonial Pedagogy

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Abstract

This paper is a reading of the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in Kenya through the lenses of critical theory/pedagogy. The study critiques the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government for adoption of the Freirian banking model to design and implement the policy. The paper argues that such a model has ended up marginalizing the voices of other FPE stakeholders and sustaining educational inequalities in the country. The paper also examines how neoliberal policies like Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS) have influenced and shaped the FPE policy, and other educational reforms in the country. Such policies are read as colonial projects functioning to produce particular meanings and serving the interests of the dominant stakeholders—top government leaders and transnational capital markets. The paper concludes by theorizing an anticolonial pedagogy that aims at transforming FPE to an educational program that works to serve the interests of the local populace. The anticolonial pedagogy theorized also proposes strategies that different government and education stakeholders can employ in order to resist and counter the colonial, neo-colonial and neo-liberal structures and ideologies that continue to be perpetuated in the country.

Key words: free primary education, colonial, anti-colonial, neo-liberal

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