

Beyond Decolonialized Education towards Decoloniality

Ahmed Deniz

The webinar on "*Beyond Decolonialized Education towards Decoloniality*" was organized on November 27th, 2025, by *Pokja Education and Religion* of NICMCR. The event brought together a diverse group of presenters and participants, with simultaneous English-to-Indonesian interpretation.

As part of the NICMCR Joint Research Project 2025 – 2027, the webinar explored critical approaches to rethinking knowledge production and religious education, with a special focus on decolonizing Islamic and Christian education. Presenters shared valuable insights on moving beyond superficial decolonization to achieve true decoloniality. The webinar was moderated by **Ina ter Avest**.

Opening and closing remarks were made by Project-coordinator **Yus Sa'diyah**. Yus mentioned that current decolonization efforts mostly work through decolonization of existing structures on the symbolic level. According to Yus, we should move towards a deeper understanding of decolonization, especially in how knowledge is produced, valued and understood. Yus then criticized the homogenization of knowledge (that there exists one universal way of knowing), which she sees as a common threat of colonization. She connects this to the issue of artificial intelligence (AI) training and the risk of a "global knowledge collapse" due to AI's reliance on Western-centric text-heavy sources. She ends the opening with an emphasis on decoloniality as a *process* rather than a destination.

Presentations started with the video of King William Alexander's speech about the end of WWII and Indonesian's decolonization, which was responded upon by **Islamiyatur Rokhman**. She emphasized excerpts from the speech which underlined the importance of embracing differences and not to see them as a threat, but instead as an essential part of our life in freedom, as source of strenght. Her presentation further addressed multicultural education models respecting diversity and religious freedom.

Mohammad Sabar Prihatin's presentation elaborated on the decolonization of Islamic Education in Indonesia with multicultural education models respecting diversity and religious freedom. He outlined theoretical frameworks, implementation strategies, and benefits including enhanced cultural identity and critical thinking, while acknowledging challenges like entrenched colonial mentalities. He highlighted the need for dialogue between knowledge systems.

Duncan Wiesel responded to Sabar Prihatin's presentation critizising colonial educational legacies, and instead introducing concepts like coloniality, decoloniality and Hikmah pedagogy as analytical frameworks. In line with Sabar, he calls for decolonisation in

postcolonial education systems. Western education systems also require decolonisation. He reflected on the lack of Black perspectives in the education system of the Netherlands.

Fredrik Doeka shared insights on decolonizing Christian education in Indonesia, emphasizing local languages and local Indonesian experiences, an approach characterised by the integration of participatory methodologies, dialogue-oriented learning and critical reflection on concepts of power, identity and faith. He urged for a ‘new lens’ reinterpreting biblical narratives, where grassroots communities and congregations are recognised as co-creators of theological knowledge. In this way, Christian education can become a force for liberation, justice, and reconciliation in Indonesia's pluralistic society.

In response to Fredrik Doeka's presentation, **Jan Eijken** emphasised Protestantism in colonial history, which aimed to civilize people according to capitalist thinking, while the Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, hoped to educate the people to become indigenous leaders. He concluded that it is not the question which of the two can deal better with intercultural dialogue. But as church communities we are called to free the Gospel from oppressing ideologies.

Hanke Drop shared how teachers can contribute through embodied subjectification and arts-based education. She focused on how teachers and learners can contribute to decolonization through embodied subjectification and arts-based education. The speech emphasized practical applications in the classroom and explored how educators can actively engage in decolonization processes.

Ibrahim Kurt presented the FLOW (*Finding your Life Orientation amidst a diversity of Worldviews*) module, a program that combines dialogue, evaluation, and play, to develop critical thinking and value diversity, focusing on youth-friendly pedagogy, civic awareness, pedagogical leadership, and pluralism. FLOW builds on merging **Valuation Theory**, Self Confrontation Method, and **Dialogical Self Theory**, into an innovative and playful model of religious education. One of the most challenging tools in FLOW is the *MirrorMind* board game. From a DST perspective, the game externalizes the inner dialogue — making internal voices visible and discussable. From Valuation Theory, it shows how values may shift during interaction: emotions, meanings, and contexts are articulated through play.

Note from the author: A full report of presentations will be shared later; therefore, only a short summary of the webinar is included here.