

Cocooning, Shedding of Decolonization, Flying to Decoloniality

breaking free of Western dominance to embrace indigenous wisdom in theology and pedagogy

Ina ter Avest, 16/02/2026

Texts of the webinar "*Beyond Decolonialization towards Decoloniality*" organized by NICMCR's *Pokja Education and Religion*

On November 27th 2025 a webinar was organized on "*Beyond Decolonialization towards Decoloniality*" by NICMCR's *Pokja Education and Religion*. The webinar brought together a diverse group of presenters and participants, with simultaneous English-to-Indonesian translation. Below a report is given of the opening of the webinar by Yus Broersma, and the presentations of Islamiyatur Rokhman, Mohammad Sabar Prihatin and Fredrik Doeka, and their respective responses by Duncan Wielzen and Jan Eijken. Next, Ibrahim Kurt presented teaching material that explains the Dialogical Self Theory (DTS) by using the FLOW module. Hanke Drop followed with a paper exploring the role of teachers' leadership in classrooms. Yus Boersma finally closed this webinar with concluding remarks for the future. Translators from English to Bahasa Indonesia: Amadeo Devin Udampoh and Teofilus Nathanael.

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Abstract

The webinar explored approaches to the process of decolonization of Islamic and Christian religious education, with a focus on rethinking knowledge production and religious education regarding in particular Islamic and Christian education. Central in the speech of the Dutch King Willem Alexander was that much of the experiences of violence, terror, forced labor, hunger, imprisonment and humiliation during and after colonization remained unspoken for many years. This sorrow and the silencing thereof caused additional pain long after the war was finished, he said. Together with the King's statement that "peace begins with recognizing differences and being able to build bridges so we can live together, even with people who are radically different from us" this was taken as a starting point and elaborated upon by the presenters and their responders. The presenters as well as their responders explored the concepts of decolonialization and decoloniality. Attention was given to the need of freeing from Western dominance and the exploration of indigenous knowledge, in the field of theology and pedagogy. Learners must be introduced in critical thinking and dialogue. Classrooms should function as an open space for learning from and with each other. The way from decolonization to decoloniality seems to be paved by awareness of coloniality in our minds, the process of freeing from its dominance and the inclusion of indigenous knowledge. With the help of concepts of the theology and pedagogy of liberation, and observed examples of 'good practice', (religious) education may be freed from westernized knowledge about pedagogy, and about the traditions of Christianity and Islam, and become a safe place for the exploration of indigenous wisdom, in processes of learning from and with each other.

0. Yus Sa'diyah mentioned that current decolonization efforts mostly work through decolonization of existing structures on the symbolic level. According to Yus sa'diyah, we should move towards a deeper understanding of decolonization, especially in how knowledge is produced, valued and understood. She criticized the homogenization of knowledge (that allegedly there exists one universal way of knowing), which she sees as a legacy – a byproduct? - of colonization. Yus Sa'diyah instead favors pluriversality. She connects her ideas 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. Yus Sa'diyah invites presenters, responders and participants to focus on the process of the way from decolonization to decoloniality. In her view we all should value the *process* instead of focusing on a destination.

1. King Willem-Alexander - Bridges of togetherness

The online meeting started with a presentation of the speech of King Willem-Alexander, commemorating the end of WorldWar II on August 15th 1945 – a date that after 80 years still evokes intense emotions. In his speech the King particularly highlights the immense suffering in and around the former Dutch East Indies: violence, terror, forced labor, hunger, imprisonment and humiliation. According to the King, this suffering continues to echo through subsequent generations and affects a large number of people, both in Indonesia and in the Netherlands. The King specifically mentions soldiers, prisoners of war, women and children in camps, and all civilians who were persecuted and terrorized. Much of this suffering remained unspoken for many years, and that silence caused additional pain long after the war finished.

Although Japan's surrender ended the war, for many people – the King says - it did not bring peace. He refers to the painful experiences of repatriates and Moluccans who were poorly received in the Netherlands. “From the tropical sun shining through the leaves of the nutmeg tree to the icicles on the roof of the barracks...”. He expresses admiration for their resilience and points to their lasting contribution to the reconstruction of the Netherlands after World War II.

According to the King, this commemoration calls for reflection: after all, the 15th of August 1945 did not bring freedom and reconciliation for everyone. He stresses the importance of looking back critically, especially in a time when international violence—such as in Gaza and Ukraine and in many other places around the world—forces us to reflect on our responsibilities.

The King raises the question of what peace truly means. For him, peace begins with recognizing differences and being able to build bridges so we can live together, even with people who are radically different from us. Diversity, once faced and expressed, can be a strength and may form the foundation of a democratic society. In his view, democracy can exist only when differences of opinion and life orientations are allowed and respected.

King Willem-Alexander calls for the protection of democracy, especially now that it is under pressure worldwide. Despite the challenges, he believes in the resilience of our societies. He concludes with gratitude for the peace we experience today and emphasizes that peace is never guaranteed, but requires ongoing commitment from each of us.

2. Islamiyatur Rokhman - Revision of historical consciousness

Islamiyatur Rokhman reflects on King Willem-Alexander's speech and recalls that in this speech, the King emphasizes that decolonization cannot be treated as a separate or isolated theme but must be understood as a significant and unfinished chapter in history. The King notes that for many, 15 August 1945 did not mark the arrival of peace. For repatriates from the former Dutch East Indies, the end of the war marked the beginning of lives filled with uncertainty, pain and exclusion—experiences for which, for a long time, no language existed. “So much suffering has been buried under a heavy lid of silence. It destroyed lives, even after the war.”

The King's reference to this “heavy lid of silence” can be seen, as Islamiyatur Rokhman argues, as an acknowledgement of how the experiences of war and repatriation—within a society focused on reconstruction—remained invisible for decades and were not granted a place in the national memory. In this sense, the speech of the King functions as a form of historical redress: stories that were long ignored or marginalized are articulated and made visible in this commemoration.

The King links the legacy of decolonization to the importance of a diverse and tolerant society. He calls on us, says Islamiyatur Rokhman, to learn from the colonial past and to apply these insights in the present, recognizing differences as a source of collective strength rather than a threat.

Alongside the King's call to take collective responsibility for global peace, we also hear the obligation to confront the colonial legacy and heal the wounds that stem from it. This speech, as Islamiyatur Rokhman notes, marks the emergence of a new form of historical consciousness in the Netherlands. “Peace depends on our ability to live together with people

who are different from us. On our ability to see diversity not as a threat, but as an essential part of our life in freedom and as a source of strength,” the King states. For education, this means according to Islamiyatur Rokhman that *inclusive* educational models—both in (pre)schools, in professional education and at universities—must be prioritized. Differences must be respected: differences in ethnicity, religion, race, gender, disability, and other forms of social identity.

Islamiyatur Rokhman concludes that on our journey from decolonization toward decoloniality, the cultivation of multicultural religious education should continue to be encouraged and embedded in all educational settings. Every individual, according to Islamiyatur Rokhman regardless of their religion, has the right to receive religious education that aligns with their beliefs - in all schools and universities.

The opening of the webinar with the speech of the King, and the additional of Islamiyatur Rokhman’s reflection on that, is followed by presentations of Mohammad Sabar Prihatin and Fredrik Doeka with responses from respectively Duncan Wielzen and Jan Eijken.

3. Sabar Prihatin – freeing from internalized colonized values

Mohammad Sabar Prihatin presented a paper titled ‘Islamic Religious Education Decolonization in Secondary Schools and Pesantren in Indonesia’ articulates the need to decolonize Islamic education in Indonesia by addressing longstanding colonial influences visible in school structures, curricula, and teaching practices. For Prihatin decolonization is framed as a necessary step to free education from Western paradigms and to make space for local/native knowledge, culture, and authentic Islamic values. Classrooms must be liberated from hegemonic and homogenous methods and perspectives (Futaqi, 2018). Prihatin’s own experiences as a teacher in secondary education make him aware of the need to adopt the way from decolonization to decoloniality in classrooms, so that Islamic education is capable of not only transmitting dogmatic knowledge but also empowering students to think critically and to strengthen their cultural and Islamic identity as a whole (Karim, 2024). By way of the inclusion of theories, practices, and challenges faced in this process in the classroom and by incorporating his field experiences, Prihatin expects to contribute to the development of a democratic, inclusive, and liberating education (Futaqi, 2018; BRIN, 2025).

Prihatin points to three important aspects of the way from decolonization to decoloniality:

1. Intellectual decolonization: reconstructing knowledge based on indigenous and local Islamic perspectives and build bridges with global knowledge;
2. Mental decolonization: overcoming internalized colonial values such as elitism, capitalism, and individualism;
3. Philosophical decolonization: cultivating an education that empowers communities while remaining rooted in and inspired by Islamic and local cultural values.

Decolonization, according to Prihatin, is not merely a rejection of Western heritage, but even more so an affirmation and inclusion of local knowledge and traditions (Trajano, 2024). According to Prihatin curriculum reconstruction is needed

- a. integrating local values and knowledge with inclusive, participatory learning methods that foster critical thinking skills in students (Kutsi & Arifin, 2023)
- b. liberating students from homogenous and Eurocentric educational perspectives and practices

- c. creating space for the recognition and development of authentic local wisdom and religious values (Subair, 2024).

For teachers in religious education (RE) classrooms, this means, according to Prihatin, not only dogmatically instilling religious teachings but even more so facilitating students to critically study and understand the social, historical, and cultural contexts they live in. However, in pesantren, despite a strong emphasis on local values and Islamic traditions, challenges arise in integrating them with actual academic knowledge in a dialogical and participatory learning approach (Akhmad, 2024; Ramadhani; 2025). Next to that limited educational resources, a lack of teacher training on decolonization strategies, and school policies hinder pedagogical innovation (Futaqi, 2025). Nevertheless, it must be said that several efforts, such as utilizing local materials, using discussion and reflection learning methods, and involving students in formulating relevant Islamic values, have demonstrated positive results in enhancing students' cultural identity and critical awareness (Muna et al., 2024; Setiawan et al., 2025).

According to Prihatin the role of teachers is of pivotal importance, as is capacity building. Teacher training and professional development are the key to the success on the way from decolonization to decoloniality. In his words they must be(come) experts in group discussions, local case studies, the combination of pesantren stories and philosophies, and the use of learning media that highlight local cultural and religious aspects.

Field observations which Prihatin conducted in schools indicate that that many learning practices still reflect top-down, homogenized approaches embedded in religious education. He notices that teachers face obstacles such as limited resources, lack of decolonial training, and school policies that resist innovation. Nonetheless, integrating local knowledge, dialogic learning, and reflective discussions have shown promise in strengthening students' cultural identity and critical thinking skills.

Prihatin proposes several strategies for effectively implementing decolonization: adopting participatory learning models, incorporating pesantren traditions and local wisdom into curricula, strengthening teacher capacity through training, and promoting collaboration between schools, pesantren, and research institutions. Crucial is the implementation of a dialogic and participatory learning model that provides space for students to actively express their thoughts and reflection thereupon (Freire, 1970; Firdaus, 2024).

By conclusion Prihatin states that decolonization is both an educational and personal journey. On their way students cultivate their cultural and Islamic identities and strengthen critical and creative thinking skills for the benefit of the combination of authentic Islamic principles and local values or traditions.

Last but not least Prihatin refers to qualities of teachers themselves. Teachers, according to him, must be reflective of their own colonial legacy while actively employing decolonial attitudes and practices. In line with Mohammad Sabar Prihatin's view this must be prioritized in teacher training.

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4. Duncan Wielzen – community of inquiry

In his reflection on the presentation of Mohammad Sabar Prihatin, Duncan Wielzen draws on the concepts of coloniality, decoloniality, and Hikmah pedagogy. Referring to the concepts of decolonial theory as presented by Mohammad Sabar Prihatin, Wielzen builds on this line of thought by arguing how colonial structures continue to shape knowledge, power, and education in post-colonial societies.

Coloniality, as presented by Prihatin, refers to the persistence of Eurocentric hierarchies established during colonialism. Scholars such as Mignolo (2009) argue that Western epistemologies remain dominant and continue to define what counts as legitimate knowledge. It elevates Western epistemologies as universal and legitimate while relegating Indigenous epistemologies to the realm of “non-knowledge.” Prihatin hints at this when he argues, following Azzahra et al. (2025), that “intellectual colonialism prioritizes Western secular

knowledge while marginalizing or ignoring Islamic values and local cultural perspectives”. In the Indonesian context, Dutch colonial rule marginalized Islamic education, portraying it as inferior and shaping curricula to produce passive subjects. This ongoing dominance reflects what Mignolo calls the “darker side of Western modernity.”

Decoloniality, as Prihatin pointed to, is proposed as a path toward intellectual and spiritual liberation. Reclaiming indigenous knowledge is defined by Mignolo (2009) as epistemic disobedience – i.e., a refusal to think solely within the boundaries of Eurocentric knowledge systems. Decoloniality seeks to affirm pluriversality: the coexistence of multiple legitimate ways of knowing and being (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). This process includes revitalizing indigenous cultural and ethical values and building economic self-reliance within educational communities. In line with what Nuryazidi (2024) suggests, Wielzen argues that decoloniality includes reinforcing indigenous spiritual, cultural, and socio-ethical values as the core of the educational experience, as well as ensuring economic autonomy through community-based entrepreneurship.

Wielzen also highlights Hikmah pedagogy (Hussien et al. 2017) as a wisdom-centered, dialogical, reflective and ethically grounded mode of teaching rooted in Qur’anic and prophetic traditions. Hikmah pedagogy according to Wielzen is a culturally grounded Islamic educational framework aligned with decolonial goals. Rooted in Islamic holy scriptures, Hikmah pedagogy promotes critical thinking, dialogue, and ethical reflection. Its pedagogical approach creates a ‘community of inquiry’ and counteracts monologic teaching methods, empowers students, and integrates local wisdom, thereby advancing intellectual, mental, and pedagogical decolonization.

Last but not least, Wielzen argues that decolonization is not only necessary for post-colonial nations. Western educational systems also uphold colonial patterns and require critical reflection. Examples in literature, theatre and movies directed by people from Surinam and the Dutch Caribbean show how younger generations challenge Eurocentric narratives in Dutch education, which often omits histories of slavery and colonial violence. Their efforts, according to Wielzen represent contemporary forms of epistemic disobedience and counter-narrative building – both in previous colonizing as well as colonized peoples.

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5. Fredrik Doeka – re-examination of theological and teaching methods

After the view on Islamic education by Prihatin and the comments on this presentation by Wielzen, the floor was given to Fredrik Doeka to present his ideas on Christian education in decolonized Indonesia.

According to Doeka Christian education within Indonesia's Protestant traditions has long been shaped by Western theological and pedagogical models introduced during the Dutch colonial period. These mission-based systems promoted European theology and cultural norms while marginalizing local languages, cultures, and indigenous religious expressions. While mission schools contributed to literacy and access to education, they simultaneously imposed Eurocentric theological and cultural norms. Biblical interpretations, liturgical practices and theological education, according to Doeka have been largely influenced by European traditions, particularly those stemming from the Dutch Reformed institutions (Aritonang & Steenbrink 2008:758). As a result, Christian education developed a dualistic structure that separated faith from local identity and reinforced intellectual dependence on Western thought.

Decolonization, according to Doeka aims to dismantle these inherited colonial power structures and re-examine theological frameworks and teaching methods that no longer reflect the lived realities of Indonesian communities. Lines of thought that we as colonized people take for granted - such as ideas about modern society, race, gender, and even what it means to be human - were shaped by colonial history (Nelson 2025), Doeka states. Drawing on postcolonial and decolonial theories, scholars argue for freeing biblical studies and Christian pedagogy from Western epistemological dominance.

Indonesia's immense diverse society regarding religious, cultural, and ethnic plurality makes the way beyond decolonization to decoloniality especially urgent. Doeka refers to the Catholic Church in Indonesia, organized into many dioceses, while Protestant Christianity is represented by more than a hundred church groups, each with different traditions. Indonesia has long looked like a *meeting place* for ideas and spiritual influences from around the world, much like a busy *marketplace* where many beliefs interact and grow (Sumartana 1993:342). Doeka is of the opinion that Christian education must address the country's complex history, interreligious environment, and local spiritual traditions. Decolonization therefore requires using local languages, incorporating indigenous wisdom, and engaging community experiences to create materials that resonate with everyday life.

What is needed in Indonesia, according to Doeka, is a contextual Christian education that is participatory and liberative, drawing on Freirean principles (2005) that encourage critical reflection on identity, power, and faith. Churches, theological schools, and educators must work together to co-create curricula that include national and local history, indigenous viewpoints, and local languages, all shaped by the realities people face today. Examples from practice—such as using cassava and palm wine for communion in Rote or holding services on the beach in Ternate-Alor—demonstrate creative efforts to integrate local culture into Christian worship.

Although resistance persists, due to institutional conservatism and the continued influence of Western theological traditions, Indonesian theologians and grassroots movements are opening new opportunities for transformation, Doeka says. Decolonizing Christian education ultimately seeks to cultivate a theology rooted in Indonesian experiences, promoting justice, cultural integrity, and social harmony.

Fredrik Doeka concludes that by valuing local identities, encouraging critical thinking, and respecting local wisdom, Christian education can facilitate the promotion of freedom, justice, and harmony in Indonesia's diverse society.

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6. Jan Eijken – awareness is the first step for decolonialization

Jan Eijken offers a Dutch perspective on the need to decolonize Christian education in Indonesia, reflecting on both Protestant and Catholic histories within the colonial context. Decolonization is described by Jan Eijken as a long-term process because colonialism and its economic, religious, and cultural effects have shaped global society for centuries. Awareness, in his view, is the first step toward change.

Eijken highlights how Protestantism historically intertwined with colonial expansion and capitalist ideology. He refers to the Dutch scholar Remco Ensel (2025) who pointed to the intimate relationship between Protestantism and the years of the *ethical politics* of the Dutch government (1901-1942), a reaction on the so called '*Cultuurstelsel*' that exploited systematically the Javanese farmers and workers in the 19th century.¹ Ensel highlights the role of Julius Boeke, a Dutch expert of colonial economy. Boeke's goal was influencing the Indonesian mindset and so to "develop", "lift up" and "civilize" the people in the capitalist way of thinking. The South African theologian Thandi Soko – de Jong argued that the protestant Calvinist doctrine of predestination emphasized that certain individuals and groups are elected by God for eternal salvation and material prosperity, and others are excluded from this "blessings". This was "a theological justification for the subjugation and exploitation of those deemed outside God's election". Max Weber already made the connection between protestantism and the capitalist savings and work ethics of the calculating entrepreneur. As is a old Dutch saying: "The merchant and the minister go hand in hand." Ambiguity characterizes the diverse positions. On the one side the former governor of the Dutch Indies Willem Henri van Helsdingen in 1941 in his book argued that "There was created something great". On the other side the Reformed missiologist prof. Johannes Verkuyl (1908-2001), who worked as a minister with Indonesian students in Leiden (1935-1939) and later in Java (1940-1962), supported the independency of Indonesia.

The Catholic Church also held an ambiguous position, balancing between its international structure and commitment to fostering indigenous leadership. In contrast with the Dutch Reformed churches (who are shaped by their Dutch-ness), the Roman Catholic Church is an international oriented organization.

The first Javanese bishop, Soegijapranata, supported Indonesia's independence, stated that "I am 100 % catholic and 100 % Indonesian." He became a national hero. The Holy Mass in Ganjuran (Yogyakarta) in June 2024, celebrated the Centenary of the R.C. Church of Ganjuran, built in Javanese Hindu-style. The catholic celebration, Eijken says, was completely Javanese, like a celebration of the keraton. This church/service according to Eijken symbolizes indigenized Catholicism through its Javanese architecture and rituals. Catholic missionaries often collaborated with colonial powers. On the other hand the Vatican as an international orientated organization hoped that mission would produce indigenous vocations for priesthood and religious life, resulting in religious leadership. Karel Steenbrink described this ambiguous position of the sisters Franciscanessen van Heythuysen. There were also instances where Catholic missionaries opposed oppression or even worked to break down colonial boundaries. A good example is the Jesuit priest Frans van Lidt.

Eijken is of the opinion that decolonization requires deep reflection on how colonialism, capitalism, and globalization shaped and still shapes religious and educational systems. It is the impression of Jan Eijken that in the plural Indonesian context theologians such as Fredrik Doeka, Irene Umbu Lolo, and Anchu Samsul Maarif emphasize the need for re-engaging of indigenous knowledge, wisdom and religion. Jan Eijken argues that this is a real challenge in particular for classical Protestant theology, with its sharp distinction between nature and divine grace, and between religion and faith. According to Jan Eijken Protestantism will face serious challenges, while some forms of Catholicism have engaged more successfully in intercultural and interreligious encounters.

The question is, according to Eijken, if we can open ourselves for the wisdom of native people, a wisdom that colonialism has been silencing. ‘Opening up’ is especially important in education, shaping curricula on a contextual, hermeneutic and liberating basis. As co-educators of the next generation church communities must call up to free the message of the Gospel (= good news for everybody!) from oppressing ideologies. Jan Eijken calls for theologians, as leading figures in the process from decolonization to decoloniality, to stimulate decolonizing missiology. He points to the teaching module ‘FLOW’ in the Netherlands as an example of co-creation of pedagogues and theologians. FLOW creates a space for religious identity development by way of inter-personal encounters and intra-personal reflection in an intercultural classroom context. This module is developed at Dutch universities and is an offer to secondary schools. However, Eijken wants to prevent a ‘neo-colonial’ attitude, so he does not want to impose this module to Indonesian education (like a new Julius Boeke). The FLOW-module is only an invitation to test in pilot studies (in which prof. Atik Tapipin actually is involved) if it can work in our respective educational contexts. Finally, Jan Eijken warns about the new ways of global ‘colonization’ by Big Tech companies (Google, Meta, TikTok, AI).

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7. Ibrahim Kurt – FLOW

The FLOW module Jan Eijken refers to is presented by Ibrahim Kurt. FLOW, Ibrahim Kurt explains, is a dialogical and playful approach of religious education, aimed at supporting

young people's religious identity development and preventing radicalization. Developed in the Netherlands, it integrates dialogue, valuation, and game-based learning to stimulate students to think critically, value diversity, and move beyond narrow or colonized identities. The abbreviation FLOW stands for *Finding your Life Orientation amidst a diversity of Worldviews*. It combines a youth-oriented pedagogy, civic and legal awareness, strong teacher leadership, and a focus on tolerance/toleration of plurality. Its purpose is not to prescribe *what* to believe but, in the contrary, to enable students to understand *how* they believe through dialogue and reflection.

The module builds on the Valuation Theory (VT) and its research instrument the Self Confrontation Method (SCM; (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen 1995), and the Dialogical Self Theory (DST) (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka 2010). According to VT's and DST's view identity is characterized by a multiplicity of internal "*I*-positions" (e.g., "I as believer," "I as citizen"), which may voice cooperation or conflict (see also Buitelaar & Zock, 2013). Valuation Theory explores the affective relation to the context students live in, their relation to family and culture, their interpretation of beliefs and struggles, their perception of their past and future. FLOW transforms classrooms into spaces for exploration of students' look at themselves, at others, and at the world - from a personal and religious perspective.

FLOW follows an inductive learning cycle: starting at students' own experience(s), encounter with the other (being a classmate or a character in a -religious-text) and new perspectives, creatively engaging with them, possibly an integration of others' views and reflection upon the process resulting in the actual (possibly changed/transformed) *I*-positioning. The FLOW-process stimulates both emotional and intellectual growth.

A central didactical tool is the *MirrorMind* board game, inspired by the Sufi tradition. Using virtues and vices (written on the board in Dutch and Arabic), the game stimulates students' inner dialogues, externalizes these in the dialogue with the game-participants, and as such stimulates the reflection on moral choices. On the board snakes and ladders represent moral pitfalls and virtues. Through storytelling, conversations and dialogue, students discover their identity as dynamic and flexible. This play-based reflection – a pivotal characteristic of FLOW - reduces, according to Ibrahim Kurt, the risk of radicalization by fostering empathy and curiosity.

The FLOW module links religious education to broader decolonial goals, inspired by the Bandung Spirit of equality and coexistence. FLOW stimulates students to identify and transform *colonized I-positions* shaped by dominance or exclusion, encouraging ecological responsibility, gender equality, and plurality/pluriversality as shared human values of a democratic society (Hermans & Bartels 2021).

As an example the FLOW-lessons Ibrahim Kurt presents the lesson on ecological responsibility. This lesson, according to Ibrahim Kurt, shows how students explore internal and external conflicting *I*-positions (e.g., "I as consumer" vs. "I as steward"). Using adapted elements of the Self-Confrontation Method (the research instrument of the Dialogical Self Theory), students map emotions and valuations to understand contradictions in themselves and their underlying motivations, like Self- or Other directed motivations. This approach connects decolonial principles with practical, reflective learning, rooted in cultural and religious wisdom.

In FLOW identity is portrayed as a “society of mind,” shaped by internal positions (e.g., “I as silent,” “I as angry,” “I as colonized”) and external positions (my family, my peers, my teachers, my community, my environment). FLOW encourages students to reinterpret these affective laden ‘voiced positions’, stimulating the flexibility of *I*-positions, such as shifting from “I as someone who must dominate” to “I as someone who respects others.”

Dialogue is understood, according to Ibrahim Kurt, as a collective learning process, characterized by creativity in relating to different ways to cope with conflicting positions – in a person and between persons. FLOW encourages both inter- and intra-personal dialogue.

It is the opinion of Ibrahim Kurt that decolonial education that seriously walks the way from decolonization to decoloniality requires co-creativity with teachers, parents, and communities, creating a space for students to shape learning through reflection journals, mind maps, and classroom dialogues.

FLOW, according to Ibrahim Kurt, is a transformative model for (inter)religious education. It nurtures empathy, critical thinking, ecological awareness, and gender equality — not through surveillance or control, but through play and dialogue, aiming at (self)empowerment of students – citizens of the world.

Ibrahim Kurt informs short about the research project with FLOW in Indonesia, directed by Atik Tapipin, exploring the way the teaching module FLOW may be adapted to the Indonesian context.

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Whereas the focus of the presentation of Ibrahim Kurt was on teaching material, the teaching module FLOW, Hanke Drop in her presentations focusses on the teacher and the way teachers and learners can pave the way from decolonization to decoloniality in education. She argues that pedagogy is needed, to decolonise education – and by consequence - society. Decolonisation implicates, according to Hanke Drop, a bottom-up movement on learners’

level. Education's aim, she states, is to stimulate learners to become autonomous, responsible human beings, rather than passive objects shaped by external systems.

8. Hanke Drop – teacher artistry

Drawing on the work of Dutch pedagogue Gert Biesta, Hanke Drop explains that education is characterized by qualification (learning subject contents, developing a professional identity, etc.) and socialisation (this is how we work at schools, in the classroom, these are our ways of behaviour in the classroom- and school community). However, the main orientation of education, according to Hanke Drop who follows here Biesta (2022), is subjectification: becoming a person, i.e. a subject, *not someone's object!* This is about becoming an adult person in the world; students' own world, *not someone other's world!* However, there is not only a question from me to the world, but also a subjectifying question the other way around: "What might the world be asking from me?" Without this subjectifying question education is only training, instead of a transformative process. Education is about pointing at the world, what is called by Biesta (2022) 'world-centred teaching'. The teacher knocks at their learners' doors: are they able to perceive these appeals of the teacher and - through the teacher – the appeals of the world?

Decolonization, Hanke Drop states, primarily depends on subjectification, because it invites learners to ask: *What does the world ask from me?* and *Do my intentions contribute to a world I want to be part of?*

Becoming a "subject", according to Hanke Drop, also involves embodiment: learning with the whole body—mind, emotions, senses, and physical presence. Embodied learning stimulates students' interrelatedness with themselves, others, and the world, enabling them to feel and to respond to the world they live in. It is the opinion of Hanke Drop that teachers therefore need "teacher artistry"—the pedagogical sensitivity to read the classroom, invite safe exploration, and guide experiential and creative learning through movement, play, arts, improvisation, storytelling, and role-play (Drop, 2025). In a safe space, learners can be engaged in creating, moving, performing and experimenting — not just theoretical learning. This way of teaching and learning is called by Hanke Drop *teacher artistry*: 'the pedagogy of inviting learners to engage in movement, work with affect and emotions, and learn to give shape to their environments ('making') in accordance with what the world asks from them'. Creative activities make the invisible and inexpressible visible and give (poetic) words to learners' experiences.

Hanke Drop concludes by pointing to the different positions of learners, teachers and school authorities on the way from decolonization to decoloniality. On the learners' level this would mean that there is space in the classroom (also in higher education!) for experiential learning: learning and inquiring through movement, expression of voices, playing and making. From the teacher this asks for making room for learners to tell stories about past and current experiences in their families and peer group. For school authorities this means the training of teachers to transform their classes into a safe space of co-creation.

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9. From westernized theory and indigenous practice to decolonized praxis

The participants of the webinar brought to the fore a question about the FLOW module, and some critical comments. Regarding the FLOW module the question was about teacher training and adaptation to different cultural/religious contexts, since this module was developed and piloted in the Netherlands. A pilot started with Atik Tapipin, to explore the possible application of this module in Indonesia.

The focus of the critical comments was on the practicalities of the offered theoretical ideas for decolonization of religious education. The complexity, the entanglement of culture and religion, the internalization of western/colonial ideologies and practices and the presentation of knowledge to students versus the narrative approach of teaching, let alone the intersectionality of these diverse aspects. Attention was given to the Pancasila ideology as a top-down approach from the government versus a bottom-up approach taking its start in the exploration of local wisdom. Teacher training is seen by the participants of the webinar as a pivotal starting point, making novice-teachers aware of their own colonialism-related mindset. Awareness thereof and self-knowledge of teachers is pivotal in the process from decolonialism to decoloniality.

According to Frans Wijzen the Dialogical Self Theory is an interesting instrument to facilitate the reflection of teachers' and all others involved. This resonates with his ideas that "teachers, positioned at the interface between state curriculum and local community knowledge, are key actors in either perpetuating or transforming these dynamics" (Wijzen 2025). Elaborating on the concept of decoloniality Frans Wijzen states that "A decolonial approach requires more than adding indigenous content to the curriculum; it involves reconfiguring the epistemic frameworks through which environmental education (and gender, and religious education, *added by ItA*) is conceptualized." (Wijzen 2025). This starts with becoming aware of our infected minds and free them from colonialization. For this the pedagogy/theology of liberation, as developed by Paulo Freire and referred to by the presenters and Fredrik Doeka, will be helpful.

A personal research question in the exploration of the mindset of all persons involved may be "where is the voice of local wisdom positioned in my 'society of mind', and what is the relation to other *I*-positions including the external *I*-position 'my religion/environment/gender'?" Attention is needed in teacher training to stimulate novice-teachers' development of internal (internal conversation) and external (team-meetings) dialogicality. As partners-in-dialogue (novice)teachers are co-researchers on the way from decolonialisation to decoloniality.

The way from decolonialization to decoloniality is a long way, as Jan Eijken stated. Freire's theory gives words to the process we are involved in and - as members of NICMCR's pokjas - are dedicated to. A metaphor for this may be the birth of a butterfly: from an insignificant caterpillar it transforms into a beautiful butterfly – an unruly process that starts with cocooning and subsequently the shedding thereof, before it can spread its wings to share its beauty with the world.

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10. Walking the road is the destination

In her closing remarks, Yus Sa'diyah reflected that we still have a long way to go. Yet this long journey is itself part of the decolonial process. Decolonisation is not a fixed destination, but an ongoing practice of reflection, unlearning, and transformation.

She reminded participants to remain attentive to the risk of imposing our own understanding of what decolonisation should look like, as this too can become a decoloniality trap. The act of questioning, unlearning colonial ways of thinking, and staying open to discomfort is already a step toward decoloniality.

Walking this road together—slowly, reflexively, and in dialogue—is where the work truly happens.

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