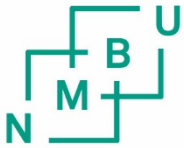

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Education provision in a postcolonial world: a case study of Norwegian NGOs in South Sudan

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Declaration

I, Mari Wæhle Gaustadsæther, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date..... **4.01.2021**

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Any errors are mine alone.

Abstract

This thesis uses postcolonial theory and the concept of decolonising education to examine the education practices of four Norwegian NGOs in South Sudan. Over the last few years, there has been an upsurge in debates about the need to decolonise academia and include indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in education. However, it seems that international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have not faced the same scrutiny or call for investigation of their education provision. As INGOs play an important part in education provision around the world, the thesis calls for their practices to be analysed in light of decolonisation theory, so as to situate their role and critically examine their practices. The findings will suggest that there is no clear and organisation-wide strategy by the NGOs to decolonise education, and that the default response to the question of education provision is that interventions are aligned to national priorities and regulations set by the South Sudanese government and donors. The thesis argues that there needs to be a wider understanding of the positionality and power of INGOs in educational decolonisation. The global architecture of education makes it difficult for the global South to decolonise without the reflection, acknowledgement of the issue, and the will to change these practices by those who are providing the education.

At the same time, the thesis finds that there is some incorporation of local knowledge by the Norwegian NGOs. This varies between including local music, songs, dance and storytelling, to using local examples and names to localise learning, and collating local stories and nursery rhymes in a published manner. There are also a couple examples of deliberately using decolonial theory, such as basing a life-skills programme on Freire's pedagogy, and including indigenous knowledges and global South scholars in a master's programme. Thus, the NGOs can be situated as trying to incorporate some elements of local knowledge, but not as structuring their whole education programmes according to the concept of decolonising education. The thesis argues it is important to see how INGOs are situated within decolonisation of education. This can give us further insight on how to provide quality education in the relevant country. Applying the concept of decolonising education can broaden our view of INGOs' role in education provision beyond simply being service providers where the government fails.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CBTT	Community-Based Teacher Training
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IR	International Relations, field of study
MoGEI	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
OsloMet	Oslo Metropolitan University
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SF	Strømme Foundation
SFS	Support Group for Sudan and South Sudan
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
WB	World Bank
YGlobal	KFUK-KFUM Global

1. Introduction

Colonisation affected the colonised peoples' views of the world and how they saw themselves (Sardar, 2008:viii). It created an inferiority complex where knowledge, histories, cultures and languages of the colonised were seen as inferior to that of Europe (Fanon, 2008[1]:9). While formal colonialism is over, the lasting effects of it are still present today (Sardar, 2008:xix). As Ndlovu-Gasheni (2017) argues, colonialism's "long-term consequence was that Western education became propagated as the only valid and legitimate form of socialisation of humanity across space and time" (p. 43). Over the last few years, there has been an upsurge in debates about decolonising academia. Students and academics call for the decolonisation of epistemic knowledges and curricula, and for the inclusion of diversity in academic fields (Mbembe, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017). Many speak of the need to transform the curriculum to fit the African context by including African knowledge systems (e.g. van Wyk & Higgs, 2011; Shizha, 2013; Odora-Hoppers, 2017). However, it seems that international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have not faced the same scrutiny or call for investigation of their education provision. It seems fewer studies have taken on INGOs as the subject of study in the decolonisation of education debate.

There is much talk about the need to decolonise education, but are INGOs working in the global South doing this? Since there is much critique about education not being decolonised and that it is not relevant to the African context (see chapter 2.1.), it is only fitting to investigate the practices of INGOs. Willetts (2011) argues that "we cannot study global politics without consideration of the engagement of NGOs in the global contention over issues" (p. 43). Critique of education development in the global South has been around for a long time, so how has this influenced the way INGOs think about their education provision? Breidlid (2020a) argues there is "little discussion among the INGOs and the national governments about the potential changes in learning strategies and knowledge transmission given the status quo in learning outcomes" (p. 24). He argues there is little consideration of educational

[1] The book was first published in 1952, but the version used in the thesis is from 2008.

practices in terms of the epistemological, ontological and ideological (Breidlid, 2020a:24). Breidlid and Krøvel argue that there is a "current learning crisis on the [African] continent (Breidlid & Krøvel, 2020:3), but that the inclusion of indigenous knowledges and languages in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are ways to mitigate this crisis.

Using postcolonial theory and the concept of decolonising education as a lens, this thesis examines the education provision of four Norwegian NGOs in South Sudan. This is done to generate more research on how INGOs' practices are situated within the decolonisation debate, as studies on this is scarce in the literature. INGOs' significant role and presence as service providers in a plethora of countries warrants a closer look at how their practices connect to postcolonial theory and the concept of educational decolonisation. INGOs should be concerned with the issue of decolonising education and being reflective of their position in this issue.

Important in postcolonial education, is to take legacies of colonialism into consideration, and to focus on what education is being given (what knowledge it gives preference to) and by whom (Ngũgĩ, 1986). As the postcolonial approach "offer[s] new ways of thinking about techniques of power that constrain self-determination" (Grovogui, 2010:239) it serves as a relevant tool to use when exploring practices of INGOs providing education in the global South. The ensuing argument is that since INGOs are important service providers, they also need to be aware of their position and responsibility in decolonising education. The thesis will argue that the Norwegian NGOs studied display some mechanisms of educational decolonisation, but that there is a lack of institutionalised decolonisation. Furthermore, studying INGOs' education practices by applying the concept of decolonising education can broaden our view of their role in education provision beyond simply being service providers where the government fails.

1.1. Research questions

INGOs' involvement in education provision warrants their inclusion in both the debate on and process of decolonising education. It raises the question of to what extent INGOs reflect on issues of educational decolonisation and their role. Therefore, the thesis will be guided by the following research questions:

1) *From a postcolonial perspective, how do we situate INGOs in educational decolonisation?*

2) *Are Norwegian NGOs reflecting on and working towards decolonising education in South Sudan?*

1.2. Why South Sudan and Norwegian NGOs?

Decades of conflict with Sudan, as well as in-state conflict in South Sudan after independence, has made it very difficult to build good educational institutions. Thus, South Sudan has been a ripe setting for external actors with the means and will to contribute to education efforts. After the peace agreement in 2005, there was a high influx of money-brining INGOs, who had different interests and ideas of how to rebuild South Sudan (Piene, 2014:271-272). Piene (2014:275) argues that external actors have much influence in all sectors, and questions how much South Sudanese nationals actually partake in decisions concerning their country.

In May 2016 the South Sudanese Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) made the announcement that they were to nationalise the curriculum in the country and no longer use foreign curriculum, such as Ugandan, Sudanese, Ethiopian, and Kenyan (Machol, 2016; Badmus, 2016; Kuyok, 2016:82). The national curriculum was set to roll out in February 2018 (Xinhua, 2018) but due to both conflict and lack of resources, there have been difficulties with implementing the strategy across the country. Likewise, it has been difficult to enforce the phasing out of foreign curricula in schools across the country, and some argue that the "persistence of the foreign education in the country suggests that colonial educational legacy have an enduring impact" (Kuyok, 2016:82).

As South Sudan has made the decision to nationalise their education by ridding it of foreign curriculum and introducing its own national curriculum, questions of how and where external actors fit in are presented. There is still a plethora of INGOs supporting education efforts in South Sudan, and the international community funds more than 90 per cent of education costs (Andersen, 2019). Furthermore, Marit Hernæs (2019) argues that education in South Sudan is run by a conglomerate of INGOs. How does a state in a conflict situation, such as South Sudan, decolonise, create its own identity, and nurture own culture, language and history when aid- and external actors are central? What type of education do the INGOs provide, and whose systems and knowledge is it based on? In light of the new national curriculum in South Sudan and voiced concerns by the government to nationalise the education (Machol, 2016), this presents itself as an interesting case when considering the issue of decolonising education.

Norway has a longstanding engagement in South Sudan, and had a significant role in the mediation and peace process between Sudan and South Sudan. Norway has an enhanced focus on education development policy, and in 2019, NOK 105 million was specifically allocated to education in South Sudan (Norad, 2020). Norwegian NGOs have been present in South Sudan for several decades, working with social- and emergency service provision. According to a Norad report from 2017, Norwegian education interventions in South Sudan includes providing support to: "primary education, alternative basic education, education in emergencies, education facilities and infrastructure, teachers training, and educational policies, government institutions and coordination" (O'Grady, 2017:21). However, while the report highlights that Norwegian NGOs are aligned to the national education policies and build strong relationships with the local communities and education authorities, it also notes how there is a "lack of an overall strategic vision in Norway's education portfolio in South Sudan" (O'Grady, 2017:3). In response to Norwegian education efforts, Breidlid (2020b) argues that a decolonisation of education aid is needed in order to reach goals of providing quality education in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, their education practices in South Sudan warrants a closer look.

1.3. Outline of the thesis

The thesis is organised into five chapters, comprising several sub-chapters. Following this introduction chapter (chapter 1), the second chapter establishes the conceptual and theoretical framework. This will be used as background and a lens to analyse the findings, and answer the research questions. The chapter takes a postcolonial approach, and looks at education from a postcolonial perspective to conceptualise 'decolonisation of education'. It also establishes what has been written about the connection between INGOs and educational decolonisation, and recognises that there are some gaps in the literature. Chapter three presents the methodological framework used in the thesis, which is a qualitative case study. This chapter will account for the choices made in the research process by explaining the research method, design and sampling, as well as ethical considerations, limitations, and an important note on sources. The fourth chapter has four sub-chapters, and presents both the findings and the analysis of the collected data. It answers the research questions by looking at the role and influence INGOs have in educational decolonisation, and whether the organisations and their practices are working on decolonising education. The final chapter summarises the thesis and its findings.

2. Conceptual and theoretical framework

This chapter tackles the existing literature on decolonising education in order to operationalize the concept for the thesis and answer the research questions (RQs). To do this, we need to have an understanding of education from a postcolonial perspective, with a special focus on the concept of decolonising education, and how INGOs' education provision fits in. Thus, the first main section (2.1) will account for education from a postcolonial perspective and clarify what decolonisation of education and the mind means. Important in postcolonial education is the need to take historical factors of colonialism and its legacies into consideration. This includes being cognisant of the type of education given, by whom, and what knowledge and information it gives preference to. The literature also argues that education systems, instead of being individual to each country, are influenced by global power relations. The last sub-chapter of the first section (2.1.4) delves into the case of South Sudan and what education they are decolonising from.

The second section (2.2) shows the connection between INGOs and education, and looks at their education practices in relation to educational decolonisation. As will become apparent, there is much written about decolonising education and INGOs providing education separately, but not together. There seems to be limited academic literature linking the practices of INGOs to decolonial thought. Consequently, the last sub-section (2.2.3) identifies a knowledge gap, and by using South Sudan as a case study and applying the theoretical framework, the thesis links INGOs' education practices to the concept of educational decolonisation.

2.1 Education from a postcolonial perspective – decolonising education and the mind

To answer the RQs, the thesis uses postcolonial theory to critically examine education practices by INGOs in South Sudan. Postcolonial theory in International Relations (IR) provides a framework for critically exploring issues of decolonisation of education and the role of INGOs, through the concept of decolonising education. In postcolonial theory, acknowledging underlying power relations, and particularly those of colonial legacies is essential (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002:2). The theory highlights the

importance of knowledge production, due to the dominance of the global North in this regard (Chowdry & Nair, 2002:26; Grovogui, 2010:241; Shizha, 2013:4). To dismantle Eurocentric and Western-based knowledge, "postcolonialism disputes the validity of ideas and commonplaces that today figure authoritatively in academic and public discourses as 'expert knowledges' about the former colonial expanses (Grovogui, 2010:241).

As a result of colonial expansion and the idea of European superiority, a concept of the cultural 'other' emerged where everything the Europeans did not understand was considered primitive (Said, 1978; Odora-Hoppers, 2017:8; Tvedt, 2017:52; Doty, 1996; Chowdhry & Nair, 2002:2). Colonial practices thus impacted the "production and representation of identities" (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002:2). Consequently, Fanon (2008) argues the colonised's sense of "inferiority comes into being through the other" (p.83). As Odora-Hoppers (2017:8) explains, the practices and beliefs of the 'other' (global South) have been seen as less developed or modern, and even uncivilised. To control the mind of the colonised, colonialism saw the "destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:16). African cultures and narratives were deemed irrelevant through "the colonisation of African knowledge spaces by Western knowledge" (Shizha, 2010:33). Thus, an alienation of the environment of the colonised ensued. This has created an idea of European/Western superiority, as well as hegemony over the "perceptions and constructions of reality" (Odora-Hoppers, 2017:8).

Subsequently, educational practices and the discourse perpetuated an idea that European people and their practices were superior to the colonised, with the former bringing civilization and truth to the latter (Fanon, 2008: 114,148). Colonial schools and universities set Europe as the centre of the universe for all subjects, such as geography, history, literature, science and technology (Ngũgĩ, 1986:93). This has shaped the "sense of self of coloniser and colonised" (Seth, 2010:214), as "the world was defined and reflected in the European experience of history [and] their entire way of looking at the world" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:93). According to Ngũgĩ (1986), "even the world of the immediate environment was Eurocentric" (p.93). This education system

was inherited by the post-colonial states, as well at the "consciousness it necessarily inculcated in the African mind" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:101).

Negative images portrayed of African cultures, languages, customs, and beliefs were internalised, consequently affecting both political and cultural choices of Africans (Ngũgĩ, 1986:18; Fanon, 2008). The believed superiority of the colonisers led to the "internalization – or better, the epidermalization – of [an] inferiority" (Fanon, 2008:4) by the colonised. This is because the colonised saw themselves through the eyes of the coloniser, forming the basis for the construction of their self (Fanon, 2008:82-84; Seth, 2010:214). This led to the colonised wanting to emulate the white man, or the coloniser, because of their perceived superiority (Fanon, 2008:119,150). Odora-Hoppers (2017) argues that the idea of a superior West is still present in the minds of Africans, leaving them in a "condition which locks their will and freezes the spirit force" (p.9). Thus, there is a need to decolonise education and the mind (Ngũgĩ, 1986).

The below sub-sections seek to explain what decolonisation of education means by looking at the literature. What becomes apparent is the need to go deeper into issues such as languages, knowledge production, perspectives and ways of learning. This is relevant to the understanding of INGOs' practices and roles, which the thesis explores.

2.1.1 The issue of knowledge systems and pedagogy

While decolonisation has happened in the formal sense, Sardar (2008) argues "colonialism, in its many disguises as cultural, economic, political and knowledge-based oppression, lives on" (p. xix). The need for decolonisation is applicable to knowledge production at the ideological level, the philosophical/methodological level, and the level of application (Odora-Hoppers, 2017:7; Naude, 2019:24). Furthermore, Odora-Hoppers (2017:7) calls for an analysis of how colonialism and the construction of knowledge are interlinked. By doing this she claims one will see how the "definition of knowledge ended up privileging, consistently, the essentially provincial, and itself an ethnic, western system, and extrapolating this wide in the

context of colonial subjugation, as the UNIVERSAL knowledge" (Odora-Hoppers, 2017:7, emphasis in original).

During colonialism, knowledge systems of the colonised were deemed irrelevant – it even went as far as the banning of languages, rituals, and cultures – and ideas of the European way being universal were propagated (Odora-Hoppers, 2017:4-5). Instead, images, materials and books reflected a primitive and savage version of the colonised, which served to alienate the colonised children from their histories and the practices of their ancestors (Fanon, 2008:98,113-114). Fanon (2008) argues

> "there is a constellation of postulates, a series of propositions that slowly and subtly – with the help of books, newspapers, schools and their texts, advertisements, films, radio – work their way into one's mind and shape one's view of the world of the group to which one belongs" (p.118).

Thus, Fanon (2008) called for the "establishment of children's magazines especially for [colonised children], the creation of songs for [colonised] children, and, ultimately, the publication of history texts especially for them, at least through the grammar-school grades" (p. 115). He argued education had to be tailored to their history, ancestry and culture for them not to see themselves through the eyes of others and not look down on their customs and ethnicities (Fanon, 2008:112-115). Contextual and localised knowledge is therefore integral to put emphasis on.

Odora-Hoppers (2017) and Shizha (2013) argue that the notion of universality of knowledge and principles is still being taught today not only in the global North, but also in the global South. This cultural imperialism "causes *cultural insecurity and self-doubt* within the dominated group" (Odora-Hoppers, 2017:9, italicised in original). Odora-Hoppers (2017) argues in order to improve the quality of African schooling, one needs a "radical reconception of the very building blocks of education including an overhaul of the pedagogy of apartheid and colonialism" (p. 6). This includes monitoring exams to ensure questions are centred on the local, and not the European (Odora-Hoppers, 2017:10). This is because "'knowledge' as defined within the context of globalisation is to a great degree, western based, and Americanised" (Odor-Hoppers, 2017:6). Breidlid (2020a) argues this leads to an alienating classroom

where “knowledges (and often languages) [students] bring from home are marginalized in the secondary discourses hegemonic in the classroom” (p. 27). When students do not have “the epistemological frame of references used in school, there are often problems related to language and learning” (Breidlid, 2020a:25). Some argue this is the case for majority of children in sub-Saharan Africa, and that this perpetuates the hegemony of Western knowledges (Breidlid, 2020a:26; Brock-Utne, 2006a; Shizha, 2013:7).

This brings up questions of what perspectives should be included in education (Ngũgĩ, 1986:101), and the importance of who the educator is. Ngũgĩ (1986) not only makes a distinction between African and non-African, but also between the African who has “internalized the colonial world outlook [and the] one attempting to break free from the inherited slave consciousness” (p.101). According to Ngũgĩ (1986), “the universities and colleges set up in the colonies after the war were meant to produce a native elite which would later help prop up the Empire” (p.93). Bassey (1999) provides a “critical analysis of the behaviour of African educated elites and argues that educated elites in Africa have used their education and the schools to perpetuate their dominance over their less fortunate countrymen and women” (p.11). Breidlid (2020a) argues there is an issue with the elite in African countries when it comes to what knowledges are being disseminated in schools. As he says, “the fact that teaching is not contextualized and that indigenous languages and knowledges are not actively promoted by the governments is to a large extent due to these governments’ elitist nature” (Breidlid, 2020a:27). Breidlid (2013) argues, “there is a sense that […] the goal of national economic development continues to be guided by a neo-colonial global project where indigenous epistemologies, values, and cultural practices are sacrificed on the altar of ‘development’ and ‘progress’” (p.140).

In order to offset colonial legacies in education, one argument is to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) (Odora-Hoppers, 2017; Breidlid, 2006:267). This includes tailoring education to the children’s environment and epistemological frames of reference to make it familiar. Breidlid (2006:267) argues IKS and local competency lead to better relevance, thus increasing the education system’s efficiency. One way of including African traditions and knowledge is to use dance in education to “uncover the Afrocentric paradigm” (Gonye and Moyo, 2015) and

contest “Eurocentric hegemonies that undermined the indigenous people’s practices, skills, insights, and pride” (Shizha 2013 cited in Gonye & Moyo, 2015:260). Traditional dance can thus be a way of challenging Western hegemony by “being an embodied practice of spiritual and philosophical knowledge that is uniquely African” (Banks 2010:27 cited in Gonye & Moyo, 2015:260).

In his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) also spoke of colonial oppression on the education systems of the colonised. Central in Freire’s (1970) pedagogy was the idea of conscientization, where lived experiences and context of the learner were crucial in acquiring literacy (Freire 1970). As Breidlid (2020) argues: “Freire’s critical literacy implied the exploration of the social and political reality in the learning process in order for the learners in a global South setting to understand, challenge and fight the forces of oppression” (p. 22). Freire (1970) stresses that learning is not conducive when one person (the teacher) simply deposits ideas that students are to memorise and accept – which he described as a banking system.

Instead, dialogic learning is essential (Freire, 1970; Darder, 1991). Dialogue is a way to engage in the process that is “dedicated to the empowerment of students through disconfirming the dominant ideology of the traditional educational discourse and illuminat[e] the freedom of students to act on their world” (Darder, 1991:94). As “dialogic experience is fundamental for building epistemological curiosity” (Freire, 1998:100 quoted in Keyl, 2017:18), a critical consciousness is then formed where new knowledge can be created.

2.1.2 The power of language

The cultural aspect of colonialism, including language, is central in decolonial theory (e.g. Ngũgĩ, 1986; Fanon, 2008; Buchanan, 1988; Shizha, 2013). Louis-Jean Calvet (1976) argues imperialism “is never solely, even if it is principally, an economic phenomenon; [we must also] emphasise the cultural factors and, more precisely, the linguistic factors which constitute part of its foundation” (Calvet 1976 quoted in Buchanan, 1988:63). Thus, the theory argues for the use of indigenous languages. Ngũgĩ (1986) highlights the importance of writing in African languages in order to foster and ensure the existence of languages in the written form. However, “problems

surrounding language cannot be solved just at the level of language" (Ngũgĩ, 1986 cited in Brown, 1987:727). Ngũgĩ (1986) argues the language question deals with the "destiny of Africa" (p.1), and brings up the political aspect of language, and the effects of colonial education and neo-colonialism. He claims "language was the most important vehicle through which [the] power [of colonial school] fascinated and held the soul prisoner [and while] the bullet was the means of physical subjugation [during colonialism], language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:9). Therefore, the question of language is in reality political as it deals with the "search for a liberating perspective within which to see ourselves clearly in relationship to ourselves and to other selves in the universe" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:87). It brings up the importance of seeing oneself through one's own eyes and not those of the colonisers', because the way we perceive and conceptualise something depends on our relationship to it (Ngũgĩ, 1986:88). It is necessary to pay close attention to how imperialism has affected the view the previously colonised have of themselves in the universe, and, subsequently, how it affects the way the colonisers view themselves and their position (Ngũgĩ, 1986:88).

An aspect of colonialism was to control the colonised's view of both themselves and the world, and education was used by colonial powers to consolidate their position (Buchanan, 1988:65-66). Schools saw to it that pride and identity with the mother tongue, and subsequent culture, were hampered by the language policies (Ngũgĩ, 1986:11-12; Fanon, 2008:25). It broke the harmony of indigenous languages being used at home, for their schooling, for their work, and in the wider community (Ngũgĩ, 1986:11,16; Brock-Utne, 2006b:286). Children were forbidden to speak indigenous languages at school and would be punished and gravely humiliated if they so did; while achievements in English were highly rewarded (Ngũgĩ, 1986:12; Fanon, 2008:17). This led to a belief that their languages were not only unimportant, but also something to be ashamed of. Ngũgĩ, (1986) notes: "thus, language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our worlds to other worlds" (p.12). While Ngũgĩ (1986) wrote about how education practices were during colonialism, he mentions the lasting effects of it, even though formal colonialism is over. This is why it is important to examine education practices, especially in the global South, and is why the thesis deals with this topic.

Ngũgĩ (1986:3) argues that the 'cultural bomb' of imperialism is a major obstacle to liberation. He explains the effect of this cultural bomb is to:

> "annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples' languages rather than their own" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:3).

What is important to note about language is that it is not simply a way of communicating, but it is also a carrier of culture (Ngũgĩ, 1986: 13; Fanon, 2008:8). Fanon (2008) argues that "a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" (p.9). He points to the problematic issue that colonialism and the domination by European culture has led the colonised to mimic and imitate the occupiers and their language (Fanon, 2008:6-14). Learning the colonizer's language is worth striving for, as "mastery of language affords remarkable power" (Fanon, 2008:9), and the language of the occupier is the ultimate signifier of success. Ngũgĩ (1986) emphasises the language question as "the choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the whole universe" (p. 4).

Important to note is that Ngũgĩ (1986) recognises that European languages were sometimes "seen as having a capacity to unite African peoples against divisive tendencies inherent in the multiplicity of African languages within the same geographic state" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:6-7). Brown (1987) points out that "English has for many years been the vehicle for the expression of black aspirations and opposition in both politics and literature" (p. 727). Brown (1987) makes the point that, in some instances, other languages than English (or the other European colonial languages) have been the "language of power and oppression" (p. 727). In South Sudan, Arabic has been considered the language of power and oppression, and as such, the South Sudanese have used English to distance themselves from the Arabic influence (further expanded on in 2.1.4).

Also noteworthy is that Ngũgĩ (1986) does not propose that African children cannot learn other languages. However, the base has to be their mother tongue and they need to have "harmony between himself, his language and his environment as his starting point" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:28). Once this is done, they "can learn other languages and even enjoy the positive humanistic, democratic and revolutionary elements in other people's literatures and cultures" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:28). By having pride in one's own language first, learning other languages will not result in "complexes about his own language, his own self, his environment" (Ngũgĩ, 1986:28). One's own language and environment has to be at the centre and not the periphery (Ngũgĩ, 1986:90,94). This is because language is important to identity creation and how one sees oneself in relation to the world (Fanon, 2008; Ngũgĩ, 1986).

2.1.3 The global architecture of education today

Even though formal colonialism ended many years ago, it can be argued that the education system in sub-Saharan Africa is still "based on a Western education philosophy, that to varying degrees takes into account the African context" (Breidlid, 2006:253). According to Jones (2006):

> "For education, nation states are located within a complex web of ideas, networks of influence, policy frameworks, financial arrangements and organizational structures. These collectively can be termed the global architecture of education, as a system of global power relations that exerts a heavy, indeed determining, influence on how education is constructed around the world. For poor countries, the global architecture of education shapes the relationship between education, development and poverty strategies." (p. 43).

Postcolonial states are "becoming more and more dependent on the West for aid in the education sector, for textbooks, and even recurrent expenditures" (Brock-Utne, 2006c:xiii). Consequently, "global hierarchies of knowledge emerge" and "education around the world is seen to become increasingly standardised" (Jones, 2007:331). This is influenced by a "significant system of transnational influence" (Jones, 2007:330) that consists of states, agencies, epistemic communities, the private sector and INGOs. According to Brock-Utne (2006c), this leads to a recolonisation of the African mind, propagated by "Western donors [and] African elites trained in the

West" (p. xiii). This is why education development and those who provide it have to be analysed from a postcolonial perspective. As Jones (2007) argues:

> "Westernizing and modernizing curriculum in developing countries [can be viewed as] serving the interests of the metropolitan powers and of the western educated local elites that served as a bridge between metropole and periphery. Foreign aid and development assistance programmes in education, too, were seen primarily in terms of donors interests, despite the idealist rhetoric surrounding them" (p. 327).

The critique of education development in Africa follows the argument that the above leads to irrelevant curriculum, issues with language, education ministers believing the Western style to be superior, and lack of material that is based on the African reality (Breidlid, 2020; Brock-Utne, 2006a:223; Skard, 2006:305). Students in the global South follow a curriculum that is of little relevance to them, and removed from their reality (Brock-Utne, 2006a:223; Breidlid, 2020). In many cases, former colonial languages are languages of instruction (Brock-Utne, 2006a:223), even though students perform better when mother tongue is used (Volan, 2006:277). Brock-Utne (2006) claims the argument that there are too many African languages to be able to use them all in education is in reality used to "keep colonial languages as the language of instruction" (Brock-Utne & Bøyesen, 2006:23). There is also the issue that parents of school children believe it is better to learn in languages that have a high status (i.e. colonial languages) than those of lower status (i.e. mother tongue, local languages) (Brock-Utne & Bøyesen, 2006:23).

In cases where education is bilingual, Brock-Utne (2006) argues local languages are only used as a transitional language, where the goal is to master the colonial languages of Portuguese, English or French (Brock-Utne & Bøyesen, 2006:15). Using English as the medium of instruction makes acquisition of course knowledge more difficult, and it also affects English proficiency (Brock-Utne, 2006b:290-291). Thus, Brock-Utne (2006a) argues that education has to be given in a language students understand, and learning has to be "rooted in the local community, in the social, political and cultural context the students live in" (p. 234). This sentiment is also argued by Fanon (2008), Odora-Hoppers (2017), Ngũgĩ (1986), and Breidlid (2006, 2020a) in the previous sub-sections. Thus, the need for contextually relevant

education forms the basis for investigating educational practices of INGOs in this thesis.

2.1.4 South Sudan – decolonising what education?

As mentioned in the introduction, the South Sudanese government has expressed the need to nationalise the curriculum by eliminating foreign curricula and making it context-specific to South Sudan (Kuyok, 2019). The above literature about decolonisation of education highlights an education inherited from colonialism, based on Eurocentrism and a Western knowledge system. It is this system and its values many argue is still present in the curriculum in much of Africa, thus calling for its decolonisation. However, South Sudan's history with Sudan and Islamic education presents as an interesting case when looking at decolonising education. As mentioned earlier, European languages, such as English, have also been used as a way to unite African people (Ngũgĩ, 1986:6; Brown, 1987:727). Similarly, other languages than the traditional colonial ones have sometimes been the symbol of oppression and power (Brown, 1987:727).

The above points are applicable to the South Sudanese case. When Sudan and South Sudan were one country, the knowledge system in school was based on Islamic education, and the South viewed Arabic as the language of power and oppression. Much of the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan was about the ideological and religious differences (Breidlid, 2013:117). The South was unhappy with the North imposing Sharia law, Arabic and Islamic education on the South (Breidlid, 2013:109-110,114; Kuyok, 2019:85). The South expressed grievances about the underdevelopment of their region, and the lack of education opportunities was a reason many youth fought against Khartoum (Sharkey, 2008:35; Breidlid, 2013:109-110, 127). English and Arabic textbooks in the North had a clear bias towards the Arab-Muslim, as there were barely any mention of South Sudanese religion, culture and history (Christine Oyenak, 2006 in Breidlid, 2013:121). Consequently, there has been a clear wish to distance South Sudan from the imposition of the Islamic knowledge system and language that neglected diversity and Southerners' cultural heritage and languages (Sharkey, 2008:25; Breidlid, 2013:11,119-127).

As a result, Breidlid (2013) argues that education policies introduced in liberated areas in the South by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement's (SPLM) Secretariat of Education were more secular and modernist, and "modelled on the global architecture of education" (p.122-123). According to Kuyok (2019:85) the SPLM's Secretariat of Education were assisted by UNICEF in reviewing the curriculum, and it drew heavily on East African education. Those schools in the SPLM administered areas that did not use the new curriculum used that of Uganda or Kenya (Kuyok, 2019:85), and English was chosen as the medium of instruction (Joyner, 1996:74). The education policy and use of English were seen as ways to resist the North's imposition of Islamic ideology (Breidlid, 2013:127-129; Sharkey, 2008:36) and was meant to promote "an inclusive educational system that celebrated the diversity of the country" (Kuyok, 2019:85).

However, Breidlid argues education was still influenced by a system that is hegemonic in nature and exclusive in terms of indigenous knowledge (Breidlid, 2013:130). He argues that:

> "The replacement of an Islamist discourse with a modernist discourse where Western epistemology and science were promoted as the only knowledge system was thought to be relevant for progress and liberation in the South, often at the expense of indigenous epistemologies and values" (Breidlid, 2013:128).

In 2006, a year after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between Khartoum and SPLM, a new curriculum was introduced in primary schools by the South Sudanese Ministry of Education (Kuyok, 2019:85). Kuyok (2019:86) notes that the national curriculum is still rooted in Eastern African characteristics, but unlike the "Sudanese education system that attempted to deracinate the South Sudanese children from their African culture and society, the national curriculum is pedagogically rooted in localism" (p. 86). At the same time, Kuyok (2019) finds it problematic that it is modelled on "highly performing OECD countries" (p. 85). Aspiring to the educational levels of advanced Asian and European countries is problematic as their "contexts and experiences that shape the educational objectives […] are less pertinent to South Sudan (Kuyok, 2019:91). Kuyok (2019) argues for a wider decolonisation of education in South Sudan, as the government's efforts to nationalise the curriculum have not been enough.

While South Sudan has wanted to distance itself from a culture, language and knowledge the people do not consider theirs (the Islamic), "there is little discussion in South Sudan over the imposition of Western knowledge" (Breidlid, 2013:113). Western education is seen as a counterpoint to Islamist education, and one that brings progress, development and modernity (Breidlid, 2013:113). Informants in Breidlid's fieldwork expressed that modernity is necessary to create awareness and get rid of cultural practices that are problematic (such as girls' education not being regarded as important, gender inequality, and female genital mutilation) (Breidlid, 2013:128-132). Other informants were more sceptical as they believed schooling may "threaten … the social fabric of these communities" (Breidlid, 2013:133). The sentiment that there are positive aspects of education is most certainly shared by Breidlid. However, he goes further and asks "what kind of education? What kind of quality? What kind of knowledges?" (Breidlid, 2013:133).

Some of Breidlid's (2013) informants reflected on the "alienating influence of modern schooling [and how it could] pull [children] away from their culture" (p. 133). The content and visuals used in learning (pictures, textbooks) were highlighted as showing other cultures than the children's own, and one informant argued "modern education imposed things instead of building on their own existence" (Breidlid, 2013:134). Disregarding indigenous knowledge in education leads to "alienation and lack of self-recognition" (Breidlid, 2013:140). Therefore, one should not disregard the wish to modernise, but this process should also include indigenous knowledge (Breidlid, 2013:139). Breidlid quotes Bhola (2003) to argue that incorporating local knowledge is not "to save the indigenous from the modern (which is an impossibility), but to organize a dialectic that is neither cannibalistic nor exploitative, but mutually enriching" (Bhola 2003:10 quoted in Breidlid 2013:139).

Creating a South Sudanese identity after independence is difficult now that it does not stand in opposition to the common Other (the Islamic North) (Breidlid, 2013:135). While conflicts in South Sudan along ethnic lines may suggest fostering these different cultures and ethnicities in education can be problematic, Breidlid (2013:135) argues that is exactly what needs to be done. As he says, "in communities so steeped in indigenous values, the exploration of their own value universe and epistemological

orientation in school is important if alienation is to be avoided" (Breidlid, 2013:135). At the same time, he recognises the need for building common loyalties beyond ethnic borders, by promoting "the basic similarities in worldviews and knowledge production that exist between the various ethnic groups" (Breidlid, 2013:135).

Breidlid (2013) argues the South Sudanese do not seem "ready for an exploration of how indigenous knowledges can be integrated in the classroom, although there are voices in the South Sudan society that are critical to certain aspects of modern epistemology" (p. 113). It is also problematic that modernist discourse influences those in charge of making decisions about education in South Sudan, which Breidlid (2013:135) argues fits Ngũgĩ's (1986) concept of colonisation of the mind. By this, Breidlid (2013) means that many of the

> "South Sudanese policy makers and academics […] are Westernized Africans who have internalized the hegemonic Western epistemology. Change and sustainable development means adopting the ways of the West and competing on the globalized playing fields, that is, an education system based on a Western epistemic model" (p. 136).

This issue is further exacerbated by the education sector being characterised by a heavy presence of Western NGOs. Breidlid (2013) argues this has "augmented [the education sector's] Western bias and has increased the gap, not only between Western and indigenous knowledges, but between the educational discourses in South Sudan and Sudan" (p. 136). Breidlid (2013) contends there are no telling signs that INGOs "will deviate from the development agenda of the past and question the pursuit of a Western education hegemonic discourse" (p.140). In light of the above, the thesis examines Norwegian NGOs' education practices through a postcolonial lens to see if they are working towards decolonising education in South Sudan. This implores the thesis to move on to a discussion of what has been said about INGOs and education provision, and how their practices are linked to decolonial theory.

2.2. INGOs and education

As argued by Breidlid (2013) INGOs have a part in the continuation and perpetuation of the Western hegemonic education discourse. While there have most certainly been changes in teaching and learning around the world, Jones (2007:335) argues these shifts are not adequately understood or given appropriate attention by UN education

multilaterals. Instead, the "UN education multilaterals continue to function as much as they always have, [and] new conceptions of education are rarely imagined, only the expansion of what prevails" (Jones, 2007:335). It is noteworthy that education multilaterals that are heavily involved in education efforts and are donors to many who are engaged in education provision, such as INGOs, have little insight into what Jones (2007) calls "revolutions in curriculum and pedagogy" (p. 335). While Jones (2007:335) claims some of this can be attributed to lack, and also decline, of educational expertise, he also highlights the important factor of contemporary global power relations. He argues that "education in its true sense remains politically unimportant, or perhaps subversive" (Jones, 2007:335), and says this can account for not focusing on building local capacity in the quest to shape educational views and policies in the global South.

Similarly, Breidlid (2020a) not only argues that there are serious omissions of references to indigenous knowledge in the SDGs, but also that this reflects the "situation among the important institutions behind the SDGs" (p. 24). He argues there is "little discussion among the INGOs and the national governments about potential changes in learning strategies and knowledge transmission" (Breidlid, 2020a:24). While he argues there is a need for "a thorough *indigenization* and decolonizing of the education system in the global South, and in sub-Saharan Africa in particular" (p.28, italicised in original) to reach the goal of SDG4[2], he notes that "a change in pedagogical and epistemological strategies is not on the agenda of the SDGs and the various international and national stakeholders" (Breidlid, 2020a:28). Thus, reiterating the opinion that there is a global architecture of education that favours a Western knowledge system.

Jones' and Breidlid's above points of little insight and discussion among stakeholders might account for there being little academic literature on linking educational practices of INGOs to decolonial theory. Instead, what takes precedence in academic literature on education provision by INGOs is that they are service providers who can: 1) fill gaps by providing complementing or alternative education on all levels to the

[2] The goal to: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

marginalised[3]; 2) develop education services that are innovative and creative[4]; 3) provide learning materials, equipment and infrastructure; 4) provide education in emergencies and conflict areas[5]; and 5) promote peace education and capacity building[6]. What the literature also highlights, which is relevant to the thesis' discussion on INGOs involvement, is that INGOs can impact educational policies and act as consultants, and assist in the development of curriculum (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond & Wolf, 2002; Nishimuko, 2009; Borien, 2016; Diokno & Symaco, 2016; Gayathri & Heydlauff, 2016).

There is also critique that funding and donor conditionalities can hamper the INGOs' practices and flexibility (e.g. Edwards & Hulme, 1998:6; Nishimuko, 2009; Arteaga, 2016:35; Symaco, 2016), and that there is a heavy focus on increasing enrolment rates (e.g. Nishimuko, 2009:286; Rose, 2009:223; Brophy, 2016). Tota (2014) argues it is difficult for INGOs to implement an "alternative educational agenda" (p. 97) to that of their donors, and instead their efforts will reflect the "IGOs' agenda and procedures" (p. 97). While it is believed INGOs can provide innovative approaches, Rose (2009) argues, "in practice, the NGO programmes are often offered in the form of a standard package" (p. 223). Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond and Wolf's (2002) assessment of education programmes by NGOs in four African countries[7] deemed the approaches to be similar even though they are very different countries. Furthermore, emphasis has been put on "access and enrolment, while the importance of retention, quality and relevance and effectiveness of education [are] often sidetracked" (Gayathri & Heydlauff, 2016:72).

The above underscores why it is important to examine INGOs' practices in light of educational decolonisation and the argument that there is a hegemonic Western education discourse. The sub-sections below will: 1) go further into the literature on INGO practices in education, so as to see what has been written about the thesis topic; 2) look at some evaluations done on Norwegian NGOs in South Sudan; and 3)

[3] Rao, 2000; Mundy & Murphy, 2001; Blum and Diwan, 2007; Nishimuko, 2009; Arteaga, 2016; Rose, 2009; Brophy, 2016; Demenge & Shrestha, 2016; Gayathri & Heydlauff, 2016; Symaco, 2016.
[4] Gayathri & Heydlauff, 2016; Diokno & Symaco, 2016
[5] Joyner, 1996; Symaco, 2016
[6] Nishimuko, 2009
[7] Ethiopia, Malawi, Guinea and Mali

identify gaps in the literature in order to situate the thesis in the discussion about INGOs and education.

2.2.1 INGOs' education practices and the concept of decolonising education

When looking at what is written about decolonising education, the literature about explicit INGO practices and how they are tied to decolonial theory seems to be scant. Rather, what takes precedence in educational decolonisation literature is: 1) African states needing to decolonise their national curricula and include Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)[8]; 2) decolonising higher education[9]; 3) the problem of African elites perpetuating a Western education system[10]; 4) and that larger agencies and organisations like the World Bank (WB), the UN's multilateral agencies, and donor countries have too much influence on national education systems[11]. There is not much written about the role of INGOs in decolonising education, and how the theory can be applied to practices on the ground. To further investigate INGOs' practices in education provision, the below sub-section (2.2.1.1) looks at some articles about INGO engagement in education and ties them to the concept of decolonising education. The last part sub-section (2.2.1.2) includes some opinion pieces that express the views of some Norwegian academics and NGOs because there has been some discussion about it.

2.2.1.1 What does the academic literature say?

Some authors have written about important aspects of providing education, which can be linked to decolonial theory by the reader. Writing about education provision by NGOs in Ecuador, Arteaga (2016) brings up the concept of the 'glocal' as she points out that due to globalistaion "one should teach to coexist, but it is imperative that we do not lose our sense of identity" (p.41). She briefly touches upon the need to ask the 'what, why, when and how' questions in order to provide "appropriate education

[8] See for example: van Wyk & Higgs, 2011; Shizha, 2013; Gonye & Moyo, 2015; Odora-Hoppers 2017
[9] See for example: Mubangizi & Kaya, 2015; Mbembe, 2016; Mamdani, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017
[10] See for example: Ngũgĩ, 1986; Bassey, 1999; Brock-Utne, 2006c; Breidlid, 2020a
[11] For discussions on this, see for example: Bank, 2006; Breidlid, 2006, 2013, 2016 & 2020a; Brock-Utne & Bøyesen, 2006; Vestbø, 2006; Jones 2006 & 2007; Volan, 2006.

development" (Arteaga, 2016:42). Another example is how Joyner (1996) argues for external help to be led by "indigenous initiatives for the re-establishment and improvement of education" (p.70) in South Sudan. She argues that when external trainers and educators are used they need to be linked to local people who can "evaluate the appropriacy of the courses and their future direction" (Joyner, 1996:72). Skard (2006:301) briefly touches on a US-founded NGO in Senegal that has an education programme with African culture as its foundation. She further claims the methods remind her of the pedagogy 'learning by doing', and the focus is on finding solutions to problems experienced by the participants (Skard, 2006:301). While not speaking of a specific INGO, Brophy (2016:14) mentions that some provide support to local language development. As local language is an important tenet of decolonial theory, this should be considered a way to foster local identity.

Taking it one step further is a study that has explicitly used decolonial theory to examine an NGO's education practices. Using Freire's pedagogy as a framework, Keyl (2017) argues the NGO in question describes a "Freirean pedagogical position that is also evident in the teacher practices" (in abstract). She claims the NGO has traits of a transformative education as it has "creat[ed] culturally responsive curriculum, dialogic teaching spaces, and the building of trust and relationships between students and teachers, [where] teachers exercise reflexivity and reciprocity" (Keyl, 2017:18). The teachers have also demonstrated to their students that "their input, their funds of knowledge, their epistemologies, are valuable to the teaching and learning endeavour" (Keyl, 2017:15). Keyl (2017) advocates for the use of such pedagogy in teaching practices, as using a "Freriean model for NGO functionality can bring about liberatory and transformative education and a successful NGO structure" (in abstract). Hence, she emphasises the "urgency in incorporating this critical worldview in teacher education, in addition to international development educational frameworks" (Keyl, 2017:2-3).

The above literature can be argued to display reflections and practices that are important in educational decolonisation. However, with the exception of Keyl's study, these are not specifically written about using a decolonial lens. Rather, the reader can make the connection between the above points and how they fit with the concept of decolonising education.

2.2.1.2. Reflections on Norwegian education aid

While there is little academic literature on the topic, there has still been some debate about the issue. In Norway, some academics have voiced their concerns about Norwegian aid to education in the global South, and a few NGOs have responded to the critique. While these opinion pieces are not academic and peer-reviewed works, it is still worth looking at them to see what opinions have been voiced on the matter. It is especially interesting to see how the NGOs frame the issues and respond to the critique, since they are the focus of this thesis.

In an opinion piece in the Norwegian newspaper *Vårt Land*, Breidlid (2018a) questions whether aid to education is a neo-colonial project. He claims the Norwegian government, Norad (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) and Norwegian aid organisations are not adequately concerned about the educational content of their education engagement in the global South (Breidlid, 2018a). While he acknowledges there are several reasons for low quality (e.g. unqualified teachers, poor facilities, little education material), he argues a major reason is that educational content follows a Western epistemology and ideology instead of being based on local knowledge and cultural values (Breidlid, 2018a). He relates it to Ngũgĩ's (1986) idea of a colonisation of the mind, which in turn creates an alienating effect in the classroom that hampers quality (Breidlid, 2018a). This, he argues, is not sufficiently acknowledged by the UN organisations, the WB, IMF, and Norwegian aid organisations and authorities, which means there will not be a radical change in how education aid is carried out (Breidlid, 2018a).

In response, Save the Children Norway (Redd Barna) and the Strømme Foundation (SF) voiced their opinions on the matter. Redd Barna welcomes Breidlid's critique about quality and share his views that there are many cases where education is not tailored to the local language and context (Blomli & Nordvik, 2018). SF agrees the alienation experienced by children in the classroom is a major challenge, and they recognise that this can, "to a large extent, be connected to the Western influence by the former colonies' education systems" (Tenga & Sødal, 2018a). Nevertheless, Redd Barna and SF argue the responsibility and solution lies with the national education systems, and not the donors and aid organisations (Blomli & Nordvik, 2018; Tenga & Sødal, 2018a). They claim putting the responsibility on the latter is effectively taking

away agency and responsibility of local authorities (Blomli & Nordvik, 2018; Tenga & Sødal, 2018a). Breidlid (2018b) responds to the above by rejecting that he was putting the blame and sole responsibility on the donors. He agrees that national governments have the main responsibility, and that "aid is only a supplement to the government's own politics" (Breidlid, 2018b).

At the same time, Breidlid (2018b) brings up the issues of mental colonisation of the elite, and that countries in the global South are not independent in their politics, as they are "caught in an eternal circle of dependence on aid actors and so-called experts form the global North" (Breidlid, 2018b). He goes on to argue that requirements from partners and donors often take precedence over the needs of the local population (Breidlid, 2018b). While he notes many global South academics are writing about the need to decolonise curriculum, it is difficult to get support for such ideas in the government (Breidlid, 2018b). Therefore, Breidlid argues, "this is where [...] Norwegian NGOs could make a difference, but then they must reassess the content of the assistance they provide" (2018b).

Redd Barna argues that there is an "active and lively discussion about quality and education content among Norwegian development actors" (Blomli & Nordvik, 2018). However, in many countries there seems to be

> "strong opposition […] to using local languages and content in teaching, both for practical reasons such as lack of materials and teachers, and for ideological reasons, such as the belief that good education must be in English or French and have a Western perspective" (Blomli & Nordvik, 2018).

Similarly, SF argues that while legacies of colonialism are influential in language policies, using the old colonial language "can also be about African countries' conscious choices in nation-building and attempts to stem existing ethnic differences" (Tenga & Sødal, 2018a). While there has been much critique about these choices, they argue it is important to remember that these choices were made by African leaders, and not the former colonial powers (Tenga & Sødal, 2018a). These statements seem to reflect Breidlid's concern that there is a mental colonisation, thus making it even more important to decolonise education and dismantle the narrative that Western education is the ideal standard.

Tenga and Sødal (2018b) point out that there are instances where SF and their programmes confront the cultural norms where they work. It is not just the ideological hegemony of former colonial powers that need to be challenged, but also other systems that oppress people (Tenga & Sødal, 2018b). Based on this, SF has used Freire's pedagogy in the development of their life-skills programme, so as to "enable victims of 'mental oppression' to understand their situation on their own terms" (Tenga & Sødal, 2018b). This programme will be expanded on in chapter 4, as it is one of the educational interventions SF has in South Sudan.

SF also claims the challenge of language is already a focus in Norwegian development assistance, and that "Norwegian authorities are today a positive driving force in educational programmes that promote mother tongue and a curriculum that is relevant to students in their everyday lives" (Tenga & Sødal, 2018a). SF mentions that some of their interventions put emphasis on learning in the mother tongue, and argues that Norad, donor countries and other organisations make significant efforts towards learning in mother tongue and having a school that is relevant to the children's everyday lives (Tenga & Sødal, 2018a). Thus, they oppose Breidlid's argument that Norwegian development assistance and educational aid are part of a neo-colonial project (Tenga & Sødal, 2018a).

From the above we see that both Breidlid and the organisations have identified issues with education provision, but there is some disagreement on whose responsibility this is, and on what the Norwegian aid community is doing about it. As the response to Breidlid's critique is that Norway is a driving force for local language and relevant education, it will be interesting to see if the NGOs examined in the thesis show examples of this.

2.2.2. Norwegian education provision in South Sudan

The previous section shows that there is both a discussion on the topic, and some measures taken to make the teaching environment and its content more relevant to the learner. It will be interesting to see if such reflections are found in the practices of the Norwegian NGOs examined in this thesis. This section specifically looks at some

books and evaluations of Norwegian programme interventions in South Sudan, to see if they discuss educational content and the concept of decolonising education.

There are several books written about Norway's engagement in South Sudan (see footnote[12]), but these do not tackle the thesis topic of decolonising education. Additionally, two Norad commissioned reports (2017, 2020) on Norwegian engagement in South Sudan have been published. Although the 2020 report[13] is a comprehensive study of Norway's engagement in South Sudan, it did not include an assessment of Norwegian assistance to the education sector. It only mentioned (in *Annexes 3-7*) that money was allocated to basic and higher education, and that Norway focuses on girls' education (Bryld, Schomerus, Tjønneland, Toft, Silva, Bonnet, Athiei, 2020b). It did not say anything about the quality of education, analyse education programmes, or give an indication of educational guidelines, framework, and pedagogical background. In the 2017 report[14], several of the Norwegian NGOs studied in this thesis are analysed for their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and connectedness (O'Grady, 2017:2-3). However, the evaluation does not investigate the content of the education in terms of decolonising practices. Neither did it touch upon whether education was tailored specifically to the context in terms of localised knowledge and content. While it mentions "innovations such as improved teaching and learning methodologies" (O'Grady, 2017:2), there is no explanation of what this entails.

Another evaluation worth looking at is the one on scholarship programmes supported by the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA); namely the Women's Scholarship Programme and the Master's Programme initiated by the Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) (Said & Vuni, 2020). While the evaluation does not specifically analyse the scholarship programmes in light of postcolonial theory and the concept of

[12] For a critical look at Norway's involvement in South Sudan, including some Norwegian NGOs, see Piene 2014. For other accounts of Norwegian involvement, see for example: Kristiansen 2009 and Hanssen 2017. These books are accounts of the authors' work in and reflections on South Sudan.
[13] The report from 2020 was named *Blind Sides and Soft Spots – An Evaluation of Norway's Aid Engagement to South Sudan* and its aim was to "assess the effect of the total Norwegian engagement (development and humanitarian) in South Sudan, consider whether the engagement has been coherent and conflict sensitive, and assess how the Norwegian engagement has been adapted to a changing context" (Bryld, Schomerus, Tjønneland, Toft, Silva, Bonnet, Athiei, 2020a:7).
[14] The report from 2017 was called *Realising Potential: Evaluation of Norway's Support to Education in Conflict and Crisis through Civil Society Organisations. South Sudan: Desk Study Report.*

decolonising education, it touches on the relevance of indigenous knowledge and making education specific to the South Sudanese context. The authors say one way the scholarship programme is tailored to the South Sudanese context is the promotion of "national unity, gender equality, and importance of all national languages through the teaching of indigenous knowledge and address[ing] the problem of ethnicity and tribalism" (Said & Vuni, 2020:25). However, some challenges were noted, such as instances where government sectors and national universities were not fully familiar with the layout of the master's programme, as they are more used to subject-specific master degrees (such as a degree in history, in mathematics, science etc.) (Said & Vuni, 2020:32). Another challenge is proper utilization of the knowledge acquired. As expressed by one informant; "it is normally not easy to talk about peace education in a community or communities where conflict exists, and difficult to talk of gender equalities and child rights in communities deeply rooted in their culture" (Said & Vuni, 2020:32). This evaluation will be further touched upon in chapter 4, as it pertains to one of NCA's education interventions.

2.2.3 Shortcomings in the literature

As a result of the discussion about INGOs and education, a gap in the literature has been identified, even though the general literature about decolonising education is rife. There seems to be little academic literature on whether decolonial theory has specifically been used by INGOs to influence their programmes. Neither have I found literature that suggests INGOs question their knowledge production in light of decolonising education, and specific studies on how INGOs' education practices fit in with decolonial theory are lacking. There is also limited mention in the larger literature on INGOs and education of how decolonial mechanisms are manifested in actual practices on the ground. As seen above, there are some studies that point to the importance of relevance, quality, being mindful of what is being taught, and that local knowledge should be included. There are also some examples of practices that can be linked to decolonial theory by the reader. Nevertheless, these issues are not connected explicitly to decolonial practices by the author, nor analysed using that lens. However, the exception was Keyl's (2017) study on the use of Freirean pedagogy in the classroom. Here there is a clear correlation between using decolonial theory and investigating NGOs' practices.

Furthermore, while the opinion pieces by Redd Barna and the Strømme Foundation (above) suggest they have reflected on their educational content (e.g. using mother tongue and a Freirean pedagogy), there are, to the best of my knowledge, no studies done on Norwegian NGOs and decolonial practices in their education programmes. As suggested by the literature above, and Breidlid's (2018a) arguments of education as a neo-colonial project, more research is needed on how INGOs provide education in the global South and whether their practices reflect a decolonial mind-set. The case of South Sudan is especially interesting as 90 per cent of the education costs are paid for by the international community (Andersen, 2019). Thus, the thesis uses postcolonial theory and the concept of decolonising education to examine education practices of four Norwegian NGOs in South Sudan. I will specifically analyse the education practices of the Norwegian NGOs to see if these display some mechanisms of decolonising education. By doing this, I seek to contribute to the literature that questions INGOs' educational practices in light of educational decolonisation.

3. Research methodology

The thesis follows a critical paradigm, which is part of and influences the methodological considerations. The thesis uses postcolonial theory and the concept of decolonising education to explore INGOs' education provision. The decision to use postcolonial theory is made on the basis that its methodological strengths stand in opposition to those methodologies that are "not equipped to deconstruct the subtle mechanisms of Othering that structure the neo-colonial discursive regimes of globalisation" (Parameswaran, 2002:312). Critical approaches "aim to look beyond what they see to consider the larger social structures and distribution of power behind them" (Nygaard, 2017:27) so as to effect social change. This social change pertains especially to "hegemonies of gender, race, class, sexuality, or geopolitics" (Nygaard, 2017:27).

The following sections tackle methodological considerations of the research questions (RQs) and account for the choices made. The first section (3.1.) establishes what type of research is done, namely qualitative, and justifies the use of a case study approach to answer the RQs. The next two sections (3.2. and 3.3.) describe how and which data were collected, and how to analyse this data in light of the RQs. Section 3.4 addresses the need to check for data quality, and how data triangulation and avoiding confirmation bias are important points in this thesis. Section 3.5 considers certain ethical considerations when doing research, followed by a section (3.6) on reflections and limitations. The chapter concludes by considering some important points about postcolonial research and sources (3.7).

3.1 Qualitative research and the case study approach

As the purpose of the thesis is to gain better knowledge of education provision by Norwegian NGOs in South Sudan, a qualitative research approach has been chosen. A qualitative approach is a way to "access unquantifiable knowledge [and] share in the understandings and perceptions of others" (Berg & Lune, 2012:8). This thesis is not concerned with statistics or numbers, but rather the connection between INGOs' education programmes and decolonial theory. Therefore, data that is expressed in words (Berg &Lune, 2012:8) is most fitting to my analysis.

To answer the RQs, a case study approach has been chosen. Case studies can provide a "suitable context for certain research questions to be answered" (Bryman, 2016:62). Furthermore, advantages of doing case study research include the possibility of "significant depth in the data created" (Sumner & Tribe, 2008:105). As Bryman (2016) notes, a case study concerns itself "with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question" (p. 60). The thesis' aim is to look at the practices of Norwegian NGOs in education provision in South Sudan. This is explored through a postcolonial perspective with specific focus on decolonising education. While this case pertains specifically to Norwegian NGOs and South Sudan, it serves as an example of INGOs' education provision and how perspectives of educational decolonisation may influence this. As such, both the intensive examination of a particular case takes place, as well as placing it within a broader category (Bryman, 2016:62).

However, what must be considered when using a case study design is the criticism that "findings deriving from it cannot be generalized" (Bryman, 2016:64). As such, I can neither claim the findings in this thesis to be applicable to education provision by INGOs in other countries, nor the education provision by other INGOs in South Sudan. Nevertheless, while case studies cannot be generalised, the opposing argument is that case study researchers "aim to generate an intensive examination of a single case, in relation to which they then engage in a theoretical analysis" (Bryman, 2016:64). My case study of education provision in South Sudan by Norwegian NGOs is therefore a way of engaging in the theory of educational decolonisation, and more broadly, connecting INGOs to the decolonisation of education. As I cannot investigate the practices of all education programmes of INGOs around the world to see if they display decolonial practices, doing a case study seems an appropriate place to start.

3.2. Data collection

To answer the RQs, the thesis bases itself off of both primary and secondary data. This includes semi-structured interviews, document analysis, evaluations, secondary literature, and Norad's South Sudan Country Meeting in August 2019. These methods fit well with the critical methodology (Nygaard, 2017:27). As the thesis looks at Norwegian NGOs' role in education in South Sudan, interviewing NGOs that are

engaged in education provision was important. To collect data on the provision of education by Norwegian NGOs I contacted all Norwegian NGOs working with education in South Sudan. To the best of my knowledge, six out of seven Norwegian NGOs in South Sudan are currently engaged in education programmes. The initial idea was to include all six in the study, but out of these, four were available for interviews early in the process. Due to scheduling issues and limited time, I was unable to conduct interviews with the last two in time for including them in the thesis. It should be noted that I conducted an interview with Save the Children Norway towards the end of the project, but the respondent did not have sufficient information about the topic and prompted me to conduct further interviews with other colleagues. Unfortunately, it was not possible to do that and analyse the interviews within the timeframe.

As the four NGOs I interviewed differed in both size, scope and education programmes, I still feel I have a varied sample that covers two thirds of the number of Norwegian NGOs working in the education sector in South Sudan. As such, the sample for the Norwegian NGOs included: 1) the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2) the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), 3) the Strømme Foundation (SF), and 4) KFUK-KFUM Global (YGlobal).

The initial sample for the informants within the NGOs was selected on the basis of their relevancy to my research project. This was found by looking at the organisations' description of their employees and their positions on their webpages. I contacted those who had South Sudan as part of their portfolio and who were working with education (in those cases where that was explicitly stated). In some of the instances I was redirected to someone else in the organisation.

In addition to the Norwegian NGOs providing education in South Sudan, I also interviewed a few other people I felt had knowledge about the topic. These included the leader of the Sudan and South Sudan Support Group in Norway (SFS), Marit Hernæs, Anders Breidlid (professor at OsloMet), and a South Sudanese academic, working at the University of Juba. Hernæs was contacted because she raised some interesting questions about education provision in South Sudan at Norad's Country Meeting (August 2019). I wanted to speak with her since she works for SFS and

seemed to be critical towards the way education provision was handled in South Sudan. Breidlid was elected on the basis of his work on both decolonisation of education and education in South Sudan, and several informants suggesting I speak with him. Contacting the South Sudanese academic was suggested by my supervisor. Consequently, the sampling strategy was purposive sampling. This is a form of non-probability sample, where the aim is to pick respondents that are relevant to the RQs, based on certain criteria (Bryman, 2016:408). Thus, I conducted interviews with seven different respondents: one for each organisation, plus the three other informants. See Appendix A for an overview of the interviews.

3.2.1. Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative interviews allow for having more open-ended questions that encourage the respondent to speak about what they deem important (Bryman, 2016:466-7). This gives an opportunity for points the interviewer had not originally included to arise (Bryman, 2016:466-7). As I had a certain objective and research questions in mind, I used semi-structured interviews that provided guiding questions[15], while also allowing respondents to answer freely (Bryman, 2016:469). The main interviews were conducted between August 6th and September 7th, 2020. With the exception of one interview, all interviews were conducted over either Skype or Zoom. Due to both geographical distances and Covid-19, it was deemed best to conduct the interviews online. Nonetheless, Hernæs wished to meet in person, and as such, that interview was done face-to-face. All interviews were recorded, after asking for permission, and later transcribed by me. This made it easier to draw out important points by coding the information and seeing similarities and differences between the interviews. Further along in the research process, I sent a few follow-up questions by e-mail to the four organisations and Breidlid to clarify a couple of points. Breidlid, NCA and YGlobal responded, but NRC and SF did not have the time. However, I do not feel this greatly affected the analysis.

The use of Skype and Zoom was approved in the application to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). As I was constrained to Norway while doing my research,

[15] See Appendix B for guiding questions to the informants. Please note that due to the semi-structured approach, these questions were not rigidly followed, and additional questions popped up during the interviews.

the use of online communication technologies allowed me to get in touch with people who were relevant to my research, but based in different countries. My respondents were based in three different countries, and two different Norwegian cities. McLennan and Prinsen (2014:97), recognise the advantage of using online tools when collecting data as it allows for reaching people that are otherwise unreachable. There are, however, some drawbacks to doing online interviews. McLennan and Prinsen (2014:98) note that some might be less familiar with this approach, and it might contain fewer cues and limited body language, which can make it more difficult to create good rapport. However, my online interviews were done over Skype or Zoom, so I was able to still use the traditional interview techniques, such as reflecting and probing (McLennan & Prinsen, 2014:98). This allowed for a conversation between the respondent and myself, and the use of follow-up questions. To make the respondents comfortable, I spent the first few minutes introducing both the project and myself, and informing them of their rights. Fortunately, the informants relayed that they found the topic interesting and were happy to contribute.

3.2.2. Other data

I also attended Norad's country meeting on South Sudan in August 2019, where Norway's engagement and involvement in South Sudan was discussed. The meeting had presentations by the outgoing Norwegian Ambassador Lars Andersen, and two Norwegian NGOs (Strømme Foundation and Save the Children Norway). Several other NGOs and interest groups involved in South Sudan attended the meeting, and the question round at the end briefly discussed education in South Sudan. Thus, notes taken by me during this meeting will also be used in the analysis.

Moreover, documents pertaining to the four NGOs' education provision were analysed. The NGOs' webpages were carefully examined for information about their education strategy, and some documents were obtained from these. Other documents were sent to me by the respondents, upon my request. I asked for an overview of their education programme in South Sudan and its scope, and papers pertaining to their practices, methods and pedagogical outlook. I also specified by asking for their education guidelines, framework, strategy and policies.

3.3. Analysing the data

To analyse the collected data I relied on the conceptual and theoretical framework (chapter 2). The RQs implore us to look at the involvement and practices of INGOs in education provision from a postcolonial perspective. In the theory, the language question, the notion of whose knowledge and ideas are at the centre, pedagogical values and methods, and local values and culture were mentioned as important points in decolonising education. These concepts will guide the analysis, and I am taking an interpretive approach where I apply content analysis to the transcribed interviews and documents. This means I will locate patterns and themes that come up (Berg & Lune, 2012:349-350) and code the information accordingly. This is done in order to reduce and transform the data into "an organized, compressed assembly of information" (Berg & Lune, 2012:56).

3.4. Quality criteria

In efforts to increase the trustworthiness of my findings, I decided to triangulate the data by using interviews, notes from Norad's meeting, NGO documents and evaluations, and secondary literature. As such, I am triangulating by using different data-collection techniques (Berg & Lune, 2012:6; Schwartz-Shea, 2006:102). Triangulating data is useful to do in order to check the validity of the findings (Nygaard, 2017:147). Moreover, instead of relying on one Norwegian NGO, I interviewed several to check for similarities and differences in their answers.

Since I am also using documents in my data collection, there are some things I need to be aware of. As Tosh (2010) points out, before assessing the "significance of documents, [one] needs to find out how, when and why it came into being" (p. 123). To evaluate a source, Tosh (2010) identifies some questions and reflections to be mindful of. One needs to: 1) consider whether it is authentic, 2) make sure one understands the text and not infer meanings that are not there, 3) question the reliability of the text, and 4) identify what has influenced the author (Tosh, 2010:124-130). McLennan and Prinsen (2014) bring up the need to identify the "context and purpose of the written record" (p.82). They point out that one has to keep in mind that "as the public face of an organisation, the material posted on the [web]site is usually carefully written" (McLennan & Prinsen, 2014:90) and that what one sees "is rarely

the complete picture of the organisation it represents" (Murray & Sixsmith, 2002:50 cited in McLennan & Prinsen, 2014:90). My documents have been obtained either through the official websites of the NGOs, their online resources/archives, or by NGO staff themselves and people involved in the projects. Secondary literature used has been peer-reviewed, and/or cited by sources considered to be legitimate.

In the analysis, I have been extra careful to include information that shows decolonial practices even if it is not explicitly stated as being the result of a reflection of educational decolonisation. This has been done to avoid confirmation bias, which is the "seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations, or a hypothesis in hand" (Nickerson, 1998:175). Avoiding confirmation bias increases the internal validity of the thesis. Moreover, I have been mindful of not creating meaning where there is none, but at the same time realised that what is not written about is also a finding in itself. While I cannot conclude that something is not considered based on its absence in the documents and interviews I have analysed, the omission of it also informs that this it is something they have not deemed important to include. As Zeitlyn argues, one has to be mindful of both what is written in the text and what is omitted (Zeitlyn, 2005:415 cited in McLennan & Prinsen, 2014:82). While there is a possibility that this is written or considered somewhere else, by both interviewing the NGOs and requesting information and documents that pertain to the thesis topic, they have at least had the chance to bring such information to my attention if it exists. With this being said, I have to acknowledge that there may be information I am not privy to, and as such, the findings in the thesis are only based on what data I had access to.

3.5. Ethical considerations

Any kind of research also brings with it certain ethical considerations. When conducting interviews and using human subjects in research, it is important to acknowledge and respect that respondents have a right to know what it is they are agreeing to be part of, and that they can choose to participate or not (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007:30; Banks & Scheyvens, 2014:164). After being presented with information about the study, their role in it and measures taken to protect their anonymity, respondents should give informed consent to their inclusion in the study

(Banks & Scheyvens, 2014:164,168; Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007:31). They must also be made aware that they have the right to withdraw their cooperation at a later stage, to no detriment to them (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007:31; Banks & Scheyvens, 2014:164).

To follow ethical guidelines, the above measures were implemented, and an application of the research project was sent to and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). The application also requires the inclusion of an information letter to be sent to the respondents. The information letter states what my project is about, its objective, and the participants' rights. The information letter also provided the informants with my contact information, the supervisor's contact information, and how to contact the NSD, in case they had any further questions.

3.5.1. Identification of informants

Prior to the interview, information about what the study is about, whom it is for, its aims and relevance, and how it will be carried out was relayed to the respondents. As mentioned, the research was also approved by the NSD. All informants were asked to sign an informed consent form, and were instructed that they could choose to withdraw either certain parts of their interview or their participation completely. During the interview, I also reiterated the option of anonymity and choosing which information that could be included. As such, my research relied on informed consent, chance of anonymity, and the chance to withdraw (Bryman, 2016:).

With the above in mind, I made some choices regarding the identification of my informants in the thesis. In the consent form, all four NGO-informants wrote that the name of their organisation could be used in the thesis. In the three other interviews, Breidlid and Hernæs said that both their name and occupation/organisation they work for could be used. The final informant did not want their name included but consented to the use of their occupation. As such, this informant will be cited as anonymous in the analysis, but sometimes be referred to as a South Sudanese academic. Based on the consent I was given, and the belief that my research has no serious consequences on the organisations or the other informants, the decision was made to use the names

of the NGOs, Breidlid and Hernæs in the thesis. This gives more credibility to the thesis, and allows for showing differences between the NGOs.

3.6. Reflections and limitations

Prior to the start of the interview process, I discussed and tested the questions with a peer in order to receive feedback. Some questions seemed to initially include too much bias, and some came off as a little too critical/too accusatory. In order not to 'scare away' the informants and to try to shed some of my bias, these were tweaked so as not to be biased or too critical, but rather touch upon the issues and invite a reflection. Also important to note is that I did not use the term 'decolonising education' in my questions, unless the respondent brought it up. The reasoning behind this was that I wanted to see if the other questions prompted the respondents to reflect on the topic themselves, without being pressed. I wanted to see if these types of terms/concepts are at the forefront when discussing questions of critique against education development in sub-Saharan Africa and the need to consider local language, culture, and context in education programmes. With that being said, the information letter sent to the respondents informed them of my objective to look at how their education programmes corresponds to the on-going debate about decolonising academia.

One limitation to the data is that I might not have spoken to the person in the organisation with most knowledge on the topic. However, when contacting the organisations I asked to be pointed towards the person best fit for the interview. While those I initially contacted were chosen because I felt they could contribute, I added that they could pass on my request if they felt someone else in the organisation was better suited. This was done by both SF and YGlobal. That being said, it seems it also came down to who in the organisation had time to speak to me.

I also have to acknowledge that what they relay in the interviews and write in their documents may not be fully representative of how it is carried out in practice. A visit to the 'field' would have been beneficial to see how their education guidelines are implemented, and to observe their practices. However, as a visit to South Sudan was

not feasible due to several constraints, conducting interviews and triangulating with other data was deemed an appropriate approach.

3.7. Important note on sources and postcolonial research

While doing this research project, a few important points about both perspectives and sources have come to mind. What often seems to take precedence in the literature on decolonisation is the work of global North scholars, and not global South scholars who have written on the same topics. Moosavi (2020) suggests that "intellectual decolonisation in the global North may be characterised by Northerncentrism due to the way in which decolonial scholarship may ignore decolonial scholars from the global South" (p.1). Furthermore, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) argues that "the contribution of African intellectuals to postcolonial and decolonial scholarship" (p.1) is often ignored. Moosavi (2020) notes how

> "Even if Southern scholarship is identifiable and available in familiar languages, the work may still not be easily accessible […] because academic databases, university libraries and the publishing industry continue to prioritise Northern scholarship at the expense of Southern materials" (p. 11).

As such, there "continues to be a structural exclusion of scholarship from the Global South … [which means] there are limitations to what individual academics can do to achieve intellectual decolonisation" (Moosavi, 2020:11).[16]

With the points of both Moosavi and Ndlovu-Gatsheni in mind, I have attempted to be mindful of the sources used in the thesis and have included both global South- and specifically African scholars. At the same time, this thesis includes the work of global North scholars. As Moosavi (2020:16-17) argues, one cannot simply disregard all scholarly work written in the global North, and similarly, one cannot claim that all global South scholarship are of good quality. As he has noted:

> "When pursuing intellectual decolonisation, one should be open to including whichever research, ideas, theories and concepts are suitable, regardless of whether they originate in the

[16] The website Democracy in Africa (democracyinafrica.org) is one actor trying to combat the prevalence of global North academic literature. It continually updates a reading list of quality academic literature by African scholars, in efforts to decolonize academia.

> global North or the global South, and beyond that, we may even find that the most promising stance is one of synthesising the two" (Moosavi, 2020:17).

As Alhuwalia (2001) says, it "is the task of post-colonialism to confront the existence of difference, to bring together theory from both sides of the imperial divide and to make it relevant to the conditions that exist for all those who endure the post-colonial condition" (p.8). Therefore, while global North scholars and their work are included in the thesis, the literature in chapter 2 also emphasises the work and contributions by global South scholars, such as, Ngũgĩ, Said, Freire, Fanon, Odora-Hoppers, etc.

4. Findings and discussion

This chapter seeks to analyse the gathered data in order to answer the RQs. The chapter is divided into four sections, where the first one (4.1) briefly introduces the Norwegian NGOs' education provision. In order to comment on the practices of these NGOs and situate them within postcolonial theory and the concept of decolonising education, we first need to understand what education programmes they provide. In the second section (4.2) I identify some overarching themes in education provision the NGOs brought up, how they are connected to educational decolonisation and how the NGOs understand their role. Chapter 2 showed varying opinions on the involvement of INGOs, and as such, we have to consider whose job it is to decolonise, how INGOs need to be involved and what role and influence they can have. The third section (4.3) examines the Norwegian NGOs' practices in terms of decolonial theory, as decolonising education happens through actual practices and pedagogy. The fourth section (4.4) displays the main arguments and, more succinctly expresses what the preceding sections tell us about the research questions.

The theory (chapter 2) argues there is a global architecture of education and that even today a Western educational discourse takes precedence and influences education systems all around the world. However, are there ways to make the education more relevant to the students' needs and culture, and are the NGOs reflecting on such issues and what they can do? Do their education programmes show instances of how, even though there is a global education system, one can foster the local? The literature argued that Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) should be incorporated, that languages are important and that local knowledge needs to take a front seat in education. Based on this, the below analysis looks at the practices of the NGOs studied and shows how there are instances of this. Nevertheless, the analysis will argue that there is no clear and organisation-wide strategy by the NGOs to decolonise education, and that the default response to the question of education provision is that interventions are aligned to national priorities and regulations set by the South Sudanese government and donors.

As mentioned in chapter 3, both primary and secondary data is used in the analysis. This was done to triangulate the data, and to get a better overview of the NGOs'

education provision. Reflections from the interviews feature most heavily in the analysis, but some documents also provided useful information.

4.1. Introducing the Norwegian NGOs' education provision

The four Norwegian NGOs examined in the thesis are: the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), KFUK-KFUM Global (YGlobal[17]), the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and the Strømme Foundation (SF). With the exception of NCA, who has been in Southern Sudan since 1972, the other organisations have worked there since the early 2000s. What is clear from the interviews and the documents reviewed is that all four organisations are aware of challenges in South Sudan in terms of access to education, lack of qualified teachers, girls' access to education, and how conflict has affected education efforts. Their education programmes are meant as efforts to alleviate the above issues, and contribute to building up the education services in South Sudan. This section introduces and gives a brief overview of the education[18] supported by the four Norwegian NGOs examined in this study.[19] It shows what the NGOs have deemed most important to focus on within the education sector, as exemplified by how they are providing education. This short introduction is needed in order to situate them within education provision and comment on their practices in regards to decolonising education.

NRC's education intervention in South Sudan includes supporting formal basic education, targeting newly displaced children with a mobile education team, providing accelerated education programmes for those who have missed out on school, and providing youth programming for 15-35 year olds (NRC, 2019:3). The NRC has also worked with four different ministries in South Sudan to develop a vocational training curriculum for those who have missed out on formal education (NRC, interview 4). The informant notes that vocational training has been more

[17] The English name is YGlobal Norway, but in the thesis it has been shortened to YGlobal.
[18] It is worth noting that all the NGOs included in the study also have other engagements than just education in South Sudan. However, in line with the research questions and objective of the thesis, the other NGO projects will not be looked at.
[19] While there is a rich history of Norwegian NGOs in South Sudan, the aim is not to give an overview of all educational projects ever provided by these NGOs. Rather, the scope of the thesis is to look into the current education provision and see how this relates to the debate about 'decolonising education'. Worth noting, however, is that many of these education programmes and projects have been affected by Covid-19. However, these programmes will still be considered as current or planned initiatives by the NGOs, and as such, will be included.

appropriate than he first believed, as the "South Sudanese were excluded or excluding themselves from a number of quite basic professions" (NRC, interview 4).

YGlobal does not have a mainstream education component in South Sudan, but rather supports one primary school in Maridi through their sister chapter called YWCA South Sudan (YGlobal, interview 3). They focus on "entrenching [education] into the community and let the community members have ownership" (YGlobal, interview 3). According to YGlobal's annual report for 2019, the school in Maridi is considered one of the best schools in the district (YGlobal, 2020:2). The informant attributes this to the holistic approach of the school with psychosocial support, safe spaces, and the community coming together to ensure retention in school (YGlobal, interview 3). They further argue that they believe big programmes lack the above "because they are so big and they are not able to pay specific attention to these kinds of things" (YGlobal, interview 3). They deem this important and argue that the "bigger you get, the more mainstream you get, the more detached you get from the real people" (YGlobal, interview 3).

Education is not currently part of NCA's Global Strategy, but NCA's South Sudan office has decided to keep it as a country specific priority because of their rich history there (NCA, interview 1). NCA has chosen to focus on teacher education, and has, for the past few years, worked with SF and the Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) to provide teacher training (NCA, interview 1). NCA's component in the joint consortium is to provide community-based teacher training (CBTT) (NCA, 2015:36) as this overcomes limited mobility of in-service teachers by bringing the programme to the community (NCA, 2015:36). The decentralised teacher education takes place over a two-year period during the school holidays, and the courses are run by NCA (NCA, Interview, 1). According to the informant, the whole programme has been developed with the Ministry of Education, both on state level in Eastern Equatoria, and the national level (NCA, interviews 1&8).

While NCA's main education component is to provide the CBTT, they have also partnered with OsloMet to provide a master's programme called Multicultural and International Education. Unfortunately, due to conflict in South Sudan, the

programme had to be run at Hawassa University in Ethiopia[20] (NCA, interview 1). NCA's role in the programme has been to carry out the administrative work, while OsloMet has been in charge of the educational aspect and the technical parts in relation to certification (NCA, interview 1). NCA has not had any impact on the educational content of the master's degree (NCA, interview 8).

SF supports education by "providing access to quality education, by working to improve the quality of teachers, by promoting girl's education, and also improving the skills of those who are out of school" (SF, interview 5). SF has developed a teacher-training programme with the South Sudanese Ministry of Education (as per their request), which unqualified teachers can take over two (full-time) or four (part-time) years (SF, 2019:21). This programme has been implemented in the "three main Teachers Institutes in the country; Rombur, Maridi and Maper" (SF, 2019:21). However, both the informant and the SF representative at Norad's Country Meeting mentioned there are certain challenges to the programme, such as recruitment of students (as many lack qualifications), teaching being an unattractive profession, difficulties with travel and safety, and that students immediately drop out if they find other employment opportunities (SF, interview 5; Tenga, 2019). Also important to include is that SF has developed a one-year life-skills programme, called Bonga, based on Freirean pedagogy and his dialogue-based learning (SF, n.d.-a). This will be further expanded on in section 4.3.2. as a practice that has specifically used decolonial theory in its development.

From the above we see that the NGOs' interventions range from supporting primary education, to alternative education for those who have missed out on school, vocational training, teacher training, youth programming, a life-skills programme, and a master's programme. This shows that they have an important role in education provision in South Sudan, and provides context for the discussion of the findings in the following sections.

[20] If the project continues, the plan is to relocate it to South Sudan (NCA, interview 1).

4.2. Role and influence of INGOs in education provision

Shown in chapter 2, postcolonial theory claims that educational practices are still imbued with colonial remnants of Eurocentrism (Odora-Hoppers, 2017), and calls for both a decolonisation of curriculum and an investigation of educational practices. Consequently, INGOs' education provision should also be examined in light of their practices to see if they display decolonial mechanisms and awareness of both positionality and power. From the previous section, it is clear that Norwegian NGOs are involved in education provision on several levels, and their education interventions should be analysed using the concept of educational decolonisation.

When considering the role of INGOs in the debate on decolonising education, one has to consider how they operate and what influences their programmes. The reality is that, collectively, INGOs have a significant role in providing education in South Sudan. There is a very heavy external support in education, and "more than 90 per cent of education in South Sudan is funded by the international society" (Andersen, 2019). As one informant pointed out: only 5 per cent, or less, of the South Sudanese budget is allocated to education, and most resources come from donors, external actors and INGOs (Anonymous, interview 6). Nevertheless, the informant also noted that South Sudan is requesting this assistance, and is in dire need of it (Anonymous, interview 6).

While there is a need for educational support, the NGOs were asked how the large number of INGOs providing education services affects the South Sudanese authorities' priorities in that sector. NRC brought up the point that one "could accuse [NGOs] of doing massive harm by relieving the government of the obligation to provide basic services, but on the other hand, how do you step back from it without putting people at risk?" (NRC, interview 4). As all organisations pointed out, there is a huge lack of services in South Sudan, which is why they are engaged in providing social services, like education. Nevertheless, the organisations stress, both in their interviews and in their documents, that their education programmes are the result of consultation and cooperation with the local education authorities. NCA highlights that local authorities have a lot of influence on the priorities that are made (NCA, interview 1). The organisations emphasise that all programmes have to be approved

and aligned to the government's national strategies and priorities, and that this is a requirement from both the donors and the national authorities (NCA, interview 1; YGlobal, interview 3; NRC, interview 4; SF, interview 5).

While all four organisations note that their education efforts are aligned with government priorities and curricula, there are also instances where they have supported the development of curriculum (Breidlid, interview 7). The NRC has developed curriculum for vocational training with four South Sudanese ministries (NRC, interview 4), NCA supported the development of the curriculum for teacher training (NCA, interview 1&8), YGlobal has included a peace-curriculum in their education efforts (YGlobal, interview 3), and SF has developed a life-skills programme called Bonga (SF, interview 5). Additionally, it should be noted that external expertise and actors have informed the new South Sudanese national curriculum (Breidlid, interview 7; Anonymous, interview 6). Formally, it is under the South Sudanese Ministry of Education, but it also involved consultants from other countries, including the UK (Anonymous, interview 6; Breidlid, interview 7).

However, both SF and NCA stress that everything related to education programmes have to be approved by the South Sudanese authorities (NCA, interview 1; SF, interview 5). NCA reiterates that the authorities "will not accept something they do not feel they have been a part of developing" (NCA, interview 1). While it is argued that the South Sudanese authorities are part of educational efforts the above reflects that INGOs also have influence, and are drivers in developing new and innovative programmes and curriculum (e.g. CBTT, Bonga, vocational training etc.). Furthermore, following the argument of a Western-educated elite, it should be questioned what the South Sudanese government deems appropriate, and if this is based on a Western educational discourse, as was argued by Breidlid (2013:136) in chapter 2 (section 2.1.4). Even though the NGOs argue that education programmes are developed with and approved by the South Sudanese authorities, this does not automatically mean that they do not follow a Western epistemic model. As such, discussions about appropriate content and knowledge included in the different curricula should be raised by the INGOs. Due to their heavy presence, INGOs should also be cognisant of their influence and position in the education sector in South Sudan.

This is because, as Willetts (2011) claims, "NGOs are involved in creation of norms, definition of rules, and participation in decision-making procedures" (p.125) and they have "reframed the debates about global issues, participated in global policy-making, and influenced policy implementation" (p.144). Jones (2007) brings up the influential aspects of non-state actors, like INGOs, in influencing policies and agendas, and being part of "a new pattern of global power relations" (2007:330). While NGOs are dependent on funding and government approval, Jones (2007) highlights the point that they are not "passive aid contractors or ineffectual participants in policy construction" (Jones, 2007:333). INGOs also have influence in the country they are operating in. For example, South Sudanese national education authorities wish to roll out the NCA supported CBTT curriculum to all states in South Sudan (NCA, interview 1). Likewise, the NRC supported vocational training curriculum has become the official vocational training curriculum in South Sudan (NRC, interview 4). SF has also shown that they have influence as they have both developed the teacher-training programme with the Ministry of Education, and the Bonga programme where they have put theory (Freire) to use. Another example of how they have room to make decisions is how YGlobal's school in Maridi has developed its own peace-curriculum and incorporated this into the national curriculum they use (YGlobal, interview 3). This means they can have an influence on what is being taught at the school alongside the national curriculum. As such, the organisations are part of creating curriculum and influencing policy as they decide where they put their efforts and money. Therefore, INGOs should recognise the influence they have, even though local authorities might be involved. They are both developing, supporting and financing education interventions, so they do have an influence on its content and outcome.

Hence, the INGOs' policies and practices on the ground also influences educational policy in the country they are working in. To the question of how external actors influence the priorities of the South Sudanese government, the South Sudanese academic responded with:

> "There are documents that have been written, policies that have been written, and a lot of them have been developed with the support of the donors, and in that way I think the donors

> have an influence on the priorities […] So they definitely have an impact on policymaking" (Anonymous, interview 6).

The NRC informant also notes how "in some countries getting involved in policy might be more difficult, but I think in South Sudan you can actually get involved in policy and support policy development" (NRC, interview 4). He attributes this to the positive interaction they have had with the Ministry of Education (NRC, interview 4). This exemplifies how INGOs can have a role in influencing educational policies in South Sudan, making it important what knowledge and perspective they have on educational decolonisation. This is especially important as the YGlobal informant argues that due to the authorities' lack of capacity, organisations do more than just complement in providing services in South Sudan (YGlobal, interview 3).

While the NGOs argue that the ministries are involved and that they are also working with education, Marit Hernæs (Interview 2), argues that the South Sudanese government has in essence left the whole educational programme to international organisations. She argues that even before independence, the South Sudanese established a Ministry of Education with very competent people who had a vision for how education in South Sudan should be (Hernæs, interview 2). They focused on trying to use local languages and make a curriculum that was applicable to South Sudan, and clearly stated that if anyone was to work with education in South Sudan they had to follow those guidelines (Hernæs, interview 2). What Hernæs (Interview 2) finds problematic is that after 2006 there was a large influx of INGOs, and she claims many of them simply followed their own course. This, she argues, still goes on today – especially because of the weak capacity of the government – and she notes how it seems that education in South Sudan has moved backwards and not forwards (Hernæs, interview 2).

Hernæs (2019) finds it problematic that, in reality, the education sector in South Sudan is made up of a conglomerate of INGOs and questions this. She brings up issues of literacy rates and lack of quality in education to point out that the education provided by INGOs is not good enough (Hernæs, interview 2). At Norad's Country Meeting, SF's representative, Titus Tenga (2019), highlighted that it was important to think of the smaller gains, even though the larger picture may be bleak. He highlights

that "one of the successes for [him] is the population's understanding and demand for education" which is a result of NGOs working on the grassroots level, and the population is now "equipped, they know their rights, and now they demand education" (Tenga, 2019).

While it is good that people are aware of their right to and importance of education, it seems he puts more emphasis on the population demanding education, and not adequately considering which knowledge system it is based on. As he argues the understanding and demand is a result of NGOs' work, they must also acknowledge the influence they have on what education and content the population demands. Through their practices NGOs set the premise for what education is deemed important. This strengthens the argument that they have a responsibility to localise the educational content and work towards decolonisation. This is particularly important in South Sudan where international actors are heavily involved in the education sector.

INGOs' education programmes are not only affected by national priorities and approvals, but also by funding conditionalities. Due to requirements and regulations set by the donor, there is a "strict regime of reporting and showing achievement of goals to [the] donors" (NCA, interview 1). This, the NCA informant (interview 1), points to as extra challenging in the context of South Sudan where things often do not go as planned and you need flexibility. Getting the donors on board with this type of flexibility is not always easy, as they have very tight margins on what it is they want to finance and achieve (NCA, interview 1). NCA's South Sudan Strategy points out that while supporting peace and reconciliation efforts in South Sudan is welcome, there is also the:

> "necessity for external accompaniment to allow for time and space for indigenous mechanisms to proceed without overdue external pressure. Modes and modalities heavily influenced by the power of external funding potential can easily overrun and potentially derail South Sudanese processes and mechanisms" (NCA, 2015:22).

SF also reflects on how earmarked funding "poses a challenge for (…) long-term development programming" (SF, 2018:13) and organisational flexibility. With more money also comes the increase of reports, project requirements and evaluations to see if the donor's expected service delivery is met (Edwards & Hulme, 1998:11).

According to Farrington and Lewis (1993), evidence suggests that "time and space for reflection and innovation are reduced, as NGOs become contractors to donors/and or governments" (Farrington & Lewis 1993:33 cited in Edwards & Hulme, 1998:11). The NRC informant supports this claim as he argues there is too little focus on programme quality in education, as the energy of the programme design unit in Juba "gets sucked into reporting and proposal writing" (NRC, interview 4). This suggests there may not be adequate reflection on educational content and the concept of decolonisation of education. It may suggest it becomes easier to follow already 'accepted' and standardised forms of education that follow the Western approach.

In his interview, Breidlid argues it is important to reflect on educational discourse as, according to him, "Norwegian aid organisations and Norad, and their educational discourse prolongs the colonisation of education" (Breidlid, interview 7). He claims they are not adequately questioning "the knowledge base for these educational systems" (Breidlid, interview 7). His accusation against Norwegian NGOs is that they believe education to be education, without fully grasping the possible "continuation of a colonial hegemony within the regime of knowledge" (Breidlid, interview 7). He also mentions that he has given some lectures on the topic, but feels that the NGOs do not fully grasp his points (Breidlid, interview 10). This is based on feedback he has gotten from attendees who have said that they do not understand what he is talking about (Breidlid, interview 7). He argues one reason may be that there are few people with a critical educational background working for the NGOs (Breidlid, interview 10).

Others argue that the responsibility does not lie with donors and the INGOs, but with the national governments, and that suggesting otherwise would be to remove the responsibility and agency of the governments (Blomli & Nordvik, 2018; Tenga & Sødal, 2018a). It is worth noting the sentiment that the West should not decolonise education on behalf of those receiving it. This is explained well by Mignolo (2014) in the following excerpt:

> "And the issue here is the potential temptation of European scholars to take the lead and to 'dewesternize' and 'decolonialize'. If that happens (and it may happen), it would be indeed rewesternization disguised as dewesternization or decoloniality … European actors and institutions will now take the lead in decolonisation because people in the rest of the world are

not capable of decolonizing themselves!" (p. 589-590).

Mignolo (2014) points out that it is not up to Western institutions and scholars to lead the decolonisation efforts. While such efforts should not be led by Western scholars, practitioners and institutions, one can argue it is still imperative that they also take responsibility to effect change. Since INGOs have been given responsibility to provide education, they should be driving forces for ensuring good, context-based academic content. The global architecture of education (as explained in chapter 2) makes it difficult for the global South to decolonise without the reflection, acknowledgement of the issue, and the will to change these practices by those who are providing the education. Therefore, one cannot simply say that the responsibility falls on the national governments.

Additionally, there is the issue of the educated elite perpetuating a Western education discourse due to mental colonisation (Breidlid, interview 7).[21] The South Sudanese academic also reflected on local elites possibly contributing to a mismatch between the education the population is receiving and its relevance to their context (Anonymous, interview 6). Furthermore, there is the issue that in reality it becomes difficult for the majority of the population, whose needs are different from those of the elite, to voice their concerns. As Breidlid (2018b) argues, even African scholars struggle with getting governmental support for their decolonial theories. Thus, the argument that the responsibility falls on the national government, and that they create guidelines the INGOs have to follow, does not adequately take into account that many global South voices are calling for a decolonisation of education.

While it is not up to Western institutions and NGOs to decolonise education on behalf of the global South (as warned by Mignolo), the thesis argues they at least need to be 'in on it', and they need to be careful of not 'hiding' behind the sentiment that it is up to the national government. In its annual report 2018, SF interviews Norad's senior advisor for education, Gerd-Hanne Fosen, who emphasises that while the national

[21] It should also be noted that decolonisation can be used as a power rhetoric by the African elite in order to stay in power and keep others out. This means they can use arguments of decolonisation to oppose other voices and influences. This type of discussion would entail an examination of internal dynamics within a country, and that is not the scope of the thesis. However, it is worth noting that there are several sides to the decolonisation debate.

government has the responsibility to provide education, others (INGOs, development agencies, etc.) "must challenge national authorities on both quality and content" (Fosen quoted in SF, 2019:14). She mentions the importance of good teachers, but also using mother tongue as language of instruction and having a relevant curriculum (Fosen cited in SF, 2019:14).

This section has shown how INGOs have an important role in education provision, but that they are also, to a certain degree, constrained by South Sudanese national priorities and requirements, and donor conditionalities. All organisations emphasise that they cannot just do whatever they want, but that everything has to be developed with approval by and cooperation with local authorities. However, it can be argued that even though the INGOs have an important role in the education sector, there is little reflection on how this role should be filled. There is not enough reflection on what kind of responsibility and influence they have on what educational content is to be provided, even though, as shown above, they are part of facilitating curriculum development. Instead, the responses are characterised by emphasis on approval and cooperation with local authorities, and that it is based on local needs. As INGOs are not passive aid contractors, the thesis argues that they have an obligation to provide input on how education should be designed so as to adapt to local context and knowledge systems.

With this in mind, the next section of the analysis moves into looking at the practices of the NGOs in terms of decolonial theory. This is done to see whether they have taken steps that can be considered mechanisms of decolonising education, so as to further answer the RQs. Even though there are rules, regulations, standards and requirements to follow, have there been instances where the NGOs have used their education efforts and their teaching to encourage local knowledge production, foster languages and cultures, and the identities of the South Sudanese?

4.3. Connecting the NGO's practices to decolonisation theory

From section 4.1, it is clear that the Norwegian NGOs support quite a few education interventions in South Sudan. Argued in the opinion pieces (section 2.2.1) was that "Norwegian authorities are today a positive driving force in educational programmes that promote mother tongue and a curriculum that is relevant to students in their everyday lives" (Tenga & Sødal, 2018a). This section seeks to explore whether the practices of the four Norwegian NGO's studied show examples of this. Do the NGOs' practices reflect mechanisms of decolonising education? Do the organisations make a conscious effort to foster and showcase the cultures? Do they make students aware that there is local knowledge production, as well as make the content familiar to their lived experiences? With the theory in mind, the focus will be on the issue of language and the use of local knowledge. As such, by operationalizing the theoretical framework (chapter 2) based on practices highlighted to contribute to decolonisation, the following three sub-chapters will look at the issue of language in education, the idea that there is a feedback loop that encourages use of local knowledge, and whether there is actual use of the term 'decolonising education'.

The first sub-section (4.3.1) tackles the issue of language and how language is integral to the students' learning. The second section (4.3.2) includes other aspects of local knowledge and using techniques to make learning more applicable to students' life experiences (local knowledge, Freirean pedagogy, keeping the learner's environment at the centre etc). The third section (4.3.3) takes it one step further, to see if there was use of the term 'decolonising education' amongst the respondents. Some of the data can fit under several of the headings as one cannot completely separate language and local knowledge, but the information will be included where deemed most appropriate. For example, NRC's incorporation of local knowledge will be included in section 4.3.3 as the informant brought it up while using the term 'decolonising education', even though it also fits in with section 4.3.2.

4.3.1. The issue of language

As was shown in chapter 2, the issue of language is an important part of decolonial theory. Problematic during colonialism was the way the colonised were taught to believe that the oppressors' languages and customs were better. As expressed by

Fanon (2008) and Ngũgĩ (1986), this led the colonised to want to identify with the colonisers and emulate and learn their languages. This affected the way the colonised saw themselves and their environment and traditions. As language is a carrier of culture (Ngũgĩ, 1986:13; Fanon, 2008:8), decolonial theory stresses that the language question in education is still important today. It is a way for children to feel pride in their culture, and it is, importantly, proven to be integral to the children's learning.

After independence from Sudan, the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) "adopted a language-in-education policy" (Spronk, 2014:1). There has been focus on developing education that fosters and preserves people's mother tongue, which stems "from a desire to promote unity in diversity, a love for their indigenous cultures and languages, and the recognition of the pedagogical advantages to using each learner's mother tongue" (Spronk, 2014:1). This policy states that the first three years of primary school will be taught in the mother tongue of the student, while having English as a second language. From the fourth year (primary 4) onwards, the two will switch, and English will become the main language, while the mother tongue the secondary language (Spronk, 2014:1).

Despite this, there are huge challenges when it comes to language in South Sudan. Both students and teachers struggle with English, making it difficult to follow the language policies (NRC, interview 4; NCA, interview 8). YGlobal notes how "in South Sudan, it tends to be English as the main language, and if there is a mother tongue it is more to complement" (YGlobal, interview 3). Additionally, the idea that English is important to learn leads to some challenges. As explained by YGlobal:

> "The local languages are used in the first years but of course it is a challenge. I think they tend to push English too early and success of pupils is sort of gauged on how fast they master and command the use of English. I feel there is some pride in parents when their children start to speak English which I think pushes the teachers further to focus on English," (YGlobal, interview 9).

The above points fit in with literature about language in post-colonial states. Brock-Utne & Bøyesen (2006:15) argue that local language is in essence only used as a transitional language, where the ultimate goal is to master the colonial language. Colonial languages are seen as having a higher status than local ones, leading parents

to want their children to master the former (Brock-Utne & Bøyesen, 2006:23). From the above, this seems to be the case in South Sudan. From several of the informants' reflections, it seems there is still a mind-set that there is pride in knowing English. This has the effect that English is introduced and pushed too early, maybe even before pupils have a good grasp of reading, understanding and writing in their mother tongue. One can see how colonial practices of elevating the colonial languages and banning the use of local languages, have hampered pride and identity with local languages, as was argued by Ngũgĩ (1986) and Fanon (2008). Odora-Hoppers (2017:9) also argues that there is, still today, an idea of a superior West present in the minds on many Africans.

SF did not discuss language much, but touched on it when asked about critique of education development. After explaining that they use local examples[22] in their education, the informant also noted that:

> "In some areas we even try to use local language. For example, where people – maybe their education levels are low – are not able to express themselves well in English, we ask them to use their language so that they can express themselves. And then we can interpret, and translate it to English" (SF, interview 5).

While it is good that people are encouraged to express themselves in their local language when needed, this comes across as a tool to use if their English levels are not good. It seems English becomes the base, but they can use their own language to complement if they have poor English proficiency. The follow-up question posed to the informant was if English is normally the language they use in their programmes, where the answer was yes (SF, interview 5). Again, it seems that mother tongue is only used as a transitional language. Instead of the NGO using local language as the broad strategy, it is rather used as a translating tool.

While the NGOs are aware of language challenges, one informant argues that national education authorities have decided the language policy, and as such, it has to be followed (NCA, interview 8). However, as the NGOs are 'on the ground' and have made observations and reflections on how language issues in schools affect quality,

[22] The use of local examples will be discussed in the next section (4.3.2 Incorporating local knowledge).

the thesis argues they should consider taking a more proactive role. The NRC informant seems to have made some further reflections on how using local languages is very important in the learning process. Even though policy is that they should be teaching in English, the informant argues that NRC staff should encourage teachers to use their local language (NRC, interview 4). The informant argues they "would prefer for people to write and be confident in their own language, than to be forcing themselves to write a language they really don't speak. That's not going to bring much benefit" (NRC, interview 4). Furthermore, the informant believes the children "get more benefit from a primary education that is in their language, as research has shown" (NRC, interview 4). However, even when local languages are used instead of English, "the problem is that the materials are in English" (NRC, interview 4).

While the informant argues that the NRC follows rules and regulations set by the government (NRC, interview 4), the above shows that they also believe teachers should be encouraged to use their local language. While it may seem counterintuitive to the national plan set by the government, the reality is that most teachers do not have an adequate grasp of English. This will negatively impact the pupils, which the informant has picked up on. It is good that the informant has made reflections on how it would be best if teachers relied more on local language, but there is still no explicit programme or project to foster local language.

The data reviewed suggests that language is not one of the focus areas of the four NGOs studied. This is not to claim that they are unaware of issues surrounding language, because they have most certainly made reflections on this. However, there are few practices in place to foster local language. While there are national policies to consider, and using local language for the first few years of schooling is in fact stipulated in the national curriculum, it is obvious that there are still huge challenges. The NGOs are in the field and see these issues, but with the exception of encouraging teachers to use local languages (NRC), there seem to be no specific programmes or initiatives to support or advocate for local languages.

The South Sudanese academic claims that, in line with the language policy that a local language should be taught in school, international actors have supported this by providing money to "develop the languages to be written [and] the books to be

produced, so actually they are supporting in developing southern languages, and also culture" (Anonymous, interview 6). This is a way to support the use of and preservation of indigenous languages, but it is unclear who exactly provides this support. This type of support was not highlighted by the four NGOs as being part of their education interventions in South Sudan. The exception is a smaller book project initiated by the NRC informant (as will be explored in 4.3.3.). Worth noting, though, is that using local examples and knowledge may also be ways of fostering local language. Nonetheless, this section argues the NGOs seem to have no language-specific programmes to support South Sudanese language development and preservation.

4.3.2. Incorporating local knowledge

At their school in Maridi, YGlobal has developed and integrated a special peace-curriculum into the national curriculum (YGlobal, n.d.). Additionally, their webpage on South Sudan says that they use sport, dance and drama as different forms of expression in learning (YGlobal, n.d.). The YGlobal informant confirmed this is something they have developed because of the situation in South Sudan (Interview 3). As the informant explains:

> "When it was break time or physical education lessons, you'd see formations along tribal lines or ethnic groupings, and small fights here and there. Therefore, we introduced what we call a peace-curriculum. We introduced this plan that deliberately brings children together, and make them have activities that make them see the differences. For example, if they are doing the dances. Each ethnic group might have their own dance, so doing those dances and learning from it – why is that group doing that and this group doing this – sort of created that awareness that at the end of the day we are all South Sudanese, and linking those to the national curriculum. And the national curriculum is very keen on promoting the pride, the national pride and patriotism, starting at that age." (YGlobal, interview 3).

The informant added that "there is a lot of storytelling, and cultural dances and songs" (YGlobal, interview 9) when asked about the use of local knowledge. As argued by Gonye and Moyo (2015) in chapter 2, using African dance in education is a way to express cultural knowledge, build up an African paradigm, and challenge Western knowledge. Some argue that essential to "enhancing student achievement is the creation of contexts for learning where their contributions are voiced and valued"

(Melchior, 2011:120). This means creating spaces where

> "students safely bring who they are and what they know into the learning relationship, and where what students know, and who they are, forms the foundations of interaction patterns in the classroom – in short, where culture counts" (Bishop & Glynn, 2000:165-166 quoted in Melchior, 2011:120).

By having specific practices that allow for and encourage the expression of culture during their school day, the children are shown that their knowledge and cultural practices are seen as ways of learning and are worthy of being fostered. This can be seen as a way the YGlobal primary school brings local knowledge into the classrooms. It shows that what the children know and the knowledge they possess is valid, and it is one way of placing their self and culture at the centre. In the literature, this is an integral point in decolonising efforts, so as not to see themselves as inferior (Ngũgĩ, 1986; Fanon, 2008). Additionally, as the informant noted, using cultural expressions in learning is also tailored to the context of conflict, as they are used to reduce the level of tension (YGlobal, interview 3). This way you can focus more on the process. The students will feel safer and they are shown that their cultural expressions are part of knowledge production. While using cultural dances, songs and storytelling was not mentioned in a context of decolonising education by the informant, it is still worth noting that this is a way to incorporate indigenous knowledge. Even if it was not originally conceived of as a decolonising mechanism, it fits with decolonial theory. Additionally, the informant mentioned it was a way of promoting national pride and patriotism, which decolonial theory highlights as a need.

Another way of incorporating local knowledge into education is using local examples and the student's immediate environment in the teaching process, as was reflected on by the SF informant. From the interview, it became clear that they reflect on critique that education is not always tailored to context, and had considered some measures to offset this. The informant first responded that the critique is true to some extent and that this may be influenced by "donors or other governments, who have their own interests, and want a curriculum aligned to their governments or education systems" (SF, interview 5). However, in order to make their programmes as close to the realities of their beneficiaries, SF tries to use local examples as much as possible (SF, interview 5). The informant explains:

> "We use local examples, local names instead of names that people do not know, that people cannot have a connection with. So we use local. We use local pictures: if it's rivers, if it's a forest, we can say 'this forest in this location'. If there is a stream, okay, you use local examples. And even things that reflect our culture. So we try to, like, localise them so that learning …(pause)…you know, it is easier to learn from known to unknown. So if you start by knowing what it is we teach you, and then tomorrow it becomes easier to know what is outside your, like, community, your place. So yeah, that's what we try to do as much as possible," (SF, interview 5).

By doing the above, they are trying to make the learning easier to understand, so as not to alienate students in the classroom. Also important to include is the life-skills programme (Bonga) developed by SF, as touched upon in 4.1. It is based on Freire's pedagogy and on the challenges the participants meet in their particular country (SF, n.d.-a). In East Africa the programme is called Bonga, meaning dialogue, and stems from Freire's emphasis on dialogic learning (SF, n.d.-a). SF highlights that Freire's "teaching method is intended as an instrument for mobilizing young people through literacy and raising awareness, [and that] Freire wanted to make education a liberating development process, which would make the world more recognizable to the student" (SF, n.d.-a). SF argues that their life-skills programme "build[s] the capacity of adolescent girls and boys to overcome their challenges and build a vision for their future through improved self-confidence, literacy, and occupational skills" (SF, 2020a:4). Furthermore, they highlight that:

> "External evaluations have shown that the SF's life-skills programmes are effective in reducing early marriage, the use of bride price that essentially considers women a burden, and gender- based violence (GBV) in SF-supported communities. When combined with literacy, vocational training, and economic inclusion, participant girls are increasingly able to stand on their own feet, embrace socio-economic self-reliance, and resist discrimination." (SF, 2019:19).

The approach is based on "engaging in continuous dialogues that affect [the participants]" (SF, 2020b:4), and using visual images, games and plays (SF, n.d.-b). The facilitators of the programme seem to be trained in Freire's pedagogy and approach through the animators' (facilitators) guide they are given. Bonga's guide to animators essentially contains the curriculum, and the approaches that should be used to teach this curriculum (SF, n.d.-b). The guide also informs the animators of the difference between a "domestic education and a liberating education" and the

distinction between a "banking system and problem-posing approach" (SF, n.d.-b:141). As the Freirean approach is based on the latter in both comparisons, this seems to be included so as to make the animators aware of how they should conduct the lessons.

Clearly, this programme has been developed specifically as a result of theory (Freire) and reflections on what pedagogy and ways of learning are fruitful in a specific context. It seems the programme empowers participants' and raises their confidence. Instead of telling them what the issue is, it teaches participants, through dialogue, that their voice matters and is part of both recognising the problem and the solution. The organisation has clearly reflected on an appropriate teaching method, and making the programme relevant to the everyday lives and challenges faced.

To the question of where and how educational content and curriculum for the CBTT are developed, the NCA informant said that "materials such as syllabus are developed in South Sudan with South Sudanese professionals who also have experience from the region (Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia)" (NCA, interview 9). The informant also stressed that "it is important that you understand that those who work with CBTT in South Sudan are South Sudanese […] and they develop it further" (NCA, interview 1). NCA's role has been to "take initiative to start the work, gather professionals, cover costs for the development of curricula and materials, and conduct advocacy work with the authorities and decision-makers" (NCA, interview 9).

One can argue that, even though NCA does not develop educational content, their role still means that they can influence the content and outcome of the programme as they have gathered professionals and conducted advocacy work. As such, they are afforded the opportunity to impact the programme. The informant mentioned that while it has to be adapted to the context and national requirements, they "also link [the teacher education] to what is internationally accepted" (NCA, interview 1). Additionally, in response to the question of training South Sudanese teachers to foster language- and cultural traditions, the NCA informant mentioned the need to challenge the teachers, so that "they do not get stuck in the past, but that they are exposed to what is happening within the field and international trends" (Interview 1). The informant also added the importance "of finding a balance where you do not loose the one or the

other" (NCA, interview 1).

To the question of whether local knowledge was incorporated into the teacher training and how, the respondent replied that the "education is carried out locally, and between each training module, the teachers go back to their local communities/schools and use the knowledge they have gained in the training modules" (NCA, interview 9). When asked whether there was any focus on the teachers using indigenous knowledge in their teaching the answer was "yes, there is, there must be" (NCA, interview 9). In the above answers, the informant argues that local knowledge is important and has been used in their programmes, but did not expand on how this has been done. The first reply is rather an argument of how teachers disseminate what they have learned locally than explaining how local knowledge is part of their training. Therefore, it becomes difficult to comment on what practices display the incorporation of local knowledge, as well as the scope of this knowledge.

Furthermore, due to mental colonisation (Ngũgĩ, 1986), having local people working on the CBTT cannot be understood as being synonymous with decolonising education or having an education system based on an African discourse. As Ngũgĩ (1986) argued, there is a distinction between the African educator who has internalised a Western outlook and the African who is cognisant of colonial legacies and less prone to these influences. From the above responses, the questions one is left with are 1) is the curriculum decolonised, and 2) what does following international trends (as mentioned by the informant) actually mean? If we are to follow Jones' (2006, 2007) and Breidlid's (2016, 2020) argument of a global architecture of education, this suggests that local education authorities are also influenced to develop education programmes that follow global requirements, and may favour a more Western educational discourse.

To gain more understanding of the CBTT-programme, I also had a look at its curriculum. While the NCA informant did not expand on how local knowledge is incorporated, the CBTT-curriculum at least displays examples of using traditional folk dance, music, and games (NCA & MoGEI[23], 2018). One of the goals of the

[23] South Sudanese Ministry of General Education and Instruction

CBTT is to "promote national unity and cohesion" and the vision of the curriculum is for it to be "firmly rooted in the country's rich culture and heritage" (NCA & MoGEI, 2018:1). The curriculum further states that a guiding principle of the teacher education is to "empower teacher trainees and people by grounding education into the local culture, traditions and environment" (NCA & MoGEI, 2018:2). The curriculum includes courses on South Sudanese history, the emergence of the Nation of Sudan, and also courses on regional studies (East Africa) and the African continent (NCA & MoGEI, 2018). Furthermore, it includes arts and crafts with pottery, weaving, basketry, sculpting etc., which are important components of their culture (NCA & MoGEI, 2018). Similarly, there is emphasis on teacher trainees using traditional folk dances, storytelling, plays, role-play, songs and rhymes in their teaching of English and national languages (NCA & MoGEI, 2018).

The training does not include a course in the national languages, but they do have a course about teaching it. The course is supposed to make them aware of both the benefits of local languages in education, but also the challenges of language in South Sudan (NCA & MoGEI, 2018:286). There is also a goal that the teacher trainee should "demonstrate how national languages preserves and promotes culture" (NCA & MoGEI, 2018:288) and learn how to teach both oral and written literature in national languages.

However, it is noteworthy that the theoretical underpinnings in some subjects are based on much Western influence. For example, within philosophy, they draw on what they deem as important education philosophers and their influence (NCA & MoGEI, 2018:21). The majority of these philosophers are European, and the only reference to African philosophers is Mwalima Julius K. Nyerere and what they have just collectively termed "African Education philosophers" (NCA & MoGEI, 2018:21). Similarly, they have a course on the history of sports and P.E., where one topic is on the "forefathers of modern physical education and national systems of physical education" (NCA & MoGEI, 2018:270). Here, they have only included Western European influences (NCA & MoGEI, 2018:270-271). While the curriculum may argue to be rooted in South Sudanese culture and heritage (NCA & MoGEI; 2018:1) this shows that they also draw on Western influence when developing programmes and curricula. In some courses, Western education philosophers bear the

most influence and there is only slight, or no, reference to regional philosophers.

4.3.3. Use of the term 'decolonising education'

As referred to in the methods chapter, the decision was made to not explicitly use the term 'decolonising education' in the questions posed to the NGO respondents. In the interviews, only one organisation (NRC) brought up the term when discussing critique and issues of education development in the global South. Unsurprisingly, as this is a topic he has written about before, the term was also heavily featured in the interview with Breidlid.

When asked about how education may not be reflecting African viewpoints and approaches to learning, and the whole notion of how to foster South Sudanese language, cultural traditions and identity, the NRC informant stressed that "those things are really, really important for me" (NRC, interview 4). The informant noted that he believes the dynamics have shifted and "people from implementation countries are moving into influential positions, so it is not so much about skin colour or racial group" (NRC, interview 4). At the same time, he brings up the issue of Africans who "have been educated through a system which has barely changed since colonial times" and that the "reality is that most curricula in Africa have yet to be decolonised" (NRC, interview 4). These systems do not challenge the structures and the ways of thinking that have been handed down from colonisation (NRC, interview 4).

The informant argues that issues of decolonisation of education is complex because of the way the "colonial mind-set has imbedded itself in cultures" (NRC, interview 4). The informant brings up an example of a university educated Nuer colleague who requested a book on Nuer cultures he had heard of, titled *Primitive Religions* (NRC, interview 4). The informant stresses that 'primitive' is not a word he likes very much, but that such language and discourse is still used today, and many do not question it (NRC, interview 4). This mirrors arguments made in chapter 2, where Ngũgĩ (1986) points to a cultural imperialism and Fanon (2008) speaks of how the colonised see themselves through the eyes of the coloniser.

Furthermore, the informant argues that a lot of what is considered African culture now is actually inherited from colonial times, thus making it difficult to 'decolonise' it (NRC, interview 4). He elaborates by using the example of sexuality, and argues:

> "The attitudes, the laws that exist that are draconian around people's sexual orientation, a lot of African people think of that as their culture being defended from loose and permissive white culture, but actually those laws are almost, I think without exception, all colonial, imposed by white people when that was the mainstream of thought. Those laws were actually imposed on them, so now there can be Africans defending what is historically colonial mind-set as African culture" (NRC, interview 4).

The informant expands on the challenges of decolonising education as an outsider. As he argues:

> "Decolonisation of education is well overdue, but you have to be careful, like somebody like me who might have fairly radical thoughts about … (pause)… I'm still a white guy, and I am still spouting my opinion, and if I am a white guy telling Africans that they should be more African, that is still a form of the same thing, so I try to tread that carefully" (NRC, interview 4).

This is most certainly a good reflection to be aware of, and relates to Mignolo's (2014) point in 4.2 that it should not be a Western project. It also shows that people working with such issues need to be aware of their own positionality. However, as argued in 4.2, those working with education need to be part of this decolonisation and take cognisance of their role due to the, often, ingrained idea that Western education is the driver for modernity. As INGOs are important service providers, it becomes too simple to disregard their role in the quest to decolonise on the basis of them being external actors. Rather, their actions should have postcolonial underpinnings so as to tackle the issue from a global South perspective.

When asked if the NRC reflects on and tries to facilitate educational decolonisation, the informants' reflections suggest this is challenging and that it is not embedded in the organisation. As the informant notes:

> "It's quite hard because you're talking about, like you know, you can be in a school and it's basically some bamboo, and some mud walls and cracked mud floors, and a couple of blackboards. And then teachers who have, or maybe haven't, graduated from primary school.

> So to go into that environment and be sort of 'let's decolonise education', it's not that easy" (NRC, interview 4).

Nevertheless, there are possibilities for those who are aware of the issue. While acknowledging the difficulties, the informant has reflected on the issue of educational decolonisation. He explains that what he tries to do is, instead of going on a national level and talking about decolonisation of education, he talks to his teams about those thoughts (NRC, interview 4). The informant speaks of a specific initiative he has taken in order to capture and make visible local cultures. The informant has previously been part of such a project in Indonesia, where the idea is to:

> "work with pupils, teachers, parents and staff to do a collection of local nursery rhymes, playground games, and local songs that children often sing in the playground, and to do a collection of them and collate them into a book. And then with each one to sort of notate what could be possible lessons from that particular game, song or rhyme, and what skills it could be used to develop" (NRC, interview 4).

Depending on languages and ethnicities in South Sudan, this might mean making a number of books (NRC, interview 4). The informant's wish is to "encourage an acknowledgement, an enjoyment and a pride in what they already have, which is so rich, and seeing that it is not separate from education" (NRC, interview 4). Creating such a book is definitely a step in the right direction, and supports Fanon's (2008:115) call to make magazines, songs and books especially for the local children. It is also a way of supporting local languages as printed materials play an important role in preserving languages. However, while the informant believes they have the capacity to do it, this is not in any NRC indicator, part of a project or has donor support (NRC, interview 4). Instead of being linked to a strategic approach, this comes down to an individual initiative. As he speaks to his teams about this, it does not come across as something that is institutionalised in the organisation.

The informant argues that from his experience, the South Sudanese "really love it when we give their culture some attention, some respect [because] people are really proud of their ethnicities, but they have never had anyone from the outside say that" (NRC, interview 4). He further argues there is value in being a foreigner when you "show interest and respect for what people already have, and you can leverage your

privilege in a way to have them hold up a mirror and note that another person in the world thinks what they have is valuable" (NRC, interview 4). He further argues:

> "When you actually put what equals local culture into a professional kind of media format, it has an impact on people's self-esteem because they have never seen that, they have only ever seen other cultures – even within their own cultures, the rich people, the people in the cities or other ethnicities depicted in that way. And so when they see themselves depicted within a book, for example, that's been professionally produced, or a magazine that's kind of glossy, then it really shifts their vision of how valuable their own culture is" (NRC, interview 4).

The informant highlights both the importance of working on programme quality and initiatives that uses local culture as educational tools (NRC, interview 4). He argues this is important because often people and organisations "lose touch with building relationships and interacting with communities" (NRC, interview 4). In a lot of agencies, even "with the best will in the world" there is not enough pressure on "achieving amazing impact or amazing programme quality" (NRC, interview 4). Instead, the biggest pressure applied on the Country Directors and Area Managers is on raising and spending money (NRC, interview 4). Breidlid (Interview 7) also argues that quality suffers because organisations are concerned with meeting budgets. It seems they use institutional capacity on raising and spending money, at the expense of quality and reflections on appropriate education provision. They do not spend enough time on reflecting on the content of their educational programmes and institutionalising what it means to decolonise education. Furthermore, Breidlid questions whether INGOs have "enough knowledge to understand that one reason why results suffer may be because the content is not adequately adapted to the cultural context" (Interview 7).

Hence, you need people who have the capacity to take a step back and reflect on issues of programme quality and "a more intelligent, longer term, positive impact" (NRC, interview 4). The abovementioned book idea is a product of such reflections. Nevertheless, while displaying decolonial practices, this comes down to an individual initiative and not the organisation's strategy. It is a most welcome initiative, but it seems reliant on having staff members who are already reflecting on these issues and how to contribute. Instead, these types of reflections and initiatives should be embedded and encouraged in the organisation's policies and strategies. Mechanisms

to decolonise education should be institutionalised within the organisation instead of being contingent on small, individual initiatives. As should it for the other Norwegian NGOs.

The master's programme supported by NCA also displays reflections on the concept of 'decolonising education'. While the programme is administered by NCA (NCA, interview 8), the reason the educational content reflects a decolonisation perspective is Breidlid's focus on such issues (Breidlid, interview 7). OsloMet, where Breidlid is a professor, is responsible for the courses and academic content, and Breidlid is the Academic Director of the programme (Breidlid, interview 7,10). As explained by Breidlid:

> "I have been very interested in this decolonisation perspective, i.e. to focus on the global South in education and also include researchers or scholars who have written about Africa from a South perspective. So we have used Freire, amongst others, different researchers from Africa, and then researchers who have tried to put education in a Southern perspective. My focus has been the epistemological gap between the Western discourse and Southern epistemological knowledge discourses. As such, I have tried to include a lot about indigenous knowledges, i.e. local knowledge, and questioned what I call the global architecture of education" (Breidlid, interview 7).

Breidlid (interview 7) argues that he can see from his master's students that the education they have received prior to the master's programme is influenced by the global architecture of education. Therefore, he says it has been very important to get them to understand that "education should happen in the local language, and take the local context, traditions and cultural capital in the local communities into account, so that they are not alienated in the school system" (Breidlid, interview 7). He mentions that it is challenging to make educators and students realise that the Western discourse is not superior – mirroring Ngũgĩ's (1986) reflections of a colonisation of the mind. To try to move away from such a mind-set, the focus of the master's programme has been to:

> "create a teaching plan where their own culture and epistemology are put in focus. There is a lot of talk about the global architecture of education and that they are also colonised to think that Western knowledge is the only knowledge worth anything" (Breidlid, interview 7).

The evaluation carried out on behalf of NCA to assess the impact of the programme (mentioned in 2.2.2.) also suggests the above is something that has stuck with the students. One informant in the evaluation remarked that the programme had made them more aware of "what type of education is needed in South Sudan in terms of context and content" (informant quoted in Said & Vuni, 2020:17). According to the students, the programme helped them identify limitations in the South Sudanese curriculum to include not only the lack of incorporation of technology, but also the "limited integration of rich indigenous knowledge from South Sudan people" (Said & Vuni, 2020:18). As such, the master's programme should be regarded as one effort in highlighting the issues of little indigenous knowledges in education in South Sudan. Additionally, as the master's is a degree in education (called Multicultural and International Education), this is a direct step towards equipping future South Sudanese educators with knowledge about relevant education. It is a way to encourage educators to take cognisance of such issues in their later education efforts.

4.4. Lack of institutionalised decolonisation

From the data we see that there are certain requirements and restrictions put on INGOs by both donors and national governments. Since INGOs are dependent on funding, their projects also reflect donor wishes. Similarly, they are also restricted by regulations and guidelines set by the national governments. However, as INGOs are important actors in education provision, and in many countries they are some of the most important service providers, the issue of educational decolonisation is something they should greatly reflect on. As the thesis argues, they are also actors who have influence on policy and advocacy work, both on local, national and international level. Consequently, they could use their influence to advocate for the importance of decolonisation of education in terms of fostering local languages and knowledges.

As INGOs often have eyes on the grassroots level and can provide innovative education programmes, they should focus on promoting programmes that are not only tailored to people's needs in terms of level of education and how to physically carry it out, but also in terms of a highly relevant content that puts the learner and their environment at the centre. Even though they follow national guidelines and donor requirements, they should question the production of knowledge and thoroughly

consider how decolonial practices can be used in education programmes. However, Breidlid argues:

> "There is little focus on having a content in educational programmes that do not follow a Western discourse. I think it is a very important issue which the organisations do not fully grasp, as they do not sufficiently use research in their programmes" (Interview 7).

As discussed in 4.1, from a postcolonial perspective, it can be argued that the NGOs do not have an adequate awareness of their positionality and power in the decolonisation of education.

Furthermore, the analysis displays a few arguments in relation to RQ 2. Firstly: yes, there are certain practices in the NGOs' education programmes that can fit into decolonisation of education theory, as shown in 4.3.2 and 4.3.3. However, the second argument is that there is little evidence of practices developed specifically with the idea of decolonising education in mind, and there is little use of the term. Consequently, in most instances, I made the connections between NGOs' education practices and decolonial theory, instead of the informants or the documents explicitly saying 'this is a practice we have as we believe it contributes to decolonisation'. It seems that, overall, the NGOs do not display institutionalised efforts to decolonise education. While the NGOs might consider their practices to be important and fitting to the needs, there could be a clearer connection made between what it means to decolonise education (as described in chapter 2) and how this is manifested in their education practices.

With that being said, one has to note the exception of NRC's book project that has been initiated based on reflections on educational decolonisation, and SF's Bonga documents that has Freire's pedagogy as the programme's underpinnings. There is also the master's programme supported by NCA, but the focus on using decolonial theory is due to Breidlid's efforts and interest in the topic.

5. Conclusion

The objective of this thesis was to apply postcolonial theory and the concept of decolonising education to four Norwegian NGOs' education practices in South Sudan. This was done to see how we situate INGOs in educational decolonisation to see what role and influence they have, and to examine whether they reflect on and work towards decolonising education in South Sudan. Due to South Sudan facing great challenges in their education system, and the heavy presence of external actors in the sector, it was deemed as an interesting case to explore issues of educational decolonisation.

Shown in the findings is that the Norwegian NGOs studied are involved in several education interventions in South Sudan, ranging from primary education, to vocational training, a life-skills programme, teacher training, and a master's programme. The analysis found that INGOs can have an important and influential role in South Sudan, due to the governments' weak capacity and lack of resources. It was emphasised by informants that all programmes are aligned with national priorities and that local education authorities and people are part of developing the programmes. However, the thesis argues that NGOs also need to critically look at what the education entails in terms of content and language, and question knowledge production. This is especially important as some informants argued that the educated elite have a Western-influenced education, and that there may be a mismatch between the education provided and relevance of content. The thesis notes that INGOs can be constrained by the interests and wishes of donors, and thus, the larger global architecture of education. Nevertheless, as they work in the field and engage directly with the issues at hand, they are in a position to advocate for measures that are most effective.

It is important for INGOs to actively take part in educational decolonisation, as they have been given important roles in education provision. As the thesis has argued, the argument that this is up to national governments falls short as they may either be constrained or influenced by the global architecture of education that favours a Western educational discourse. Therefore, the inclusion of those who provide education, such as INGOs, is central. If they do not grasp the influence they have,

they run the risk of continuing to disseminate a Western education discourse through their education programmes. The thesis urges INGOs to develop and support measures that foster local languages and knowledge production, in order to show students that this is important. If INGOs are to participate in education provision and support, they need to reflect on issues of curriculum, localised knowledge, and indigenous languages and systems when developing and implementing their education programmes.

In terms of connecting the NGOs' education practices to decolonial theory, there were some varying findings. While all organisations noted huge issues with language in education in South Sudan, they did not seem to have programmes to offset this problem. There is little evidence, per se, that the NGOs are actively trying to decolonise education, but the findings did display instances where local knowledge and culture were taken into account. This included the incorporation of cultural dances, songs and storytelling, and using local examples in education so as to localise the learning. There were also a few practices that were developed as a direct result of decolonial theory, such as the Bonga programme based on Freire's education philosophy. In addition, the master's programme highlighted the importance of indigenous knowledge and based its curriculum on global South scholars and theories. There was also an initiative taken to collate a book that would use local songs, games and rhymes as educational tools. Thus, the NGOs can be situated as trying to incorporate some elements of local knowledge, but not as structuring their whole education interventions according to the concept of decolonising education.

While this study alone cannot produce findings that are applicable to other cases, it can certainly contribute to the research on decolonisation of education. Additionally, it can shed some light on, what I believe to be, understudied issues within the topic of INGOs' education provision and their reflections on educational decolonisation. Shortcomings in the literature (identified in chapter 2) along with the thesis' findings suggest there is a need for more knowledge on the topic. Going forward, further research could be done on INGOs' education practices in light of decolonising theory. Doing this will generate more understanding of what needs to be done if efforts of decolonising education are to be met.

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Appendix A – list of interviews

Interview number	Date of interview	Informant
Interview 1	06.08.2020	NCA staff
Interview 2	10.08.2020	Marit Hernæs (SFS)
Interview 3	14.08.2020	YGlobal staff
Interview 4	14.08.2020	NRC staff
Interview 5	17.08.2020	SF staff
Interview 6	17.08.2020	Academic at Juba University (Anonymous)
Interview 7	07.09.2020	Anders Breidlid
Interview 8 (follow-up)	19.11.2020	NCA Staff
Interview 9 (follow-up)	20.11.2020	YGlobal Staff
Interview 10 (follow-up)	20.11.2020	Anders Breidlid

Appendix B – guiding questions for informants

Questions for: Norwegian NGOs providing education in South Sudan

1) Can you give a brief history of the NGO's presence in South Sudan? (When, where, why?)
2) In what way does the NGO support or provide education in South Sudan? When did it start, and why has the NGO chosen to work with education?
    a. What education programmes (basic education, vocational training, teacher training etc.) does the NGO have in South Sudan, and where?
    b. Does the NGO support education in other ways? (Act as consultants, provide expertise, develop curriculum or education plans for the local authorities, etc.?)
3) Can you describe the planning process for your engagement in education in South Sudan?
    a. Where does the initiative come from? (Do you see a need or are you asked?)
    b. Does the NGO cooperate with the local community and South Sudanese authorities? (In what way?)
    c. Does the NGO coordinate their education programmes with other NGOs providing education in South Sudan?
4) How and where is the NGO's educational content developed and produced; for example curriculum and textbooks? (Does the NGO follow South Sudan's national curriculum?)
5) What requirements does the South Sudanese government put on education provision by NGOs? Do they make any demands/have requirements on how education should be conducted? If so, can you give examples?
6) From where does the NGO receive their funding for education programmes? What requirements/conditionality does the donor have on type of education, curriculum, coordination, and alignment with national educational priorities?
    a. Are there some types of education programmes/initiatives it is easier to get funding for?
7) Considering there are a large number of NGOs providing social services in South Sudan, such as education, in what way do you think it might influence South Sudan's own priorities in that sector?
8) Some critique education development in Africa for not being adequately tailored to the specific context, and that African intellectuals, knowledge, viewpoints and approaches to learning are not reflected in the curriculum. Is such a critique something the NGO reflects on when developing education programmes?
    a. Does the NGO reflect on how education can support the goal of promoting African, and specifically South Sudanese, culture, language and identity? Does the NGO try to foster and facilitate South Sudanese language- and cultural traditions in their education programmes? If so, how?
    b. Does the NGO incorporate local knowledge in their education programmes? If so, how?

Questions for: Other persons relevant for the thesis objective

1) Can you tell me a bit about the education sector in South Sudan? (Public, private, curriculum, structure, language policy etc.)
    a. What is the current situation of the education system?
2) What are your thoughts on Norwegian NGOs providing education in the Global South?
    a. What do you feel is important to consider when developing education programmes?
    b. What do the organisations need to reflect on?
    c. Any thoughts on what level of education (primary, secondary, tertiary etc.) NGOs should focus on?
3) Sometimes you hear critique about education development in Africa not adequately being tailored to the specific context, and that African academics and viewpoints are not reflected in the curriculum. What are your thoughts on this?
    a. What should be important in South Sudanese education development? What needs to be included and considered?
    b. How can NGOs be sensitive to the South Sudanese context in education – what should they do?
4) Considering there are a large number of NGOs providing social services in South Sudan, such as education, in what way do you think it (possibly) influences South Sudan's own priorities in that sector?
5) How does a state in a conflict situation, such as South Sudan, decolonise, create its own identity, and nurture own culture, language and history when aid- and external actors are central?

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