

MASTERARBEIT | MASTER'S THESIS

Titel | Title

Critically Exploring the Peacebuilding Potential of Gender-
Responsive Global Citizenship Education (GCED)
Possibilities and Challenges of Transformative Pedagogy in
Deconstructing Structural Oppression

verfasst von | submitted by

Sophia Danter BEd

angestrebter akademischer Grad | in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien | Vienna, 2025

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt | Degree
programme code as it appears on the
student record sheet:

UA 066 848

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt | Degree
programme as it appears on the student
record sheet:

Masterstudium Bildungswissenschaft

Betreut von | Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Barbara Schulte M.A.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Gegenstand der vorliegenden Masterarbeit ist die Untersuchung der Potenziale von Global Citizenship Education (GCED), unter besonderer Berücksichtigung geschlechtersensibler und dekolonialer Ansätze, zur Forcierung nachhaltiger und gerechter Friedensbildung. Aus bildungswissenschaftlicher Perspektive analysiert die Forschungsarbeit, inwiefern GCED-Konzepte als normative Bildungsideale und praktische Maßnahmen zur Förderung realer, kontextspezifischer Fähig- sowie Fertigkeiten (=capabilities) bei diversen Lernende*n funktional sein können. Folgende zentrale Forschungsfrage wird dabei erörtert: Inwiefern und unter welchen Voraussetzungen können Konzepte der geschlechtergerechten GCED transformative Fähigkeiten für die Friedensbildung etablieren? Im Rahmen dieser akademischen Untersuchung wurde Bacchis (2009) WPR-Ansatz zur Diskursanalyse mit einer normativen Bewertung durch den Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011) kombiniert. Die Ergebnisse basieren auf den Auswertungen von sieben Expert*inneninterviews sowie einer umfassenden Analyse ausgewählter fach einschlägiger Policy-Dokumente. Dabei konnte eine Diskrepanz zwischen den rhetorischen Verpflichtungen zur globalen Bildungsgerechtigkeit und den strukturellen Limitierungen der gegenwärtigen Implementierung von GCED-Konzepten in verschiedensten Räumen festgestellt werden. Zu den bestehenden Grenzen zählen insbesondere epistemische Hierarchien, eine entpolitisierte Sicht auf Geschlechterverhältnisse, unzureichende institutionelle Unterstützungsmaßnahmen sowie ein Mangel an Anerkennung alternativer Existenzweisen und Wissensformen. Allerdings identifizierte die wissenschaftliche Untersuchung ebenfalls ermächtigende Ansätze in kontextsensitiven, gemeinschaftsbasierten Bildungsräumen, welche die Handlungsfähigkeit, kritische Reflexion und Autonomie fördern. Demnach leistet die vorliegende Masterarbeit sowohl theoretische als auch empirische Erkenntnisse zum internationalen Bildungsdiskurs über globale Gleichstellungsthematiken und plädiert für eine feministisch-dekoloniale Modifikation von aktuellen GCED-Implementierungen. Gemäß der Zusammenführung der Daten lässt sich demnach ableiten, dass eine Erfassung des „Bildungserfolgs“ nicht anhand standardisierter Kompetenzen erfolgen sollte. Stattdessen wird die Schaffung kontextbasierter „Capabilities“ für Lernende* empfohlen, um eigene Lebens- und Denkweisen kritisch, nachhaltig und wirksam gestalten zu können. Dies kann einen konstruktiven Beitrag zur Förderung eines friedlicheren und respektvolleren Zusammenlebens auf *glokaler* (= global & lokal) Ebene leisten und zur Sichtbarmachung alternativer Wissenssysteme beisteuern.

Abstract (English)

This master's thesis explores whether and how Global Citizenship Education (GCED) can promote peacebuilding in education through gender-sensitive and decolonial approaches. From an Educational Science perspective, the thesis investigates how GCED frameworks function as both normative ideals and practical tools for fostering real capabilities in diverse learners globally. The fundamental research question posed is: To what extent, and under which conditions, can gender-responsive GCED foster transformative capabilities for peacebuilding? Combining Bacchi's (2009) WPR approach to discourse analysis with a normative assessment through the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011), the research supports its findings with seven expert interviews and related global policy documents. The findings reveal a discrepancy between rhetorical commitments to educational justice and the structural limitations of current GCED implementation. These limitations include epistemic hierarchies, depoliticized gender framing, insufficient institutional support, as well as a lack of perspective and acceptance of other ways of being and knowing. However, the research also uncovered empowering approaches in context-sensitive, community-based educational spaces that promote agency and critical reflection. Thus, this master's thesis provides both theoretical and empirical enhancements to the academic discourse on global education inequality and advocates for a feminist-decolonial reframing of GCED ideas. It concludes that educational success must be measured not by standardized competencies but by learners' expanded freedoms to shape their lives and contribute meaningfully to their concept of "living in peace" within their communities – on a *glocal* (= global & local) level.

Acknowledgments

Developing this thesis has offered a valuable opportunity to explore both academic and personal aspects of my life. It has been grounded in the philosophy that education possesses an "extraordinary capacity" to bring about profound change in both individuals and Throughout this process, I have become more aware of the fact that knowledge is never produced in isolation, but rather emerges in diverse forms of dialogue, in humankind's relationships, and often in the spaces between different lived realities.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Barbara Schulte, whose intellectual acumen and support have been a constant source of guidance as I navigate this process. Her critical insights, combined with her encouraging and open-minded approach, have shown me what is possible when research is practiced with both rigor and empathy. I am also deeply grateful for the many wonderful friends and family members in my life. Beyond offering love and encouragement, they have been willing to engage in discussions that have helped me think more deeply about the subject and to consider a variety of perspectives. Their presence has been a vital source of energy throughout this process. Above all, I would like to express my thankfulness to all the participants who generously shared their time, experiences, and reflections in the interviews. These contributions have offered me insights into aspects of the world that I might otherwise never have encountered - realities shaped by the intersecting dynamics of privilege, marginalization, and resistance. Engaging with their narratives has been a significant experience for me that has further reinforced my conviction in the importance of exploring how education can contribute to the empowerment of individuals and communities in different ways and beyond schooling.

In the process of writing this thesis, I have had the opportunity to reflect on my perspective and how my own life experiences have informed it. This journey has also been an occasion to consider the privileges that have allowed me the space and safety to engage in such research. To all who have supported me on this path, I would like to humbly express my appreciation for your reminders that the pursuit of understanding is a collective effort, nurtured by human connection, thoughtful reflection, and a shared belief in education's ability to bring *positive* change.

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT.....	11
1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS	12
1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY.....	14
1.4 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SELECTION OF COUNTRIES	15
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS	17
2.1 KEY CONCEPTS OF THE STUDY	17
2.1.1 GCED.....	17
2.1.2 Gender Equality	18
2.1.3 Decoloniality.....	18
2.1.4 Peace	18
2.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND	19
2.2.1 GCED Overview and Connected Concepts	21
2.2.2 The Role of Gender in Peacebuilding.....	23
2.2.3 Post- and Decolonial Approaches to GCED	25
2.2.4 Key Challenges and Opportunities in GCED-Implementation	29
3 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS	31
3.1 THEORETICAL LENSES FOR ANALYSIS	32
3.1.1 Poststructuralist Approach	32
3.1.2 WPR Approach.....	35
3.1.3 Capability Approach	35
3.1.4 Normative Foundations and their Relevance to the Study.....	38
4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	41
4.1 LITERATURE SELECTION AND REVIEW STRATEGY	41
4.2 EMPIRICAL DESIGN: THREE ANALYTICAL STEPS.....	42
4.2.1 Step One: Applying WPR to Policy Texts and Frameworks	42
4.2.2 Step Two: Thematic Analysis of Policy Texts and Expert Interviews	43
4.2.3 Step Three: Reflection through the Capability Approach.....	43
4.3 WPR (WHAT'S THE PROBLEM REPRESENTED TO BE?) APPROACH	44
4.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS	47
4.4.1 GCED as Transformative Peace Praxis: Beyond Formal Schooling.....	47
4.4.2 Navigating Complexity: Gender Norms, Tradition, and the Fear of Culture	47
4.4.3 Rethinking Key Concepts: Decoloniality and the Risks of Depoliticization	48
4.4.4 Power, Voice, and Representation in GCED	48

4.4.5 <i>Rethinking Education Itself: Schooling, Systems & Purpose of Learning</i>	48
4.5 CAPABILITY APPROACH FRAMEWORK.....	48
4.5.1 <i>Subjective Empowerment and Educational Freedom</i>	49
4.5.2 <i>Transformative Agency without Essentialism</i>	49
4.5.3 <i>Contextual Adaptability and Normative Caution</i>	50
5 DATA COLLECTION	50
5.1 DATA COLLECTION METHODS.....	50
5.1.1 <i>Expert Interviews</i>	50
5.1.2 <i>Policy Documents</i>	59
6 ANALYSIS	62
6.1 ANALYSIS OF POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND EDUCATIONAL MODELS.....	62
6.1.1 <i>SDGs and GCED</i>	63
6.1.2 <i>Decolonial and Alternative Approaches</i>	64
6.1.3 <i>The Role of Gender</i>	65
6.2 GCED CONTEXTUALIZED: THE CASE OF THREE COUNTRIES	67
6.2.1 <i>MENA-Region: The Case of Tunisia</i>	68
6.2.2 <i>South Asia: The Case of India</i>	71
6.2.3 <i>Europe / The West: The Case of Austria</i>	75
6.3 THEMATIC RESULTS OF EXPERT INTERVIEWS	78
6.3.1 <i>Patterns and Themes</i>	78
6.3.2 <i>Overall Implementation Experiences</i>	82
6.3.3 <i>Future Directions: Innovation, Responsibility, and Visions</i>	85
6.3.4 <i>Intersection of Thematic Analysis and Interview Content Patterns</i>	86
7 FINDINGS.....	89
7.1 FRAMING THE ANALYSIS: CRITICAL LENSES AND LAYERED INTERPRETATION	89
7.2 PROBLEMATIZATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS IN GCED.....	91
7.3 SILENCES AND EXCLUSIONS.....	95
7.4 CONTESTING AND CONSTRUCTING GCED	98
8 DISCUSSION.....	103
8.1 GCED THROUGH THE CAPABILITY APPROACH: EMPOWERMENT OR IDEALISM?.....	103
8.1.1 <i>Assessing Empowerment and Agency</i>	104
8.1.2 <i>Contextual Relevance and Adaptive Potential</i>	105
8.1.3 <i>Beyond Representation: Can GCED Foster Transformative Peacebuilding?</i>	107
8.2 SYNTHESIS: TOWARDS A FEMINIST-DECOLONIAL VISION FOR GCED	109
9 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	112

9.1 EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES: RETHINKING IMPACT FROM THE CAPABILITY PERSPECTIVE	112
9.2 MULTIFACETED FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT	114
9.3 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS.....	115
10 CONCLUSION.....	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	120
APPENDIX.....	131

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK..... 10

List of Tables

TABLE 1 / BACCHI’S 6 KEY ANALYSIS QUESTIONS..... 45

TABLE 2 / INTERVIEWEE OVERVIEW INFORMATION TABLE 52

TABLE 3 / EXPERT INTERVIEWS: THEMATIC OVERVIEW & GUIDELINE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS55

TABLE 4: OVERVIEW OF MAIN POLICY DOCUMENTS FOR THE ANALYZING PROCESS..... 59

TABLE 5 / COMPARISON TABLE OF PROBLEMATIZATIONS: POLICY DOCUMENTS VS. INTERVIEW
CONTENT 93

TABLE 6 / THEME MATRIX: MAPPING POLICY, INTERVIEW CONTENT, AND REGIONAL CONTEXT
..... 98

TABLE 7 / INTERVIEW THEMES, POLICY ALIGNMENT, AND DISRUPTIVE PRACTICES IN GCED-
IMPLEMENTATION (WPR Q3 & Q6) 101

TABLE 8: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS BY RESEARCH QUESTION..... 108

Abbreviations

CA	Capability Approach
CED	Citizenship Education
DACH	Germany, Austria, Switzerland
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
HRE	Human Rights Education
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
PE	Peace Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WPR	What's the Problem Represented To Be
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

1 Introduction

In recent years, the role of education in addressing global crises, ranging from armed conflict and ecological degradation to systemic gender injustice and growing societal inequality, has gained further urgency. In response to an increasing demand for justice-oriented and transformative pedagogical approaches, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) has emerged as a key framework through which education aims to foster more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable societies. Mainly promoted through United Nations (UN) frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4.7, GCED is an international attempt to provide learners with cognitive, socio-emotional, and other meaningful competencies necessary for engaging with global issues and living responsibly in an interconnected world.

At the core of GCED principles lies a commitment to cultivating values such as human dignity, an openness to diversity, empathy, cooperation, and peace. These values are closely aligned with the principles of international human rights discourse. However, despite its transformative potential, GCED is criticized for being influenced by Eurocentric, depoliticized educational models and philosophies that are considered “the right ones” and which are not always open to questioning. For this reason, failures to address the lived experiences of historically marginalized communities and the epistemologies of the Global South and Indigenous people are frequently cited as one of the shortcomings of GCED ideas and goals. In particular, the intersection of GCED with the concepts of gender and decoloniality - both of which are crucial for understanding the structural causes of inequality and violence - is rarely explored in depth in empirical or theoretical research. This master's thesis, therefore, seeks to address this gap by critically analyzing how GCED initiatives can be reconceptualized through gender-responsive and decolonial lenses. Rather than approaching GCED as a static or universally applicable framework, this study will examine how its meaning, implementation, and impact are shaped by local, cultural, historical, political, and institutional contexts.

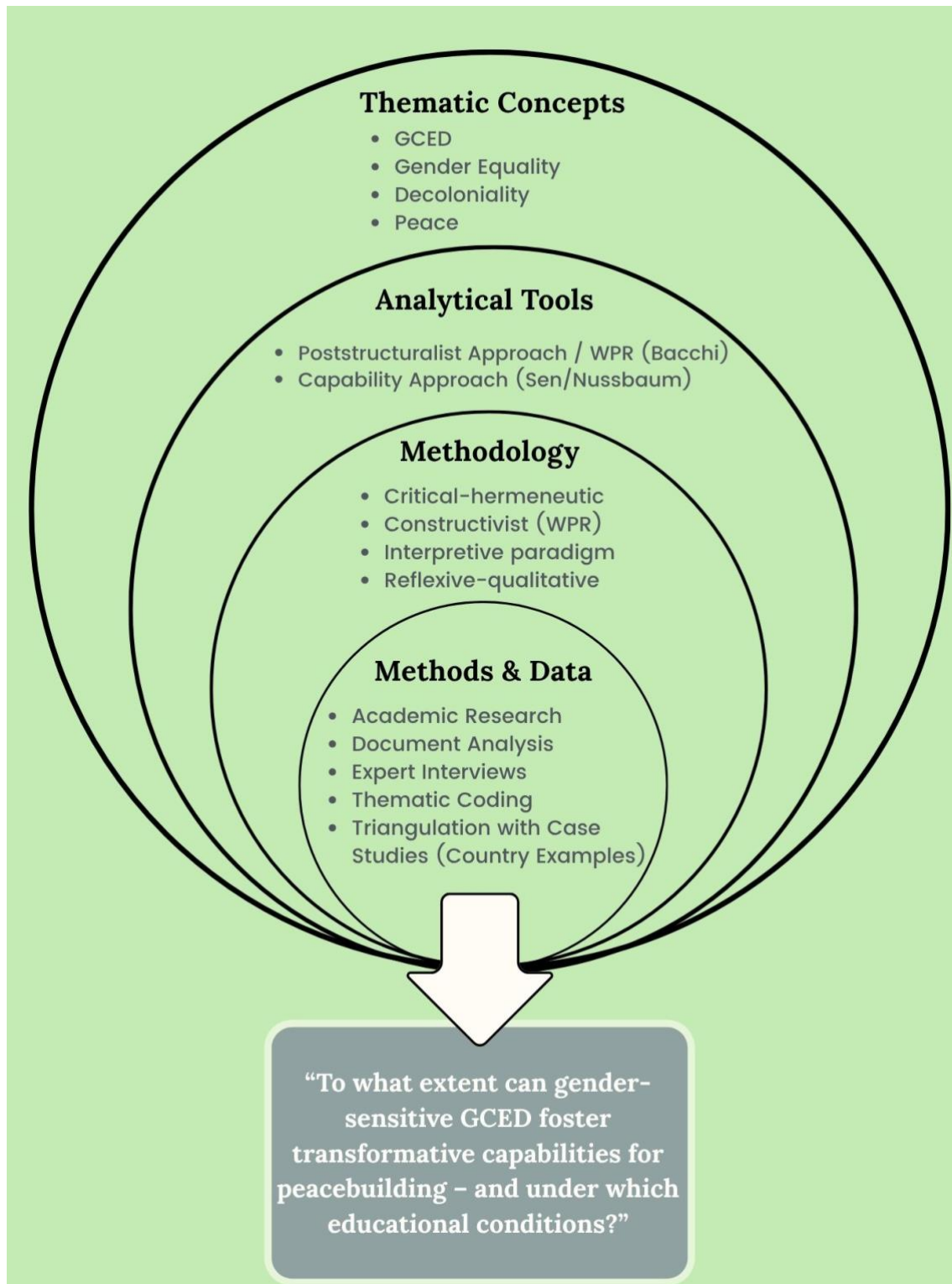
Drawing on interdisciplinary academic research and qualitative, empirical expert interviews, this thesis examines how the concepts of GCED engage with gender equality, decoloniality, human rights, and the fostering of peace. It also considers how the conceptual foundations of GCED need to be reimagined to facilitate transformative learning more effectively within complex, pluralistic, and marginalized societies, while avoiding the framing of “problems” and values only through Eurocentric perspectives. Adopting a comparative, multi-level approach,

this master's thesis also explores three national contexts - Tunisia, India, and Austria - to highlight the lived potential and challenges of GCED as an implemented global education project. The analytical architecture is built upon four interconnected layers that reflect its conceptual and methodological foundation, and the overall research process is fundamentally guided by several key conceptual anchors that establish the thematic focus and relevance of the study. The following two analytical lenses are then employed to examine these foundational notions: firstly, the poststructuralist WPR (What's the Problem Represented to be?) Approach (Bacchi, 2009) is used to deconstruct dominant discourses and problem representations in both policy, academic literature, and interview data, while the Capability Approach (CA) (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011) provides a normative framework to evaluate whether GCED fosters learners' substantive freedoms, forms of agency, and certain "peacebuilding capacities". These theoretical tools are embedded in a critical-constructivist methodological framework, which emphasizes reflexivity, contextual sensitivity, and the co-construction of meaning. Consequently, the research adopts a qualitative, interpretative base that values diverse voices, while the chosen methods – thematic coding of expert interviews, document analysis, and triangulation with specific country examples allow for a layered interpretation that connects discourse to structural conditions and normative outcomes. To improve understanding, the thesis employs an onion-shaped model of analysis, ensuring that theoretical reasoning, empirical insights, and normative evaluation are interwoven in a critical assessment of the transformative potential of gender-sensitive GCED. The following figure provides a brief overview of this model.

1.1 Background and Context

Figure 1: Analytical Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the layered interaction between the key analytical components of this thesis, ranging from foundational concepts and theoretical tools to methodological positioning and specific techniques. As an intersection of various educational traditions, including Human Rights Education (HRE),



Peace Education (PE), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), GCED has established itself as a priority in international educational policy, because it reflects the ambition to prepare learners for their role in an interconnected yet unequal world (UNESCO, 2015). At its most fundamental level, GCED addresses the questions of what, how, and why we educate. In this sense, it partially aligns with some principles of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), which views education above all as a political act and a means of achieving liberation from different forms of structural oppression. Rather than treating knowledge as neutral or universal, critical pedagogical approaches emphasize the role of education in challenging inequality, encouraging reflection, and fostering collective empowerment (Freire, 1970). However, as noted previously, academics have criticized dominant frameworks for often using neoliberal, Eurocentric, or depoliticized narratives that obscure global inequalities and sometimes even silence alternative epistemologies (Andreotti, 2011; Mignolo, 2009). Without this critical engagement, education risks becoming a norm-reinforcing tool rather than a facilitator of social and educational transformation. This is why this thesis builds upon critical perspectives by approaching GCED as both an academic concept and a contested political project. It explores how GCED principles can evolve from policy rhetoric into transformative pedagogical practices, particularly within the contexts of peacebuilding, gender justice, and decolonial critique.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

This chapter outlines the main research objectives and guiding questions that inform this thesis to study the postulated transformative potential of GCED through a decolonial and gender-responsive perspective. One main research question (MRQ) and three sub-questions (SQ) guide this master's thesis. Together, these questions address the conceptual foundations (Approaches & Frameworks), practical implementation (Effects), and transformative potential (Further Development) of gender-responsive GCED within international peacebuilding in education.

Main Research Question (MRQ):

To what extent, and under which conditions, can gender-responsive Global Citizenship Education (GCED) foster transformative capabilities for peacebuilding?

1. Sub-question (SQ1):

How are peace, gender, and global citizenship represented in key GCED policy texts, and what assumptions or silences shape these representations (WPR)?

This question considers how existing global frameworks (e.g., SDGs and UN Women's Gender Equality Strategy) are incorporating the terms “gender” and “peace education” into GCED. It asks what institutional and pedagogical approaches are effective, and what assumptions lie behind them.

2. Sub-question (SQ2):

How do practitioners and experts describe the opportunities and constraints of implementing gender-responsive GCED across contexts, and where do these accounts align or diverge from policy framings?

Here, the emphasis is on the evidence on how these approaches work and includes pedagogical directions such as critical pedagogy or inclusive learning.

3. Sub-question (SQ3):

Do GCED practices expand learners’ substantive freedoms (capabilities) in context-sensitive ways, and which conversion factors enable or inhibit such expansion (CA)?

This question draws on the real-world experiences of educators and other professionals, looking at both positive impacts and systemic barriers. To capture the complexity of the implementation, it relies on research and interviews with experts in the field.

These three questions correspond to three overarching analytical categories that structure the thesis:

- 1) **Approaches & Frameworks (SQ1):** Examining the pedagogical, socio-economic, political, and philosophical foundations of GCED, with particular attention to gender and decolonial perspectives.
- 2) **Implementation and Function (SQ2):** Analyzing how practitioners and experts describe opportunities, challenges, and divergences between policy framings and lived educational realities.
- 3) **Evaluation and Further Development (SQ3):** Assessing whether and under which conditions GCED practices expand learners’ capabilities and foster skills such as empathy, intercultural competence, and critical thinking, while also identifying systemic

barriers and silences.

Specifically, this research aims to:

- (1) Evaluate how GCED, when framed in terms of gender equality and decoloniality, supports or reaches the development of peacebuilding capacities in learners.
- (2) Examine concrete pedagogical strategies that link GCED to transformative learning.
- (3) Analyze the lived experiences and perspectives of international educators and scholars working with GCED in diverse contexts.
- (4) Provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, curriculum designers, and educational practitioners seeking to implement inclusive and contextually relevant GCED programs.
- (5) Contribute to the broader academic discourse by offering a decolonial and feminist critique of current GCED practices and frameworks.

1.3 Structure of the Study

This master's thesis is structured to guide the reader from the conceptual and normative foundations of GCED towards its practical, context-specific implications regarding peacebuilding education. The introduction outlines the current state of research on GCED and defines the key questions, objectives, and relevance. Additionally, it emphasized the necessity of an inclusive interpretation of GCED to address global inequalities sustainably. Chapter 2 develops the broader theoretical background of the study and introduces the educational and political foundations of GCED, as well as the central relevance of gender, post- and decolonial critique, and questions of educational (in-)justice. It also elaborates on main concepts such as peace(-building), intersectionality, gender, and decoloniality. Chapter 3 then presents the core theoretical considerations of the thesis and introduces two main approaches: the Poststructuralist Approach, which enables critical interrogation of discourse (Bacchi's WPR Approach), power, and subjectivity in educational settings, and the Capability Approach (CA), which provides a normative framework to assess the postulated transformative potential of education in terms of individual agency, *real* freedoms and socio-political justice. Chapter 4 outlines the methodological framework, combining post-structuralist policy analysis by Bacchi (WPR), thematic analysis (Mayring, 2015), and the CA (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). Chapter 5 details the data collection process, focusing on the qualitative design of expert interviews and the selection of relevant international policy documents and educational articles. This chapter also includes a rationale for participant selection and discusses data access, ethical

considerations, and limitations of the sample. The following Chapter 6 presents the empirical analysis, starting with an assessment of policy frameworks and educational narratives surrounding GCED, peace, gender, and decoloniality. A central section of this chapter is 6.2, which explores the application and meaning of GCED in three distinct national contexts - Tunisia, India, and Austria. These examples provide a comparative lens for understanding the local articulation and negotiation of GCED principles, and their inclusion reflects the thesis's cross-scalar and multi-contextual design. The chapter then concludes with the thematic analysis (Mayring, 2015) of interview data, identifying key patterns, contradictions, and visions for the future of GCED in practice. Chapter 7 synthesizes the findings through critical interpretation and layered reflection and reflects how the philosophy behind GCED ideas is framed across various discourses, where silences or exclusions emerge, and to what extent the postulated peacebuilding competencies and gender-responsive goals are operationalized or remain aspirational. Following this step, Chapter 8 offers a comprehensive discussion, linking the empirical results with the thesis's theoretical and methodological foundations. It evaluates GCED through the dual perspective of the CA and poststructural critique and therefore aims to develop a nuanced assessment of its emancipatory and political potential. Chapter 9 formulates concrete recommendations for policymakers, educational practice, and future research and proposes a set of guiding principles for context-sensitive, gender-responsive, and ethically grounded GCED implementation across diverse educational environments and alternative knowledge systems. Finally, Chapter 10 provides the conclusion, summarizing the core insights and contributions of this thesis while reflecting on the broader implications for the role of education in building peaceful, inclusive, and just futures for *everyone*.

1.4 Justification for the Selection of Countries

As mentioned, this thesis additionally draws on three regional case exemplars - Tunisia, India, and Austria - to explore how GCED initiatives are interpreted, implemented, and confronted with challenges in different lived realities around the globe. The selection is not meant to be globally representative, but analytically illustrative, offering contrasting perspectives across socio-political, cultural, and historical landscapes.

At the core of this selection lies the conviction that GCED is neither neutral nor universally applicable but instead takes on meaning through the political and epistemic structures within which it is embedded. Drawing on postcolonial, feminist, and capability-oriented methodologies, a key consideration is understanding how global frameworks such as SDG 4.7 and UNESCO's GCED agenda intersect with national legacies of colonialism, patriarchy,

culture, *race*, religion, caste, and educational systems that stratify society. Consequently, the countries chosen to represent three distinct geographical and cultural regions - the MENA region, South Asia, and Europe - provide insights into the varying global influences on GCED ideals.

- 1) As a postcolonial society undergoing democratic transition, Tunisia is an interesting example for GCED exploration. Since gaining independence in 1956, the country has introduced significant legal reforms concerning women*¹'s rights (Ouanada, 2020), while striving to reconcile secular and religious perspectives on national identity, particularly in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution (Présidence du Gouvernement Tunisien et al., 2017). Its education system reflects modernization efforts and the ongoing tension between local autonomy and the influence of donor-led policies (Lakhal, 2020).
- 2) India offers an interesting, layered British-influenced postcolonial context in which caste hierarchies, British colonial educational structures, and patriarchal gender conventions mainly influence access to education (Chaudhary, 2007; Siddiqui, 2021). Although feminist and subaltern movements have played a vital role in reimagining education, structural exclusions persist (Arur & DeJaeghere, 2019; Dhuru & Thapliyal, 2021).
- 3) As a high-income Western EU country, Austria contrasts with the other two. While its education system integrates civic and human rights education through formal curricula (BMBWF, 2015; European Commission, 2017), it remains marked by Eurocentrism and institutional stagnation regarding decolonial perspectives (Wintersteiner et al., 2015; Südwind, 2022).

¹ Throughout this thesis, the asterisk in terms such as 'woman*' or 'man*' is used to signal an inclusive understanding of gender that goes beyond essentialist or binary categories. Although this research primarily focuses on the experiences and structural positioning of women* and girls*, the use of the asterisk (*) also recognizes and includes individuals whose gender identities do not conform to cisnormative frameworks. This includes, but is not limited to, transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, agender, intersex, and other gender-diverse individuals who may also be affected by patriarchal structures and educational inequalities. The asterisk thus serves as a reminder that 'gender' is neither fixed nor universally experienced, and must be approached critically as a socially constructed, context-specific and intersectional category.'

When considered as a whole, these three countries provide an opportunity for both multi-scalar and cross-contextual exploration. The objective is not to generalize, but merely to examine how the fundamental principles of GCED, namely peace, gender justice, educational goals, and citizenship, are locally defined, chosen, or questioned. In this way, the comparative viewpoint highlights how the meanings of agency, participation, and empowerment may differ in various global contexts. Consequently, these country examples seek to contribute to a more complex and context-aware theorization of GCED ideals in international educational implementation.

2 Theoretical Framework and Key Concepts

The chapter on the theoretical framework provides a comprehensive overview of the underlying concepts and principles that guide this master's thesis and inform its core research questions. It aims to provide the necessary background to analyze the intersection of gender-responsive GCED, peacebuilding, and decolonial approaches, before investigating whether and how transformative educational methodologies might achieve their goals.

2.1 Key Concepts of the Study

This section introduces and contextualizes the core concepts that underpin this academic research: *GCED*, *Gender Equality*, *Decoloniality*, and *Peace*. Each term is presented in the context of the selected key policy documents that influence global dialogue on these issues. Primarily, the definitions presented here draw on publications by diverse institutional actors, reflecting the dominant and actual conceptualizations within international discourse. At this stage, the concepts are presented descriptively only, since the intention is to clarify how these terms are expressed in mainstream global policy, thereby providing a shared reference point for subsequent analysis. More in-depth critiques, particularly from feminist, decolonial, and poststructuralist perspectives, will follow in later chapters, where the definition, implementation, and effect of these concepts will be critically questioned.

2.1.1 GCED

GCED is framed as a transformative approach to civic education that aims to empower learners with the values, knowledge, competencies, and skills needed to actively contribute to the resolution of global issues and the creation of a fairer, more inclusive, and sustainable world (UNESCO, 2015a). Within the context of SDG Target 4.7, GCED fosters critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and active engagement in both local and global contexts. According

to UNESCO, GCED is structured around three domains: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral. These emphasize not only what students learn, but also how they feel and act upon that knowledge. Representing an evolution of peace and human rights education, its vision of interconnectedness reflects a moral imperative and a pedagogical framework (UNESCO, 2015b).

2.1.2 Gender Equality

Gender equality, especially in education, encompasses more than just equal access and positive participation outcomes. It involves dismantling the hidden power relations and systemic barriers that prevent individuals, particularly women* and gender-diverse persons, from exercising their full agency (UNESCO, 2021b; UN Women, 2022). Gender-responsive education promotes curricula and teaching methods that reflect intersectional experiences and encourage empathy, critical thinking, and participation that is inclusive of all. This concept is closely linked to wider peacebuilding efforts, as gender-based discrimination frequently overlaps with other forms of structural violence (UNESCO, 2021a). In this discourse, gender is treated not merely as a descriptive variable but as a key analytical lens through which to view educational justice, especially for women* and girls*.

2.1.3 Decoloniality

The term "decoloniality" refers to an epistemological critique and political standpoint that challenges Eurocentric knowledge hierarchies and other colonial legacies embedded within our Western educational systems (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2011). It advocates the recognition of Indigenous knowledge and other marginalized intellectual traditions (UNESCO, 2002; UNESCO, 2018). In GCED discourse, decoloniality encourages educators and policymakers to consider which histories, cultures, values, and viewpoints are represented and which are excluded, and why. UNESCO's LINKS Programme and the Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions an example of an initiative that aims to institutionalize these epistemic pluralities (UNESCO, 2005; UNESCO, 2021). In this thesis, decoloniality is used as a lens through which to critique and reconstruct GCED discourses, particularly those shaped by dominant Global North paradigms.

2.1.4 Peace

“Peace” is conceptualized as a multidimensional and ongoing interconnected process between humans that involves structural, cultural, and epistemic elements (UNESCO, 2021), rather than

simply the absence of conflict and war. The UN has defined a culture of peace as a holistic set of values, attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles that reject violence and seek to address the root causes of conflict through dialogue, negotiation, and cooperation across all levels of society. Operationalized through eight interdependent action areas, this system includes peace-oriented education, the promotion of human rights and gender equality, democratic participation, sustainable development, intercultural understanding, participatory communication, and the advancement of international peace and security (United Nations, 1999).

2.2 Research Background

This subchapter builds on Chapter 1.1 and establishes a further understanding of the thesis's essential background by providing context as well as initial insights into the topic's urgency. A thoroughgoing examination of gender equality, decolonial aspects, and peacebuilding in education is also presented, with all themes collectively embodied within the framework of GCED.

The current global transformations are creating widespread insecurity, according to Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn (2020). They argue that they are challenging the foundations of human existence; however, these insecurities have always been part of the social order. Despite the seeming stability of national borders, significant injustices are highlighted by global disparities between the Global North and South, which are often linked to power, privilege, and access to resources. Despite the United Nations' SDGs (2015) having established objectives for a new global community, initial progress has been restricted. This underscores the complexity of translating communication and policies into real-life action, particularly in contexts where the Global North must align its objectives with those of the Global South and implement transformative changes (Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn, 2020, pp. 5-6).

This increasing global complexity, characterized by diverse interconnected systems, challenges the efficacy of global decision-making and strategic planning in our world, argue Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn (2020). For instance, political decisions influence economic behavior by establishing new frames, rather than issuing direct commands. However, these multifaceted interconnections across local, regional, national, and international levels sometimes hinder systemic transformations, even for urgent issues such as climate change or peacebuilding in areas of war. Consequently, to achieve an optimal balance between human prosperity and environmental limitations, new educational approaches are required that prioritize collective

global awareness. This understanding requires integrating the communicative aspects of a “global society” with specific recommendations for the core idea of an international community. Thus, the concept of a "world collective" could address social order in the context of global challenges (Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn, 2020, pp. 5-6).

Based on these insights regarding a so-called new world collective, Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn (2020) propose education and learning as foundational for the shaping of such sustainable global transformation processes within our societies. They advocate for inclusive, high-quality, life-long education as a universal human right and a necessary condition for participating meaningfully in the global community. Education is, therefore, presented not only as the process of gaining knowledge but also as a way of enabling individuals to critically engage with their surroundings and the world. Thus, this view suggests a link between learning and an individual's ability to handle the increasing complexity of circumstances and highlights the importance of understanding learning in terms of its content, purpose, and relationships. This is why, in a world that is increasingly dynamic and unpredictable, the importance of education in fostering something like “global citizenship”, sustainability, or collective resilience becomes increasingly essential and deep structural change is required, calling for educational approaches that enable new modes of coexistence and awareness within this global collective (Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn, 2020, pp. 7-8).

In theory, as Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn (2020) wrote, these globally oriented educational approaches, such as Development Education, Global Learning, and GCED, are rooted in historical and theoretical traditions and aim to address global issues such as different forms of inequality, ecological sustainability, and the preservation of peace by encouraging critical thinking and suitable action. North-South dialogues and developmental inequalities are emphasized in Development Education, while these perspectives are integrated into broader debates on globalization and sustainability in Global Learning. GCED, within this context, represents a further evolution, building on these foundations with a vision of cosmopolitan citizenship rooted in humanistic, decolonial, and participatory ideals. Despite their conceptual differences, all three share an orientation toward sustainability, non-violence, justice, and partnership. Mostly, international bodies like UNESCO increasingly promote GCED, which advocates for an education that goes beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Nonetheless, the field is confronted with theoretical and empirical challenges, particularly concerning

determining the effectiveness and degree of real-life transformation of such educational initiatives (Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn, 2020, pp. 8-9).

2.2.1 GCED Overview and Connected Concepts

„The primary aim of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is nurturing respect for all, building a sense of belonging to a common humanity and helping learners become responsible and active global citizens. GCED aims to empower learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. Education for global citizenship helps young people develop the core competencies which allow them to actively engage with the world, and help to make it a more just and sustainable place. It is a form of civic learning that involves students' active participation in projects that address global issues of a social, political, economic, or environmental nature.“ (United Nations, 2025)

In essence, GCED is an educational approach that is predicated on the principles of human rights, democracy, and global solidarity. The United Nations SDG4, which emphasizes quality education, explicitly prioritizes GCED as a fundamental component of fostering sustainable development and global citizenship skills by promoting a sense of shared responsibility in addressing pressing global challenges such as ongoing violent conflicts, societal and gender inequalities, climate change, and environmental degradation (UNESCO, 2025). Within educational settings, promoting critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and ethical engagement with global issues on a glocal (combining the local with the global) level is a key component of GCED. Therefore, it can be understood as a multifaceted, transformative educational concept that covers global issues and the interconnectedness of today's challenges and emphasizes cultivating critical thinking, empathy, collaboration, and the resolution of conflict skills. GCED is committed to, but not limited to, the promotion of values such as justice, respect for diversity and open-mindedness, and encourages learners to act for the collective well-being in their communities and beyond - but always with a self-aware and critical perspective and a willingness to question one's values (UNESCO, 2025).

These ambitions are closely linked to the commitment to Human Rights Education (HRE), which shares normative roots and pedagogical goals with the concept of GCED. As UNESCO (2015) points out, GCED incorporates and promotes the aims of HRE, Peace Education (PE), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), taking a more diverse approach to

encouraging global responsibility (UNESCO, 2015, p. 15). Therefore, human rights form the foundational ethical framework of GCED and provide a concrete normative approach to evaluating educational justice. Decolonial scholars such as Becker (2021) have deepened this connection by arguing for a reconceptualization of human rights as lived and relational practices rather than top-down legal constructs. According to this perspective, both GCED and HRE should be viewed as dialogical, political, and transformative pursuits that challenge dominant worldviews and emphasize interdependence, justice, and solidarity. Similarly, Nygren (2020) highlights the increasing integration of GCED, HRE, and PE in global policy discourses, but raises concerns about their implementation being influenced by competing educational principles and contextual tensions. He notes that without being situated in local and structural realities, teaching human rights as "universal ideals" might reinforce distance and a sense of abstraction. Alternatively, education should bridge the cognitive, socio-emotional, and ethical domains by encouraging reflective thinking and awareness of deeply rooted global injustice on different levels. In this sense, a human rights-based GCED approach alone is insufficient because it requires a pedagogy of both disruption and possibility for everyone (Nygren, 2020). Wintersteiner and Wulf (2015) expand on this argument by linking HRE to a wider convivialist vision of global citizenship. They contend that GCED should avoid the tendency to universalize certain values in abstract terms, instead cultivating what Morin (2012) refers to as a "planetary consciousness", which is grounded in dialogical democracy, ethical plurality, and shared vulnerability. In this sense, human rights are not only legal guarantees but also shared practices of care, relationality, and political responsibility. When embedded in such a humanistic tradition, GCED becomes a vehicle for recognizing others as co-creators of the world and for developing the emotional, political, and epistemic capacities needed to sustain democratic life in a fragile, interdependent world (Wintersteiner & Wulf, 2015).

This emphasis is further highlighted by researchers such as Andreotti (2011) and Toh & Wan (2017), who emphasize the importance of fostering critical global awareness and the ability to challenge existing power structures. Nonetheless, despite its recognized significance, the development of GCED continues to be predominantly influenced by Western-centric educational paradigms, a phenomenon documented by Eliott et al. (2010). Consequently, there have been criticisms regarding its applicability in diverse gender, socio-cultural, and political contexts, particularly in postcolonial societies where educational frameworks must undergo modification to confront historical inequalities and local necessities.

As a result, researchers also highlight the suggestion that a transformative agenda for teacher education is needed, developing educators as critically reflective and independent individuals with the intellectual confidence and professional autonomy to navigate diverse and complex educational contexts (Androetti, 2010, p. 240). Rather than relying on fixed, universal solutions, this approach aims to empower educators to make ethical, informed decisions. In terms of its practical implications, a decolonial and post-critical GCED focuses on an understanding of globalization and its inequalities and incorporates critical competence as a key tool. This orientation goes beyond a single “right” answer and encourages people to make contextualized and therefore more responsible decisions. When used in educational settings, students are taught to engage with complexity, challenge assumptions, and transform relationships, while embracing uncertainty and continuous learning (p. 241). For this reason, four types of "learning" are proposed as necessary by Andreotti & Souza (2008b, pp. 242-243):

- (1) Learning to unlearn (recognizing the socio-historical construction of knowledge)
- (2) Listening to listen (remaining critically aware of one's assumptions)
- (3) Learning to learn (engaging with different epistemologies)
- (4) Reaching out (applying learning in a context-sensitive way)

2.2.2 The Role of Gender in Peacebuilding

Opiyo (2023) described the relationship between peacebuilding and gender as not simply an additive one, but rather a transformative one. Women*'s active involvement brings a range of unique perspectives and skills to the table, particularly in communication, empathy, and grassroots mediation, contributing to an expansion in the scope of conventional peace processes (Opiyo, 2023, p.132). This standpoint is also reinforced by the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 1325 (United Nations, 2019), which highlights the crucial role of women* in maintaining peace and security and calls for their increased representation at all levels of decision-making on a global scale. Gender-sensitive peacebuilding, therefore, recognizes that all conflict resolution processes require a gendered perspective and consequently emphasizes the equal participation of women* in all peacebuilding activities. It acknowledges that conflicts affect women* and men* disproportionately, and that gender roles impact and are influenced by peace outcomes. Therefore, the inclusion of women* is essential to uncover oppressive structures or harmful norms, enabling societies to address the root causes of conflict and war rather than simply restoring pre-existing, unjust systems, such as the patriarchy (United Nations, 2019). Merkel's (2015) research also shows a correlation between high levels of

gender inequality and an increased chance of violent clashes, underscoring the central role of gender equality in promoting new approaches to peaceful development. Thus, it is essential to acknowledge that disregarding women's rights can undermine the very foundations of democratic values and world freedom (Merkel, 2015, p.15).

The effectiveness of female peacekeepers has been well demonstrated, due to their unique skill sets and empathetic approaches to conflict resolution (Opiyo, 2023). For example, women have played important leading roles in various war-torn settings, including those in Liberia, Darfur, and Haiti. Furthermore, their peace-driven contributions have been instrumental in post-conflict scenarios such as the aftermath of the Bosnian War and the Rwandan Genocide (Opiyo, 2023). Their capacity to create trust within the community, gather central information, and engage deeply with local communities, especially other women and children, enhances the success of peace missions during conflict situations. Moreover, the presence of women peacekeepers has frequently been observed to enhance the protection of different vulnerable groups, as well as fostering conditions that are essential for the facilitation of processes of mutual healing and reconciliation after war (p. 133). This evidence highlights the UN's postulate that the inclusion of women is not merely advantageous but imperative for the long-term success of peacekeeping operations. Additionally, there is also growing recognition of the importance of engaging men and boys as allies in transforming gender norms into peacebuilding (UN Women, 2021).

Aggestam & Holmgren's (2022) study also analyzed the nexus between gender and resilience from a transformative perspective, emphasizing its potential to enhance the process and outcomes of peace initiatives. They found that international handbooks have been updated to emphasize the necessity of transitioning from symbolic representation to substantive inclusion, acknowledging women as resilient actors with leadership capacities that are underutilized in conflict settings. However, the analysis also critiques the trend toward technocratic and depoliticizing approaches that risk undermining transformative gender analysis. Such an approach limits the potential to address deeply rooted structural power inequalities and entrenched patriarchal norms in societies (Aggestam & Holmgren, 2022). Consequently, for gender-responsive peacebuilding to actualize its potential in fostering sustainable peace for *everyone*, scholars postulate that it is crucial to critically engage with the politics of peacebuilding, prioritize conflict transformation over mere management, and recognize lived local realities rather than impose externally defined frameworks of resilience and cooperation

(Clark & Ungar, 2021). Therefore, the promotion of women's leadership, ensuring their access to resources, and the institutionalization of their peacekeeping roles could lead to more legitimate, effective, and enduring peace outcomes, as Opiyo (2023) wrote.

2.2.3 Post- and Decolonial Approaches to GCED

In addressing issues such as global educational governance, gender (in-)justice, and knowledge diversity, this thesis employs critical frameworks that examine the (neo-)colonial principles underlying current power structures. At the same time, the terms “postcolonial” and “decolonial” are used frequently and often indistinguishably. However, a closer analysis shows that these terms come from distinct intellectual traditions, are based in different geopolitical contexts, and suggest divergent approaches to coloniality. To maintain conceptual clarity, it is necessary to explain them properly first. Also, in this thesis, the argument will be advanced for the preferential use of a “decolonial lens”.

Key thinkers in postcolonial theory include, for example, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha. With roots in literary criticism, philosophy, and cultural theory, postcolonial studies analyze the persistence of colonial power in global discourses, representations, and identity constructions. Thus, postcolonial studies primarily critique how colonial ideologies continue to exist in cultural or linguistic forms. Nonetheless, Western academia often restricts the theory to its spheres, thereby reproducing Eurocentric frameworks it seeks to critique (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

By contrast, scholars such as Aníbal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo, and María Lugones led the modernity and coloniality research that resulted in the emergence of decolonial theory from Latin America. Quijano's (2000) introduction of the concept of the “coloniality of power” described the continued persistence of colonial hierarchies of *race*, labor, knowledge, and gender in present-day global systems. Rather than viewing colonialism as a thing of the past, decolonial thinkers locate it within an ongoing system of power that continues to shape the modern world in several spheres. A key feature of decolonial theory is its focus on epistemology, challenging the Western idea of universal and objective knowledge and instead calling for a rethink of how knowledge is created and shared (Mignolo, 2011). This involves rejecting the view that only Eurocentric reasoning is valid and acknowledging that Indigenous, local, and non-Western approaches to knowledge are equally legitimate. Therefore,

decoloniality is both critical and constructive, aiming to create inclusive futures in which different worldviews and ways of acquiring knowledge can coexist (Escobar, 2017).

As briefly mentioned above, this thesis adopts a decolonial theoretical lens because it offers the most adequate framework for critically engaging with global education policy texts, especially concerning GCED, gender, and politics of knowledge and power. Unlike postcolonial theory, which, while valuable for cultural and textual analysis, often remains rooted in Euro-American academic traditions, decolonial thought actively challenges the underlying epistemic hierarchies that sustain global inequalities (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

Decoloniality directly addresses the structural exclusion of Indigenous and marginalized knowledges from global education governance, which is particularly relevant given that the primary policy corpus of this thesis is mainly shaped by UN institutions. Despite their progressive rhetoric, these bodies frequently universalize Western educational norms, and therefore, a decolonial approach addresses this issue by asking: Which worldviews are legitimized, and which ones are silenced? This lens also resonates strongly with the interview data, as several participants highlighted tensions between global policy frameworks and local lived realities. Decolonial theory aims to validate such tensions as being structurally rooted, rather than being incidental. Moreover, it aligns with critical scholarship from feminist, Indigenous, and Global South perspectives (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Andreotti, 2011; Santos, 2014), with these researchers applying decolonial critique to reinterpret similar documents. Ultimately, decolonial theory not only enables critique but also opens space for pluriverse thinking, which is why it is the most suitable tool for a thesis concerned with educational justice, peacebuilding, representation of diversity, and knowledge plurality.

Given these critiques of epistemic dominance and the universalization of Western knowledge systems, it is important to situate GCED within its historical and discursive context. Far from being a neutral or universally agreed-upon concept, GCED is shaped by different agendas, institutional frameworks, and power relations and requires, as such, critical examination, especially when considered through the perspective of decolonial thought.

As mentioned in the introduction, over the past years, the idea of “global citizenship” has become increasingly prominent in educational discourses in Europe and the USA, but it is shaped by different agendas and theoretical frameworks, leading to different interpretations of

the terms “global”, “citizenship” and “education” (Andreotti & de Souza, 2012, p. 1). Educational initiatives that seek to promote global citizenship frequently entail the implementation of various initiatives, including school partnerships, volunteer abroad programmes, and the incorporation of global issues within existing curricula. Nonetheless, many of these initiatives neglect to address the complex historical, cultural, and political dimensions of global-local dynamics, instead reinforcing simplistic dichotomies and ethnocentric worldviews. Consequently, GCED practices may unintentionally produce unhistoricized, depoliticized, and deficit-based approaches to difference (Andreotti & de Souza, 2012, pp. 1-2).

In this case, according to Andreotti (2010), the postcolonial view can still offer a helpful perspective within GCED since it emphasizes the need to reconceptualize knowledge, learning, progress, and identities away from universalist frameworks that interpret difference as deficit (Andreotti, 2010, p. 240). She also postulated that the fundamental objective of this pedagogical approach is to establish a plurality of epistemologies on equal terms while simultaneously aiming to redefine power dynamics on non-discriminatory principles. To combat these issues, a view from the postcolonial perspective offers a series of critical tools with which to examine these tendencies and to reimagine education "otherwise" by challenging global ethnocentric hegemonies and the uncritical reproduction of Western humanist ideals that present knowledge and progress as universal and unequivocal (Andreotti & de Souza, 2012, pp. 2-3). These deeply rooted hegemonies in educational discourse often produce something called “epistemic blindness” to other ontological and epistemological possibilities (Andreotti & de Souza, 2012).

Therefore, the authors identified two predominant strands within postcolonial approaches to GCED. The first of these is informed by historical materialism and focuses on shifting structural power dynamics through cross-sectoral mobilization to amplify the voices of historically oppressed groups (Andreotti & de Souza, 2012, p. 3). The second strand, rooted in poststructuralist thought, emphasizes non-dualistic understandings of identity and relational ethics, advocating for educational practices that foster ethical engagements without requiring homogenization. While both approaches offer valuable insights, they are also limited in certain ways. The former may overlook the complexity of culture, while the other risks not providing practical responses to material injustices (Andreotti & De Souza, 2012, pp. 3-4). However, when these postcolonial transformative educational perspectives are viewed from the standpoint of implementation, it is suggested by Andreotti (2010) that teachers are encouraged to actively

shape change rather than adapting to it following the dictates of economically-driven education agendas. This involves embracing complexity, uncertainty, and multiple perspectives in class, thereby ensuring that education is responsive to societal as well as students' needs (Andreotti, 2010).

In this context, Becker (2021) proposed a new approach to understanding human rights, based on the process of decolonization. It attempts to challenge the colonial underpinnings and underlying assumptions of concepts like "human rights", thereby also incorporating concepts such as "lifelong learning" within GCED frameworks as a human right. Drawing on Fanon's (1961) model of decolonization, Becker (2021) outlines a three-phase, non-linear process of "decolonial becoming-human": (1) Recognizing and addressing the suppression of knowledge and identity under colonialism, (2) Reclaiming a relational sense of humanity through reflexivity and mutual recognition, and (3) Transitioning towards a pluriverse approach that embraces non-hegemonic ways of being and knowing. The first stage focuses on how colonial education undermines selfhood by imposing narratives, which often lead to internalized inferiority. The second phase calls for reclaiming voice and presence, as the #BlackLivesMatter movement, for example, illustrates, and advocates for human rights education to serve as a supportive, activist ally. The third phase imagines places where different types of knowledge are shared. These places put the experiences of marginalized people at the center; therefore, according to Becker (2021), HRE must become a dialogical, ethical practice that nurtures narrative spaces for difference and co-constructed meaning. Such transformation demands not only pedagogical shifts but also an ontological reorientation of the people who transform it, moving from legally defined and top-down frameworks to bottom-up, lived, and relational understandings of "rights" and "humanity". In this view, decolonial HRE becomes an ongoing praxis of recognition of interconnected global challenges, fostering pluralistic forms of solidarity (Becker, 2021).

Taken together, these perspectives highlight that meaningful developments in GCED require critical engagement with the interconnected structures of patriarchy, coloniality, and epistemic dominances (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2011), especially within educational institutions. This evidence has been presented to show that educational models claiming universality, as GCED, frequently mask the plural, situated, and contested nature of knowledge and peacebuilding, particularly when gendered and decolonial viewpoints are dismissed (Andreotti, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012). To engage with these dynamics, this master's thesis takes a critical

epistemological approach, integrating post-structuralist policy analysis, thematic analysis, and the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011).

2.2.4 Key Challenges and Opportunities in GCED-Implementation

As mentioned, GCED is envisioned as a transformative educational paradigm that cultivates learners' awareness of global interdependence, social justice, and peace (UNESCO, 2015). Despite its increasing relevance within the context of the UN SDGs (SDG 4.7), the practical implementation of GCED faces multiple systemic challenges, including political resistance, extreme forms of cultural relativism, and institutional constraints (Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn, 2020).

When interpreted as an acknowledgement of cultural diversity and epistemic plurality, the idea of cultural relativism has the potential to enrich GCED by providing a more localized approach and a greater responsiveness to alternative knowledge and teaching systems. Such perspectives, as Okpokwasili (2024) wrote, can foster deeper engagement with diverse epistemologies and respect for different worldviews; however, if taken to an extreme, cultural relativism may also inhibit these proposed universal educational rights or gender equality, particularly when invoked to justify discriminatory practices, such as female* genital mutilation or child marriage (Okpokwasili, 2024). This provokes a conceptual tension within the implementation of GCED: How can cultural differences be respected by global frameworks for education without compromising normative commitments to principles of justice, gender equality, peace, and human dignity?

This tension is reflected in the divergent positions of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum regarding the role of universal norms within the CA. Sen (1999), on the one hand, places great emphasis on democratic deliberation and the ongoing negotiation of core values in each socio-political context, arguing that normative frameworks must evolve through collective public reasoning and remain open to revision. In this view, cultural values should not be dismissed but discussed collectively within societies, avoiding both universalism and uncritical relativism (Sen, 1999). Nussbaum (2011), on the other hand, defends a list of ten central capabilities as a universal "ethical minimum". Drawing on a human rights framework, she argues for the guarantee of certain capabilities to all humans, regardless of cultural context or geographical location. Access to education, bodily integrity, and political voice are examples of these

capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011). This distinction also matters significantly for concepts such as GCED, and it is therefore important to consider how it could be applied in practice.

While Sen's approach places significance on dialogue and local relevance, Nussbaum's perspective insists on the imperative of ensuring that specific educational and social entitlements are non-negotiable. Therefore, practically speaking, GCED needs to strike a balance between these two approaches, raising two crucial questions: When is cultural relativism considered to be enriching and necessary (Sen)? And when does it risk becoming a barrier to educational justice (Nussbaum)? This difficulty is especially visible in gender-sensitive education, where "culture" is sometimes used as a rationale for the exclusion of women*, girls*, or non-binary learners from full participation. Thus, the CA provides a valuable normative basis for evaluating the "real-life" implementation of GCEDs, precisely because it facilitates both contextual flexibility and principled critique.

Another significant challenge in this regard lies in the practical (non-)translation of GCED principles into a broad spectrum of educational contexts. Although GCED is designed to be inclusive and relevant to local contexts, the curricula and teaching methods often fail to reflect this adequately because several learning and teaching models and materials continue to reflect Eurocentric or Global North suppositions, thus excluding Indigenous, regional, or gender-diverse ways of constructing knowledge (Andreotti, 2011; Torres, 2017). This divide between universalist aims and culturally specific realities highlights the opposing forces between context-sensitivity (as per Sen) and the protection of basic "human rights" (as per Nussbaum). Therefore, when cultural justification is used to maintain exclusion or inequality, the ability of GCED to bring about truly transformative change might be undermined. Additionally, limited teacher training and professional development in GCED pedagogies have also resulted in inconsistent application and low confidence among educators, as Oxley & Morris (2013) as well as Bourn (2015) found.

Nevertheless, Bosio & Waghid (2022) proposed another perspective, saying that GCED concepts can offer significant potential for addressing global inequalities, promoting social cohesion, and developing emotional, cognitive, and intercultural competencies. After all, their research shows that GCED approaches can enhance learners' ability to critically reflect on structural injustices, develop empathy, and engage productively in democratic decision-making processes (Bosio & Waghid, 2022).

3 Theoretical Considerations

This chapter introduces the theoretical underpinnings that inform the analytical approach employed in this master's thesis. While the previous chapter outlined the conceptual terrain surrounding GCED, gender, decoloniality, and peace, this section will focus on the theoretical concepts through which these terms are understood. Not only are these foundations used to frame the research interest abstractly, but they also actively shape the analytical questions posed, the way power and knowledge are understood in educational policy discourse, and how notions such as justice and capability are conceptualized. To ensure conceptual clarity, this chapter distinguishes between the descriptive introduction of core terms and concepts, which are addressed in Chapter 2, and the analytical theories used to critically examine these terms in a contextualized manner. In this sense, Chapter 3 lays the groundwork for analyzing both global policy frameworks, scientific articles, and empirical material not only through a critical but also through a normative standpoint.

Consequently, two contrasting theoretical standpoints are presented: the Poststructuralist Approach and the Capability Approach (CA). The utilization of a critical framework for the analysis of the construction of knowledge and subjectivities through discourse is provided by poststructuralist theory. Drawing on the work of thinkers such as Michel Foucault (1978 & 1980), Judith Butler (2002), and Gayatri Spivak (1988), this standpoint challenges the neutrality of educational concepts, revealing the shaping of standards, policies, and exclusions by powers of discourse. In this respect, the insights provided are especially important concerning the policy analysis carried out in this thesis, forming the conceptual foundation for the implementation of Bacchi's WPR method (Bacchi, 2009). The second theoretical basis of this thesis is the Capability Approach (CA), which Amartya Sen (1985, 1999 & 2009) and Martha Nussbaum (2000 & 2011) elaborated. Unlike the discursive focus of poststructuralism, the CA offers a theoretical basis for evaluating individual and collective well-being, ideas of peace, people's agency, and, in the long run, also educational opportunity from a justice-oriented perspective. It provides the essential standards for evaluating whether educational practices and policies contribute to human flourishing and having a "good life" in an interconnected way, particularly among those who are marginalized due to gender, geopolitical position, or social class.

Instead of these two approaches being seen as incompatible, their different strengths are used by this thesis. Poststructuralism is useful in deconstructing prevailing ideologies and exposing hidden power dynamics, while the CA provides a criterion by which to evaluate the capabilities of learners. Together, these elements underpin a dual research approach that facilitates the

evaluation of present GCED narratives and their effects on educational as well as social emancipation or restriction.

3.1 Theoretical Lenses for Analysis

This thesis applies the Poststructuralist Approach to analyze how policies related to GCED construct concepts such as peace, gender, decoloniality, and global citizenship. At this point, Bacchi's WPR Approach (2009) facilitates a critical examination of how power manifests through defined concepts as well as language, highlighting marginalized perspectives. For instance, this is applied in the analysis of SDG 4.7, in which "peace" is frequently portrayed as an individual responsibility, thereby overlooking structural violence. Conversely, the CA (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011) provides a way of assessing whether GCED practices enhance learners' actual freedoms within their world. The final analytical stage then uses it to evaluate whether GCED-related educational scenarios and programmes encourage different types of participation, especially when considering gender and socio-cultural differences.

3.1.1 Poststructuralist Approach

“Poststructuralism offers a way of interrogating the assumptions of academic disciplines, revealing how knowledge is constructed, contested, and historically situated rather than objective or neutral.”

- Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (1997, p. 19)

Post-structuralism has emerged as both a continuation and a critique of structuralist thought in its application to education. While structuralism centered on systemic foundations, such as socio-economic classes, *race*, and gender, and their integration within social networks, the doctrine frequently faced criticism for its deterministic, ahistorical, and reductionist characteristics (Mason & Clarke, 2010). Post-structuralist analysis mainly retains the structuralist emphasis on deconstructing the concept of a rational, autonomous subject; however, it differs in its rejection of “universal truths”, overarching narratives, and different fundamental epistemologies. The focus on the complex, non-linear interplay of cultural, political, and economic discourses indicates that local and specific knowledge is prioritized over systemic generalizations, as Foucault (1984) stated.

The philosophical basis of this approach includes Nietzsche's claim that truths are just deep metaphors as well as Derrida's key concept of "deconstruction". Deconstructionism exposes how "truths" are constructed within specific knowledge systems throughout history and academic or political discourse (Nietzsche, 1886 & 1990; Derrida, as cited in Mason & Clarke, 2010). Foucault's methodology challenges the concept of linear causality by encouraging the exploration of marginalized or otherwise "disqualified" knowledge in educational systems. Therefore, rather than being neutral carriers of knowledge, educational institutions are considered dynamic spaces where meanings, identities, and values are continually negotiated (Mason & Clarke, 2010).

According to Mason and Clarke (2010), Foucault's dialogical method situates critique within ongoing historical dialogues and, as such, represents a critical post-structuralist educational analytical method, as it resists fixed foundations and promotes continuous interrogation. Additionally, post-structuralist thought shares a focus on language with critical theorists like Habermas; however, it differs significantly from critical theories concerning epistemological assumptions. Instead of thinking of language as an objective tool for communication, post-structuralist theory sees language as a societal construct influenced by culture, history, and ideology (Mason & Clarke, 2010). Well-known thinkers in this area, such as Saussure (1959), further developed this thought by contributing to the theory of meaning as a relational rather than referential concept. So, according to this idea, meaning emerges through processes of difference and, as a result, truth is seen as dependent on the context, limited to written language, and deeply political; therefore, established as a key source of power and debate. In an educational context, this challenges the conceptualizations of terms such as "democracy", "peace" or "freedom", highlighting their inherently discursive and open-to-interpretation natures (Mason & Clarke, 2010), which is particularly relevant for the analysis carried out in this thesis.

Besides language, power itself is another important sphere that should be examined from a poststructuralist perspective, since it is an aspect of all societal relations. This also challenges several traditional conceptions of power as either repressive or hierarchical and aligns with Foucault's (1978 & 1988) conceptualization of power as relational. According to his view, the presence of power is embedded in certain discourses and influences the validation of knowledge and thinking (Foucault, 1978 & 1988). Building on this, Mason and Clarke (2010) argue that education is intrinsically linked to a continuous contest over meaning and legitimacy, in which

privilege within asymmetrical structures is often held by those who define knowledge, such as educators. They further note that, instead of striving for a “perfect form of communication,” poststructuralism emphasizes the tactical management of power relations through some sort of ethical and thoughtful teaching methods (Mason & Clarke, 2010). From an analytical perspective relevant to this thesis, this also implies that power is rarely observed in the form of formal authority or explicit oppression. Rather, it operates through dispersed discourses and everyday practices and can often only be rendered visible when reconstructed through critical analysis (Mason & Clarke, 2010). This makes it particularly relevant for approaches such as Bacchi’s WPR, which aim to identify these hidden presumptions and the power imbalances embedded in educational policy and practice.

As noted earlier, poststructuralism differs from classical critical theory in rejecting universal principles such as “reason” and “truth”, instead emphasizing the historical contingency and mutability of dominant norms (Olssen, 2006). Indications of this can be seen in the genealogical strategy, which opposes the establishment of absolutes and prioritizes adaptability over definitive evaluation, as Butler (2002) postulated. In educational contexts, it is suggested that one must think critically about several areas of practice: First, one must amplify the voices of those who are marginalized (Luke, 2002). Second, one must understand power as embedded not only in beliefs but also in institutional bodies, social spaces, and emotional responses (Olssen, 2006). Third, one must examine students’ discursive identities and interests (Misson, 1996).

Another notable characteristic of poststructuralism is its shift from conventional critical thinking by rejecting epistemological dichotomies. A self-governing person, for example, is seen as a societally created and dialogically shaped entity - as such, this strategy is also founded on feminist and antiracist philosophy, with an emphasis on evaluating dominant discourse (male* & *white*) and highlighting the situational nature of knowledge (Alcoff, 1988; Ellsworth, 1989). This way of thinking questions traditional notions of voice, rationality, and dialogue by highlighting their inherent exclusionary potential (Spivak, 1988; Luke & Gore, 1992). Feminist post-structuralism, with its emphasis on difference, standpoint, and relational epistemology, often finds itself in productive tension with the broader postmodern skepticism of foundationalism. Anti-racist pedagogy, in contrast, demands the de-centering of Eurocentric class-based models in favor of decolonial knowledge traditions (Allen, 2005). Thus, post-structuralist pedagogy centers openness, emphasizing dialogue grounded in the shared

awareness that all knowledge is relative. This approach, therefore, seeks to encourage ethical and empowering interactions across differences, as Ellsworth (1989) also postulated.

3.1.2 WPR Approach

Drawing on Foucault's (1978 & 1980) discourse theory and his conception of power as both productive and relational, Carol Bacchi's (2009) 'What's the Problem Represented to Be?' The (WPR) Approach provides a valuable tool for engaging critically within a poststructuralist framework. Rather than pre-existing problems being assumed to be solved by GCED research and other dominant policy papers, the WPR approach questions how these constructs actively create the "problem" they claim to address, as well as the impacts of those constructs.

For this reason, the six guiding questions of Bacchi (2009) serve as the point of reference for the in-depth examination of how key concepts such as peace, citizenship, decoloniality, and gender are represented in GCED-related policy documents. Methodologically, the WPR framework is applied in the first step of the empirical analysis, where dominant discursive patterns and silences are identified, aiming to allow for a thorough investigation of global education policy, looking beyond just the gaps in implementation and instead examining the underlying ideas of inclusion, exclusion, and standardization in the GCED discussion.

3.1.3 Capability Approach

Another fundamental element of this master's thesis is its use of the Capability Approach (CA) as a conceptual foundation. Within this foundation, a conceptual structure is developed to evaluate the dimensions of human well-being, lived forms of peace, agency, and justice as they relate to the research problem being examined.

Emerging in the late 20th century, the CA was a critical response to utilitarian and resource-based models of welfare and provided a more nuanced, human-centered viewpoint through which to understand individuals' "real" freedoms and opportunities to live lives they value (Sen, 1999). The CA was first introduced by Amartya Sen, a renowned economist and philosopher, in 1985 and emerged as an alternative to the prevailing paradigms of the time, which emphasized factors like utility or the possession of goods. As Sen (1985) argued, neither income levels nor perceived subjective satisfaction serves as a proper measure of well-being. Rather than prioritizing individuals' roles or statuses, the focus is placed on their functionings, the "beings and doings" that can and are achieved, and, more fundamentally, their capabilities: the substantive freedoms required to achieve these functionings (Sen, 1999). According to Sen (1999), the term "capabilities" is defined as the opportunities available to people, as opposed to

formal rights or hypothetical possibilities. This shift in consideration from resources to capabilities highlights the crucial role of transformation factors, which include individual, communal, and ecological dimensions (Robeyns, 2005). Functionings are intended to identify the aspects of life that are currently being fulfilled, such as well-being, literacy, and participation in community activities. In contrast, however, capabilities represent the potential to achieve these functionings (Sen, 1999).

While Sen avoided creating a complete catalog of abilities, Nussbaum offered a more normative and philosophically based understanding of the CA. In her work, Nussbaum (2000 & 2011) developed a comprehensive framework that outlines ten core human capabilities that are essential for attaining a life of dignity. These abilities encompass various areas, including physical health, practical thinking, human relationships, and environmental management or interconnectedness. Her approach also highlights the importance of human dignity, political and social justice, and basic human rights for all. Consequently, her perspective is considered relevant for normative evaluations in education, gender equality, and social inclusion (Nussbaum, 2011; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007).

To further ground this research in the CA, it is important to explore how the framework evolved from the foundational work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. These developments clarify the analytical dimensions of it and expand its applicability to complex domains, such as gender justice, education, and global development. In *Commodities and Capabilities* (1985), Sen presents a critique of traditional welfare economics and argues that these fail to adequately capture the essence of well-being by relying on ownership of either property or material resources. That was the reason why Sen proposed a fundamental shift in evaluative focus from means to ends by distinguishing between commodities, functionings, and capabilities. Sen says that: "*what matters for well-being is not just the characteristics of commodities possessed, but what use the person can make of them*" (Sen, 1985, p. 10). The introduction of the concept of conversion factors - personal (e.g., physical condition or intelligence), social (e.g., gender roles or institutional structures), and environmental (e.g., infrastructure or climate) - that mediate how individuals translate resources into meaningful outcomes lay the groundwork for a theory that views individual well-being in terms of what people can be and do (Sen, 1985).

This idea is expanded a lot in *Development as Freedom* (1999), where Sen presents the CA as a comprehensive model for "development". In this context, development is defined not solely as economic growth but as the expansion of individuals' substantive freedoms within their lives

and ways of being. Sen identifies five "instrumental freedoms" - political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security - which are interconnected and mutually reinforcing (Sen, 1999, p. 38). Together, they create the conditions in society and institutions that allow people to pursue the lives they value. Sen also argues that poverty, for example, should be understood as capability deprivation, not just income inequality, thereby shifting the ethical and analytical lens from material wealth to human agency. As he postulates: "*freedom is both the primary objective and the principal means of development*" (Sen, 1999, p. 12), emphasizing the importance of individual agency in any evaluation of social progress.

In his later work, *The Idea of Justice* (2009), Sen moves beyond ideal-theoretical conceptions of a perfectly just society. Instead, he advocates for a comparative and pragmatic approach: Rather than abstract principles of justice being theorized, the spotlight is placed on identifying and reducing injustices in real-world contexts also empathizing the importance of public reasoning and democratic participation in evaluating what people can effectively do and be in their specific societal circumstances (Sen, 2009, p. 231). This newly formed understanding of justice is pluralist and context-sensitive, which makes the CA especially relevant for educational research that engages with cultural diversity, social inequality, and power asymmetries.

While Sen intentionally makes the approach open-ended, Nussbaum builds on this with a more normative version of the CA, as previously mentioned. In *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* (2000), she addresses gender inequalities that are often overlooked by traditional economic and rights-based metrics. Nussbaum established a list of ten important *skills* that, in her opinion, define a life that is worth living. These include life, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination, thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, interaction with other species, play, and control over one's environment (Nussbaum, 2000, pp. 78-80). She stresses that these abilities are political rights, not cultural luxuries, based on a universal idea of human dignity and, importantly, critiques cultural relativism and insists that universal norms of justice must accommodate diverse lifestyles (Nussbaum, 2000), which is a particularly significant argument for GCED.

In *Frontiers of Justice* (2006), Nussbaum later builds on the CA beyond the usual parameters of traditional liberal contract theories, incorporating domains that are often excluded from mainstream political philosophy, such as disability, global inequality, and animal ethics. It is

argued by her that support and recognition must be provided by a just society for all individuals and beings, including those who may never be able to reciprocate in standard ways, such as people with profound disabilities or non-citizens (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 159).

Finally, in *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* (2011), Nussbaum offers a precise summary of her theoretical framework for use in policy, education, and public discourse and reemphasizes her claim that capabilities provide "*superior normative guidance compared to that offered by utility or resources.*" and argues for their essential role in shaping educational and development agendas (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18). As a result, her model shows that it can act as a boundary instead of a regulation that should be followed exactly. This flexibility allows for change while maintaining a consistent standard, which is helpful when examining GCED.

3.1.4 Normative Foundations and their Relevance to the Study

The application of post-structuralist theory in this master's thesis is therefore more than essential for critically examining the discursive construction of gender-responsive GCED within policy, pedagogical contexts, and beyond. Because of the thesis's emphasis on the unmasking of implicit power relations, normative assumptions, and institutional hierarchies that shape GCED implementation, a post-structuralist approach, with notable influence from the former works and thoughts of Michel Foucault (1978), provides a critical analytical lens since it enables an investigation of the construction of "problems" in a Western-shaped world, the privileging or marginalization of certain voices, and the influence of these constructions on educational practices. In addition, the use of post-structural thoughts is also particularly relevant in the context of the WPR approach from Bacchi (2009) due to its focus on the representation of GCED in educational policy. It is, therefore, a remarkable tool that enables the deconstruction of seemingly progressive discourses that may perpetuate dominant gender norms or global power asymmetries. Furthermore, post-structuralism provides support for the intersectional perspective of the research by rejecting the idea of fixed identities or universal truths. This is of fundamental importance when exploring the intersection of *race*, class, gender, and geopolitical location in the context of peacebuilding through education. In conjunction with the explained CA by Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2000), which prioritizes human agency and empowerment, the post-structuralist framework fosters a critical perspective on capabilities as context-dependent, challenging the perception of capabilities as individual or even apolitical elements.

By using insights from post-structuralism, the thematic analysis can be enhanced by providing a more insightful perspective for interpreting the identified subthemes. These topics should be understood not just as descriptions, but as elements that are part of power-laden ways of talking about issues within this thesis. That is why this methodological approach lets silences, contradictions, and institutional constraints show up in the participants' narratives as well as the policy texts. Also, the conceptual space for decolonial critique can be expanded by the adoption of the post-structuralist approach, as Eurocentric assumptions that are inherent in global educational or geopolitical discourses can be challenged. Building on the work of Mignolo (2007) and Andreotti (2011), this view allows to examine how frameworks for GCED underlie the significance of context-sensitive plural epistemologies. However, it is important to acknowledge that post-structuralist approaches, as already mentioned by Olssen (2006), have their limitations as well. One key limitation is their tendency to avoid offering definitive recommendations or maintaining stable categories. While this openness fosters critical thinking, it may hinder efforts to translate research findings into specific policy recommendations (Olssen, 2006). Thus, applying the CA to this study provides a more normative, action-oriented framework for assessing empowerment and agency.

Therefore, employing the CA as the theoretical framework enables this thesis to examine gender, decolonial power asymmetries, and Eurocentric issues in terms of outcomes as well as individual freedom, structural constraints, and agency. Within the broader framework of GCED, the CA plays a crucial role in evaluating educational policies and practices and helps to assess whether these policies and practices substantially increase people's agency. Further, it might also offer valuable perspectives on how individuals from diverse backgrounds transform educational resources into meaningful outcomes, influenced by their social, cultural, and institutional contexts (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007).

As outlined before, these two approaches provide tools for analyzing the transformative power of GCED critically. The approaches can be used to examine if and how GCED can cultivate peace, justice, and engagement in decolonization, especially when viewed through feminist and interdisciplinary lenses.

As poststructuralist thought is fundamentally based on the assumption that power is not merely repressive but also productive (Mason & Clarke, 2010), the formation of subjectivities, norms, and agencies is the primary focus of this approach. Therefore, when applied to GCED, it raises important questions for this thesis:

- (1) How are key concepts such as 'peace', 'global citizenship', 'gender', and 'justice' constructed within educational discourse?*
- (2) Which subjectivities are enabled or excluded by current conceptions of GCED?*
- (3) How do power and discourse function within educational spaces to reproduce global hierarchies and colonial logics?*

Foucault's (1978 & 1980) notions of governmentality and regimes of truth are particularly relevant here, as they help to interrogate how certain forms of knowledge (e.g., liberal peace frameworks and universalist human rights models) are legitimized, while others (e.g., indigenous epistemologies and intersectional feminist analyses) are marginalized. Poststructuralism, thus, provides a critical lens through which to reveal the normative underpinnings of international educational agendas. Since the CA's central assumption is that justice should be assessed in terms of people's real liberties, i.e., their capabilities (Sen, 1985), in an educational context, this implies shifting the focus from standardized outcomes to the opportunities of diverse learners. So, for this thesis, the CA raises the following questions:

- (1) Which capabilities form or limit current GCED practices, particularly in postcolonial contexts?*
- (2) What roles do gender, culture, and societal inequality play in the design and delivery of educational concepts that are oriented towards peacebuilding?*
- (3) To what extent does GCED allow learners to thoughtfully examine global structures of injustice and to act within their local and global surroundings?*

Nussbaum's (2000 & 2011) emphasis on education as a central human capability strongly resonates with research interests in transformative pedagogies. Moreover, her feminist expansion of the approach enables a nuanced analysis of how the intersection of axes of oppression, such as gender, *race*, class, and geopolitical location, shapes individuals' actual educational opportunities.

Although they emerge from different intellectual traditions, these two approaches do not exclude each other. In fact, the integration of both allows this thesis to address the normative intention of education, such as human flourishing, the feeling of safety, justice, and agency, and the power-laden discourses that influence how these intentions are framed or institutionalized. This theoretical pairing facilitates a dual analytical strategy, from which the more normative analysis (Capability Approach) postulates the following question: "What should education for

global citizenship and peace ideally achieve in terms of human capabilities, participation, and dignity?" - while the critical-discursive analysis (Poststructuralist Approach) asks: "How are these ideals framed? Who defines them and (why?)? And what exclusions or hierarchies are incorporated in dominant educational discourses?"

4 Methodological Considerations

Proceeding from the fundamental concepts and theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, this section provides a detailed exposition of the methodological basis of this thesis. While the theoretical frameworks of poststructuralism and the CA offer critical and normative perspectives for interpreting and evaluating global education discourses, the methodological section now details how these perspectives are operationalized through particular analytical tools and approaches. To ensure clarity and coherence, the methodological considerations are structured along four interconnected levels:

- (1) The thematic field of inquiry is defined by key concepts such as GCED, gender, peace, and decoloniality.
- (2) Theoretical frameworks, namely poststructuralism and the CA, guide the critical engagement with discourse and power, and the normatively driven evaluation of educational justice, power, and societal hierarchy.
- (3) Methodological tools, specifically Bacchi's WPR approach and established thematic pattern analysis (Mayring, 2015), translate theoretical concepts into structured and replicable analytical procedures.
- (4) Empirical methods, incorporating expert interviews, policy documents, country examples, as well as academic research analysis, serve as the foundation for the development of insights.

4.1 Literature Selection and Review Strategy

Before the empirical implementation of the research design, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify relevant theoretical frameworks, policy debates, and recent conceptual developments at the intersection of GCED, gender, peacebuilding, and decolonial critique. This master's thesis methodical review of existing and relevant literature was carried out from February to July of 2025. Several sources were used, including interdisciplinary databases, targeted journals, and international policy documents. The keyword combination reflected the multifaceted nature of the research questions. They included: "Global Citizenship

Education" OR "GCED" AND "gender-responsive" OR "gender equality" AND "peacebuilding" OR "peace education"; "decolonial education" OR "decolonial pedagogy"; "transformative pedagogy" OR "critical pedagogy" AND "empathy" OR "resilience" OR "social-emotional learning" OR "conflict resolution"; as well as "intersectionality" AND "GCED" OR "education for sustainable development" (ESD). The literature was primarily sourced through academic databases, which included Scopus, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, UNESCO Digital Library, GCED Clearinghouse, and u:search. Following a multi-stage screening process, the selection criteria prioritized empirical relevance, conceptual alignment with the Poststructuralist Approach, CA, GCED, and feminist-decolonial theories, as well as applicability to at least one of the defined research sub-questions.

4.2 Empirical Design: Three Analytical Steps

To implement the empirical design of this thesis, a three-step process was developed and made explicit. It integrates a post-structuralist policy document analysis (WPR), thematic framing and analysis of expert interviews, and an overall normative-reflective evaluation through the CA. Each step corresponds to one analytical layer of the study, collectively facilitating a multidimensional analysis of GCED-related epistemologies. This multi-step strategy reflects a form of methodological triangulation that integrates different data sources and analytical processes, thereby increasing both the empirical depth and the strength of the interpretations generated by the thesis's research. The thesis addresses the MRQ and SQ1-SQ3 as defined in Chapter 1.2.

4.2.1 Step One: Applying WPR to Policy Texts and Frameworks

The first step in the analysis is a document-based application of the WPR framework, which involves a critical discourse analysis of selected policy texts, frameworks, NGO reports, and academic literature related to GCED. The key question is: What “problems” are these programs designed to solve? Such problem representations and the underlying narratives are not neutral - they reflect underlying power relations, ideological positions, and cultural assumptions (Bacchi, 2009; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). The analysis then explores which narratives of peace, gender, and competency development dominate these texts, and whether they are rooted in Western epistemologies and are shaped by actors from the Global North, often *white*, male*, and associated with international institutions. This step also investigates the subject positions constructed by these texts, such as "the peaceful global citizen" or "the oppressed woman*," and how these limit or prescribe action (Ryan, 2022).

4.2.2 Step Two: Thematic Analysis of Policy Texts and Expert Interviews

In the second step, WPR's document analysis will be further analyzed and complemented by the lived experiences and professional perspectives of experts working and conducting research in the fields of GCED, gender studies, peace and conflict studies, education, and other relevant fields. These include lecturers, educators, NGO representatives, authors, policy practitioners, and academics, whose insights are gathered through semi-structured interviews. The aim is to explore how "gender" and "peace" are conceptualized and operationalized within the GCED, and what challenges or opportunities appear in the field. Mayring's (2015) thematic analysis will be used to identify patterns in the interviews, particularly about alignment or misalignment between policy discourses and implementation on the ground. Some key themes include the role of gender, the question of peacebuilding competencies, the limitations of current curricula, and the structural barriers in (inter-)national education systems. This stage also reveals if and how experts critique the normative assumptions behind existing policies.

4.2.3 Step Three: Reflection through the Capability Approach

The third analytical step then introduces the CA (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999) as a framework for overall reflection and evaluation. However, instead of being employed as an empirical method in an absolute sense, the CA is utilized as a normative-evaluative framework and facilitates the interpretation of both policy and interview data in the context of "human welfare" (= having a good life through enabling capabilities), empowerment, and social justice. This step goes beyond discourse to assess whether GCED, especially when gender-responsive, opens real opportunities for learners to act as agents of peace and justice. In other words, it asks: What actual capacities are enhanced by GCED programs? Does a gender-responsive pedagogy lead to meaningful empowerment? By combining the discursive critique of WPR with the evaluative lens of Nussbaum's (2011) & Sen's (1999) CA, the thesis's research asks whether GCED initiatives are merely reinforcing idealized subject positions or enabling individuals to challenge structural injustices in our interconnected world. This step also considers where gender-responsive GCED can have the most impact, and what claims it can make, without falling into the traps of idealism or cultural imperialism. The insights derived from this normative-reflective step will then be further evaluated through the lens of the CA in Chapter 4.5. This allows for a synthesis of discursive, experiential, and normative findings across all three analytical levels.

4.3 WPR (What's the Problem Represented to Be?) Approach

This section outlines the application of the WPR approach (Bacchi, 2009), as a concrete methodological tool for critical policy analysis in this thesis. Although WPR is rooted in post-structuralist theory, it is primarily employed here as a procedural framework in Step One of the empirical designs (see Section 4.2.1). Providing a discursive lens that aligns with the thesis's epistemological foundations, it enables a systematic investigation into how GCED, peace, gender, and empowerment are represented in policy documents. Rather than policies being treated as descriptions of pre-existing issues, they are viewed as active sites of meaning-making and power negotiation by the WPR perspective. In particular, this thesis uses the WPR lens to examine how gender-responsive GCED is presented as a solution to problems such as gender inequality, global power imbalances, and conflict, and what assumptions or silences may underlie these presentations (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016).

One of the strengths of the WPR methodology, as frequently mentioned, is its ability to encourage critical reflection on how policies define specific "problems" that should be "solved" and thereby justify forms of intervention. This is crucial for understanding this thesis, which examines how educational responses to gender inequality and conflict are outlined in GCED policies. When viewed through the WPR lens, global education is not merely perceived as an unquestionable good but as a discursive field that is influenced by underlying assumptions, power relations, and normative prescriptions.

4.3.1 Core Principles and Problem Representation in GCED

The WPR approach encourages the critical analysis of how policy documents present particular problem areas. In the context of GCED, this involves examining how issues such as gender inequality and peacebuilding are presented as "problems" and which normative assumptions and cultural beliefs influence these perceptions. For instance, documents such as UNESCO's 'Gender and Peacebuilding Training' (2021b) and UN Women's 'Gender Equality and Education' (2022) present gender-responsive education as a means of resolving global conflict, frequently without considering the inherent values that inform these arguments.

4.3.2 Critical Analysis of Assumed Solutions

The WPR framework shows that by framing problems in a particular way, certain solutions become normalized while others are even excluded. In the case of GCED, solutions are often

presented as ways of increasing access to education and participation, but primarily through "formal" schooling or Western-influenced learning programmes and methods. While well-intentioned, these solutions may be based on reductive assumptions, such as the idea that education alone can “solve” structural violent tendencies in our complex world. Furthermore, these solutions may fail to address the deeper colonial and patriarchal structures embedded in education systems (Aggestam & Holmgren, 2022).

4.3.3 Power Structure Examination

A key contribution of the WPR approach is its ability to unpack hidden power relations that underpin most policy discourses. Within the framework of GCED, the interrogation of how gender and peace discourses mirror global power imbalances would be an example. Policies formulated by international organizations such as the UN frequently universalize Western conceptions of peace, human *development*, and what gender equality looks like, while overlooking local knowledge systems, lived experiences, and different forms of being from the Global South (Aggestam & Holmgren, 2022; Spivak, 1988). By using the WPR framework, local actors who are often viewed as passive recipients of externally defined solutions could be recognized as co-creators of knowledge.

4.3.4 Six Key Analysis Questions

Concrete, the WPR analysis contains six questions, with the initial question investigating the proposals for change or solution outlined in a specific policy. It then uses this change or solution to explore the construction of the underlying problem. The following six key questions are based on Carol Bacchi's (2012) concept:

Table 1 / Bacchi's 6 Key Analysis Questions

Question 1	What's the problem represented to be in a specific policy or policies?
Question 2	What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions (<i>conceptual logics</i>) underlie this representation of the “problem” (<i>problem representation</i>)?
Question 3	How has this representation of the “problem” come about?

Question 4 What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the “problem” be conceptualized differently?

Question 5 What effects (*discursive, subjectification, lived*) are produced by this representation of the “problem”?

Question 6 How and where has this representation of the “problem” been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and/or how can it be disrupted and replaced?

Source: Bacchi, C. (2012). Introducing the ‘What’s the Problem Represented to be?’ approach. In L. F. McDonald & L. M. L. McDonald (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies* (pp. 221-235). SAGE Publications.

The first question asks: What is presented as the problem in thinking of or implementing the educational concept of gender-responsive GCED? One problem that is being framed is the unsuitability of some learning methods and content in the context of rapidly changing societies in our globalized world. This assumption indirectly implies that identifying accurate solutions will result in increased peace by imparting the “right form of knowledge”. Second, what assumptions underlie this framing? These may include beliefs that education is a neutral force for good and that some specific competencies are essential to develop; or that women* are inherently more “peaceful” compared to men*. Third, how have these narratives developed historically? Influences from global governance institutions and Western NGOs often shape dominant narratives based on the ideologies of just a small fraction of the world's population. Fourth, what remains unproblematic in this formulation of the problem, and where are the silences? To illustrate, Indigenous peoples are often regarded as a homogenous entity, a practice that obscures the heterogeneity inherent within their communities and potentially fosters the emergence of new disparities in representation and participation. Fifth, what effects are produced by these representations? One such consequence is the systematic exclusion of marginalized groups from policy discourses, while another is the reinforcement of prevailing narratives that depoliticize education and obscure profound structural inequalities. Sixth, where and how has this representation been produced, propagated, and defended, and how could it be challenged? In the case of GCED, dominant problem representations are largely devised and transmitted within global policy discourses, such as UNESCO and the UN, which function as critical sites of legitimation. At the same time, these also provide potential entry points for the contestation of alternative, decolonial, or feminist perspectives, with the disruption and reframing of mainstream discourses being the result (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). Applying these six questions allows for a nuanced critique of how GCED is constructed and evaluated.

4.4 Thematic Analysis

The following section presents five key thematic categories that emerged from the interview data. These also form part of the empirical foundation for the subsequent analysis chapters. An inductive thematic analysis approach based on the qualitative coding of transcribed expert interviews was used to develop these themes. Adopting Mayring's (2015) structured content analysis approach, this process systematically defined coding units, developed a category system directly from the material, and continually refined it through constant comparison with the interviews. To ensure that the categories were grounded in participants' lived experiences and contextual realities, as opposed to being imposed by a predefined theoretical framework, this inductive orientation was chosen. Taking this type of approach enables patterns, contrasts, and critical perspectives to be picked up as they naturally emerge from the material, thus capturing the subtle ways in which GCED, gender, peace, education, decoloniality, and global politics are interpreted, challenged, and reimaged. Consequently, the resulting categories offer a robust basis for analyzing the alignment or misalignment of policy ideals with practice and how local actors negotiate and reconstruct GCED in various contexts worldwide.

Before thoroughly explaining the five thematic clusters, it is important to note that these categories are the result of an inductive, empirical analysis. Integrating them at this stage provides a preliminary overview of the findings, as opposed to a comprehensive examination. This section provides a preliminary introduction to the clusters, which helps readers understand the analytical framework that underlies the subsequent empirical chapters. Chapter 6 then addresses the in-depth interpretation and critical engagement with each theme.

4.4.1 GCED as Transformative Peace Praxis: Beyond Formal Schooling

This category explores whether and how GCED functions not only within schools and universities but also in informal learning spaces, such as community practices or educational grassroots initiatives. It challenges the Western perspective on education and asks whether GCED can be considered a living, evolving practice that is part of diverse communities, or if it is limited to formal learning processes.

4.4.2 Navigating Complexity: Gender Norms, Tradition, and the Fear of Culture

This cluster focuses on the tensions between universal educational values and local socio-cultural circumstances. A nuanced and empathetic view of culture is taken, based on the idea

of promoting self-reflective engagement with cultural norms rather than tradition being rejected. The emphasis is on whether and how GCED can serve as a unifying force rather than a source of conflict, recognizing diversity while seeking to put an end to oppression.

4.4.3 Rethinking Key Concepts: Decoloniality and the Risks of Depoliticization

This section examines the application and use of terms such as 'decoloniality' in policy and academic discourse. Instead of relying solely on certain frameworks, the focus here is on self-reflexivity and political clarity to raise the question of the role of political structures and hierarchies in shaping and reshaping global concepts and terms.

4.4.4 Power, Voice, and Representation in GCED

This category focuses on the politics of knowledge (re-)production within GCED: Whose voices are included or excluded? Which narratives dominate and which are marginalized - and why? These questions draw attention to global power asymmetries, the invisibility of Indigenous epistemologies, and the possibility and importance of centering other voices in defining what it means to be a "global citizen" in different contexts around the world.

4.4.5 Rethinking Education Itself: Schooling, Systems & Purpose of Learning

This cluster critically explores the role of formal education systems. Traditional forms of schooling and their purpose, which often prioritize economic productivity over human development, as Fan (2025) claims, are critically examined, and a redefinition of the purpose of education is called for, as well as advocacy for curricular reforms. These emphasize, for example, critical thinking and collective responsibility, especially considering systemic inequalities, being challenged here.

4.5 Capability Approach Framework

This subchapter now explains how the CA, introduced in Chapter 3.1.2, is used as a normative-evaluative filter throughout this thesis. Drawing on the work of Amartya Sen (1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2011), the CA encourages critical reflection on empirical findings by considering whether gender-responsive GCED projects genuinely enhance learners' capabilities and opportunities. While the WPR and thematic analysis stages focus on discourse and lived

experience, the CA enables a final interpretive stage in which normative assumptions, structural conditions, and real opportunities are considered with collective and individual freedom, as well as educational justice. Deductively arising from core CA principles, the three dimensions of subjective empowerment, transformative agency, and contextual adaptability guide the evaluation of key themes emerging from the expert interviews in Chapter 5.

4.5.1 Subjective Empowerment and Educational Freedom

This section critically focuses on whether and how GCED may meaningfully strengthen individual competencies and create new ways of thinking and learning, expanding both subjective and context-related understandings of freedom and context-based possibilities for learners. As Sen (1999) postulated: "*A person's functioning reflects the various things a person may value doing or being*" (Sen, 1999, p. 75), effective empowerment involves the ability to freely pursue these collectively valued goals. As such, the analysis highlights what educational empowerment means in terms of people's own lived realities, providing valuable insights into the impact of educational empowerment for individuals and communities. The thematic focal point here is: How do learners interpret peace, societal justice, educational freedom, and gender equality in their world? What does it mean to them to feel empowered?

4.5.2 Transformative Agency without Essentialism

While GCED ideologies often seek to promote active citizenship and social responsibility, this section should explore the possibility of doing so without reducing learners to fixed patriarchal roles or Western-framed identities. The question raised here is, therefore, whether gender-responsive GCED can enable learners' transformative agency - that is, the ability of individuals to question and act on structural injustices and contemporary global challenges - without prescribing what such agency should look like. Inspired by Nussbaum's (2011) critique of essentialist approaches to "human development", this focus explores the possibility of encouraging learners to explore their contextual realities in pluralistic ways and through different paradigms. The promotion of ideological conformity (e.g., students becoming "activists" or "global citizens" according to Western models) within GCED, and the ability of GCED to create flexible frameworks for building local collaborations, critically engaging with cultural norms, and dialogically learning from each other through evolving processes are analyzed here.

4.5.3 Contextual Adaptability and Normative Caution

The third topic considers the moral and operational aspects of implementing gender-sensitive GCED in culturally and politically diverse settings. A major issue here is the tension between advocating for “universal” capabilities such as democracy, peace, and participation, and respecting cultural differences and self-determination. Although the CA is inherently normative, it also requires sensitivity to local meanings and practices, drawing on Nussbaum's (2011) concept of “normative judgement without imposition”. This part later connects pedagogically grounded components with the idea of avoiding cultural imperialism. The question that arises is: How can informal learning spaces and diverse community knowledge systems complement formal education in promoting peace and genuine gender equality, particularly in contexts where structural inequality is deeply rooted?

5 Data Collection

Having outlined the main concepts as well as the theoretical and methodological framework guiding this thesis, the following chapter presents the concrete data collection process, including the selection of participants, interview design, and ethical considerations.

5.1 Data Collection Methods

The thesis adopts a qualitative approach, combining semi-structured expert interviews and document-based policy analysis to explore the potential of gender-responsive GCED to contribute to sustainable peacebuilding processes through transformative education. Using this multi-source strategy helps to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of how GCED operates in practical educational contexts, highlighting the viewpoints that offer valuable insights and those that might be overlooked.

5.1.1 Expert Interviews

For the empirical component of this master's thesis, seven semi-structured expert interviews were conducted via Zoom from April 1 to April 29, 2025. The subjects of the interviews were selected based on their academic, experiential, and activist expertise around the concept of GCED, and each of them had a specific focus with a corresponding subtheme, but not necessarily GCED. The group of interview participants included seven professionals with distinct yet overlapping areas of expertise in peace education, GCED, feminist and postcolonial theory, critical pedagogy, and international relations. Their backgrounds are rooted in academia, activism, civil society, and international collaboration, providing varied insights into

education for peace, justice, and transformation. These semi-structured online interviews with experts, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, form the empirical basis of the thesis's research. They provide valuable insights from practitioners and academics, offering a significant addition to the perspectives revealed in policy documents and other relevant literature. The sample included individuals from both Western and non-Western nations, spanning a wide range of ages, backgrounds, life experiences, and narratives. The aim was to include a diverse range of perspectives to avoid focusing solely on “the single story” told from a privileged perspective.

Interviewee I1 is a professor of peace and development studies at a university in Sweden, from India. Her academic focus lies at the intersection of feminism, gender, postcolonialism, and conflict, with particular attention being paid to development issues in South Asia. Her research engages with themes such as the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, the role of culture and religion in global politics, sexual violence in peace and war, and racialized dynamics within international aid structures.

Interviewee I2 is a feminist researcher, activist, artist, entrepreneur, and writer based in India whose work spans women's issues, peace and security, decolonial healing justice, and feminist foreign policy. She advises various multilateral initiatives on feminist international relations and founded a civilian peacebuilding initiative focused on gender equality through storytelling, advocacy, and education. Her work focuses on two main areas: local community engagement and international policy processes.

Interviewee I3 is a research associate in general education at a German university. Her work centers on democracy education, global learning, and the cultural dimensions of pedagogical professionalism. Her research interests include international comparative education, migration studies, global justice, and school development, particularly regarding diversity and structural inequality in education systems.

Interviewee I4 is the managing director of a civil society organization committed to communication, development, and dialogical education. She also coordinates a postgraduate program in Global Citizenship Education at the university level. Based in a German-speaking region of Europe, she participates in national education networks and chairs a strategic working group on GCED. Her areas of expertise include peace education, cultural peace studies, transdisciplinary approaches to global learning, and the role of literature in transnational civic education.

Interviewee I5 is a professor and the UNESCO Chair in GCED in Higher Education at a European university. He is also on the board of a doctoral program in philosophy, science, cognition, and semiotics. His scholarly work connects GCED with philosophical inquiry and social pedagogy, placing strong emphasis on ethics, critical thinking, and the theoretical foundations of global education frameworks.

Interviewee I6 is a lecturer and researcher at a university institute for educational research and teacher education in Austria. His areas of expertise include innovation-oriented educational administration, the digital transformation of learning environments, diversity-sensitive media education, and human rights education. His current work integrates GCED and ESD with democracy education and peace and conflict studies, emphasizing methodological innovation in teacher training.

Interviewee I7 is a doctoral researcher and lecturer with a migration background from the Kurdish region who holds a leading university chair in European and international politics. Her research is centered on theories of international relations, with a particular emphasis on feminist international relations, gender and security, terrorism and political violence, and feminist peace studies. She thoughtfully examines how gender influences global security debates and their effects on educational practices and curricula.

The interviewees offered insights from academic research and real-world experience, adding depth to the conversation with diverse ways of thinking, local knowledge, and ideas from multiple fields.

Table 2 / Interviewee Overview Information Table

Pseudonym	Discipline / Role	Region / Country Focus	Expertise / Research Focus	Age Range (approx.)	Gender	Interview Duration
I1	Feminist Peace & Development Studies Professor	Europe / Global South / South Asia / India	Postcolonial Feminism, Critical Security Studies, Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Culture and Religion in Global Politics,	40-50	Female	40 mins

Pseudonym	Discipline / Role	Region / Country Focus	Expertise / Research Focus	Age Range (approx.)	Gender	Interview Duration
			Sexual Violence in Peace & War, Dynamics within International Aid			
I2	Feminist Activist, Writer & Educator	South Asia / Global South / India	Gender, Decolonial Educational Practice, Women, Peace, and Security & Feminist Foreign Policy	30-40	Female	30 mins
I3	Research Associate in Educational Sciences	DACH region / Europe	Democracy Education, Diversity, Teacher Training, Global Learning, Internationally Comparative Education, Migration Studies, Questions of Global Justice, School Development & Structural Inequality in Education System	50-60	Female	30 mins
I4	Education Expert, NGO Managing Director & GCED Coordinator at University level	DACH region / Europe / Global	Global Learning, GCED, Curriculum Development, Policy-Practice Transfer, Peace Studies & Literature in Transnational Civic Education	50-60	Female	60 mins
I5	Professor of Philosophy & UNESCO Chair of GCED	Europe / Global / North Africa (MENA Region)	GCED, Philosophy, Research & Evaluation Methods, International Education	50-60	Male	30 mins

Pseudonym	Discipline / Role	Region / Country Focus	Expertise / Research Focus	Age Range (approx.)	Gender	Interview Duration
			Frameworks, Critical Thinking, Science, Cognition & Semiotics			
I6	Lecturer & Professor in Educational Theory / Research	DACH region / Europe	Teacher Education, Epistemological Critique in Education, Innovation-oriented Educational Management, Digital Transformation of Learning Environments, Diversity-sensitive Media Education & ESD	40-50	Male	40 mins
I7	Intersectional Feminist & International Relation Researcher	DACH region / Europe / MENA Region / International	Feminist International Relations, Gender & Global Security, Decoloniality, Terrorism & Political Violence	30-40	Female	35 mins

The questions explored key dimensions of gender-responsive GCED in peacebuilding contexts, drawing on the participants' expertise. However, various factors were considered, such as time constraints, the specifics of the research focus, the interviewees' professional backgrounds, the natural progression of the conversation, and ethical considerations relating to dialogue dynamics. Consequently, not all questions were articulated precisely or in their original sequence. Instead, the guide served as a flexible reference tool. Questions were adapted as needed to align with the interviewee's expertise, encourage open dialogue, and ensure relevance to the main research themes. In doing so, qualitative research ethics and conversational integrity were upheld. Additionally, the interviews were conducted in the interviewees' preferred

language. Native German speakers were interviewed in German, and all others participated in English.²

Table 3 / Expert Interviews: Thematic Overview & Guideline Interview Questions

Thematic Section	Focus of the Section	Guiding Interview Questions
1. Introduction: Personal Perspective on GCED & Peace Education	Explore the interviewee's personal view and relevance of GCED and peace education within their field of work	1.1 What is the role of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) or Peace Education in your academic discipline or professional practice? Which aspects do you consider particularly important? 1.2 What societal challenges can be addressed through educational programmes in your discipline? Do you see particular opportunities or obstacles? 1.3 Are there any current academic or practice-oriented discourses that particularly influence your view of education and peacebuilding?
2. Education & Competencies for Sustainable Peacebuilding	Identify relevant competencies or skills and their promotion through educational processes	2.1 What competencies – whether from a psychological, pedagogical, sociological or political perspective – are essential for peaceful societies? 2.2 How can education specifically contribute to the promotion of these competencies? What specific methods or strategies do you know from your discipline? 2.3 Are there any research results or

² At this juncture, it is pertinent to acknowledge the potential for variations in the outcomes within the domain of mother tongue linguistics when English, functioning as a working and second language, affects the responses of the interviewees. In the interest of fostering a decolonially oriented mindset, it would be more appropriate to conduct the interviews in the subjects' respective mother tongues. Unfortunately, this was not possible within this sample and research process.

Thematic Section	Focus of the Section	Guiding Interview Questions
		examples from your practice that show which educational or psychological approaches are particularly effective?
3. Science vs. Practice – Discrepancies & Challenges	Highlight differences between academic theory and real-world application	3.1 Are there aspects of GCED or peacebuilding that play a greater role in practice than in science – or vice versa? 3.2 Do you have any examples from your field that show where theory and practice diverge?
4. Power Relations & Structural Inequalities in Education	Discuss the impact of power dynamics, intersectionality and privilege in education	4.1 What role do social categories such as gender, social background, ethnicity or other affiliations play in the establishment and implementation of GCED? 4.2 Do you see other existing power relations within GCED that should be questioned? Can you give examples? 4.3 How can gender-sensitive and decolonial perspectives contribute to reducing structural inequalities through education? Do you know of any programmes or initiatives that are pioneering in this area?
5. GCED and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Examine links between GCED and the SDG agenda	5.1 How do the SDGs influence the development and implementation of GCED programs? Are there examples from your area of expertise that show links between these two areas? 5.2 What overlaps do you see between GCED and other global education and development goals?

Thematic Section	Focus of the Section	Guiding Interview Questions
6. Alternative Knowledge Systems and Educational Concepts	Explore non-western or community-rooted educational concepts	6.1 Are you familiar with educational approaches based on alternative knowledge systems (e.g. indigenous educational concepts, narrative history tradition, community-based learning)? 6.2 What is the potential of these alternative approaches for GCED? Do you see any challenges in their practical implementation?
7. Geopolitical & Cultural Contexts in the Implementation of GCED	Investigate how local context affects GCED implementation	7.1 To what extent do political and cultural contexts influence the implementation of gender-sensitive GCED? 7.2 What are the challenges of integrating gender and decolonial perspectives into different education systems? 7.3 What strategies or methods can be used to overcome these challenges? 7.4 Can you identify case studies that can be considered as 'best practice'?
8. Effectiveness of GCED Programs & Evaluation Methods	Evaluate how impact and effectiveness of GCED programs are measured	8.1 How do you assess the effectiveness of GCED as a concept in your field and from your professional perspective? 8.2 How can the success of such programs be measured? Are there established or innovative evaluation methods that you consider useful in this context? 8.3 What are the challenges of measuring the social and emotional learning processes that GCED aims to promote?

Thematic Section	Focus of the Section	Guiding Interview Questions
9. Epistemological & Methodological Perspectives on GCED	Critically reflect on research paradigms and alternative approaches	9.1 What critical perspectives are needed to develop GCED beyond western educational paradigms? 9.2 Can you give examples of alternative knowledge concepts or research approaches that could contribute to such a development of GCED?
10. Responsibility & Prospects	Identify responsibilities, actors, and potential for future GCED development	10.1 Who should bear the main responsibility for the further development of GCED – and why? 10.2 Do these responsibilities differ according to regional or disciplinary contexts? 10.3 What is the role of educational institutions, policy makers, civil society organizations and local communities in this process? 10.4 Are there aspects or issues that are not given enough attention in the current debates on education and peace? 10.5 Where do you see the greatest development potential for GCED in the coming years?

To identify recurring patterns, tensions, and discrepancies between narratives and their implementation in practice, the data is coded thematically according to the principles of Mayring's (2015) qualitative content analysis. During this process, particular attention is given to how participants conceptualize and discuss the so-called “peacebuilding competencies” and other GCED-related terms that occur. Additionally, the analysis explores the extent to which these competencies have or have not been integrated into educational settings that orient towards or use GCED approaches. Critiques of current curricula and frameworks that may inadvertently reproduce neoliberal or Western-centric standards, as mentioned by Stein et al. (2023) in their studies, are also addressed in this broad reflection.

5.1.2 Policy Documents

Another step in the research process for this thesis involves analyzing existing documents on the most relevant subject areas. These include educational policies, best practices, international frameworks, and institutional reports. To provide additional insights into the subject matter, these complement the interviews. This methodology will facilitate research into the conceptualization and incorporation of GCED at the policy level, including its association with gender, decolonization, and peace objectives. Primary sources include UN/UNESCO publications, SDG implementation plans, and various international policy documents integrating GCED into educational strategies. The master's thesis will also draw on literature related to transformative education and peacebuilding from gender and decolonial perspectives.

To guarantee analytical clarity and theoretical consistency, the present thesis focuses on a selection of key policy documents that are frequently referenced by academics and experts within their respective articles or books. The following table lists these texts, which provide a foundation for the current state of research and the primary objectives of concepts such as GCED, gender equality, peace(-building), global politics, sustainability, diversity, and decolonial practice within international frameworks and policies.

Table 4: Overview of Main Policy Documents for the Analyzing Process

Author / Organization / Title	Description	Key Topics
UNESCO. (2015). <i>Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action</i> . Paris: UNESCO.	Framework outlining implementation of SDG 4, with emphasis on GCED, gender equality, and sustainable development	SDG 4, GCED, ESD, gender, education policy
UNESCO. (2015). <i>Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives</i> . Paris: UNESCO.	Provides conceptual framework and practical guidance for GCED implementation	GCED, competencies, pedagogy, human rights
UNESCO. (2016). <i>Education 2030 Framework for Action</i> . Paris: UNESCO.	Action plan for realizing SDG 4, focusing on inclusive and equitable	SDG 4, policy implementation, equity, lifelong learning

Author / Organization / Title	Description	Key Topics
	quality education and lifelong learning	
United Nations. (2019). <i>Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security</i> . New York: UN.	Foundational UN resolution integrating gender perspectives in peace processes and conflict resolution	WPS agenda, peacebuilding, gender, security
UNESCO. (2021). <i>Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development</i> . Paris: UNESCO.	Advocates for transformative education that promotes peace, human rights, and sustainability	Peace education, human rights, SDGs, pedagogy
UNESCO. (2021a). <i>Citizenship Education as a Peacebuilding Tool</i> . Paris: UNESCO.	Highlights CED's potential in fostering peace and rebuilding post-conflict societies	Peacebuilding, CED, civic engagement
UNESCO. (2021b). <i>Gender and Peacebuilding Training for Primary School Teachers: Training Manual</i> . Paris: UNESCO.	Teacher training manual for integrating gender and peace perspectives in primary education	Gender pedagogy, peace education, early education
UN Women. (2022). <i>Gender Equality and Education</i> . Retrieved from: https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/education	Explains the critical links between gender equality, education, and empowerment	Gender, education, equity, empowerment
UNESCO. (2002). <i>Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS)</i> . Retrieved from: https://www.unesco.org/en/links	Program supporting the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in sustainable development and education	Indigenous knowledge, sustainability, epistemic diversity
UNESCO. (2018). <i>UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples</i> . Paris: UNESCO.	Defines guidelines for Indigenous participation and recognition in education policy	Indigenous rights, participation, decolonial education

Author / Organization / Title	Description	Key Topics
UNESCO. (2005/2021). <i>Basic Texts of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2021 ed.)</i> . Paris: UNESCO.	Legal framework promoting cultural diversity and equitable access to cultural life	Cultural rights, diversity, identity, expression
UNESCO-APCEIU. (2020). <i>SangSaeng: How Can GCED Promote Gender Equality?</i> Seoul: UNESCO APCEIU.	Journal issue exploring practical and theoretical connections between GCED and gender equality	GCED, gender equality, classroom practices, Asia-Pacific

The selection of the policy documents was guided by three interrelated criteria. Firstly, the frequency with which the documents appeared in academic and policy-oriented research, as well as their overall influence. Secondly, the relevance of the papers to the qualitative interview data. The third point to consider was how they align with the overarching research questions of this master's thesis. Therefore, analyzing these pre-selected main documents provides an overview of the systemic opportunities and constraints that influence the design of GCED concepts in different educational settings around the world. The extent to which such frameworks reflect a critical and inclusive understanding of the related subject areas is also examined.

The listed main documents are also closely intersected by the theoretical lenses that structure this thesis, particularly the CA and poststructuralist critique. On one hand, several of the texts (e.g., the UNESCO Incheon Declaration (2015), the Gender and Peacebuilding Training Manual (2021), and UN Women's Gender Equality and Education report (2022)) reflect a shared commitment to learner agency, the expansion of human dignity, and inclusive educational spaces. These priorities are in line with Nussbaum's (2011) CA focus on substantive freedoms, equity, and the situated development of human potential. On the other hand, documents such as SDG Target 4.7, the UNESCO Indigenous Knowledge Policy (2022), and the UN Resolution on Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (2019) also illustrate how normative frameworks can be shaped by global discourses of power, knowledge, and legitimacy, making them especially productive sites for poststructuralist critique.

However, this selection of documents has its limitations, and it is important to reflect critically on its composition. Most of the included texts originate from United Nations bodies or affiliated organizations, such as UNESCO or UN Women. This indicates not only the supremacy of the UN system in global educational policymaking but also the lack of comparable, authoritative international frameworks that systematically address GCED, gender, peace, and decolonization. While this practical limitation partly justifies the document selection, it also raises important questions about the risk of reinforcing a narrow, Western-centric vision of thinking that privileges Eurocentric norms and might exclude other perspectives. Such considerations emphasize the importance of adopting a poststructuralist mindset that analyses not only the content of documents, but also how they are expressed, the narratives they amplify or silence, and the underlying ideological assumptions that inform their formulation. Nevertheless, these main documents are not regarded as definitive or all-encompassing in this thesis. Instead, the perspectives of interview participants and the broader body of critical literature that interrogates and reclaims such sources provide a broader and more nuanced interpretation. It is important to note that some academics, particularly those with feminist, decolonial, and Global South viewpoints and experiences, do not simply accept those prevailing principles unquestioningly. Rather, they interrogate and reclaim some of the content to create space for a more varied conception of education and its related topics. Therefore, through dialogic interpretation alongside interview data and intersectional literature, these texts are situated within a broader spectrum of educational debates that seek to redefine concepts of education as dynamic, contested, and potentially emancipatory practices rather than just tools of global governance.

6 Analysis

This chapter provides an empirical analysis of the selected policy frameworks and educational models, employing the WPR approach developed by Bacchi (2009). The analysis proceeds in three steps: First, the WPR approach is applied to policy frameworks and educational models in Section 6.1, with selected primary documents (listed in Chapter 5.1.2) being used as a basis. The second section provides context for GCED by referencing country-specific examples. This is followed by Section 6.3, which highlights the transcribed findings from expert interviews. The objective of these steps is to expose both the representations and silences that are inherent in the prevailing discourses and implementation practices of GCED.

6.1 Analysis of Policy Frameworks and Educational Models

Section 6.1 uses Bacchi's (2009) WPR method to examine how gender, peace, inclusiveness, SDGs, and global citizenship are constructed and framed in policy papers on the global level. In line with the thesis's poststructuralist orientation, policies are not treated as neutral entities, but as discursive constructions that determine what counts as legitimate knowledge and desirable action in GCED. This analysis primarily addresses SQ1 (WPR on policy texts).

6.1.1 SDGs and GCED

In the selected policy documents examined for this thesis, GCED is prominently positioned within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, most explicitly in Target 4.7 of SDG4. This target, as articulated in the Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2015), commits signatories to ensuring that “*all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity*” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 20). The subsequent Education 2030 Framework for Action operationalizes this vision, positioning GCED as a central tool for achieving global sustainability (in terms of ecology) and peace (in terms of the absence of war). Complementing these overarching frameworks, Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives (UNESCO, 2015) outlines a competency-based approach, emphasizing specific knowledge, tools, skills, values, and attitudes that learners are expected to develop to contribute to the SDGs meaningfully (UNESCO, 2015).

From a WPR perspective (Bacchi, 2009), the “problem” represented in these documents is framed as a global deficit in certain competencies, attitudes, and viewpoints that are named essential for such peaceful and sustainable societies. Education, in this framing, is seen as a neutral and universally applicable mechanism for addressing systemic social, political, economic, and environmental challenges. This assumption is particularly evident in the prescriptive competency frameworks of Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives (UNESCO, 2015), which construct the “ideal” global citizen as a subject equipped with the “right” attitudes and dispositions, without necessarily accounting for the diverse socio-political contexts in which these learners live. This representation reflects what Andreotti (2011) has described as “soft” GCED, focused on tolerance, intercultural dialogue, and behavioral change, while often marginalizing “critical” forms of GCED that engage directly with structural violence, historical injustices, and epistemic hierarchies (Andreotti, 2011).

Similarly, Unterhalter et al. (2020) and Bamberger (2022) caution that depoliticized framings tend to prioritize individual transformation over collective action or systemic reform. Therefore, critiques are reinforced when analyzing policy silence surrounding colonial legacies, global economic dependency, and North–South asymmetries. These issues are largely absent from, or mentioned only briefly in, both the Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015) and the Education 2030 Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2016). The absence of explicit engagement with or dismantling of power structures is particularly evident in how gender equality is treated. While it is presented as one of the core aims of Target 4.7 and reiterated in Gender Equality and Education (UN Women, 2022) and Gender and Peacebuilding Training for Primary School Teachers: Training Manual (UNESCO, 2021b), the dominant approach remains focused on measurable indicators, such as enrolment, access, or participation of women* and girls*, rather than the systemic reconfiguration of gendered power relations. Through Bacchi’s WPR lens, this constitutes a “silence” in which structural and intersectional dimensions of gender inequality are underrepresented, thereby narrowing the scope for feminist, decolonial pedagogical strategies. A similar restriction can be observed regarding epistemic diversity. Although the UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples (2018) and the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems programme (2002) promote the integration of Indigenous perspectives, these commitments remain largely peripheral to the core competency frameworks of GCED. As Gough (2018) and Bosio (2022) point out, this is an example of how dominant Northern epistemologies are favored in global education policy, even in supposedly inclusive models.

6.1.2 Decolonial and Alternative Approaches

Building on the analysis of GCED within SDG frameworks, this section now examines how decolonial and alternative approaches are mentioned, represented, or marginalized in the analyzed policy corpus. Applying Bacchi’s (2009) WPR framework, the analysis asks: What “problems” are represented to be in these documents? What assumptions underpin this representation? And what is left unproblematic or absent?

Several documents address epistemic diversity and Indigenous perspectives, including the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) Programme (UNESCO, 2002/2023), the Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples (UNESCO, 2018), and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005/2021). These frameworks position the “problem” as the historical marginalization and

underrepresentation of Indigenous and local knowledge systems in education policy and practice. Their proposed “solution” is the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives through consultative processes, culturally responsive curricula, and the overall protection of cultural rights and knowledge or tradition (UNESCO, 2002/2023; UNESCO 2018; UNESCO 2005/2021). This representation assumes that including alternative, Indigenous, or decolonial policies, primarily through their recognition and integration into existing educational structures, is sufficient to address systemic epistemic inequalities.

From a WPR perspective, this framing leaves several dimensions unproblematicized. For example, it often treats Indigenous knowledge as a complementary “add-on” to existing curricula or learning spaces rather than as a transformative foundation for rethinking GCED’s epistemological base. While the LINKS programme (UNESCO, 2002/2023) explicitly promotes the interlinkage between Indigenous knowledge and sustainable development, and the Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples (UNESCO, 2018) calls for their active participation in policy processes, neither fundamentally questions the global governance structures and Eurocentric knowledge hierarchies through which education is defined. This mirrors the broader critique of Battiste (2013) and Smith (2012), who both argue that the mere act of including without considering the wider context risks perpetuating rather than dismantling epistemic domination. Fricker’s (2007) notion of epistemic injustice is also relevant here: By failing to center Indigenous epistemologies as equal systems of knowledge production, such policies may perpetuate testimonial and hermeneutical marginalization. Furthermore, while the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005/2021) acknowledges the cultural specificity of educational goods and practices, its implementation guidelines remain largely framed within market-oriented and standardized evaluation systems. As McKinley & Smith (2019) point out, a truly decolonial approach goes beyond adaptation of global indicators to local contexts, instead focusing on the co-construction of indicators based on relationality, local learning, and community-defined concepts of success (McKinley & Smith, 2019).

6.1.3 The Role of Gender

Following the analysis of GCED within SDG frameworks and its treatment of epistemic diversity, this section examines how gender is represented in the analyzed policy documents. Again, applying Bacchi’s (2009) WPR framework, the analysis identifies the “problem” as it is constructed in key gender-related policy documents and evaluates the assumptions and silences embedded in this certain way of representation.

Documents such as Gender Equality and Education (UN Women, 2022), Gender and Peacebuilding Training for Primary School Teachers: Training Manual (UNESCO, 2021b), and Citizenship Education as a Peacebuilding Tool (UNESCO, 2021a) consistently frame gender inequality as a clear barrier to peace, *development*, learning, and civic participation – therefore also being an active citizen with personal rights and goals. The proposed “solutions” focus on integrating gender-sensitive pedagogies, providing teacher training as well as materials on gender-responsive peace education, and embedding intersectional awareness into curricula of schools or universities. This representation assumes that education, if sufficiently inclusive and participatory – especially for women* and girls* –, can function as a transformative tool to dismantle gendered inequalities within the patriarchal tendencies of our world.

However, this framing also carries significant assumptions: Firstly, it positions education as a neutral and inherently well-intentioned space, overlooking the possibility that educational systems themselves may reproduce patriarchal or binary gender norms. As Davies and Bentrovato (2011) highlight in their synthesis report on education and fragility, Western-framed schooling might reinforce conflict dynamics, exclusion, and structural inequalities, thereby underlining the “dark” role of education in fragile contexts (UNESCO-IIEP, 2011). Secondly, it implies that gender inequality is a universally similar experience for every woman* and girl*, addressable through standardized strategies such as global training manuals or competency frameworks. While these instruments aim to promote mutual respect and socio-emotional skills (often for men* and boys* to “learn”), they mostly rely on liberal-feminist notions of empowerment that prioritize individual behavioral change over systemic transformation (Bamberger, 2022; Anderson, 2019). At this point, the WPR analysis highlights what remains unproblematized: Structural drivers of gender inequality, such as militarized social or societal orders, economic dependency, or institutional sexism, are rarely named or addressed explicitly in the policy texts. As Nguyen (2024) and Ní Aoláin et al. (2011) add, gender-responsive education must be linked to broader peacebuilding efforts that do not merely integrate women*’s and girl*’s viewpoints and life-experiences into existing frameworks but actively transform the underlying, often hidden, power relations. Intersectional perspectives from Dill & Zambrana (2020) further emphasize that gender as a construct cannot be disentangled from *race*, class, caste, coloniality, and ability, yet such dimensions are sometimes not connected in the operational frameworks of the analyzed documents. A further tension emerges in the reliance on measurable participation rates and access indicators when it comes to evaluating gender equality in educational institutions. While these statistics have their importance, they risk flattening the complexity of gendered experiences and marginalizing culturally embedded,

collective strategies for emancipation. That is the reason why Noddings (2013) and Anderson (2019) argue for pedagogies that combine cognitive, affective, and relational practices, such as empathy, critical consciousness, and emotional literacy, recognizing that peace and justice – particularly for women* and girls* - are not cognitive achievements but lived and relational processes on a local community-based level.

As the next section will show, the regional implementation of these ideas differs significantly. Therefore, an examination of GCED applications in selected world regions follows, aiming to contextualize and test how these problem representations play out in lived educational settings.

6.2 GCED Contextualized: The Case of Three Countries

To explore how GCED is constructed and contested in different regional contexts, this thesis employs a comparative case study of three countries: Tunisia, India, and Austria. The sampling strategy is based on purposeful selection, with each case study representing a different world region: The MENA region (Tunisia), South Asia (India), and Western Europe (Austria). These three countries were introduced earlier in the Introduction and further referenced in Chapters 3 and 4 as illustrative examples that ground the theoretical and methodological considerations in concrete educational settings. They are now explored in greater depth to inform the empirical analysis and provide contextualized insights for the subsequent interpretation of findings. Through this approach, the thesis critically examines how GCED frameworks are shaped by historical legacies, political institutions, gender norms, culture, caste, and former or current epistemic hierarchies. This multi-regional comparative analysis serves multiple critical purposes: Firstly, it facilitates the identification of patterns and differences in the translation of global policy into local practice. Secondly, the selected countries differ in terms of their educational traditions, feminist histories, and decolonial backgrounds, providing valuable insight into socio-political factors that may influence the interpretation of GCED. Thirdly, all three countries are currently engaged in processes of establishing, reforming, or innovating civic and global education. Together, these factors enable the thesis to trace emerging tensions between normative ideals and institutional realities. At the core of this regional contextualization lies the question of how decolonial thinking and its challenges to universalist approaches to knowledge and citizenship find resonance within each context. The focus is on examining how GCED ideals are embraced – or not – in different political and historical contexts. This country-by-country comparison addresses the methodological focus of the thesis

directly, since the WPR approach allows for the deconstruction of GCED programmes in all three cases. By contrast, the CA provides a normative evaluation of the freedom-expanding potential of some of the mentioned GCED initiatives in different national and societal contexts.

6.2.1 MENA-Region: The Case of Tunisia

According to Ouanada (2020), the discussions surrounding citizenship and GCED in Tunisia are inherently connected to the nation's democratization process and the status of women*. After gaining independence in 1956, Tunisia initiated a process of cultural modernization, particularly concerning women*'s rights, while maintaining a political system characterized by authoritarian rule until 2010. The 2011 Jasmine Revolution, also driven by youth and women*, was a call for democracy and gender equality, but at the same time tensions between secular and religious visions of citizenship increased and they reflect the deeper struggles to define something like a “national identity” in the face of globalization, international influence and colonial past (Ouanada, 2020, pp. 125-126).

Ouanada (2020) traces Tunisia's feminist roots back to ancient times and attributes them to the mythical founding of Carthage by Elissa, an early symbol of female leadership. Despite patriarchal reinterpretations, women* have historically held economic and religious roles, shaping a legacy of resistance and care. This pattern of resistance continued with Tahar Haddad, whose 1930 demand for women*'s emancipation through education influenced the 1956 Code of Personal Status (CPS), a fundamental document in Tunisia's gender rights framework (pp. 126-129). Following Tunisia's independence, President Bourguiba implemented several reforms, including the 1956 Code of Personal Status, and although he is often credited with these changes, they were shaped by women* who were active in the struggle for independence. However, Bourguiba's reforms also served to centralize authoritarian control and limit democratic participation (pp. 130-131). Later, under Ben Ali, the CPS was managed by the state, and gender equality laws were ratified, though ambiguously, balancing modernist and Islamist pressures without fully committing to feminist goals. In response, the 1970s saw the rise of autonomous groups that challenged patriarchal structures and state co-optation, such as the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD), which rejected patriarchal norms and the idea that women*'s rights are granted by the state (pp. 131-132). Following the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, feminist activism evolved; however, tensions escalated as some Islamist parties advocated for conservative reforms. In response, civil society fought back to protect the non-religious achievements of the CPS, and women*'s participation in civil society expanded,

especially through the formation of associations and digital networks that offered alternative spaces to challenge patriarchal structures (Ouanada, 2020). Despite ideological divisions between progressive and conservative women's groups, some promoting universal rights and others embracing Islamic feminism, both sought to assert their influence in the public sphere. Progressive feminists have advocated for gender balance in electoral lists, thereby achieving a notable female presence in parliament; yet women continue to face exclusion from top political positions and leadership roles due to structural and cultural biases (Ouanada, 2020).

To mention here, the 2014 Tunisian Constitution signifies a major step forward in establishing gender equality as a fundamental institutional principle. Building on the 1959 Constitution, it explicitly enshrines equal rights and duties for men and women without discrimination (Art. 21) and commits to protecting and advancing women's rights (UNDP, 2018). Key provisions include guarantees for equal political participation (Art. 34), fair employment conditions (Art. 40), protection from violence (Art. 46), and the pursuit of gender equality in elected bodies. The constitution also establishes that ratified international agreements supersede domestic laws (Art. 20) and ensures that human rights protections cannot be restricted beyond what is necessary for a democratic state (UNDP, 2018, Art. 49). Nevertheless, gender-based discrimination in employment and increasing unemployment among highly educated women persist, thereby widening the gender gap. Although legal reforms, such as protections against violence and marriage rights, have been introduced, conservatives have blocked more controversial reforms like the equality of inheritance rights (Présidence du Gouvernement Tunisien et al., 2017).

Concerning incorporating GCED into youth and higher education policy frameworks, Tunisia is taking a leading role in establishing these kinds of initiatives, occasionally with a particular emphasis on gender equality and fostering democracy. Several recent programs, which were often developed in cooperation with European and international institutions, exemplify these efforts. Therefore, an analytical overview of four key initiatives is provided in this section, which lays the groundwork for a critical examination of their orientations to be examined in the next chapter.

- (1) The Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship (MedUni) is a prime example of a GCED initiative in the region. Established in 2013 by the Council of Europe's North-South Centre, in collaboration with Tunisia's National Youth

Observatory, the MedUni functions as a multi-stakeholder forum aimed at fostering youth engagement in democratic participation as well as intercultural dialogue across the Euro-Mediterranean region. Its objectives include the building of capacity for youth organizations, the strengthening of civic responsibility, and the creation of transnational networks for shared policy reflection (Council of Europe North-South Centre, 2024).

- (2) The 2023 Intensive Course in Global Citizenship Education, held at IHEC Carthage, offers a more targeted pedagogical intervention. This one-week training program, organized by UNESCO Maghreb in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair on GCED in Higher Education (University of Bologna), aims to integrate transformative GCED methodologies into higher education practice. The program brings together graduate students from Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and Italy and emphasizes the use of participatory pedagogy to address issues such as sustainability, diversity, and human rights. The course also encourages hands-on learning by working with local NGOs and is in line with UNESCO's overall plan to incorporate GCED into formal and informal educational settings (UNESCO Maghreb, University of Bologna, & IHEC Carthage, 2023).
- (3) The UNITWIN Network for Transformative Education in Arab-European Higher Education is a structural initiative through which GCED and ESD are being institutionalized in Tunisia's teacher education. The network was developed under the auspices of UNESCO's UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, and the aim of the network is for GCED and ESD principles to be embedded into university curricula in Tunisia as well as across Europe. The specific objectives of the initiative include the joint design of teacher training modules, the promotion of cross-cultural academic mobility, and the formulation of evidence-based policy recommendations for ministries of education. The University of Bologna, IHEC Carthage, and the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education are among the core institutional partners (European Union & Council of Europe, 2022-2025).
- (4) Another notable example is AFS Tunisia's Global Citizenship Education program, which is designed to empower individuals and communities from the ground up. Since 2015, a range of student exchange and intercultural dialogue activities have been operated by AFS Tunisia, with a focus on values of empathy, gender role awareness, and inclusive civic engagement. These programs not only facilitate North-South student mobility but also engage local educators in training modules designed to promote intercultural communication as well as gender-sensitive pedagogy. AFS Tunisia's GCE

initiative has also been recognized by UNESCO and is being implemented in partnership with European schools and civil society organizations (AFS Tunisia, 2025).

These four initiatives are important steps toward institutionalizing GCED and gender-sensitive pedagogy in Tunisia. However, they also raise critical questions about inherent power imbalances in educational development in the MENA region. In her evaluation of global "capacity building" workshops in Tunis, Malek Lakhal (2020) argues that such initiatives often operate under the epistemological and financial oversight of NGOs or other initiatives from the Global North that are framed as "educational," "progressive," or "empowering." She claims that, despite their intended aim of local empowerment, these programs might reinforce deficit-based and Western-centric viewpoints that present local groups as lacking knowledge, initiative, or modernity. Lakhal (2020) also claims that methods intended to raise awareness of structural oppression frequently align with the principles of civic agency and neoliberalism, both of which prioritize self-responsibility and individual productivity. This critique is particularly relevant when considering the framing and promotion of GCED programmes as well as gender equality discourses in Tunisia. Although these initiatives formally advocate for participatory and more inclusive education, they may (un-)intentionally reproduce hegemonic knowledge systems of countries from the Global North while marginalizing local feminist or culture-based decolonial perspectives. Considering Lakhal's observations, the question is whether GCED programs in Tunisia genuinely promote emancipatory practices firmly rooted in local realities or if they serve as instruments of soft power that perpetuate historical disparities between the Global North and Global South (Lakhal, 2020).

6.2.2 South Asia: The Case of India

British colonial rule in India had a significant impact on the development of education, particularly through the introduction of a Western-style education system that largely replaced the existing diverse Indian-Indigenous school system. This transformation began with Wood's Despatch of 1854, a policy document often regarded as foundational and like a national education strategy (Chaudhary, 2007). Although British educational policy formally placed a high priority on expanding primary education, it focused more on secondary and collegiate education. This was primarily a result of the colonial aim of fostering a small, English-educated elite who could act as administrators between British rulers and the native Indian population. The outcome was an education system that prioritized the upper classes, leaving out lower castes or other disadvantaged communities. Even though later statements were more in favor of mass education, the actual resources given to education remained mostly the same.

Therefore, by 1911, literacy rates were less than 10%, reflecting the systemic social exclusion that was part of the colonial education strategy at this time (Chaudhary, 2007, pp. 2-3). Until the Government of India Act of 1919, Indian elites had little influence over educational policy and lacked the promotion of widespread schooling. These upper-caste elites often viewed education to maintain their status rather than to uplift the broader Indian population. Empirical evidence from the 82-district dataset revealed this imbalance, demonstrating that social diversity, particularly concerning caste and religion, hurt the successful implementation of public schools (Chaudhary, 2007, pp. 25-26). In their research, Lahiri-Roy & Belford (2021) critically examine this lasting impact of these westernized, neo-colonial education approaches on the identity development and sense of empowerment of women* and girls* from postcolonial regions such as India. Their autoethnographic study shows how education can offer transnational privilege and access to education while at the same time leading to cultural dissociation and the unquestioned internalization of colonial and epistemic hierarchies (Lahiri-Roy & Belford, 2021).

Nasrina Siddiqui's 2021 research also offers valuable insights into India as a case study by providing context on gender inequality in Indian society. She explores this issue in India as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon that one cannot adequately assess through conventional quantitative metrics like workforce participation or educational enrollment alone. Instead, the author emphasizes the need for a culture-specific, phenomenological inquiry into how people understand and experience gender equality within the Indian socio-cultural context. Therefore, the study used interpretative phenomenological analysis of focus group discussions with 18 participants to reveal how patriarchal norms and biological essentialism continue to shape restrictive gender roles in postcolonial India. She found that gender disparities are a result of three key themes: Early socialization, institutional practices, and cultural narratives that emphasize biologically deterministic views contribute to the normalization of gender inequality. As a result, gender equality is often understood in narrow legal or policy terms, with deeper structural issues being overlooked (Siddiqui, 2021).

Thus, India offers an interesting case study for examining how colonial legacies, caste, gender inequalities, and ongoing efforts at educational reform influence GCED concepts. As a former British colony, India's education system continues to be influenced by structural aspects of colonialism, particularly in higher education (Chaudhary, 2007). Also, life-skills and values-based educational programmes targeting girls* in rural India, which are similar to the concepts

of GCED, are said to be affected by caste and gender hierarchies. Drawing on decolonial feminist perspectives, Arur & DeJaeghere's (2019) research shows that, despite advocating local empowerment, such programmes often neglect caste-based structural oppression in a gendered context. They emphasize that global discussions on gender equality can unwittingly mask local power dynamics (Arur & DeJaeghere, 2019) unless intersectional frameworks that prioritize caste and class are incorporated into some GCED initiatives. Alviar-Martín & Baildon (2023) later make another significant contribution to this discourse by examining the implementation of GCED in schools in various Asian contexts. They reveal that, despite being portrayed as globally oriented and justice-based, GCED is frequently embedded in long-standing colonial, western-centric, and market-driven rationales (pp. 2-13). Their research article highlights several empirical cases as examples that illustrate these tensions: Although some school-level practices in Taiwan and Singapore aim to engage with underrepresented perspectives, these practices often fail to address systemic power imbalances or promote real anti-oppressive pedagogies. By contrast, other case studies, such as those involving collaborations with Indigenous and Adivasi communities in the Philippines and India, demonstrate that another output of these programmes is possible. Alviar-Martin & Baildon (2023) discovered that some GCED initiatives in India have attempted to move beyond dominant neoliberal and postcolonial approaches by directly engaging with marginalized communities, particularly Indian Adivasi populations (pp. 12-13). The authors cite one notable example: The research of Dhuru & Thapliyal (2021), who critically examine Avehi-Abacus (AA), an Indian educational initiative, as a site of decolonial praxis within GCED. They argue that AA challenges the neoliberal or often humanitarian orientations present in mainstream GCED, which often treat diversity as a deficit and frame global citizenship through universalist deficit norms. AA, in contrast, places significant weight on the concept of "transnational literacies," encouraging participants to engage with local "silenced histories" by analyzing authentic data concerning caste, class, gender, and Indigenous marginalization (pp. 413-414). By including real-life examples and data about Dalits, Adivasis, women*, and rural poor people in classroom activities, AA helps students understand political issues and learn to critique the system (Dhuru & Thapliyal, 2021). Importantly, the Indian case contrasts with many other regional examples that remain entangled in "liberal-neoliberal-critical interfaces," where the rhetoric of global citizenship is present but critical engagement with power and history is minimal. Therefore, in the Indian context, the partnership with Adivasi communities has been identified to reframe GCED as a decolonial pedagogical tool because it transcends the hierarchy between the self and the other (Alviar-Martin & Baildon, 2023).

Like Tunisia, India has recently seen an increase in GCED programs for both policymakers and students. These programs exhibit a variety of approaches, ranging from intercultural capacity building to transformative pedagogies. The following list provides an analytical overview of four initiatives in the Indian context:

- (1) As part of the global AFS network, AFS India articulates a comprehensive GCED strategy that emphasizes intercultural exchange and ethical engagement. Its agenda includes promoting inclusive values, cultivating leadership capacities, and advancing SDG 4.7 outcomes, namely sustainable development, gender equality, and global citizenship. By integrating long-term volunteer exchanges and structured intercultural education programs, AFS aims to develop young citizens capable of critical reflection, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving (AFS India, 2025).
- (2) In collaboration with national stakeholders, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) organized a workshop in India to enhance institutional capacity for GCED. Educators and policymakers in the region are the target audience of this forum, which promotes the integration of GCED-aligned pedagogical approaches within the framework of SDG 4 (UNESCO APCEIU, 2022).
- (3) The Global Citizenship Foundation (GCF) has played a notable role in promoting GCED in Indian K-12 schools. In collaboration with Ahlcon International School in New Delhi, the GCF developed a comprehensive GCED strategy integrating SDG themes throughout the school. Key elements of this strategy include forming a Strategic Initiative Group (SIG), implementing project-based student challenges such as "100 Acts of Global Citizenship," and offering educator training modules tailored to each school (GCF, 2017).
- (4) The Avehi-Abacus (AA) Project (recently mentioned), a social justice-oriented GCED initiative established in 1990, operates through modules such as Saath-Saath (gender equity) and Sangati (environmental awareness). As a grassroots educational initiative in India, it focuses on strengthening public education for marginalized communities and is based on three principles: social justice, environmental sustainability, and transformative pedagogy. It has developed interdisciplinary teaching-learning modules to promote critical thinking and supplement formal curricula, and emphasizes both student engagement and teacher empowerment. The goal is to support equitable, value-based education. It also aims to influence national education policy (Avehi Abacus Project, 2018).

The four Indian cases demonstrate different levels of orientation, ranging from AFS and UNESCO's emphasis on intercultural and institutional aspects to GCF's curriculum-wide, project-based GCED, and Avehi's socio-political, justice-driven pedagogy.

6.2.3 Europe / The West: The Case of Austria

Austria, as the only Western country example in this thesis, has a well-established civic and peace education infrastructure through which a structurally embedded and policy-driven model of GCED has evolved. Since the implementation of "Politische Bildung" as a cross-curricular principle in 1978, GCED-relevant content has been tried to be incorporated into Austrian schooling with an emphasis on democratic participation, human rights, civic responsibility, and also global awareness (BMUKK, 2013; BMBWF, 2015). In line with many other international frameworks and Western countries, Austria has integrated SDG 4.7 into national policy and the European Education Area, implemented in 2017, further establishing global and intercultural learning as integral parts of the national educational plan (European Commission, 2017).

Furthermore, civil society actors have played a crucial role in implementing GCED and addressing inconsistencies in curricular praxis, particularly about gender and decolonial issues. For instance, the NGO Südwind has developed GCED materials and programs that explicitly address gender (in-)justice in the Global South and led the Bildung2030 platform based on the philosophy of the SDGs (Südwind, 2022). Some higher education institutions have also become key stakeholders in GCED. For instance, the University of Klagenfurt developed a master's program with KommEnt and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), which offers a research-based curriculum that incorporates decolonial, feminist, and peace education approaches. It is one of the few institutionalized programmes that explicitly addresses GCED through critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory (Wintersteiner et al., 2015; ADA, 2019), so it is worth acknowledging its incorporation of critical views on Western ideologies. Nevertheless, questions of lived intersectionality are underrepresented in Austrian GCED initiatives. Although many programs emphasize gender justice and global solidarity (in terms of North-South cooperation), they often fail to fully integrate the lived experiences of marginalized migrant communities, ethnic minorities, and the intersecting systems of oppression that influence educational access to and participation within schooling systems in Austria. Consequently, critical GCED in Austria requires addressing the intersection of migration, gender, and socioeconomic inequality with broader struggles against patriarchy and racism.

Below is an overview of four Austrian GCED initiatives or projects, some of which have already been mentioned:

- (1) The University of Graz, in cooperation with the Pädagogische Hochschule (PH) Steiermark and other international partners, led the Erasmus+ project "Global Citizenship and Multilingual Competences." This project developed online professional development resources to support teachers in integrating GCED and multilingual pedagogies across subject areas. The initiative's production of a self-assessment tool for educators, a practical implementation handbook, and a final conference on the bridging of global citizenship with language education was its achievement. GCMC emphasizes reflexivity, global justice and highlights the connections between inclusive education and intercultural competence within GCED frameworks (GCMC, 2020-2023).
- (2) KommEnt's "Global Citizenship Education – Supporting Transformation" was financed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) within a gender-sensitive SDG 4.7 framework to consolidate and expand the implementation of GCED through teacher training and cross-institutional networking. Six regional workshops for educators, conferences on gender and peace, and reflection spaces for GCED practitioners were included in the initiative. The project was specifically designed to integrate feminist and transformative learning approaches and contributed to the development of GCED tools that support intersectionality, peace education, and sustainability (ADA, 2021-2022).
- (3) The ULG Master's Program in Global Citizenship Education is Austria's most comprehensive academic intervention into teacher education for GCED. It is hosted by Pädagogische Hochschule Kärnten in cooperation with the UNESCO Chair at the University of Klagenfurt (PH Kärnten, 2024). The program's 120 ECTS curriculum integrates theory, critical pedagogy, and supervised internships, equipping multipliers and educators with the skills to implement transformative GCED methods in both formal and non-formal educational contexts. The program's modules cover a range of topics, including gender, post- and decolonial critique, and peacebuilding issues, and aim to be a center for rethinking citizenship education, focusing on global and justice-oriented perspectives. Its direct engagement with intersectionality and educator agency sets it apart as a model for systemic change in teacher education in Austria.
- (4) The Bildung2030 and KOM-BINE frameworks aim to integrate aspects of GCED into national curricula and teacher education mandates. The KOM-BINE competence framework trains teacher educators across Austria, while the Bildung2030 platform provides resources aligned with the SDGs, facilitates SDG-centered curriculum

renewal, and supports school networks across Austria. The project focuses on mainstreaming SDG 4.7, enhancing teacher competencies, fostering curriculum innovation, and promoting system-level coordination to embed GCED in educational structures.

Although Austria demonstrates significant institutional engagement with GCED, it is important to acknowledge the underlying tensions and complexities that challenge the country's "progressive" image. First, persistent and systemic issues related to gender-based violence and femicide reveal a discrepancy between policy discourse and lived realities. Monitoring bodies have documented issues such as fragmented data collection, limited institutional coordination, and inconsistent application of protective measures for women* and girls*. Consequently, Austria's ability to fulfil its obligations regarding gender equality can be questioned (Council of Europe, GREVIO, 2024; Rechnungshof, 2023). Second, Austria has witnessed growing resistance to gender equality discourses, particularly through right-wing anti-gender and anti-diversity mobilizations, as Mayer & Sauer (2017) found. Such movements aim to frame educational content on gender justice or sexual diversity as ideological or threatening, increasing pressure on schools and teacher education programs and potentially undermining GCED's transformative aspirations (Mayer & Sauer, 2017). Such backlash is also a reflection of broader political currents that resist pluralism and contest intersectional frameworks in education. Third, although global solidarity and human rights are frequently invoked by GCED initiatives in Austria, intersectional inequalities, particularly those related to migration, ethnicity, and disability, are often not adequately addressed by them. For example, research findings from 2020 demonstrate that refugee girls* with and without disabilities face considerable barriers to involvement and acceptance in Austrian elementary schools, influenced by both institutional limitations and socio-cultural stereotypes (Bešić et al., 2020). These findings highlight the shortcomings of standardized curricula that present GCED as universally applicable, without addressing the structural and subjective factors that influence diverse learners' lived experiences here in Austria, a country with a historically significant migration background.

Taken together, the mentioned programs and initiatives demonstrate Austria's wide-ranging engagement with GCED, but they also reveal the silent spots where contested social debates challenge the implementation of transformative and inclusive approaches. Before comparing the three country examples with the interview content, thematic patterns and subthemes will be established and analyzed critically for gaining an understanding of the overall implementation

of GCED initiatives and ideologies, as well as their future directions, from experts, which can be compared later with the findings from the policy document analysis.

6.3 Thematic Results of Expert Interviews

This chapter presents the findings from qualitative interviews with seven experts (I1-I7) in GCED or related subjects, addressing the primary research question (MRQ) of this thesis. The results of the interviews are organized into key thematic areas that reflect the patterns and core concepts discussed by the interviewees. This provides a thorough overview of the experts' insights and individual viewpoints. These themes directly address the master's thesis's overarching research questions through exploring the context-related significance of GCED concepts, implementation challenges, and future directions for its development.

6.3.1 Patterns and Themes

The interviews reveal a multifaceted understanding of GCED, often emphasizing its interconnectedness and comprehensive scope. For example, I6 explicitly described GCED as an "*all-encompassing perspective*" integrating various educational approaches, including environmental, human rights, and gender education, which provides a holistic framework for understanding interconnected global issues (I6, Interview 2025). This holistic conceptualization of GCED aligns closely with the analytical category 4.4.1, "GCED as Transformative Peace Praxis: Beyond Formal Schooling", which explores how GCED extends beyond formal education to include community-based and holistic learning as well as teaching settings. I5 also noted significant overlaps and strong interdisciplinary ties between GCED, Peace and Conflict Studies, and ESD. Similarly, I3 viewed GCED as fundamentally about "*interdependence and interconnection*," emphasizing the necessity of a holistic approach to solving global pressing issues such as climate change and social inequalities (I3, Interview 2025). Some experts also outlined the unique role of peace education, for instance, I1 described it as fundamental to conflict transformation and as distinct yet complementary to GCED in promoting a more global and equitable perspective (I1, Interview 2025). Drawing on her background in feminist theories of international relations, I7 conceptualized "peace" primarily through a "gendered power lens", underscoring its role in dismantling gender stereotypes and fostering an understanding of the various forms of discrimination present in today's global conflicts, particularly for women* and girls* (I7, Interview 2025). Building on this, I4 emphasized the importance of peace education in addressing challenges ranging from global warming to human rights violations and highlighted the importance of understanding the underlying causes, interconnected themes, and

consequences of such challenges and conflicts as crucial (I4, 2025). These findings relate to analytical category 4.4.2, 'Navigating Complexity: Gender Norms, Tradition, and the Fear of Culture', in which the terms of peace and gender are considered not just as interpersonal topics, but as part of socio-political and wider cultural structures.

A prominent theme that also emerged from the interviews is the role of GCED in strengthening democratic principles and fostering active citizenship in the face of global crises. I6, for example, argued that the underlying ideas of GCED are crucial for "*supporting, protecting, and enhancing current democracies*," which he views as globally challenged, and asserted that national civic education alone is insufficient given the global interconnectedness of current democratic challenges (I6, Interview 2025). I1 reinforced this point, highlighting GCED's ability to deal with issues such as populism, political extremism, and the decline of democratic values by empowering citizens to critically engage with their global realities (I1, Interview 2025). It was further emphasized by I3 that even processes such as civic engagement are facilitated by GCED initiatives, enabling individuals to better understand the complexity of different world systems and their agency within them (I3, Interview 2025). This theme resonates strongly with analytical cluster 4.4.5 "Rethinking Education Itself", which critiques formal systems and emphasizes education as a democratic and transformative process aimed at collective agency.

Additionally, experts also mentioned various societal issues that gender-sensitive GCED and peace education are designed to address when implemented in transformative educational settings. These include fighting human rights violations, dealing with migration more effectively, tackling social inequality, preventing conflict, and deconstructing oppressive structures (I4, Interview 2025; I5, Interview 2025; I7, Interview 2025). Therefore, when it comes to the so-called "essential skills" needed to create such transformative and peaceful societies, a set of interconnected skills emerges from the interview content. These mentioned abilities are often better considered in a general approach than as a list of separate skills. This emphasis on tackling structural injustice and deconstructing oppressive systems ties closely to analytical category 4.4.3 "Rethinking Key Concepts: Decoloniality and the Risks of Depoliticization", which highlights the importance of critical reflection on power, politics, and the framing of concepts such as gender, justice, and peace. Several experts, including I6, expressed reservations about rigid, preset lists of competencies to address those framings adequately since they preferred to conceptualize GCED as a "framing paradigm" or

“perspective” that helps individuals make “*new sense of existing knowledge and skills*” (I6, Interview 2025). I6 viewed GCED as a “*complex set of knowledge and skills*” that allows individuals to “*look differently at their own ordinary life,*” emphasizing that all key competencies are important and should be considered “*as a whole*” (I6, Interview 2025).

Despite the emphasis of the experts on holistic and integrative understandings of GCED, the inductive coding process revealed five particularly significant clusters of competencies that were referenced consistently across interviews. Participants offered repeated references, associations, and elaborations when discussing the aims, methodologies, and tensions of GCED implementation, and these categories emerged from this dialogue. As opposed to being pre-selected or theoretically imposed, they surfaced as empirical indicators of how experts perceive the types of abilities that GCED seeks to cultivate in practice. The thematic category 4.4.5 Rethinking Education Itself explores how educational processes and institutions are being reimaged, considering systemic inequality, new pedagogical aims, and the perceived limitations of conventional learning and teaching models. This means that they are analytically connected to this thematic category. The subsequent five competency domains manifested themselves most frequently during the coding process of the interviews:

(1) Critical Thinking and Reflexivity: Across the interviews, critical thinking and reflexivity were described as essential for addressing the complexity of global challenges. I1, for instance, emphasized these competencies as necessary for questioning structural power relations within postcolonial education systems and for navigating contested global narratives (I1, Interview 2025). Similarly, I7 framed critical reflection as a central tool for analyzing intersecting systems of oppression, such as colonial hierarchies, gender norms, and epistemic inequalities, both in personal experience and academic work (I7, Interview 2025). These insights illustrate how reflective capabilities are seen not only as cognitive tools, but also as politically and ethically charged forms of engagement.

(2) Empathy and Solidarity: Several interviewees pointed to the importance of socio-emotional competencies in facilitating transformative learning processes, particularly regarding “peace education”. I7 referred to empathy as the “*binding link*” between critical reflection and meaningful action, suggesting that emotional connection is a precondition for global solidarity (I7, Interview 2025). I1 similarly emphasized empathy and a sense of global community as necessary responses to xenophobia and other forms of exclusion (I1, Interview 2025). I4 added that a connection to one's local or familial environment often serves as the foundation for

building broader solidarities across borders (I4, Interview 2025). Together, these accounts illustrate how empathy is understood as situated and relational, rather than abstract.

(3) Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement: A third set of competencies involved notions of social responsibility and active participation in democratic and global processes. I3 highlighted “*action competence*” as enabling learners to relate personal concerns to broader systemic issues (I3, Interview 2025), while I6 emphasized the role of GCED in supporting learners to become “*active citizens*” capable of responding to global challenges (I6, Interview 2025). I2 nuanced this view by stating that critical skills alone are insufficient without equitable and enabling environments. For her, the institutional conditions under which civic competencies are exercised determine their transformative potential (I2, Interview 2025).

(4) Intercultural Competence and Openness: Given the global orientation of GCED, the ability to navigate cultural complexity was also widely discussed. I3 referred to intercultural competence as essential for understanding global interconnectedness and responding to it responsibly (I3, Interview 2025). I1 extended this view by linking the development of a global sense of community to cultural literacy and inclusion (I1, Interview 2025). I7 emphasized the importance of “*world openness*” in both educational practice and research, understood as a willingness to critically engage with different or new perspectives shaped by gender, location, and social location (I7, Interview 2025).

(5) Resilience: The concept of resilience emerged with learners' emotional well-being and capacity to navigate crisis and inequality. I4 identified resilience as an increasingly relevant tool in the face of ongoing global disruptions, such as climate change and political instability (I4, Interview 2025). I3 interpreted resilience as closely tied to self-efficacy and power awareness: learners' ability to act meaningfully was seen as contingent upon their perception of agency within existing structures. In this view, rigid educational systems and dominant epistemologies may hinder resilience by limiting learners' capacity to respond to complexity in autonomous ways (I3, Interview 2025).

From a normative perspective, the prominence of these competencies is closely aligned with the focus of the CA on expanding real freedoms and opportunities for several diverse forms of living. Critical thinking, empathy, and intercultural openness are instrumental in enabling learners to become active agents of change, rather than being goals in themselves. They

contribute to core human capabilities such as practical reason, affiliation, control over one's environment, and emotional resilience (Nussbaum, 2011). In this sense, GCED becomes a framework for not merely transmitting and acquiring knowledge, but also for cultivating the agency, reflection, and solidarity necessary for promoting diverse forms of peace and justice in unequal societies. These five recurring competencies mirror the core concerns of analytical category 4.4.4, 'Power, Voice and Representation in GCED'.

6.3.2 Overall Implementation Experiences

This section aims to explore the practical and educational experiences and insights of experts on implementing GCED concepts and ideas linked to it. A common theme that emerged several times was the prioritization of active, participatory, and reflexive learning through real-life-based approaches over the simple transfer of informational knowledge. Several interviewees, such as I7, stressed the importance of fostering active engagement and critical self-reflection, which they called key components of a well-rounded educational experience. I7 also described her efforts to create a democratic seminar environment in which students actively co-shape processes such as determining assessment methods and meeting deadlines. This approach emphasizes collective decision-making within the group and encourages students to understand their emotions when confronting difficult subjects, aiming to create a supportive and reflective learning environment (I7, Interview 2025). From a normative perspective, such participatory learning settings closely align with the CA's emphasis on expanding learners' agency and providing genuine opportunities. They foster fundamental capabilities such as practical reasoning, social connectedness, and self-determination (Nussbaum, 2011). Consequently, GCED emerges as a milieu for fostering individual and collective agency, far beyond the conventional limitations of knowledge transfer. In addition, I1 mentioned another illustrative example, namely the belief within academia that practicing intersectionality will serve as an example to the world of how to be intersectional. However, it is often the case that one fails to recognize that this concept has been brought to us by others whose real-life experiences one could learn from (I1, Interview 2025).

Another strategy that was mentioned, which is useful for implementing GCED ideas in educational settings, is based on the use of real-world examples from different regions, cultures, local case studies, and experiential community-based learning methods, as I1 (2025) and I2 (2025) referred to in their interviews. I2, for example, emphasized the importance of acknowledging the consequences of historical actions on contemporary circumstances, and

therefore, the primary objective from her point of expertise is to disengage from the conceptual frameworks and methodologies that have historically been the cause of ongoing societal issues, best by engaging with real-world examples (I2, Interview 2025). I7 also stressed the importance of using real-life examples of ongoing conflicts, including sexualized violence as a tool of war, to provide a broader context for peace education and its relevance (I7, Interview 2025). These examples illustrate how GCED can become most impactful when learners can link abstract global concepts with their social realities, which is something that this concept facilitates. From a capability's perspective, this translation into lived local experience is crucial for enabling the development of emotional well-being and active citizenship (Nussbaum, 2011), particularly in contexts shaped by inequality or conflict. I6 named a specific assessment method involving pre- and post-course questionnaires to prompt students to reflect on their understanding of GCED competencies, aiming for what I7 termed "*embodied learning*," where understanding moves from abstract cognition to personal or lived experience (I7, Interview 2025).

In formal educational settings like universities, educators often integrate GCED through specific courses or thematic modules. I6 made mention of his university course, "Global Citizenship Education Skills," which is centered on cultivating a repertoire of transversal competencies applicable across academic disciplines (I6, Interview 2025). I5's research on teacher education found that while GCED is theoretically established, its concrete inclusion in university courses is minimal, and instructors often lack detailed examples of its conceptualization or any form of practical application (I5, Interview 2025). While the theoretical framework exists, the lack of concrete examples in university courses suggests that the implementation often falls short of the intended theoretical goals (I5, Interview 2025). I4 also mentioned in this context that, even though there are a lot of theoretical approaches to GCED, especially for adult learning spaces, the real challenge is putting them into practice in actual school settings (I4, Interview 2025). This suggests a need for better integration and more practical guidance on methods at different educational levels. Some experts also discussed the relationship between academic theory and practical implementation, offering varied perspectives, particularly from critical, decolonial, and feminist standpoints. Drawing from feminist research methodologies, I7 strongly challenged the strict separation of theory and practice, arguing that feminist research inherently integrates both due to its "*emancipatory and normative aim*" to improve structural inequalities. Attention is therefore drawn to the significant influence of the researcher's role and positionality on the research process and interpretation (I7, Interview 2025). This viewpoint suggests that for GCED to be genuinely effective, its

theoretical framework must be critically evaluated and implemented in a manner that recognizes the researcher's or educator's position within existing power structures, such as postcolonial or patriarchal structures.

Experts also underscore the importance of diverse perspectives and authentic dialogue in promoting something like “intercultural learning” as well as global awareness, which constitute a core principle of GCED. I6 discussed his role in establishing global networks and exchange initiatives between European and Arab institutions of higher education (e.g., Tunisia) and mentioned that the main strategy should be to “*listen to their voices*,”. Additionally, I6 claims that Western countries have often “*spoken too much*” when shaping GCED discourse, and thus, this effort aims to foster mutual understanding and a co-creation of GCED perspectives that are genuinely global and not Eurocentric. As an example, the inclusion and understanding of concepts derived from different ethical and moral traditions should be a priority, as I6 (2025) suggests.

Another subtheme is the importance of diverse representation among educators, which was underscored by I7's personal experience as a student. Her expressed desire was for lecturers with whom a relation or bonding could be formed, particularly those from similar cultural backgrounds or who taught topics connected to her roots (I7, Interview 2025). She identified the educator's connection to a region as a factor with the potential to significantly impact the effectiveness of teaching about specific areas like the Global South (I7, Interview 2025). The importance of not just what is taught, but who teaches it, in fostering *authentic* intercultural understanding and decolonial perspectives is highlighted by this. I1 also emphasized the importance of designing learning environments that introduce students to a variety of global lived realities and acknowledge that authentic intercultural competence extends beyond mere surface-level comprehension (I1, Interview 2025). Therefore, representing diversity oneself can challenge structural postcolonial hierarchies in learning environments. Thus, these varied practices illustrate how the implementation of GCED intersects with broader normative goals: fostering epistemic justice, enabling voice, and enhancing the agency of individuals and communities worldwide. When the view is taken through the perspective of the CA, the full transformative potential of GCED can be seen to unfold, where learners' real freedoms, to reflect, to express, to participate, are structurally enabled.

6.3.3 Future Directions: Innovation, Responsibility, and Visions

When discussing the future of GCED, the interviewed experts collectively stressed the need for fundamental transformations that go beyond pedagogical reforms. Their insights highlight the critical interplay of ethical imperatives, institutional responsibilities, and political commitments necessary for effectively and sustainably advancing gender-sensitive GCED concepts in educational settings (I1, 2025; I2, 2025; I3, 2025; I4, 2025; I5, 2025; I6, 2025; I7, 2025). From the perspective of the CA, these aims are consistent with a broader concern for expanding real freedoms and opportunities, not only for learners but also for educators and institutions. According to the interviewees' descriptions, the future of GCED is not merely limited to curricular innovation; instead, it encompasses the enablement of epistemic justice and structural transformation within educational institutions (I6, 2025; I7, 2025).

The call for decolonial practices and a more equitable distribution of epistemic power within educational institutions was a recurring theme in the interviews. I6, for example, emphasized that GCED-affine ideas must be critically reassessed in terms of whose knowledge is centered and who is either included or excluded from shaping its frameworks, and warned against "*neo-colonialism*" in north-driven educational projects in the Global South. Therefore, he advocated for long-term horizontal partnerships based on mutual learning and respect towards "*other epistemologies*" (I6, Interview 2025). This viewpoint demonstrates that progress in GCED can be found not only in new educational programs or curricula but also in changing the way global educators and other relevant actors interact with each other. Experts also view this kind of "*diversification of perspectives*" as critical for future progress in achieving equity, which was stressed by I5, saying that GCED cannot claim to be "global" if voices from varied social, geographic, and cultural backgrounds are not meaningfully included. For him, extending involvement is not just a matter of representation, but a necessity for epistemic justice (I5, Interview 2025). These interview statements again reflect the core concerns of analytical category 4.4.4 "Power, Voice, and Representation in GCED", which posits that the identity of the participants in knowledge creation directly impacts whose realities and futures are acknowledged in global education discourses.

Similarly, the significance of institutional change was widely discussed throughout the interviews, especially in terms of equality in educational workplace environments. I7, for example, highlighted several structural barriers faced by educators, particularly those from

marginalized gender identities, which hinder long-term engagement in transformative educational initiatives. She argued that, if institutions aim to embody these certain values of “*justice*” that GCED promotes, they must redesign work conditions, for example, by implementing family-friendly policies or fostering female leadership (I7, Interview 2025). In the context of CA, such structural redesign has the potential to directly contribute to the development of core capabilities, including affiliation, the ability to exercise influence over one's environment, and the capacity to engage meaningfully in social, educational, and professional life.

It was also argued by multiple experts that GCED initiatives must move beyond isolated projects and be integrated structurally into education systems. I7, for instance, emphasized the crucial role of systemic embedding, both politically and in curricula, underscoring that without this support, the ideas of GCED will remain stuck in temporary initiatives or niche programming. Therefore, political will is an essential enabler of transformative GCED (I7, Interview 2025). Another interview participant, I1, expanded on this critique, mentioning the importance of supporting long-term educational transformation processes, including the will to challenge dominant ideas about the purpose of education and reimagining its role in fostering global justice and peace (I1, Interview 2025). These evaluative responses are in alignment with analytical cluster 4.4.5, entitled “Rethinking Education Itself”, which regards education not as a neutral channel for knowledge transmission, but rather as a transformative practice embedded in socio-political power relations.

6.3.4 Intersection of Thematic Analysis and Interview Content Patterns

Having described and extracted the thematic findings of the seven interviews conducted, this subchapter aims to examine how the patterns that emerged from the expert interviews are confirmed, supported, or contrasted with the thematic categories developed through document and literature analysis. By comparing the conceptual frameworks of GCED, peacebuilding, and gender from both sources, it seeks to highlight areas of thematic overlap, as well as gaps in coverage.

One significant overlap is evident in the conceptualization of GCED as a holistic as well as interconnected approach, which is a key aspect of its design. In the thematic category “GCED as Transformative Peace Praxis: Beyond Formal Schooling”, GCED concepts extend beyond classroom settings into more informal and community-based learning strategies. This view is

reinforced by I6, who characterized GCED as an “*all-encompassing perspective*” integrating environmental, gender, and human rights education. Within the context of the CA, this comprehensive understanding of GCED is characterized by a commitment to fostering authentic learning and engaging across diverse life domains. Therefore, “education” is not considered to be a distinct sphere of learning; on the contrary, it is understood as a milieu in which the cultivation of autonomy and applied inclusive knowledge is possible. I6 also emphasized its relevance in both formal and informal learning settings, regardless of cultural background or religion (I6, Interview 2025). Similarly, I3 postulated the necessity of such an interconnected approach to address global issues such as climate change and social inequality, thereby reinforcing GCED's role as a foundation for understanding the increasingly complex nature of our world (I3, Interview 2025).

The thematic cluster "Navigating Complexity: Gender Norms, Tradition, and the Fear of Culture" was also found in some of the interview contents. Both I1 and I4 emphasized the importance of “*real intercultural proficiency*” in expressing GCED through marginalized voices and viewing it inclusively. I1 linked this concept to the development of a “*sense of global community*” (I1, Interview 2025), while I7 addressed the necessity of building up cultural sensitivity in her discussion of intersectional discrimination, persistent gender norms, and the requirement for GCED to respect tradition while challenging oppressive social or cultural structures (I7, Interview 2025). Moreover, it is important to note that these perspectives align with Nussbaum's (2011) concept of “affiliation”, which emphasizes respect for others and the social foundations of self-respect. Consequently, it might be contended that cultural differences ought to be addressed by learners, both cognitively and as part of a relational capability for coexistence and justice, by GCED.

The thematic category "Power, Voice, and Representation in GCED", which questions who defines “global citizenship ideologies” and whose voices are prioritized, is also reflected in some of the interviews. I1, I2, and I7 explained how feminist ideas can be utilized to dismantle dominant patriarchal narratives, emphasizing the significance of providing a platform for individuals who are frequently overlooked in peace-building contexts due to their underrepresentation (I1, Interview 2025; I2, Interview 2025; I7, Interview 2025). I1 also addressed the importance of fostering solidarity and community to challenge exclusionary and patriarchal structures within educational systems (I1, Interview 2025). Meanwhile, I4 stressed

that learners must first be empowered by GCED to recognize these underlying power imbalances and their consequences for marginalized communities (I4, Interview 2025).

A strong consensus on the importance of critical competencies, which was first discussed in the thematic cluster "Rethinking Education Itself: Schooling, Systems & Purpose of Learning", arose from questions about certain skills, such as critical thinking, action competence, and empathy, that were asked in the interviews. These skills were frequently named and challenged in the interviews. I1, I4, and I7 emphasized that critical thinking is essential for challenging post- as well as neocolonial power structures and gender stereotypes (I1, Interview 2025; I4, Interview 2025 & I7, Interview 2025). I7 described empathy as a "*binding link*" between reflection and action, and as crucial for fostering solidarity - an alternative purpose of learning, compared to content-based learning, that everyone requires in our globalized world (I7, Interview 2025). I3 specifically referred to an individual's action competence, explaining that it allows learners to engage responsibly with global issues (I3, Interview 2025) and therefore is another way of rethinking the concept of education and the meaning behind learning. It shifts the focus from mere knowledge to learning as an enabling power for transformation beyond the confines of school subjects, with the potential to impact one's own life and the lives of others (I3, Interview 2025). Adopting a CA perspective, such transferable skills are valuable not only as tools but also because they are integral to developing critical thought and the ability to navigate one's daily life. In this way, education is redefined as a means of enabling people to lead the lives they value independently, without merely preparing them for exams or the job market.

Moreover, there is a partial overlap with the category "Rethinking Key Concepts: Intersectionality, Decoloniality, and the Risks of Depoliticization", I1, for example, discussed this overlap explicitly in the context of gender-sensitive approaches in the Indian context and advocated for knowledge firmly rooted in real-life experiences, including the incorporation of caste as a category to think of, (I1, Interview 2025) to foster "*real intersectionality and non-patriarchal thinking*". She added that intersectionality is not merely a matter of adding up identities; it is about understanding how contexts such as nationality, class, *race*, caste, religion, and privilege, which overlap, shape our subjectivity and perspectives. Therefore, rather than acting as a checklist, it should analyze how complex identities produce different feminist perspectives (I1, Interview 2025). Systemic critiques of formal schooling and its alignment with economic productivity and, therefore, the neglect of collective global goals, as discussed by Fan

(2025), were mentioned by I2 (2025). She named the risk of depoliticization and postulated, that the challenge with our current education system is that so much attention is being given to producing individuals who are deemed to be ready for the labor market, rather than human beings being nurtured, and therefore people are capable of being more productive, but not more proactive about the planet being saved (I2, Interview, 2025). In capability terms, this approach highlights a structural failure to cultivate political agency and critical responsibility. If learners are only prepared for economic productivity but not for taking part in creating fairer societies or just communities, key human capabilities will remain underdeveloped, and viewpoints will remain unheard.

7 Findings

The key analytical findings of the thesis are hereby presented in this chapter, with the intersection of document analysis, theoretical categories, and outcomes of seven expert interviews being drawn upon. Using a step-by-step method based on the WPR Approach (Bacchi, 2009) and the CA (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011), this section brings together how GCED is discussed, questioned, and reimagined in different contexts and around the globe. It identifies patterns, traces silences, and evaluates discursive framings and practical applications. Notably, the chapter does not seek to deliver a definitive verdict on GCED, but rather to offer a critical interpretation of its tensions, gaps, and transformative potential. The findings remain analytically distinct from the upcoming "Discussion" chapter, which will see these results engaged with through broader theoretical reflection, implications, and potential contributions to the field.

7.1 Framing the Analysis: Critical Lenses and Layered Interpretation

To address the research questions systematically, the "onion model" of interpretation (as introduced in Chapter 4.3) is employed in all steps using the WPR lens, particularly regarding how GCED can foster transformative capabilities for peacebuilding through gender-sensitive pedagogical approaches. First, the layered model begins with (1) thematic coding of key patterns and categories emerging across documents and interviews, proceeds to (2) critical interrogation using the What's the Problem Represented to Be? (WPR) Approach (Bacchi, 2009) and culminates in (3) a normative assessment through the lens of the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). Distinct insights are provided by each layer, and a

multidimensional understanding of both discourse and practical application is realized through the integration of the three.

The initial analytical step consists of the thematic categorization of the empirical material. Altogether, four main themes were identified during the coding of interviews and documents, which function as entry points for the underlying layers of data analysis. The four following thematic clusters that have subsequently evolved were not developed in an inductive way from interviews alone, but also because of a recurring analytical process that connects the results of earlier chapters. They build on the analytical categories that Chapter 4.4 introduced, which themselves synthesized theoretical framings (Chapter 3.4) and were refined during the multi-stage coding of documents and interviews. The categories (A) through (D), as such, represent analytical foci that are based on both theoretical assumptions and empirical findings. By organizing the information thematically, they provide a way into the layered analysis and guide further WPR deconstruction and CA evaluation.

(A) Conceptualizations of GCED, Gender, and Peace Education

(B) Decolonial Perspectives, Power, and Diverse Voices

(C) Pedagogy, Competencies, and the Theory-Practice Divide

(D) Systemic and Institutional Constraints

The second analytical lens uses Bacchi's (2009) poststructuralist WPR framework to show how policy documents as well as expert discussions "create problems" like conflict/war, gender (in)equality, peace, or educational reforms, and what assumptions, silences, and power hierarchies underpin these constructions. In this context, the WPR Approach poses questions such as: What is represented as the problem? What is left unproblematic? How are gender, peace, and global citizenship differently framed or silenced across global and national contexts?

The final layer is supported by the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000 & 2011) so that the evaluation of whether GCED practices foster *genuine capabilities* in learners can be accomplished. This normative perspective is oriented around the following question: To what extent are *real freedoms* and opportunities for learners expanded by GCED, particularly those in marginalized or postcolonial contexts? Combining these two approaches allows the research to examine how GCED is constructed through discourse (WPR) and its ideal objectives (capabilities). The WPR framework assists in deconstructing the dominant paradigms and

epistemological hierarchies within the field of education. Meanwhile, the CA evaluates the extent to which GCED initiatives empower learners to think critically and engage meaningfully within their communities and beyond.

These lenses are also applied across the three regional case studies, Tunisia (MENA), India (South Asia), and Austria (The West/Europe), to provide context-specific insights into the translation of well-known global frameworks into national policies and local pedagogies. The countries were selected for analytical relevance in demonstrating how GCED is negotiated within diverse cultural, historical, and political contexts, particularly concerning gender, de- and postcolonial legacies, and educational governance.

In sum, the chapter follows a three-step logic: (1) Mapping themes and patterns in empirical material, (2) Problematizing and deconstructing dominant discourses, and (3) Evaluating pedagogical as well as structural implications from a capabilities-based perspective. While it primarily focuses on mapping, deconstructing, and normatively evaluating empirical material, the subsequent “Discussion” chapter revisits these findings in the context of broader theoretical debates and critically reflects on their implications for gender-sensitive GCED concerning decoloniality and peace education.

7.2 Problematizations and Representations in GCED

In global contexts, GCED is frequently portrayed as a response to challenges such as gender (in-)equality, conflict, and civic disengagement. Using the “What’s the Problem Represented to Be?” (WPR) Approach, this section examines how problem representations are framed (Bacchi, 2009).

According to the analyzed UNESCO and UN Women documents, GCED is presented as a normative and strategic intervention, a tool for cultivating peaceful, tolerant, and productive “global citizens” (UNESCO, 2015; UN Women, 2022). In both frameworks, “gender inequality” is usually presented as an absence of participation or representation of women* and girls* within educational settings that can be addressed by curricular inclusion mechanisms and empowerment initiatives at school or university levels. Peace is often not presented as a politically contested concept, but rather as a universally shared value and a desirable outcome of citizenship education. This approach suggests that social issues primarily result from gaps in

awareness, skills, or viewpoints, particularly among marginalized groups such as women*, Indigenous people, or persons from countries in the Global South. Consequently, education is seen as a transformative tool, aimed at fostering empathy, tolerance, and intercultural understanding. In these frameworks, the learner is positioned as an individual “moral agent”, capable of being transformed through skill acquisition and value internalization (UNESCO, 2015; European Union, 2022). However, from a CA standpoint, this view risks reducing the learner's role to that of an adaptive subject, rather than promoting the full expansion of agency, critical awareness, and freedom to act differently within given contextual constraints. Simply educating people without addressing the unequal distribution of resources and capabilities does not necessarily result in equal educational or personal opportunities.

A review of interview data from a variety of regional contexts reveals discrepancies with this document-driven perspective. While interviewed experts recognize the usefulness of GCED in raising at least social awareness, some critique the simplistic and politicized nature of its implementation and even its core values. For example, I1 raised the question of whether formal education is truly progressive in the sense that GCED stands for and argued that Western education systems often reproduce social hierarchies and exclude non-Western knowledge, learning approaches, and locally grounded customs (I1, Interview 2025). Others have underscored that GCED frequently functions as a medium for liberal universalism, advocating for values that often do not align with the lived experiences or daily needs of many learners, particularly in postcolonial or conflict-affected contexts (I1, Interview 2025; I2, Interview 2025, I4, Interview 2025 & I7, Interview 2025). Furthermore, a predominant emphasis on personal skills, such as emotional intelligence and intercultural sensitivity, was highlighted by multiple interviewees as a means of shifting responsibility for peacebuilding from institutions to individuals (I1, Interview 2025; I2 Interview, 2025). This critique is in line with Lakhal's (2020) assertion that initiatives promoting GCED ideas, most notably in the Global South, are often shaped by Northern epistemological perspectives. Thus, these narratives obscure the structural causes of injustice and prioritize individualized forms of civic responsibility, which are often in line with neoliberal ideas of self-optimization and productivity.

These representations reflect the broader discursive patterns that emerged in the document and interview analysis, which can be grouped into the four interrelated analytical categories, as mentioned before: (A) Conceptualizations of GCED, Gender and Peace Education, (B)

Decolonial Perspectives and Epistemic Power, (C) Pedagogical Framing and the Theory-Practice Divide, and (D) Institutional Constraints that shape what is visible or actionable.

The overall problem representations found in policy discussions, as well as interview contents, can be explained and summarized as follows:

Table 5 / Comparison Table of Problematizations: Policy Documents vs. Interview Content

Analytical Category	Policy Documents	Interviews
(A) Conceptualizations of GCED, Gender, and Peace Education	- GCED is presented as a transformative educational approach that fosters active, globally minded citizens equipped with competencies in human rights, sustainability, and peace (UNESCO, 2015). - Gender inequality is defined as structural, requiring gender-transformative approaches in education (UN Women, 2022; UNESCO, 2021b). - Peacebuilding is described as a transformative and relational process connected to justice but often operationalized through predefined competencies (UNESCO, 2021).	- GCED is viewed as an “all-encompassing perspective” that integrates environmental, human rights, and gender dimensions (I6, Interview 2025). - Gender is framed as deeply intersectional and embedded in power structures, not merely as individual empowerment (I7, Interview 2025). - Peace is conceptualized as dismantling oppressive systems and achieving justice, rather than simply the absence of conflict (I7, Interview 2025).
(B) Decolonial Perspectives & Epistemic Power	- There is acknowledgment of the need to integrate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives (UNESCO, 2018; UNESCO, 2002). - Critiques exist regarding the dominance of Global North epistemologies, which risk marginalizing other worldviews (UNESCO, 2021). - Recognition of epistemic diversity tends to appear in supplementary	- Strong critique of Eurocentrism and neo-colonial influence in GCED discourse (I6, Interview 2025). - Emphasis on centering marginalized voices and diverse epistemologies as essential rather than optional (I5, Interview 2025). - GCED should be co-created globally, rather than exported

Analytical Category	Policy Documents	Interviews
	sections rather than the core of policy frameworks.	from the Global North (I6, Interview 2025).
(C) Pedagogical Framing & Theory-Practice Divide	- Policies advocate for transformative, participatory pedagogies (UNESCO, 2021b). - However, they often reduce implementation to lists of competencies and measurable indicators (UNESCO, 2015). - There is limited discussion of how systemic barriers affect practical implementation (UNESCO, 2016).	- Interviews highlight a significant gap between theoretical frameworks and practical classroom realities (I4, I5, Interview 2025). - Educators emphasize participatory, democratic practices, such as involving students in co-deciding learning processes (I7, Interview 2025). - There is skepticism toward rigid lists of competencies; GCED is seen as a flexible “framing paradigm” rather than a fixed curriculum (I6, Interview 2025).
(D) Institutional Constraints	- Policy documents acknowledge the importance of systemic change and political will but often remain at the level of high-level goals and outcome indicators (UNESCO, 2015). - There is minimal concrete guidance on overcoming entrenched institutional barriers (UNESCO, 2016).	- Institutional hierarchies and systemic barriers are identified as major obstacles to transformative GCED (I7, Interview 2025). - Gendered barriers in workplace structures are seen as limiting long-term engagement with gender-sensitive education (I7, Interview 2025). - Experts call for institutional redesign, such as family-friendly policies and promotion of women* into leadership, as crucial for realizing GCED’s principles (I7, Interview 2025).

7.3 Silences and Exclusions

Although GCED is considered inclusive and intended to promote peace and global solidarity, further analysis reveals significant silences and exclusions that undermine its transformative potential. Applying Bacchi's (2009) fourth and fifth questions: What is left unproblematic in this representation of the “problem”? and: What is being silenced or taken for granted? This section identifies the implicit assumptions and oversights in global policy discourse, expert insights, and the regional application of GCED initiatives in Tunisia, India, and Austria.

(1) Depoliticization of Peace and Gender: One of the most persistent blind spots in GCED policy frameworks is the depoliticization of the core concepts of "peace" and "gender." Within global documents, such as UNESCO's (2015) Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives, “peace” is often defined as an interpersonal and behavioral competency that emphasizes values such as tolerance, empathy, and intercultural dialogue. While these are relevant, the structural nature of violence and conflict, including militarism, colonial legacies, and systemic inequality, is overshadowed by such framings. Similarly, equal access and representation are the focus of the dominant discourse on gender equity, especially within SDG 4.7 and UN Women (2022) guidance, without the intersecting systems of power, such as patriarchy, racism, or economic injustice, that produce inequality in the first place being suitably addressed. A clear critique of this framing is offered by expert interviews: Several interviewees highlighted that when abstracted from socio-political realities, GCED risks disconnecting peace education from the lived experiences of students in marginalized communities. As was stated by one academic: *„The concept of peace is often portrayed in very vague terms... it's all about dialogue and empathy. However, what about structural violence? What about economic exploitation? That gets left out.“* (I7, 2025). Others emphasized the limits of "additive" gender strategies that do not question how schooling itself reproduces patriarchal hierarchies. An educator explained: *„It is not enough to simply include 'gender' and give a few examples. It is about how power operates – including in our educational institutions.“* (I5, 2025).

(2) Marginalization of Local Epistemologies: GCED programs often reference “global values” and “universal competencies” for everyone, yet rarely engage with non-Western or Indigenous epistemologies. The documents reviewed often present knowledge production as something neutral, with the definition of these values and for whom they are intended not being questioned at all. Again, the Tunisian example clearly illustrates this tension, as multiple GCED

initiatives promote values such as democracy and participation, and gender equality based on a Western perspective, yet they are often implemented via international partnerships that operate according to northern epistemological frameworks (Lakhal, 2020; UNESCO Maghreb, 2023; I6, Interview 2025). Consequently, local feminist insights and culturally specific interpretations of peace and the concept of a "good life" are frequently dismissed. Interviewees also expressed concern that GCED often lacks contextual sensitivity, which reinforces deficit-based views of the Global South or other regions of the world. Interview data affirm this concern since one expert explained: *„These programmes are well-intentioned, but they usually come with a very specific understanding of education. And this understanding is Western, yes, and rarely deviates from that. It is then more a matter of fitting local realities into this understanding. It is not the other way around.“* (I5, 2025). Another educator added: *“If you are not from the Global North, your knowledge is often only interesting as ‘experience’, not as theory. So, we learn about other cultures, but we don't learn from them.”* (I7, 2025). This critique aligns with the poststructuralist idea that knowledge is never neutral and reinforces dominant power structures (Foucault, 1980).

(3) The "Good Global Citizen" as a Normative Subject: The assumed subjectivity constructed by GCED, that of the self-aware, cosmopolitan individual who internalizes values of peace, tolerance, and sustainability, is another silence to mention. Being a global citizen is presented as both universally desirable and contextually attainable. However, an analysis of interview data indicates that this depiction is not only idealized but also fails to disclose certain conditions (e.g., gender-based violence, structural poverty, colonial legacies, or corruption) that restrict numerous disadvantaged learners from fully engaging in GCED activities. One expert, I2, critiqued this construct by calling attention to the individualization of responsibility in GCED programs: *“I would not focus on the skills of the individual. We've gone too far in focusing on the skills of the individual. I feel like we're making people the ones to bear the burden of the entire system, and that's just no longer cutting it”* (I2, 2025). Another researcher similarly questioned the normative model of the "engaged global citizen": *„I do think that there is such an ideal image... which is strongly based on the educated middle-class ideal of a young person who is very open, who enjoys intercultural communication, who likes to travel to other countries... in other words, it is very much based on a privileged perspective.“* (I4, 2025). The CA suggests a closer look at this discrepancy by shifting attention from defined outcomes to authentic freedoms, since promoters of GCED often do so without considering whether learners can or even desire to transform these possibilities into meaningful engagement (Nussbaum,

2011; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). For example, highly educated women* in Tunisia face high levels of unemployment despite formal equality guarantees (Présidence du Gouvernement Tunisien et al., 2017). GCED frameworks rarely address these kinds of contradictions, which are also seldom acknowledged in GCED policies that tend to treat all individuals as "learners" as being in a privileged position, while ignoring conditions of structural inequality. Considering this from a CA perspective, the absence of enabling conditions can undermine such ideals. Examples of these conditions include employment, dignity, and civic inclusion, particularly in postcolonial or gendered contexts.

(4) Silenced Questions of Power and Accountability: Most critically, the discourse on GCED remains largely silent on questions of underlying power asymmetries and accountability. Whose knowledge matters? Who gets to decide what constitutes peace, justice, or citizenship? Questions of this nature are not usually addressed in policy texts, which often take on a tone that minimizes political involvement. The lack of space for such reflection in GCED-related documents, projects, or curricula was critically judged by experts from multiple contexts, particularly regarding the colonial foundations of education systems, the hegemony of Western principles, and the limits of feminist reforms under state oversight (I1; I2; I4; I6, Interviews 2025). This silence was especially noted in the Austrian context, where the inclusion of non-European epistemologies is structurally hindered, as one expert critically stated: *„The problem I see now, since I've been at university, is that it's no longer possible to achieve such diversity in teaching. I mean... which university institute is inviting people from Africa or Latin America? Nobody does. The problem lies with the teaching staff themselves at public universities.“* (I5, 2025). Another expert emphasized the structural exclusion of feminist peace approaches from formal curricula: *„I think that when you think about such questions, it also has an impact on your research practice... and I would say that you can't separate theory and practice so clearly... because feminist research has an emancipatory and normative aspect.“* (I7, 2025). Similarly, one scholar referred to the epistemic imbalance within the development of GCED in terms of content representations and voices: *“My role in this case is essentially to listen to their own voices. [...] I think that we have... it's our turn to listen to other voices. And especially Arabic and Islamic countries [...] for developing their own idea and their criticism”* (I6, 2025).

7.4 Contesting and Constructing GCED

The following theme matrix outlines how key aspects of GCED are represented in policy documents, reflected in expert interviews, and experienced across regional contexts in Austria, Tunisia, and India. Using Bacchi's (2009) WPR framework and the CA (Nussbaum, 2011), this overview identifies gaps, silences, and contested meanings within GCED discourse and practice.

Table 6 / Theme Matrix: Mapping Policy, Interview Content, and Regional Context

Theme	Policy Representation (WPR Q1-2)	Interview Perspectives	Country Contexts	Critical Notes (WPR Q4-6, Capabilities)
1. Gender in GCED	Framed as equality or inclusion target; often depoliticized;	Some experts critique lack of structural focus; stress locally & culturally rooted understanding	Austria: Gender ≈ "diversity"; Tunisia: Islamic vs. universalist feminisms; India: Gender = structural injustice	WPR Q1/Q4: Gender framed as apolitical Capabilities: To live without shame, to shape one's social roles individually
2. GCED's Normative Orientation	Promoted as a global good; based on liberal democratic ideals; peace, sustainability, participation & reflection as "core values"	Seen as Eurocentric by some; others acknowledge value but stress need for contextualization	Austria: EU-driven; Tunisia: modernization and post-colonial tension; India: often contested	WPR Q4/Q6: Whose vision of the "global citizen"? Capabilities: To participate meaningfully, to express one's worldview
3. Intersectionality & Social Justice	Rarely addressed in depth; gender, class, caste, and race often	Strong demand for integrated approach, especially in countries of the	India: Centered on caste, gender, religion;	WPR Q5: Structural injustices

Theme	Policy Representation (WPR Q1-2)	Interview Perspectives	Country Contexts	Critical Notes (WPR Q4-6, Capabilities)
	separated or ignored	“Global South”; Some regions simplify complexity	Tunisia: ideological divides within feminism; Austria: class mostly silenced	remain mostly invisible Capabilities: To be treated with dignity, to resist imposed norms
4. Power & Epistemic Authority	Northern institutions guide capacity-building, knowledge production & pedagogy models	Concerns about "soft power" & "forced modernization"; Demand for Indigenous, feminist, decolonial knowledge	Tunisia: Lakhali critiques western framing; India: Dalit/feminist educators resist top-down GCED; Austria: Acceptance within the system, but mild critique	WPR Q4: Assumes Western epistemology is neutral Capabilities: To know / learn differently; To be epistemically free & unattached
5. Participation & Educator Agency	Teacher role underdefined; GCED as curriculum item, not practical tool	Interviews highlight reliance on individual educators; Many work around institutional limits	Austria: Voluntary personal action; Tunisia: Networks; India: Community-led pedagogy	WPR Q5: What structural support is missing? Capabilities: To influence, to form collectives
6. Implementation & Institutional Gaps	Underplayed; Policy language optimistic, but vague on enforcement, training & evaluation	Strong concern about the disparity between ideals & practice; Lack of proper alignment within institutions	All countries report similar problems. India adds ideological pushback; Tunisia: NGO-state tensions; Austria:	WPR Q3/Q5: Assumes policies = implementation Capabilities: To access “real-life” quality education; To

Theme	Policy Representation (WPR Q1-2)	Interview Perspectives	Country Contexts	Critical Notes (WPR Q4-6, Capabilities)
			Undertraining of teachers	practice what is taught
7. Pedagogy & Methodology	Participatory methods promoted in policy (e.g., MedUni, UNITWIN), but often applied unequally or inconsistently	Divergence in application; Convergence in value of dialogic methods	Tunisia: Used in workshops but may mask power asymmetries; India: Grounded pedagogy from marginalized educators; Austria: Optional, depends on individuals	WPR Q6: Is the pedagogy transformative or performative? Capabilities: To engage critically & to learn through “relevance”

Before turning to the discussed details, the following graphic and table offer a brief overview of how the seven experts’ views intersect with the global policy material that was analyzed. In keeping with the "layered onion" logic, the table addresses three analytical steps all at once:

- (1) Thematic synthesis:** The first section summarizes the five most recurring themes. These were identified through the analysis of interview transcripts.
- (2) Policy comparison:** The third category positions the clusters alongside the fundamental principles outlined in key documents. This indicates where practitioners align with, or challenge, established narratives.
- (3) Critical Interrogation:** The fourth dimension applies Bacchi's (2009) WPR questions 3 and 6 to demonstrate how experts either reproduce or disrupt dominant representations of “peace”, “gender”, and “global citizenship” in educational contexts.

Table 7 / Interview Themes, Policy Alignment, and Disruptive Practices in GCED-Implementation (WPR Q3 & Q6)

Theme	Interview Evidence	Alignment & Contradiction with Policy Discourse	WPR (Q3 & Q6)
A. From “Competency lists” to “embodied learning”	<i>“When a course is successful, students give lived answers... it becomes personal, emotional, behavioral” (I6, 2025).</i>	UNESCO’s three-domain model (cognitive, socio-emotional, behavioral) welcomes embodied outcomes (UNESCO, 2015), yet most policy indicators privilege cognitive metrics	Q3: Embodied learning rarely appears in standard monitoring templates because results-based approaches are preferred Q6: Experts disrupt this by inserting reflective journals or “pre/post story-of-self” methods - practices absent from policy but legitimized in local classrooms
B. Agency vs. “Top-down” Scripts	<i>“We’ve gone too far focusing on the skills of the individual... the burden of the entire system is shifted onto learners” (I2, 2025).</i>	SDG 4.7 indicators cast the learner as a self-improving subject partly responsible for peace and personal growth (UNESCO, 2016), reinforcing neoliberal narratives	Q3: This representation emerged from the global competence agenda of OECD/UN alliances Q6: Experts contest it by prioritizing enabling environments (safe schools, community co-ownership) and by advocating for collective agency instead of individualism
C. Cultural Tension	<i>“...culture and politics are a heady, toxic</i>	Policy documents frequently promote cultural understanding & respect as key goals (UNESCO, 2015 & 2021),	Q3: Treating culture as merely “diverse” masks how power

	<i>combination, sometimes because politics tends to take over cultures and decide what culture is..." (I1, 2025).</i>	framing culture as an "apolitical domain" linked to diversity and peaceful coexistence; Rarely examine how political actors define, instrumentalize, or suppress cultural expressions to serve ideological purposes	operates through cultural definition Q6: Experts call for GCED approaches that critically analyze who defines "culture," and how cultural policymaking may reinforce systemic inequalities
D. Decolonial Critique & Power Interrogation	<i>"The problem lies with the teaching staff... no one invites people from Africa or Latin America" (I5, 2025).</i>	Global frameworks endorse 'global solidarity', yet do not prescribe diversification of faculty or authorship	Q3: GCED arose inside Euro-Atlantic epistemic communities - silences on staffing reproduce that origin Q6: Experts disrupt by co-teaching with scholars from the "Global South", or by assigning locally authored texts - therefore re-centre subaltern voices
E. Re-politicizing Peace & Gender	<i>"If we're not willing to explore power, no peace education can thrive" (I2, 2025). "The concept of peace is often portrayed in very vague terms... what about structural violence." (I7, 2025).</i>	UNESCO's 2021 Recommendation acknowledges structural violence, but practical guidelines still foreground interpersonal harmony	Q3: The behavioral framing originates from depoliticized, pro-donor peace narratives Q6: Interviewees insert feminist viewpoints, critical race and climate-justice lenses - thus re-politicizing classroom dialogue

8 Discussion

Drawing from discourse deconstruction (via Bacchi's WPR) and layered case analysis, this chapter shifts the focus from critical mapping and comparative thematization (Chapter 7) to interpretive synthesis as well as normative reflection of the findings. It directly addresses the MRQ: To what extent, and under which conditions, can gender-responsive GCED foster transformative capabilities for peacebuilding? - and discusses the three sub-questions (SQ1–SQ3), which are explained in more detail in Chapter 1.2. An examination of the significance, constraints, and possibilities of GCED is provided through the lens of the CA, while the influences on its implementation are considered, including both conditions and power dynamics. Throughout, theoretical assumptions relate to grounded examples from Austria, Tunisia, and India. The chapter is divided into two sections: first, a capability-based investigation of GCED (Section 8.1); and second, a more extensive integration of pressures and transformative pathways (Section 8.2).

8.1 GCED Through the Capability Approach: Empowerment or Idealism?

After critically mapping GCED's contested meanings, this section shifts from deconstruction to a normative evaluation. While the WPR analysis revealed some hidden assumptions and interwoven power structures, the CA now allows us to assess the practical impact of GCED on expanding "*real freedoms*". This step is crucial because it determines whether gender-responsive GCED merely replicates Western conventions or enables people to act and live differently within their own lives. This discussion explicitly revisits the MRQ and Sub-questions (SQ1-SQ3) defined in Chapter 1.2. First, it is synthesized how WPR findings respond to SQ1, then integrate interview- and country-level insights for SQ2 and finally evaluate capability expansion and conversion factors for SQ3 through the Capability Approach. The section proceeds in three steps: (1) it evaluates whether gender-responsive GCED expands learners' "*substantive freedoms*" (Sen, 1999), (2) it appraises the extent to which these liberties are context sensitive (specifically in terms of culture, cast, class, and gender), (3) It asks whether GCED has the ability to translate discussion into genuinely transformative peacebuilding outputs as part of education, with the relationship between discourse and "real" societal and structural change being explored. The evidence from interviews is triangulated with policy documents and regional case findings. Each claim is tied back to the dual methodology (WPR for deconstruction; CA for normative evaluation).

8.1.1 Assessing Empowerment and Agency

From a capability perspective, there are significant regional differences between the formal goals of GCED and its actual potential for students' empowerment, based on my thesis's sample:

Austria: Despite the integration of GCED across teacher-training subjects, students only briefly encounter its content, especially in terms of real-life connections or diverse contexts, often only through elective theoretical modules (I5, Interview, 2025). As I5 (2025) confirms: *"There is no real integration into the compulsory courses; it remains an optional programme."* This undermines learners' capabilities for political engagement (especially in terms of representing the voices of Indigenous, migrants, refugees, and people from the Global South), a core element of Nussbaum's (2011) concept of *"control over one's political environment."* This issue reflects Bacchi's WPR question 3: What effects are produced when policies assume that curriculum presence equals practical empowerment? (see also critical insights from Chapter 6.3.4 on institutional fragmentation, and Table 5 in Chapter 7.2 on the discrepancy between policy goals and classroom practice in Austria). Thus, UNESCO's call for an "active citizenship" through GCED (UNESCO, 2015) risks remaining merely theoretical and non-inclusive in the Austrian context. Additionally, persistent societal challenges in Austria, such as high rates of gender-based violence and documented gaps in institutional responses, reveal a significant discrepancy between the country's progressive gender-responsive GCED policy rhetoric and its actual practices (Council of Europe, GREVIO, 2024; Rechnungshof, 2023). Also, marginalization of refugee girls* (Bešić et al., 2020), demonstrates how political or social backlashes can hinder GCED's transformative potential, especially when it excludes certain learners due to structural barriers.

India: Conversely, initiatives such as the Whole-school SDG festivals at Ahlcon International School embody GCED in collective, real-world problem-solving, for instance, through negotiations on water conservation with local authorities (Teacher Magazine, n.d.) and help to build experiences and *"own capabilities"* for collective agency, allowing students to deliberate, plan, and see their outcomes of the learned concepts. As I2 notes, *"Empathy and solidarity grow far more in these hands-on projects than in textbook lessons"* (I2, 2025). This example resonates with other Indian initiatives, such as Avehi-Abacus, which explicitly link GCED to decolonial praxis by incorporating the perspectives of excluded groups and local histories into the curriculum (Dhuru & Thapliyal, 2021). More broadly, research suggests that GCED in India

could have its transformative potential when it actively challenges caste- and class-based exclusions in a decolonial way and engages with disadvantaged communities through context-based participation (Arur & DeJaeghere, 2019; Alviar-Martín & Baildon, 2023). This counters WPR question 6, as these practices expand context-situated individual freedoms beyond abstract discourses or Western-framed ways of teaching or learning.

Tunisia: The 2023 Intensive Course on GCED at IHEC Carthage fosters intercultural understanding and dialogue through teamwork. However, persistent labor market discrimination and stagnant discussions on inheritance reform limit the economic security and legal autonomy of many young women* (Présidence du Gouvernement Tunisien et al., 2017). This tension reflects a broader societal dynamic, as evidenced by the fact that, despite Tunisia's progressive legal framework and strong tradition of women's activism, also in GCED-related fields, the country remains polarized between conservative and progressive visions of what gender equity means and should look like (Charfi, 2012). Thus, the potential for expanding capabilities through GCED is limited when progressive legislation does not result in equal socio-economic opportunities (Ouanada, 2020). Furthermore, if not rooted in local feminist and decolonial perspectives, GCED programmes implemented in cooperation with international actors may inadvertently reproduce Western-centric paradigms, thereby limiting their transformative potential (Lakhal, 2020). This gap highlights Bacchi's WPR question 3, revealing that capabilities for meaningful agency are limited when given institutional reforms are not accompanied by societal acceptance and structural adjustments.

These country-specific analysis results suggest that the GCED promise of becoming a “world collective”, as Lang-Wojtasik & Schönborn (2020) mentioned, depends on the presence of certain factors, aligning with Martha Nussbaum's (2011) argument that capabilities depend on internal abilities (e.g. critical thinking skills, confidence, intercultural understanding) and external conditions (e.g. institutional frameworks, economic opportunities, legal protections, social acceptance).

8.1.2 Contextual Relevance and Adaptive Potential

Focusing on capabilities highlights the critical role of the *glocal* context in the potential impact of GCED. Although global policy frameworks list competencies such as empathy, critical thinking, and civic engagement (mostly meaning democratic values) as universally transferable, interview evidence reveals that these skills require careful adaptation to the diverse cultural,

political, and social realities of human beings to "*live a meaningful life within their reality*". This aligns with Bacchi's (2009) WPR Question 6, which asks whether dominant representations allow for local and context-specific adaptations or impose universal norms.

One expert emphasized that GCED must foster the capability to "*making complexity clear without trivializing it*" enabling learners to engage with complex interlinked crises such as fossil-fuel dependence, authoritarianism, and anti-feminist backlash (I4, Interview 2025). Without this complexity literacy, the risk is that GCED as an educational approach will remain normatively thin and mostly ineffective. This suggests that internal abilities to understand these interrelations, such as critical analysis, must be complemented by inclusive pedagogical methods that resonate with local public discourses, culture, community values, and alternative educational philosophies, as conceptualized by Nussbaum (2011). Another adaptive potential is seen within the sphere of dialogic pedagogies, where tensions between perspectives of a secular, religious, or caste-based nature are confronted in a post-revolutionary or post-colonial society, as the examples of India or Tunisia show. As experts observed, imported European secular debate formats "*don't resonate*" with many students (I5, Interview 2025; I1, Interview 2025). This gap reflects Bacchi's (2009) WPR Question 3, which addresses the issue of some GCED programs assuming something like cultural objectivity. Contextual relevance is also important when it comes to the criticisms of so-called rigid competence checklists, which many interviewees mentioned (I4 & I6, Interview 2025). Therefore, experts advocate for enabling feminist as well as decolonial environments and safe, community-led spaces that empower women*, marginalized Indigenous groups, or lower caste members to act and live *their* best yet sustainable life (I1, Interview 2025; I2, Interview 2025).

Together, these cases demonstrate that GCED frameworks cannot be one-size-fits-all since the development of their capabilities depends on a co-construction process with local communities and their ways of thinking, learning, building connections, and experiencing the world, driven by a commitment to gender equality and decolonization. Without this collaborative effort, the potential benefits remain unrealized and out of reach since the evidence confirms that global policy ideals must be translated into context-sensitive practices to achieve "*real freedom*" and autonomy. These concepts are central to both Nussbaum's (2011) critical analysis of policy silences and Bacchi's (2009) interrogation of the same.

8.1.3 Beyond Representation: Can GCED Foster Transformative Peacebuilding?

Building on previous analyses, this section examines whether GCED can move beyond the mere appearance of "inclusion" to genuinely promote "constructive peacebuilding". Although policies often proclaim global and peaceful values, a WPR-based reading reveals a persistent depoliticization. The term "peace" is reduced to interpersonal civility (UNESCO, 2015a), gender to symmetrical participation (UNESCO, 2016), and "global citizenship" to a set of ahistorical soft skills (UNESCO, 2015b). These findings echo Bacchi's (2009) questions 3 and 6, inquiring about the effects of such framings and the alternative representations that remain silenced.

When these idealizations are assessed through the lens of the CA, their material fragility becomes apparent. Despite taking GCED courses, Tunisian graduates confront endemic youth unemployment (see also Lakhal, 2020; and Chapter 6.3.4 for tensions between GCED discourse and Tunisian postcolonial contexts, further unpacked in Chapter 7.3, point 2), and Austrian curricula celebrate some form of "*diversity & alternative knowledge inclusion*" while university faculties remain overwhelmingly Eurocentric (see I5, Interview 2025). This trend is also highlighted by the example of Indian women*, especially from lower castes, who navigate entrenched patriarchal norms that limit their agency even more, as shown by I1 and findings from Arur & DeJaeghere (2019). These cases illustrate that the concept of the "good global citizen" is an inspiring yet challenging and Western-centric ideal and therefore, the analysis suggests that a transition from normative idealism to tangible peacebuilding in gender-responsive GCED is only possible if the following three criteria are met: First, power analysis must be prioritized by interrogating who defines "peace", whose histories are seen as universal or important (and why?), and whose knowledge systems remain unheard (Foucault, 1980; I6, Interview 2025; I7, Interview 2025; I1, Interview 2025). Secondly, educational institutions (especially persons in high-level positions) must be aware of the importance of providing students with diverse role models and alternative knowledge. They should offer essential enabling factors such as adequate material resources, psychosocial safety, and necessary support, as well as different forms of guidance and mentorship through marginalized groups (I7, Interview 2025). Without these external conditions, newly acquired "peacebuilding competencies" cannot translate into real agencies and communities fostering peace (Nussbaum, 2011). Third, capability levels and goals need to be discussed locally, rather than imposed as universal Eurocentric standards, to respect contextual and cultural differences while avoiding relativist traps (Andréotti, 2011; I5, Interview 2025; I1, Interview 2025).

To sum up, without careful consideration, the risk of re-establishing the very disparities that GCED seeks to overcome is real. This could result in the emergence of what Andréotti (2011) refers to as "soft" global citizenship: a concept that offers satisfaction without undermining existing structural hierarchies. However, thoughtfully adopting the concept of the new "global citizen" as a standardized Western ideal shifts the focus towards confronting systemic violence and actively building inclusive, context-driven forms of "peace" for vulnerable communities through education.

Table 8: Summary of Findings by Research Question

Research Questions	Synthesis of Findings
Main Research Question (MRQ): To what extent, and under which conditions, can gender-responsive Global Citizenship Education (GCED) foster transformative capabilities for peacebuilding?	Gender-responsive GCED can foster transformative capabilities for peacebuilding when it is designed with power-awareness, supported by institutional and material resources, and co-constructed with diverse local actors. Essential enabling conditions include inclusive curricula, epistemic plurality, feminist pedagogies, and protection from structural violence. In the absence of such conditions, GCED risks remaining a depoliticized, ideal-typical vision that reinforces Eurocentric, colonial and neoliberal norms.
Sub-question (SQ1): How are peace, gender, and global citizenship represented in key GCED policy texts, and what assumptions or silences shape these representations (WPR)?	Key GCED documents such as the <i>Incheon Declaration</i> (UNESCO, 2015), <i>Education 2030 Framework for Action</i> (UNESCO, 2016), and the <i>UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development</i> (UNESCO, 2021) largely define the “problem” behind these terms as a lack of individual awareness or competencies. Structural inequalities, such as epistemic violence, patriarchy, or colonial legacies, are seldom addressed in depth. Peace is often reduced to interpersonal civility, gender to symmetrical participation, and global citizenship to ahistorical soft skills.

Research Questions	Synthesis of Findings
Sub-question (SQ2): How do practitioners and experts describe the opportunities and constraints of implementing gender-responsive GCED across contexts, and where do these accounts align or diverge from policy framings?	Expert interviews and case findings from Austria, Tunisia, and India reveal strong support for GCED’s transformative aims but highlight deep contextual constraints. In Austria, policy ambition contrasts with minimal curricular integration and systemic fragmentation. In Tunisia, GCED is embedded in feminist traditions yet remains shaped by international donor frameworks and socio-political, religious, and economic gender gaps. In India, grassroots initiatives more effectively align GCED with everyday experiences than top-down models. While policy framings emphasize inclusivity, empowerment, and transformative aims, practitioner accounts reveal tensions: implementations often lack material support, overlook local specificities, and remain discursively aligned but practically limited.
Sub-question (SQ3): Do GCED practices expand learners’ substantive freedoms (<i>capabilities</i>) in context-sensitive ways, and which conversion factors enable or inhibit such expansion (CA)?	GCED practices can support the expansion of learners’ substantive freedoms, such as critical thinking, solidarity, political agency, and intercultural empathy, particularly when enabling conversion factors are present. These include safe learning spaces, co-created curricula, diverse faculty, and recognition of alternative knowledge systems and ways of being. Conversely, structural barriers, such as economic precarity or discrimination, limit the realization of these capabilities, leaving learners formally “included” but substantively excluded.

8.2 Synthesis: Towards a Feminist-Decolonial Vision for GCED

The purpose of this final synthesis is to bring together the findings from the previous analyses and explicitly reconnect them to the overarching research questions defined in Chapter 1.2.

Specifically, the discussion addresses:

- SQ1 by unpacking the discursive tensions and silences in how GCED, gender, and peace are represented within key policy texts;
- SQ2 by synthesizing expert interview data and regional case studies to analyze opportunities and constraints in implementing gender-responsive GCED across contexts; and
- SQ3 by assessing under which conditions GCED practices can move beyond normative ideals toward tangible capability expansion and transformative outcomes for all learners.

Within this integrative framework, the following two guiding questions structure this last synthesis:

(1) What key tensions define the current landscape of gender-responsive GCED?

(2) Under what conditions can GCED shift from normative ideals to practices that effectively enhance learners' real capabilities for peacebuilding?

(1) A central tension exists between the universalist promise of SDG 4.7 and the structural, persistent inequalities across global contexts (as already evidenced in the empirical gap analysis in Chapters 6.3.2 and 7.2, especially concerning gendered policy implementation). This idealized promise is disconnected from the structural power-driven realities, including economic barriers, political and social marginalization, and patriarchal norms, that inhibit agency in practice (I1, Interview 2025; I5, Interview 2025). These disparities are particularly evident when gender is taken into consideration, as it appears to be just another factor contributing to the existing structural barriers. Although GCED often highlights the participation and contributions of women* and girls*, this representation is merely symbolic and fails to address how institutions, economic systems, cultural clashes, and social hierarchies perpetuate gender inequalities in hidden ways (I1, Interview 2025). As I5 (2025) observed, critical feminist perspectives are often dismissed as "*too political*," revealing that gender equality is treated as a matter of quantitative inclusion or materials-based issue rather than a transformative shift in power dynamics. A similarly profound tension stems from the different interpretations of "peace". After all, for many individuals, peace cannot be reduced to interpersonal relations. Instead, it is closely linked to structural circumstances, such as militarism, colonial history, and economic injustice (I2, Interview 2025; I7, Interview 2025). This underscores the notion that a state of peace, both individually and within communities, is neither neutral nor universally shared, but rather varies depending on social position, gender

identity, a country's history, and regional and cultural norms. Without recognizing the underlying structural inequalities that determine which peace concerns are prioritized, GCED risks becoming an "*empty vessel*" (I6, Interview, 2025), which echoes Bacchi's (2009) question 6 regarding the silences inherent in policy discourse. Thus, both gender equality and peace often remain caught between rhetorical inclusions and structural neglect, revealing how the desired transformation of inequalities is often obscured by the universalist nature of GCED's language or ideas.

(2) A review of the capability analysis reveals that incorporating GCED ideas into existing educational settings or creating new curricula and learning materials without considering the context is insufficient (see Chapters 7 & 8 – especially Table 8). Accordingly, three principles are essential for translating GCED from normative Western-based ideals into the empowerment of marginalized persons, communities, and knowledge systems. Firstly, a power-conscious design is essential, meaning that the GCED must address the following: who defines peace; which histories and thoughts are considered universal; and which knowledge systems are silenced. This requires integrating local, feminist, Indigenous, and postcolonial perspectives to redefine peace and citizenship contextually (Bacchi, 2009; Lakhal, 2020). Secondly, tangible support is essential to transform the mindset that formal participation is sufficient into one that enables genuine freedom for all students, including those from diverse backgrounds. Consequently, structural interventions within educational settings are imperative, and examples include providing funding and scholarships to set new learning goals, creating safe spaces and fostering opportunities for marginalized students, and ensuring a diverse teaching faculty in terms of personnel and subject matter. Whether addressing gender-based discrimination in India or Eurocentric university structures in Austria, material conditions influence the realization of a capability-based education for everyone (I1, Interview 2025; I5, Interview 2025). Thirdly, it is necessary to consider context-specific capability standards, as well as the implications these may have for the community. As opposed to applying the same standards universally, GCED programmes should liaise with local communities to develop their own guidelines. These should reflect the community's history, socio-political power, as well as needs and goals regarding capability-based learning. In doing so, this strategy acknowledges cultural distinctions and counters the tendency towards ideological indifference (based on Andréotti's (2011) decolonial thoughts). These insights demonstrate that GCED has the potential to be a powerful tool for achieving 'equality' by questioning its terms and ideologies from different viewpoints, when designed with gender sensitivity and decolonial ideas in mind. However, this potential is often limited by firmly established organizational, political, and other power-driven

constraints at various levels. Therefore, GCED's ability to create change depends on its commitment to confronting systemic inequalities and Western idealized narratives, and redefining "peace" and "knowledge" as independent entities.

9 Recommendations

Chapter 9 aims to summarize the key recommendations based on the practical and theoretical insights developed throughout this thesis. Drawing upon multi-layered findings from discourse analysis, capability evaluation, and regional case studies, it provides some recommendations for the real-world implementation of GCED, particularly in pedagogical settings and at the policy level. Notably, these recommendations advocate shifting away from traditional monitoring and policy mechanisms towards frameworks rooted in the CA and informed by feminist and decolonial critiques. The division of the chapter into three sections is as follows: Firstly, it rethinks standards for measuring the "success" of GCED when used in educational contexts. Secondly, structural reforms across all educational spheres are outlined. Lastly, it indicates the main areas that research should prioritize in the future. Together, these recommendations transform critical analyses of the limitations of GCED into actionable pathways to achieve more just as well as meaningful educational opportunities for learners worldwide.

9.1 Effectiveness Measures: Rethinking Impact from the Capability Perspective

As the thesis found, a feminist-decolonial vision of GCED cannot be evaluated through enrolment figures, curricular adaptations or standardized surveys alone. Instead, its success must be determined by its ability to expand the substantive freedoms of those who have been, and still are, excluded or marginalized by enabling them to embody the postulated principles of "global justice" and the concept of being a "global citizen" in ways that are meaningful to their specific contexts (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999). This means that the structure and purpose of an evaluation process itself must generate *value* in the lived realities of learners. It should not be a detached measurement exercise but a process that helps individuals recognize, claim, and expand their (learning, acting, and thinking) capabilities. The key question, therefore, shifts from "Are learners achieving predefined competencies?" to "Do learners feel and experience that they can act differently, navigate power structures, and influence their social, environmental, as well as political environment in ways that matter to them?"

Drawing on insights from this thesis, three approaches are proposed to realize such transformative evaluation:

(1) Firstly, capability-based indicators should be developed collaboratively with those most affected by structural inequalities. Rather than assessing some generic skills, these indicators should capture learners' sense of empowerment and their practical agency. For example, do learners feel able and free to speak out about injustice? Can they initiate local change, even in small ways? Do they perceive that their knowledge and identities are valued as sources of legitimate insight, rather than as objects of study?

(2) Secondly, a multi-scalar assessment model is needed to trace how individual capability gains connect to broader structures. At a micro level, evaluations should explore whether learners have access to safe spaces in which they can express their complex identities and expertise, and question systems of power, fearlessly (I6, Interview 2025). At a meso level, institutions should assess whether diverse epistemologies, particularly concerning peace and gender, are genuinely integrated into subjects, teaching methods, areas of academic research, and, most importantly, the composition of the educational staff (I1, Interview 2025; I7, Interview 2025; see also discussion in Chapter 7.3 on epistemic silences and exclusions). At a macro level, metrics aligned with SDG 4.7 or the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda (UNESCO, 2015; UN Women, 2022) should be contextualized to ensure they reflect local struggles, values, and circumstances of daily life in depth rather than imposing external standards.

(3) Thirdly, evaluation methodologies themselves should be empowering. From a feminist-decolonial standpoint, measuring impact necessitates a participatory and reflective process that empowers learners with the resources to assess their lives, emotions, prospects, and relationships with others and the broader global community. For instance, storytelling workshops can uncover how learners connect certain ideas of "peace" or "gender justice" that are often framed from a Western viewpoint to their own personal stories and societal struggles. The true measure of impact lies in whether students can say: "This learning experience has transformed my perception of myself within these interconnected global systems, my awareness of my privilege, and my understanding of how I can contribute meaningfully to my community and beyond to help create a more peaceful world. It has also given me thought to what I can do

to contribute to the improvement of the world on an equal level.” To “measure” such deeply personal and context-specific outcomes, evaluators must listen for changes in how learners speak about themselves, their rights, and their imagined futures. They must look for shifts in language, confidence, participation, *drive*, and initiative. As I2 (2025) argued, purely psychometric data misses these subtle yet transformative changes. Ultimately, effectiveness in GCED cannot mean ticking off standardized boxes but needs to create pathways through which those historically silenced or marginalized can live differently, on their terms, in ways they find meaningful.

9.2 Multifaceted Framework Development

To realize a feminist-decolonial vision of GCED, new frameworks must resist the neoliberal reduction of education to skill acquisition and the ongoing suppression of non-Western epistemologies. At the policy level, national education strategies could adopt something similar to a *Coloniality and Gender Impact Review* grounded in Bacchi's (2009) WPR questions 3 and 6. In this review, educational authorities or teaching and learning specialists from all levels and institutions in each country determine who holds the right to define concepts such as "peace", "citizenship", and "justice", and whose potential contributions have been overlooked. This directly responds to the critiques in Chapter 7.3 about knowledge differences and the non-Western thought and learning systems that are often neglected. Therefore, a modified policy framework with rotating evaluation committees comprising regional feminist scholars, Indigenous educators, psychologists, and diverse civil society members could be implemented. Such diverse bodies would review curricular materials and policy proposals to ensure epistemic plurality. At curricular and institutional levels, teacher education programmes require a structural incorporation of gendered perspectives and decolonial thinking among faculty personnel, rather than merely adding isolated modules to courses. The UNITWIN Arab-European Network provides a concrete model demonstrating how North African and European institutions can collaboratively co-design GCED modules, trying to resist one-directional knowledge transfer (UNESCO, 2023). In addition, future frameworks should include co-authorship requirements for non-Western countries regarding curriculum and thematic design. These actions guarantee that decolonial perspectives become part of the organizational system instead of being chosen subjects or secondary considerations. At a pedagogical level (micro), educators require practical instruments that facilitate situated, communal, and politicized learning. One possible approach is the use of "critical capability circles", which are classroom

spaces where students collectively analyze local manifestations of structural violence or exclusion and consider pathways for action and personal goals within their communities.

9.3 Future Research Directions

In an era of deep global uncertainty and rising conflicts, GCED should be reimagined not only as a pedagogical reform in educational institutions but as a critical response to the systemic injustices and epistemic hierarchies embedded within global governance and education, as this thesis found. This vision prompts significant academic research questions that need to be explored further: (1) What kind of "world collective" can be constructed by education, and what are the implications of this for our global society? (2) How can learners specifically develop and nurture their capabilities to navigate, resist, and reshape the systems that engender feelings of insecurity, exclusion, and environmental collapse? (3) By what authority is the direction, form, and content of these collective educational responses defined? Based on these principles and the findings of this thesis, several key research areas arise.

(1) Longitudinal Capability Tracing

Most existing research on GCED remains confined to short-term cognitive or attitudinal outcomes, with minimal attention to sustained effects on learners' *real-life agency*. Yet, a capability-oriented model demands long-term evidence of whether learners acquire substantive freedoms to act for more justice and peace (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999). Therefore, future studies may consider using longitudinal designs to examine whether and how GCED involvement leads to meaningful peacebuilding and civic engagement practices in various contexts and within one's own community. Methods could include repeated interviews, life-history research, and participatory longitudinal journaling. These techniques would allow researchers to trace how learners apply their learning to their lived capabilities over time.

(2) Structural Peace Metrics

Current evaluations of GCED often overlook structural violence, such as socioeconomic marginalization, gender- or caste-based discrimination, and epistemic exclusion, in favor of abstract ideals like "tolerance." Future research could develop tools capable of assessing "peace" as a structural condition shaped by intersecting identities, including gender, class, caste, and *race*. This requires the integration of mixed-methods instruments that can capture both quantitative data, such as socio-economic mobility indicators, and qualitative insights into learners' perceptions of justice and inclusion within formal systems. Such metrics must be co-

designed with communities affected by structural violence to ensure their relevance and legitimacy.

(3) Comparative Decolonial Pedagogy

A key tension emerging from both policy analysis and expert interviews is the systematic marginalization of non-Western epistemologies (I1, Interview 2025; I6, Interview 2025; Lakhal, 2020). Future research should engage in systematic comparative studies examining how concepts like “global citizenship”, “justice”, and “peace” are reframed within different philosophical and cultural traditions, for example, religious ethics, Indigenous relational ontologies, or Dalit feminist-activist thought. Such research would directly address WPR questions 3 and 6 by interrogating who is permitted to imagine GCED’s future, and under what circumstances. Methodologies might include discourse analysis, ethnographic collaborations, and transregional dialogues that enable subaltern perspectives.

(4) Mapping Pedagogical Assumptions

It has been demonstrated by this thesis that numerous GCED frameworks are based on psychological models of peace, with the development of specific competencies such as empathy and tolerance being focused on, while critical analysis of the system is frequently overlooked. Therefore, further research ought to examine how pedagogical assumptions differ in regional, ideological, and institutional contexts. This should involve exploring differently shaped interpretations of concepts such as emotional intelligence, empowerment, and the relationship between knowledge and real-life action. Some possible research questions could be: How do feminist pedagogical approaches at Austrian universities challenge neoliberal notions of individual responsibility? How do caste politics in India reshape the aims and limits of GCED? Such an enquiry is essential for creating pedagogical techniques that can encourage transformative capabilities instead of perpetuating existing paradigms.

(5) Cross-Scalar System Diagnostics

Lang-Wojtasik and Schönborn (2020) emphasized the complex difficulties facing the world today, alongside the need for educational change related to GCED across micro, meso, and macro levels. Future research should therefore prioritize developing assessment tools that can reveal why GCED initiatives succeed or fail. At the micro level, for instance, we can examine how classroom practices such as embodied learning influence learners' sense of what they can achieve. At the meso level, we can ask how and why institutional structures support or inhibit

the integration of feminist and decolonial content. At the macro level, how do governance mechanisms such as funding models, certification systems, and transnational partnerships enable or constrain GCED policy? Research of this kind would provide practical knowledge for creating solutions that match the objectives of policymakers with the real-life experiences of those impacted by the proposed "*problems*".

(6) Critical Methodology Development

Finally, future research should question the epistemological foundations of its methodologies. What transformations might occur if we "decolonize" the research instruments used to evaluate GCED learning packages within curricula? Researchers ought to investigate participatory and community-driven methodologies that empower marginalized groups and redefine what counts as "impact". This would respond directly to Bacchi's (2009) idea that methodologies and problem representations are not neutral but reproduce specific power dynamics.

Above all, this critical research agenda ought not to remain limited to academic institutions in the Global North. It is essential that global governance bodies such as UNESCO and UN Women adopt mandate-based participatory research in collaboration with Indigenous or feminist networks, youth movements, and educators from different communities and cultural backgrounds. Ministries of education should invest in independent, cross-regional evaluation bodies, and curriculum developers are obliged to institutionalize continuous feedback loops driven by marginalized groups. Ultimately, if a sustainable and peaceful "*world collective*" is to be constructed by GCED, its role in reproducing global inequalities must be interrogated by future research.

10 Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate to what extent, and under which conditions, gender-responsive GCED can foster transformative capabilities for peacebuilding through an educational lens. To address this MRQ, the study examined three SQ: (1) how peace, gender, and global citizenship are represented in key GCED policy texts (SQ1); (2) how practitioners and experts across regions interpret and implement these ideals (SQ2); and (3) whether and how GCED practices expand learners' substantive freedoms, and what factors might influence this expansion (SQ3). The findings suggest that, although GCED holds considerable promise for fostering progress in the areas of peace and justice, its transformative potential depends on context-sensitive design, support for deep structural changes, and critical engagement with both overt and hidden

inequalities at all levels, including those arising from colonial histories, socioeconomic class, gender, *race*, religion, caste, culturally based influences, and educational structures. Situated within the disciplinary field of Educational Sciences, this thesis responded to growing academic and policy interest in GCED as a vehicle for societal transformation, while feminist and decolonial critiques were foregrounded in an alternative knowledge-system-based approach that frequently remains underrepresented in mainstream frameworks. To address the research question(s), a three-layered qualitative methodology was employed. First, policy documents and expert interviews were analyzed and coded using a thematic approach to identify recurring conceptual and empirical patterns. The second step involved applying Bacchi's (2009) WPR Approach to reveal the underlying assumptions, silences, and power asymmetries in present GCED narratives. In a third step, the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011) was employed to evaluate the potential for meaningful expansion of learners' opportunities and capabilities through GCED approaches, particularly for those who have been historically marginalized due to gender, colonial legacies, or other structural inequities in society, particularly within Western-framed contexts of education.

The findings evidence that although gender-responsive GCED is underpinned by strong normative principles, its transformative capacity is subject to significant constraints. When embedded in context-responsive pedagogies and supported by inclusive institutional structures that prioritize awareness of power, epistemic justice, and pluralistic knowledge systems, GCED can foster learners' capabilities for peacebuilding. However, such strategies call for engagement with feminist and decolonial frameworks, and a broader representation of voices from the Global South and Indigenous epistemologies is required. Adopting the Capability Approach (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999), this thesis evaluates GCED in a manner that transcends mere rhetorical inclusivity. Instead, its focus included learners' real freedoms to act and take part within our complex world in their own meaningful ways, rather than on the transmission of knowledge.

These insights highlight a key tension: The universalist aspirations of GCED often conflict with local lived realities in terms of power and discrimination. As the WPR analysis (Bacchi, 2009) revealed, dominant framings often depoliticize key terms such as "peace" and "gender justice," neglecting the structural preconditions that enable or hinder learners to convert educational opportunities into meaningful agency within their world and value-based community. Furthermore, the term "inclusion" is often mistakenly equated with "representation" and fails

to address systemic reform. This perpetuates the coloniality of knowledge and maintains existing hierarchical structures (Andreotti, 2011). Nevertheless, the thesis also revealed encouraging prospects: Transformative GCED approaches become possible and transformative in diverse ways when three conditions are met: (1) power analyses are integrated into the curriculum and pedagogy; (2) essential transition factors such as psychosocial safety and epistemic recognition are institutionally supported; and (3) local communities co-define capability development, avoiding both relativism and the imposition of global norms (Nussbaum, 2011). In this sense, education is not merely a tool for the transmission of knowledge, but also a field in which political negotiation and social possibility are cultivated. The objective of this thesis, which was to transition from an analysis of discourse to a normative assessment, has been accomplished. However, there are still several unresolved issues. One such challenge arises in the attempt to quantify the impact of contextualized learning outcomes. Another is the need to ensure that GCED efforts continue beyond the life of short-term projects. Incorporating feminist-decolonial perspectives and alternative knowledge systems into Western-style education systems is another challenge, and not a straightforward one to overcome due to power imbalances in numerous areas, as the thesis demonstrated. Based on these findings, there is an urgent need for future research in five specific areas: longitudinal capability tracing, structural peace metrics, comparative decolonial pedagogy, pedagogical assumption mapping, and participatory methodology development (see Chapter 9). Ultimately, this thesis contributes both conceptually and empirically to the field of *Bildungswissenschaft* (Educational Sciences) by demonstrating how GCED, when reimagined through a feminist and capability-oriented paradigm, can serve as a critical tool for rethinking the purpose, content and politics of education and fostering a society that respects equal rights and promotes peaceful coexistence in our interconnected world. Essentially, it advocates shifting the focus from education about global justice to education as global justice, empowering learners to understand and reimagine the world on their own terms.

Bibliography

- Abdi, A. A. (2015). Decolonizing global citizenship education. In A. A. Abdi (Ed.), *Decolonizing global citizenship education* (pp. 15-30). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-277-6_2
- ADA. (2019). *Global Citizenship Education: Capacity Building and Cooperation Project Report*. Austrian Development Agency. <https://www.entwicklung.at/projekte/detail/universitaetslehrgang-global-citizenship-education-2019-2022>
- AFS India. (n.d.). *Global citizenship education agenda*. AFS India. Abgerufen am 20. Juni 2025 von <https://india.afs.org/education/gced-agenda/>
- AFS Tunisia. (2025). *Global Citizenship Education Agenda*. Abgerufen von <https://afstunisia.org/global-citizenship>
- Aggestam, K., & Eitrem Holmgren, L. (2022). The gender-resilience nexus in peacebuilding: The quest for sustainable peace. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 25(4), 880-901. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-022-00269-9>
- Alcoff, L. M. (1988). Cultural feminism versus post-structuralism: The identity crisis in feminist theory. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 13(3), 405-436. <https://doi.org/10.1086/494426>
- Allen, R. L. (2005). Whiteness and critical pedagogy. In Z. Leonardo (Ed.), *Critical pedagogy and race* (S. 53-68). Blackwell.
- Alkire, S. (2002). *Valuing freedoms: Sen's capability approach and poverty reduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Alviar-Martin, T., & Baidon, M. (2023). Global Citizenship Education in Asia: Moving Towards Decolonization. In Y. Zhang & M. Bray (Eds.), *International handbook on education development in Asia-Pacific* (pp. 1-15). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-2327-1_144-1
- Anderson, A. (2019). Advancing global citizenship education through global competence and critical literacy: Innovative practices for inclusive childhood education. *SAGE Open*, 9(1), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019826000>
- Andreotti, V. (2010). Postcolonial and post-critical 'global citizenship education'. In M. Apple, S. Ball, & L. A. Gandin (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of the sociology of education* (pp. 238-248). Routledge.
- Andreotti, V. (2011a). *Actionable postcolonial theory in education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Andreotti, V. (2011b). Critical Global Citizenship Education. *Development Education Review*, 12, 5-12.
- Andreotti, V., & De Souza, L. (2008). Learning to read the world through other eyes. *Global Education*.
- Andreotti, V. d. O., & de Souza, L. M. T. M. (2012a). The idea of global citizenship: A critical overview. *Journal of Global Education and Social Studies*, 1(1), 1-22.
- Andreotti, V. d. O., & de Souza, L. M. T. M. (2012b). *Postcolonial perspectives on global citizenship education*. Routledge.
- Arur, A., & DeJaeghere, J. (2019). Decolonizing life skills education for girls in Brahmanical India: a Dalitbahujan perspective. *Gender and Education*, 31(4), 490-507.
- Arvanitis, E., & Lamprakis, A. (2021). Reclaiming emotion and affect in peace education. *Journal of Peace Education*, 18(1), 36-54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2020.1868382>
- Avehi Abacus Project. (2018). *Vision and Mission*. <http://avehiabacus.org/vision-Mission.html>
- Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?* Pearson.
- Bacchi, C. (2012). Introducing the 'What's the Problem Represented to be?' Approach. In L. F. McDonald & L. M. L. McDonald (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 221-235). SAGE Publications.
- Bacchi, C., & Goodwin, S. (2016). *Poststructural policy analysis: A guide to practice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bamberger, M. (2022). Gender and resilience in global citizenship education. *Journal of Global Education Policy*, 9(3), 201-217.
- Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Purich Publishing.
- Becker, A. (2021a). Becoming-human through decolonial human rights education: From universality to pluriversality. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 19(1), 111-124.
- Becker, A. (2021b). Decolonial human rights education: Changing the terms and content of conversations on human rights. *Human Rights Education Review*, 4(2), 49-68. <https://doi.org/10.7577/hrer.3989>
- Bešić, E., Paleczek, L., Rossmann, P., & Gasteiger-Klicpera, B. (2020). Attitudes towards the inclusion of refugee girls with and without disabilities in Austrian primary

schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24(7), 749-767. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1467976>

Bildung 2030. (n.d.). *Home - Bildung 2030*. Abgerufen am 12. Juni 2025 von <https://bildung2030.at>

BMBWF. (2015). *Verordnung zur Politischen Bildung als übergreifendes Bildungsziel*. Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung.

BMUKK. (2013). *Grundsatzertlass Politische Bildung*. Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur.

Bosio, E. (2022a). Meta-critical global citizenship education: Towards a pedagogical paradigm rooted in critical pedagogy and value-pluralism. *Journal of Global Citizenship and Education*, 6(3), 235-250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12345-022-00234-9>

Bosio, E. (2022b). Towards decolonial and postcritical GCED. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 14(1), 45-60.

Bosio, E., & Waghid, Y. (2022). *Global citizenship education in the global south: Educators' perceptions and practices*. BRILL. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004521742>

Bourn, D. (2015). *The theory and practice of development education*. Routledge.

Brantmeier, E. J. (2013). Pedagogy of vulnerability: Definitions and applications. In E. J. Brantmeier, B. C. Miller, & M. L. Apple (Eds.), *Pedagogy of vulnerability* (pp. 1-12). IAP.

Butler, J. (2002). *Undoing gender*. Routledge.

Casel. (2020). *Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework*. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. <https://casel.org>

Charfi, A. (2012). *Révolution, modernité, Islam*. Sud Editions.

Chaudhary, L. (2007). *An economic history of education in colonial India*. Hoover Institution. <https://www.hoover.org>

Clark, L., & Ungar, M. (2021). Gender-responsive peacebuilding: A critical exploration of resilience and intersectionality. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 16(3), 293-308. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166211045407>

Comim, F., Qizilbash, M., & Alkire, S. (Eds.). (2008). *The capability approach: Concepts, measures and applications*. Cambridge University Press.

- Council of Europe, GREVIO. (2024). *Thematic evaluation report on the coordinated policies on preventing and combating violence against women in Austria*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Council of Europe North–South Centre. (2024). *Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship*. Council of Europe. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/north-south-centre/mediterranean-university-on-youth-and-global-citizenship>
- Davies, L., & Bentrovato, D. (2011). Understanding education's role in fragility: Synthesis of four situational analyses of education and fragility: *Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Liberia*. Paris: UNESCO-IIEP. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000191504>
- De Lissovoy, N. (2010). Decolonial pedagogy and the ethics of the global. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 31(3), 279-293.
- De Vries, M. (2021). Enacting critical citizenship: An intersectional approach to global citizenship education. In E. Bosio & H. Giroux (Eds.), *Critical pedagogy and global citizenship education* (pp. 157-170). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429346897-1>
- Dhuru, S., & Thapliyal, N. (2021). Global Desi?: Possibilities and challenges for global citizenship education in India. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 19(4), 405-419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2021.1889362>
- Dill, B. T., & Zambrana, R. E. (2020). Critical thinking about inequality: An emerging lens. In B. T. Dill & R. E. Zambrana (Eds.), *Feminist theory reader* (pp. 108-116). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003001201-14>
- Ellsworth, E. (1989). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 59(3), 297-324. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.59.3.058342114k266250>
- Escobar, A. (2017). *Designs for the pluriverse: Radical interdependence, autonomy, and the making of worlds*. Duke University Press.
- European Commission. (2017). *Building a stronger Europe: The role of youth, education and culture policies – European Education Area*. Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3dbc3537-ebf9-11ea-b3c6-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
- European Union & Council of Europe. (2022-2025). *South Programme V*. <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/south-programme>

- Fan, G. (2025). The Reconfiguration of Human Education in an Uncertain World. *Prospects*, 55(1), 1-20.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: Vol. 1. An introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1984). What is Enlightenment? In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 32-50). Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1988). The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom. In J. Bernauer & D. Rasmussen (Eds.), *The final Foucault* (S. 1-20). MIT Press.
- Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (1990). *Beyond good and evil: Prelude to a philosophy of the future* (R. J. Hollingdale, Trans.). Penguin.
- Global Citizenship Foundation. (n.d.). *Global Citizenship Foundation: Advancing education for human flourishing*. <https://www.globalcitizenshipfoundation.org/>
- Gough, A. (2018). Sustainable development and global citizenship education: Challenging imperatives. In I. Davies, L. C. Ho, C. M. Kiwan, J. H. L. S. T. E. F. D. W. K. S. J. W. M. T. B. & D. D. (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of global citizenship and education* (pp. 345-359). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59733-5_19
- Guajardo, M. (2023). Linking global citizenship education and critical pedagogy: Women's leadership and power. *Citizenship Teaching & Learning*, 18(1), 35-50.
- Lahiri-Roy, R., & Belford, N. (2021). 'A neo-colonial education': Querying its role in immigrant identity, inclusion and empowerment. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 42(2), 235-252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2021.1889487>
- Lakhal, M. (2020, 26. Februar). The taming of youth activism in Tunisia and the Global South. *Review of African Political Economy*. <https://roape.net/2020/02/26/the-taming-of-youth-activism-in-tunisia-and-the-global-south/>
- Lang-Wojtasik, G., & Schönborn, S. (2020). Development Education - Globales Lernen - Global Citizenship Education. Bleibende Aporien und strategische Offerten im Weltkollektiv. *ZEP: Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik*, 43(4), 4-12. <https://doi.org/10.25656/01:21260>
- Luke, C., & Gore, J. (Eds.). (1992). *Feminisms and critical pedagogy*. Routledge.

- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On The Coloniality Of Being: Contributions to the development of a concept. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3), 240-270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162548>
- Mason, M., & Clarke, M. (2010). Post-Structuralism and Education. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGaw (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* (Vol. 6, pp. 175-182). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-044894-7.01730-9>
- Mayer, S., & Sauer, B. (2017). Austria. In R. Kuhar & D. Paternotte (Eds.), *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against equality* (pp. 23-40). London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Mayring, P. (2015). *Qualitative content analysis: Theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution*. Beltz.
- McKinley, E., & Smith, L. T. (2019). *Handbook of Indigenous Education*. Springer.
- Merkel, K. (2021). *Thematic review on gender-responsive peacebuilding* (K. O'Neill, Ed.). UN Women.
- Miedema, S., & Bertram-Troost, G. (2020). Transforming worldviews: Exploring worldviews and global citizenship education. *Religious Education*, 115(2), 208-221.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2010). Epistemic disobedience, independent thought, and decolonial freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(7-8), 159-181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275>
- Mignolo, W. D. (2011). *The darker side of Western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options*. Duke University Press.
- Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. (2018). *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Duke University Press.
- Misson, P. (1996). *Deconstructing the classroom: A poststructuralist approach to literacy education*. Routledge.
- Mohanani, S. M., Netto, S. G., & Ram, A. T. (2024). Breaking barriers: Collective intelligence as a tool for gender-responsive education. In R. K. Kushwaha, Z. D. Nzuza, P. K. Yadav, & S. Yadav (Eds.), *Collective intelligence: A resource for teachers, parents & policymakers* (pp. 208-220). BlueRose Publishers.
- Morin, E. (2012). *La Voie: Pour l'avenir de l'humanité*. Fayard.
- Ní Aoláin, F., Haynes, D., & Cahn, N. (2011). Gender, conflict, and peacebuilding. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 33(4), 1055-1079. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2011.0051>

- Noddings, N. (2013a). *Caring: A relational approach to ethics and moral education*. University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (2013b). *Education and peace: A feminist perspective*. Teachers College Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2000). *Women and human development: The capabilities approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2006). *Frontiers of justice: Disability, nationality, species membership*. Harvard University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Harvard University Press.
- Nygren, T. (2020). *The complexity of implementing ideals of global citizenship: A comparative study*. Uppsala University Project Summary.
- Okpokwasili, O. A. (2024). The ethics of cultural relativism versus universal human rights in addressing gender issues in Nigeria. *AMAMIHE: Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 22(4), 43-47. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16714.79047>
- Olssen, M. (2006). *Michel Foucault: Materialism and education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315633459>
- Opiyo, K. O. (2023). Transforming the landscape: Women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(5), 131-144.
- Ouanada, H. (2017). Women's Rights, Democracy and Citizenship in Tunisia. In E. McLaren (Ed.), *Women and social change in North Africa* (pp. 127-134). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ouanada, H. (2020). Citizenship and global citizenship education in Tunisia: Women's rights at the heart of the democratic process. In A. Akkari & K. Maleq (Eds.), *Global citizenship education* (pp. 125-134). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-44617-8_10
- Oxley, L., & Morris, P. (2013). Global citizenship: A typology for distinguishing its multiple conceptions. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 61(3), 301-325.
- Preece, J. (2015). Resilience in post-conflict societies. *International Journal of Education and Development*, 40, 24-35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.12.003>
- Présidence du Gouvernement Tunisien, ONU Femmes, & Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International (MAEDI). (2017). *Discrimination de genre dans la fonction publique: Résultats de l'étude sur la présence des femmes dans la fonction*

publique et leur accès aux postes de décision en Tunisie. ONU Femmes. <https://www.unwomen.org/fr/digital-library/publications/2017/12/discrimination-de-genre-dans-la-fonction-publique>

- Quijano, A., & Ennis, M. (2000). Coloniality of power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1(3), 533-580. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/23906>
- Rechnungshof Österreich (Austrian Court of Audit). (2023). Gewalt- und Opferschutz für Frauen (Themenübergreifende Prüfung). Vienna: Rechnungshof.
- Robeyns, I. (2005). The capability approach: A theoretical survey. *Journal of Human Development*, 6(1), 93-114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/146498805200034266>
- Ryan, C. (2022). (Gendered) resilience in community-based natural resource management in fragile and conflict-affected settings. *Journal of International Relations and Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-022-00269-9>
- Saeng, S. (2018). How can GCED promote gender equality? *Sang Saeng*, 19(4), 14-19.
- Santos, B. de S. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Routledge.
- Saussure, F. de. (1959). Course in general linguistics (W. Baskin, Trans.; C. Bally & A. Sechehaye, Eds.). Philosophical Library.
- Sen, A. (1985). *Commodities and capabilities*. North-Holland.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Siddiqi, N. (2021). Gender inequality as a social construction in India: A phenomenological enquiry. *Women's Studies International Forum*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2021.102472>
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2. Aufl.). Zed Books.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271-313). University of Illinois Press.
- Stein, S., Ahenakew, C., & Andreotti, V. (2023). Power/knowledge: Global and Indigenous education. In R. Tierney, F. Rizvi, K. Ercikan & G. Smith (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (4. Aufl., S. 251-260). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-818630-5.08040-4>

- Struthers, A. (2019). Human rights education: Educating about, through and for human rights. *International Journal of Human Rights*, 23(7), 1046-1061.
- Südwind. (2022). *Bildung2030: Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung und globales Lernen*. <https://www.bildung2030.at>
- Torres, C. A. (2017). *Theoretical and empirical foundations of critical global citizenship education*. Routledge.
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40.
- UN Women. (2021a). *Annual report 2020-2021*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/annual-report/2021>
- UN Women. (2021b). *Men, masculinities and humanitarian settings*. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/men-masculinities-and-humanitarian-settings-en.pdf>
- UN Women. (2021c). *The Warwick principles: Best practices for engaging men and boys in preventing violence against women and girls*. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/02/the-warwick-principles-best-practices-for-engaging-men-and-boys-in-preventing-vawg>
- UN Women. (2022). *Gender Equality and Education*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/education>
- UNESCO. (2005/2021). *Basic texts of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2021 ed.). UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2015a). *Education 2030: Incheon declaration and framework for action*. UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2015b). *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232993>
- UNESCO. (2016). *Education 2030 Framework for Action*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>
- UNESCO. (2018). *UNESCO policy on engaging with indigenous peoples*. UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2021a). *Citizenship education as a peacebuilding tool*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/citizenship-education-peacebuilding-tool-new-social-contract-education>

- UNESCO. (2021b). *Gender and peacebuilding training for primary school teachers: Training manual*. <https://gcedclearinghouse.org/resources/gender-and-peacebuilding-training-primary-school-teachers-training-manual>
- UNESCO. (2021c). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707>
- UNESCO. (2023). *Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS)*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/links>
- UNESCO Maghreb, University of Bologna, & IHEC Carthage. (2023). *Intensive Course in Global Citizenship Education*. UNESCO. <https://unescochairgced.it/en/2023/12/02/intensive-course-in-global-citizenship-education/>
- UNESCO-APCEIU. (2022). *SangSaeng: How Can GCED Promote Gender Equality?* UNESCO APCEIU.
- United Nations. (1999). General Assembly, Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace: Resolutions / adopted by the General Assembly. <https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unga/1999/en/12411>
- United Nations. (2019). *Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security*. UN. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/DPFrameworks/Resolution1325.pdf>
- United Nations Development Programme. (2018). *Tunisia: Gender justice & the law*. <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/gender-justice-and-the-law>
- Unterhalter, E. (2017). *Gender and education: The evidence on gender equality in education*. UNESCO GEM Report.
- Unterhalter, E., Durrani, N., & Emejulu, A. (2020). Gender, education, and global citizenship: A framework for inclusive education. *Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14(3), 205-224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1742674>
- Walker, M., & Unterhalter, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Amartya Sen's capability approach and social justice in education*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2. Aufl.). Blackwell.
- Wintersteiner, W., Grobbauer, H., Diendorfer, G., & Reitmair-Juárez, S. (2015). *Global Citizenship Education: Politische Bildung für die Weltgesellschaft*. Austrian Commission for UNESCO.

Wintersteiner, W., & Wulf, C. (2015). Global Citizenship: Konvivialistischer Kosmopolitismus. Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt / Freie Universität Berlin.

Appendix

(1) Anhang A: Expert*innen-Interview-Leitfaden:

"Ich möchte mich zunächst für die Bereitschaft, dieses Interview zu führen, bedanken. Gegenstand meiner Forschung ist die Frage, inwiefern Global Citizenship Education (GCED), die sich an den Prinzipien der Gender-Sensibilität orientiert, zur nachhaltigen Friedensbildung beitragen kann. Dabei ist insbesondere die Förderung sozialer, emotionaler und psychologischer Kompetenzen von Interesse, da diesen nachgesagt wird, dass sie zur Dekonstruktion unterdrückender gesellschaftlicher Strukturen beitragen kann. Das von Ihnen vorgebrachte Fachwissen ist von großer Bedeutung, um sowohl theoretische als auch praktische Perspektiven zu beleuchten."

1) Einführung: Persönliche Perspektive auf GCED & Friedensbildung

- 1.1) Welche Rolle spielt Global Citizenship Education (GCED) bzw. Friedensbildung in Ihrer wissenschaftlichen Disziplin bzw. beruflichen Praxis? Welche Aspekte sind aus Ihrer Sicht besonders wichtig?
- 1.2) Welche gesellschaftlichen Herausforderungen können durch Bildungsprogramme in Ihrer Disziplin adressiert werden? Sehen Sie hier besondere Chancen oder Hindernisse?
- 1.3) Gibt es aktuelle wissenschaftliche oder praxisorientierte Diskurse, die Ihre Sicht auf Bildung und Friedensförderung besonders beeinflussen?

2) Bildung & psychosoziale Kompetenzen für nachhaltigen Frieden

- 2.1) Welche Kompetenzen - sei es aus psychologischer, pädagogischer, soziologischer oder politischer Perspektive - sind für friedliche Gesellschaften essenziell? (z.B. kritisches Bewusstsein, Empathie, Resilienz, soziale Verantwortung, usw.)
- 2.2) Wie kann Bildung gezielt zur Förderung dieser Kompetenzen beitragen? Welche konkreten Methoden oder Strategien kennen Sie aus Ihrer Disziplin?
- 2.3) Gibt es Forschungsergebnisse oder Beispiele aus Ihrer Praxis, die zeigen, welche pädagogischen oder psychologischen Ansätze besonders wirksam sind?

3) Wissenschaft vs. Praxis – Diskrepanzen & Herausforderungen

- 3.1) Gibt es Aspekte von GCED oder Friedensbildung, die in der Praxis eine größere Rolle spielen als in der Wissenschaft - oder umgekehrt?

3.2) Haben Sie Beispiele aus Ihrem Bereich, die zeigen, wo Theorie und Praxis voneinander abweichen?

4) Machtverhältnisse & strukturelle Ungleichheiten in der Bildung

4.1) Welche Rolle spielen soziale Kategorien wie Gender, soziale Herkunft, Ethnizität oder andere Zugehörigkeiten bei der Etablierung und Implementierung von GCED?

4.2) Sehen sie sonstige bestehende Machtverhältnisse innerhalb von GCED, die hinterfragt werden sollten? Können Sie Beispiele nennen?

4.3) Wie können gendersensible und dekoloniale Perspektiven dazu beitragen, strukturelle Ungleichheiten durch Bildung abzubauen? Kennen Sie Programme oder Initiativen, die in diesem Bereich wegweisend sind?

5) GCED im Kontext der Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

5.1) Wie beeinflussen die SDGs die Entwicklung und Umsetzung von GCED-Programmen? Gibt es Beispiele aus Ihrem Fachbereich, die Verbindungen zwischen diesen beiden Bereichen aufzeigen?

5.2) Welche Überschneidungen sehen Sie zwischen GCED und anderen globalen Bildungs- und Entwicklungszielen?

6) Alternative Wissenssysteme und Bildungskonzepte

6.1) Kennen Sie Bildungsansätze, die auf alternative Wissenssysteme zurückgreifen (z.B. indigene Bildungskonzepte, narrative Geschichtstradition, gemeindebasiertes Lernen)?

6.2) Welche Potenziale bieten diese alternativen Ansätze für GCED? Sehen Sie Herausforderungen in der praktischen Umsetzung?

7) Geopolitische & kulturelle Kontexte in der Umsetzung von GCED

7.1) Inwiefern beeinflussen politische und kulturelle Kontexte die Implementierung von gender-sensibler GCED?

7.2) Welche Herausforderungen stellen sich bei der Integration von gendersensiblen und dekolonialen Perspektiven in unterschiedliche Bildungssysteme?

7.3) Mit welchen Strategien oder Methoden können diese Herausforderungen bewältigt werden?

7.4) Können Sie Fallbeispiele benennen, die als „best practice“ gelten können?

8) Wirksamkeit von GCED-Programmen & Evaluationsmethoden

- 8.1) Wie beurteilen Sie die Wirksamkeit von GCED als Konzept in Ihrem Fachbereich und aus Ihrer Expert*innenperspektive?
- 8.2) Wie kann der Erfolg solcher Programme gemessen werden? Gibt es etablierte oder innovative Evaluationsmethoden, die Sie in diesem Zusammenhang für sinnvoll erachten?
- 8.3) Welche Herausforderungen stellen sich bei der Messung der sozialen und emotionalen Lernprozesse, die GCED fördern möchte?

9) Epistemologische & methodologische Perspektiven auf GCED

- 9.1) Welche kritischen Perspektiven sind notwendig, um GCED über westlich geprägte Bildungsparadigmen hinaus weiterzuentwickeln?
- 9.2) Können Sie Beispiele für alternative Wissenskonzepte oder Forschungsansätze nennen, die zu einer solchen Weiterentwicklung von GCED beitragen könnten?

10) Verantwortung & Zukunftsaussichten

- 10.1) Wer sollte die Hauptverantwortung für die Weiterentwicklung von GCED tragen – und warum?
- 10.2) Unterscheiden sich diese Verantwortlichkeiten je nach regionalem oder fachlichem Kontext?
- 10.3) Welche Rolle spielen Bildungseinrichtungen, politische Entscheidungsträger*innen, zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen und lokale Gemeinschaften in diesem Prozess?
- 10.4) Gibt es Aspekte oder Themen, die in den aktuellen Debatten über Bildung und Frieden zu wenig Beachtung finden?
- 10.5) Wo sehen Sie das größte Entwicklungspotential für GCED in den nächsten Jahren?

"Ich bedanke mich für Ihre Bereitschaft, sich der Thematik so umfassend zu widmen, und für die von Ihnen bereitwillig dargelegten Einblicke. Gibt es abschließend noch Aspekte, die Sie ergänzen möchten oder die Ihrer Meinung nach in unserem Interview unzureichend berücksichtigt wurden?"

(2) Appendix B: Expert-Interview-Guide:

„In expressing gratitude for the undertaking of this interview, it should be noted that the subject matter of the present research concerns the extent to which Global Citizenship Education (GCED), predicated on the principles of gender sensitivity, can contribute to sustainable peace education. It is of particular interest to consider the promotion of social, emotional and psychological competencies, which are said to contribute to the deconstruction of oppressive social structures. The expertise you have provided is of great importance to shed light on both theoretical and practical perspectives.”

1) Introduction: Personal Perspective on GCED & Peace Education

- 1.1) What is the role of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) or Peace Education in your academic discipline or professional practice? Which aspects do you consider particularly important?
- 1.2) What societal challenges can be addressed through educational programmes in your discipline? Do you see particular opportunities or obstacles?
- 1.3) Are there any current academic or practice-oriented discourses that particularly influence your view of education and peacebuilding?

2) Education & psychosocial competencies for sustainable peace

- 2.1) What competencies - whether from a psychological, pedagogical, sociological or political perspective - are essential for peaceful societies? (e.g. critical awareness, empathy, resilience, social responsibility, etc.)
- 2.2) How can education specifically contribute to the promotion of these competencies? What specific methods or strategies do you know from your discipline?
- 2.3) Are there any research results or examples from your practice that show which educational or psychological approaches are particularly effective?

3) Science vs. practice - discrepancies & challenges

- 3.1) Are there aspects of GCED or peacebuilding that play a greater role in practice than in science, or vice versa?
- 3.2) Do you have any examples from your field that show where theory and practice diverge?

4) Power relations & structural inequalities in education

- 4.1) What roles do social categories such as gender, social background, ethnicity or other affiliations play in the establishment and implementation of GCED?
- 4.2) Do you see other existing power relations within GCED that should be questioned? Can you give examples?
- 4.3) How can gender-sensitive and decolonial perspectives contribute to reducing structural inequalities through education? Do you know of any programmes or initiatives that are pioneering in this area?

5) GCED in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- 5.1) How do the SDGs influence the development and implementation of GCED programs? Are there examples from your area of expertise that show links between these two areas?
- 5.2) What overlaps do you see between GCED and other global education and development goals?

6) Alternative knowledge systems and educational concepts

- 6.1) Are you familiar with educational approaches based on alternative knowledge systems (e.g. indigenous educational concepts, narrative history tradition, community-based learning)?
- 6.2) What is the potential of these alternative approaches for GCED? Do you see any challenges in their practical implementation?

7) Geopolitical & cultural contexts in the implementation of GCED

- 7.1) To what extent do political and cultural contexts influence the implementation of gender-sensitive GCED?
- 7.2) What are the challenges of integrating gender and decolonial perspectives into different education systems?
- 7.3) What strategies or methods can be used to overcome these challenges?
- 7.4) Can you identify case studies that can be considered as 'best practice'?

8) Effectiveness of GCED programs & evaluation methods

- 8.1) How do you assess the effectiveness of GCED as a concept in your field and from your professional perspective?

8.2) How can the success of such programs be measured? Are there established or innovative evaluation methods that you consider useful in this context?

8.3) What are the challenges of measuring the social and emotional learning processes that GCED aims to promote?

9) Epistemological & methodological perspectives on GCED

9.1) What critical perspectives are needed to develop GCED beyond western educational paradigms?

9.2) Can you give examples of alternative knowledge concepts or research approaches that could contribute to such a development of GCED?

10) Responsibility & Future Prospects

10.1) Who should bear the main responsibility for the further development of GCED - and why?

10.2) Do these responsibilities differ according to regional or disciplinary contexts?

10.3) What is the role of educational institutions, policy makers, civil society organizations and local communities in this process?

10.4) Are there aspects or issues that are not given enough attention in the current debates on education and peace?

10.5) Where do you see the greatest development potential for GCED in the coming years?

„Thank you for your willingness to address this topic so comprehensively, and for the insights you have so willingly provided. Finally, are there any aspects that you would like to add or that you feel have not been adequately addressed during our interview?“