Research Report Decolonization of Education in Zambia and Best Practices in Africa

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1.0.   Introduction

There has recently been a renewed call to undo colonial practices in all areas of human endeavors. For the education sector, this has been inspired by the stakeholders' realization that the power relations and attitudes to knowledge production and consumption, as were perpetuated in the colonial era, continue to influence the structures of the current education systems across the formerly colonized countries. This arises from the reality that colonialism and education are closely interlinked, as the role of education in colonialism is undeniable. Moira (2021) reveals that historically, education systems were used – and abused –to control colonies. As such, the content and practices of education have colonized minds, given how the knowledge systems developed in the Global North, based on an ideal rational scientific model, dominate educational thinking and practices in the Global South (Mahler, 2017). In this regard, the Global South has mainly witnessed the birth of a movement that seeks to challenge and change the narrative, as seen in the growing debates on the decolonization of education in former colonies.

The global movement to decolonize higher education is gaining scholarly attention as conversations around the topic are just beginning. Championed by stakeholders, it is a sad reality that many institutions of higher education were founded on and continue to benefit from the violent dispossession of Indigenous land and, by extension, relegation and exclusion of knowledge systems deemed too local to have an impact on mainstream knowledge (O'Brien & Mudaliar, 2022). This trend continues to hold water in our modern university education systems extending the effects of the colonial origin of the current educational system. Moira (2021) advances that in a quest to address the persistent inequalities that remain as legacies of the colonial experience, education today requires decolonization across five separate areas: teaching, research, institutions, estates, and reparations. She argues that education can live up to its potential as a transformative space for individuals and societies by decolonizing each of these spheres. Cupples and Glynn (2014) remark that universities worldwide, especially those in postcolonial settler nations, have begun to acknowledge their need for a more inclusive approach toward indigenous cosmologies and epistemologies, lest they continue to alienate indigenous students.

That the colonial legacy highly enmeshes the Zambian education landscape is a position which many stakeholders seem to agree with. It has been argued that the education system still reflects the ideologies and values of the colonial powers, hence the call for the decolonization of the university landscape. To bring about an understanding of the discourse on decolonization, ZANEC conducted public debates, in 2019, on the decolonization of education, and it was noted that the concept of decolonization has the potential to localize our curriculum, create liberal thinking among lecturers and students, and support the respect of human rights linked to education. For this reason, ZANEC conducted a study on the decolonization of education in Zambia and best practices in Africa.

1.2. Primary Purpose and Specific Objectives of the Study
1.2.1. Primary Purpose of the Study

The study's primary purpose was to distill evidence on the current progress, value, and relevance of the decolonization of education and how it can be implemented in Zambian public universities.

1.2.2. Specific Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives that guided the study were to:

1. Provide a background of the Zambian education system
2. Show the current state of 'colonization' of the education curriculum in Zambia.
3. Analyze the measures taken to decolonize the curriculum at public universities in Zambia.
4. Identify reasonable efforts to help best incorporate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum.
5. Analyze how decolonization can help improve Zambia's education and skills sector and respond to national aspirations.

2.0. Methodology
2.1. Study Area

The study was conducted in eight universities in Zambia, six public and two private universities. The public universities were the University of Zambia and Chalimbana University in Lusaka province, Kwame Nkrumah University and Mulungushi University in Central province, Mukuba University, and the Copperbelt University in the Copperbelt Province. This is because such institutions are principally potential settings for the entrenchment of decolonization ideas and are more likely to have academics expected to pioneer the decolonization of education. Private universities were the Zambia Open University and Cavendish University, both of Lusaka province. Again, this is because they are the longest-serving private universities in Zambia and have the potential to take a critical role in the decolonization agenda.

2.2. Study Design

The study employed an instrumental qualitative case study involving in-depth, in-context interviews and discussions with participants (Stake, 1995). An instrumental case study devotes time to studying a case (e.g., person, specific group, occupation, department, organization) to provide insight into a particular issue, redraw generalizations, or build theory. This helped to use what was discovered about this specific situation to understand better how universities in comparable settings approach decolonizing their curricula. While doing this, the research prioritized the "assemblage[s] of signs and symbols" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 52) of Indigenous knowledge and the outputs of this knowledge within the context of the university for sustainable development.

2.3. Sample and Sampling Techniques

We targeted one hundred and nine participants (N =109): university managers, key informants such as the regulatory bodies for the higher education sector in Zambia, academic professionals (Lecturers), and student union leaders from the eight participating learning institutions. This number was distributed and represented as follows; key informants at Zambia Qualifications Authority, Higher Education Authority (HEA), and Ministry of Education, Department of University Education (n = 3), academics (n = 40), university managers (n = 40, key informants (n = 2), and student union leaders (n = 24).

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Snowball sampling (Patton, 2002) was employed in selecting university managers and academic professionals familiar with the decolonization discourse. A variety of professionals from different departments were included in the study to learn more about their experiences and better understand the widespread decolonization of education in their institutions. Individuals chosen based on the criteria were also entrusted with discovering others who fit the bill (a process known as "snowballing"). This method, like a snowball rolling down a hill, aided the researchers in locating additional people who had first-hand experience of the phenomena under investigation.

Convenient sampling was employed to select student representatives (student union leaders) and key informants (the Director of Higher Education at the Ministry of Education and the Director of Quality Assurance at the Higher Education Authority). Convenient sampling was used because Khan and Best (2006) note that by observing the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the features of the population from which it was drawn. Therefore, the deliberate data selection was based on the judgment guided by the research's objectives.

When creating the sample, we tried to keep gender in mind. Notably, women must engage equally in higher education and be equally represented within the academy in Zambia (Mwale-Mkandawire, 2019). As a result, researchers tried to record as many women's voices as possible. The table below summarizes the sample distribution.

Participant Institution	Number of Academics	Number of Managers	Number of Student union leaders
The University of Zambia	5	5	3
Chalimbana University	5	5	3
Kwame Nkrumah University	5	5	3
Mulungushi University	5	5	3
Copperbelt University	5	5	3
Mukuba University	5	5	3
Zambia Open University	5	5	3
Cavendish University	5	5	3
Ministry of Education		1	
Higher Education Authority		1	
TOTAL	40	42	24

2.4. Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data collection was twofold, desk review and fieldwork. The former involved a review of available literature regarding the decolonization enterprise. The latter entailed responsive and relational dialogues (interviews and talking circles) with academics engaged in decolonization efforts and conversations with university managers that supported the research mission (Chilisa, 2012). These dialogues, otherwise known as semi-structured interviews in their traditional conceptualization, also involved students at the sampled institutions. These conversations were recorded and guided by a flexible protocol to allow serendipitous moments (Simons, 2009). Conversations with the study participants were driven by questions on the current state of decolonization, how they have conceptualized

it, how they were able to capture it, and how their respective universities engage with the decolonizing agenda**.**

The students were asked to point to instances they see as having links that embed their learning in the colonial legacy of higher education. Next, the Key Informants and the Managers were asked to outline structures that would support the university's call to decolonize, as well as what management mechanisms may be put in place to nurture the process and benefits of decolonization and spread best practices. Finally, university managers were asked to link these outcomes to the university's role in the process. Fundamentally, the dialogues were centered on the participants' expertise and experience, seeking tales, instances, context-dependent explanations of ideas, and treating 'facts-as-experience' (Simpson, 2008, p. 96).

2.5.Data Analysis
A two-stage analytical technique, including coding, was used to parse and deconstruct the data corpus to make sense of the collected data (Stake, 1995). Structured coding was used first to record critical concepts and participant-generated examples pertinent to the research questions (Saldana, 2016). In the second analysis stage, pattern coding was utilized to categorize the structural codes into fewer groups, reducing the data to logical units and revealing emergent answers to the case (2016). As its name suggests, pattern coding creates patterns, or what Stake calls "correspondences," in dataset chunks (1995, 78). The case was further shown by extracting participant narratives and examples from the corpus. This is because "stories generated in everyday conversation, including those generated in research techniques, are tightly related to the experiences and the drive to account for and make sense of the lives of organization members" (Simpson, 2008, pp. 94–95).

2.6.Ethical Considerations
The researchers adhered to the ethical standards in carrying out this study. All participating organizations and people were given their informed consent before the research began. Participants were strongly urged to participate voluntarily and were not penalized if they decided to stop participating in the study. Participants were allowed to select the most convenient time to participate in the study, minimizing the impact on their everyday lives. At all stages—data collection, analysis, discussion, and dissemination- anonymity and confidentiality were kept. The consultant and specific members of ZANEC and its partners were the only people to access the data, which was held in the strictest confidence.

2.7. Quality Assurance
Several methods were used to check the study's validity and reliability. First, there was a stringent procedure for developing the data collection instruments to guarantee their precision (validity of the tools). As such, the researchers went through the research instruments with the research assistants and piloted the study at the University of Zambia to ensure that the tools yielded the expected results.

3.0.   Presentation of Findings
The primary purpose of the current study was to distill evidence on the progress, value, and relevance of the decolonization of education and how it can be implemented in Zambian public universities. The study's overarching aim was to generate data that may be used to further the discussion around the decolonization of education in Zambia and across the African continent. More specifically, the study sought to undertake the following:

1. Provide a background of the Zambian education system

2. Show the current state of 'colonization' of the education curriculum in Zambia.
3. Analyze the measures taken to decolonize the curriculum at public universities in Zambia.
4. Identify reasonable measures to help best incorporate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum.
5. Analyze how decolonization can help improve Zambia's education and skills sector and respond to national aspirations.

In this report section, we address these aims by presenting the evidence from our study. First, the findings are foregrounded on a historical background of education in Zambia. Next, we highlight the socioeconomic and cultural contexts that have shaped this country's educational history. A presentation of the perceptions of our participants on the state of colonization of education in Zambia follows this. This is carried out by mobilizing the sentiments expressed by our study participants around the focal theme of what has been done to decolonize education. We then move to how the study participants understand the reasonable measures to incorporate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum. The last part of our findings will address the stakeholder views on how decolonization can help improve Zambia's education and skills sector while responding to national aspirations.

As we work through these aims, we engage in an iterative process of continuous reflection on the implication of the findings that we uncover. Thus, we nest our analytical gaze as we present the findings. Finally, as we conclude the results, we offer the major themes in condensed form, highlighting the significant takeaways from our study.

3.1. Background of the Zambian education system

The framing of the first objective dictated that we use documentary reviews to map the historical background of education in Zambia. Thus, we supply a historical experience of teaching in Zambia. The starting point will be the arrival in Zambia of the missionaries who aimed to spread the gospel. One such minister, Fredrick Annot of the White Fathers Mission, opened the first official school in Zambia in Kankoyo in 1883. Since then, many schools in Zambia have been founded in that first missionary style. These schools attempted to educate students in essential English reading and Western-based arithmetic skills to read the Bible.

Furthermore, this civilizing mission was based on the necessity to transmit the good news of 'God' to places and people portrayed as living in darkness previous to European presence. 'How we should rejoice and celebrate the Lord that even the ears of those who have been in such a state for ages might be opened to hear God's Word!' Annot is reported to have stated (Annot, 1889, p. 58). In 2020, it was estimated that Zambia had roughly 9441 primary and 1,290 secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2020). This was the colonial legacy of instituting formal education in Africa, which occurred amid the more extensive epistemic violence that followed imperialist activity from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries.

Annot mirrored the harsh, dualistic essence of Western thinking by placing his god above the gods of the Bulozi empire, especially Nyambe. Derrida (1976) criticizes Western philosophy, claiming that it only develops meaning through opposites like good/evil, holy/heathen, and love/hate. Derrida hypothesizes that the two sides are never equal in this binary thinking. This mode of thought localizes non-Western gods, creating a false

antithesis that is always smaller than and secondary to the first. 'When one term is prioritized, it is frequently expressed as the center, marginalizing and practically deleting the other term' (Meisenbach, 2004, p. 19). Indeed, official education in Zambia continues to replicate colonially bequeathed epistemic systems as in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. An expanding body of scholarship calls into question the global economy of knowledge production and distribution, namely, which knowledge is favored and considered universal (e.g., Chakrabarty, 2000; Connell, 2018). This scholarship, which has gained enormous traction as the decolonial movement has spread across the African continent and the West, raises critical questions about the blanket application of the canon of knowledge based on the Anglo-American epistemic system and then proposes several alternative paths toward a more localized 'sociological imagination' (Mills, 1959). This study adds to the body of knowledge by investigating the extent of colonization of education in general and higher education.

3.1.1. Epistemic Violence and the Formal Education Project

Decolonization of education is crucial for African universities to serve as centers of excellence and information repositories. According to Ajayi et al. (1996), the university should "teach itself to be development conscious and development-oriented" (p. 203). According to Dei (2014), the African university should be culturally placed, reflective, and epistemically Indigenous. Epistemological Indigeneity is an epistemic framework that introduces students to "history, culture, tradition, past, and identity as contested, concrete, and significant to how we come to decolonize the school/university curriculum and produce social and academic success" (Dei, 2014, p. 9). Thus, our understanding of decolonization goes beyond the superficial appropriation of knowledge for its own sake and instead seeks to draw on a diverse network of epistemic systems to advance the development of society and the social and physical environment (Barnett & Bengtsen, 2017; de Sousa Santos, 2007; Mbah, 2016).

As previously stated, formal education was initially introduced into the geopolitical territory known as Zambia by missionaries like Frederick Annot, David Livingstone, and Moffatt Stanley in the late nineteenth century. In its current form, formal education is based on blind acceptance of the canon of knowledge set up and entrenched in these colonial encounters. The primacy of the Anglo-American epistemic paradigm implies that non-Western modes of knowing to contribute very little to the canon of knowledge known as conventional science. This conceptualization excludes knowledge systems too local to have any bearing on mainstream understanding. During the sixteenth to twentieth centuries of imperialist traffic, Western forms of knowing demolished and buried the epistemic systems, cultural infrastructure, and intellectual fabric of the peoples and countries of Africa, Asia, and South and Central America. Spivak (1988) defined epistemic violence as a process of othering in which the subaltern is "precluded from being human, forbidden reciprocity, and excluded from intelligibility" (Rawls & David, 2003, p. 494). This exclusion from intelligibility is based on universal principles, in which the colonized people become 'the other.' The colonial encounter was marked by (epistemological and physiological) enslavement in Africa based on skin pigmentation (Mazrui, 2005). Europe's imperial age in the eighteenth century established a canon of knowledge that "permeated the entire conceptual system of the social sciences from their start" (Castro-Gomez, 2002, p. 277). Thus, epistemic violence obliterates colonized epistemic systems' ability to speak

or be heard (Spivak, 1988), despite serving as the foundation of formal education in Zambia.

The history of colonial education in Zambia can be divided into two periods. The first was from 1885 to 1924, when the territory was controlled by the British South African Company (BSACo). Francis Coillard of the Paris Evangelical Mission Society founded many of Zambia's early schools during this time. The school system was run with little or no involvement from the BSACo. As a result, schooling tended to be quite essential, with the primary goal of helping missionaries spread the gospel. Young African Christians were given rudimentary reading, literacy, and numeracy training to translate the Bible to their families and other community members. As a result, the nature of this early formal education reflected the demand for converts. By the 1920s, the territory had fifteen missions. These missionaries were running around 1,688 schools, with an estimated enrolment of 922,000 students (Henkel, 1989). The education provided by these schools was almost entirely based on a missionary epistemic paradigm that purposefully excluded local histories, traditions, and cultural infrastructures.

The second period began in 1925 when the British colonial office took over the management of the territory from BSACo. Various actors in this era had diverse aims and interests in the education provided to Africans. White settlers, whose number was continuously increasing, saw African education as a prescription for political and economic upheaval. As a result, colonial Europeans were skeptical of any advancements in African education. As a result, they are opposed to any innovations that would improve schools (Kelly, 1991).

Furthermore, settlers' perspectives on African education differed from those of missionaries. The latter desired literacy and skill development to be the foundation of education. This resulted in the formation of the African elite, whose values rarely coincided with those of traditional leaders or even colonial authorities. According to Kelly (1991), many "local individuals increasingly demanded more education, of a higher standard and at a higher level...generally, they had to leave the nation to get this" (p. 39). Similarly, the colonial authority ensured that African education was practical and straightforward, with no academic rigor. Thus, colonial education emphasized Christian-based religious teaching and moral instruction, thus rejecting the existence of localized religious and ethical knowledge.

3.1.2. The Beginnings of Higher Education

On October 24, 1964, Zambia declared independence from the United Kingdom. The colonial education system and its goals had achieved national traction then. However, colonial officials had been averse to Africans' growth through education. They preferred a more diluted content and attitude to prevent the rise of the Black consciousness. As a result, the colonially bequeathed education system was founded to secure African subjugation and exploitation. Education was intended to render Africans conformable to the colonial administrative machinery. According to Kelly (1991), the colonially bequeathed system was "[a]n tool of imperialist dominance and economic exploitation, as a primary source of economic inequities and social stratification, as an instrument of intellectual and cultural enslavement" (p. 39). Colonial officials dismissed and rejected Zambia's native knowledge systems because they were perceived as too local to be of any significance.

However, at the time of independence, Zambia had a severe shortage of human resources, with only 100 people holding an undergraduate degree and just under 1,000 holding a secondary school diploma. As a result, the newly independent country was desperate for human resources to fill the positions of authority in the government left vacant by the departing British (Chipindi, 2018). To address the need for more competent human resources, the government launched an urgent endeavor to create a university (Chipindi, 2018). As a result, a commission was formed shortly after independence to address this issue. Sir John Lockwood, a famous academician from the United Kingdom who had previously served as Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, chaired the committee. As it became known, the Lockwood Commission (1963) offered several suggestions, the most important of which was that the new institution be affected by and responsive to its surroundings. It stated that the [new] university [to be established in Lusaka] should view its national role as broader than has been the case elsewhere. It should be inspired by the environment in which its inhabitants live and work. It should be a lively and fruitful source of stimulus and support for all types of education and training... As an independent institution, it is free to be as inclusive and experimental as it wants in desirable national fields. (p. 2)

Furthermore, the Commission stated that the new institution would be "sensitive to society's true requirements" (p. 3). The institution was molded by its surroundings, notably the newly independent country. As a result, the institution became permeable to dominant regional discourses, such as liberation and decolonization, specific to the Southern African region, as well as national discourses, such as nation-building through human resource development and capacity-building in all sectors of the economy. This was to be accomplished by expanding the university's resources in the form of knowledge, competence, and community service to the society beyond the institution's walls, as well as acknowledging the influence of the country's political and socioeconomic context on the university itself.

According to Goma, UNZA's first Indigenous Vice-Chancellor, and Tembo (1984), UNZA should "take the lead in and play a major role in bringing about Africa's all-around development" (p. 20). They also saw the African university as an arbiter of African civilization. According to Tembo (1978), "African universities will never contribute successfully to social transformation until they are altered such that they represent African conditions of existence" (p. 31). UNZA would not aim to lead "societal reform...as the primary agent of social reform" (Chokani, 1985, p. 1). With its established community service goal, UNZA has played an essential role in the country's development by providing expertise, scholarship, and knowledge generation. However, the nature of this knowledge is still debated (Mbah et al., 2021).

After the establishment of the University of Zambia, the Government of Zambia reconstituted the University of Zambia at Ndola (UNZANDO) into the Copperbelt University in 1987. It was established as a Public University by Act of Parliament No. 19 on 1st December 1987. UNZANDO had temporarily been housed at the Zambia Institute of Technology's campus in Riverside, Kitwe. It was envisaged that the university would move to Ndola once the facilities there had been completed. However, the Ndola facilities were never constructed. In 2008, Mulungushi University was established, and other public universities such as Nkrumah University, Mukuba University, Chalimbana University,

Robert Makasa University, Levy Mwanawasa Medical University, and Palabana University were also established. As a result of the liberalization of education which allowed private players to provide instruction in the country, the number of higher education providers has exponentially increased. Higher Education Authority Report (2020) shows that the government has 62 higher learning institutions, of which 9 are public universities and 53 are private universities. The increase in higher education providers necessitated the establishment of the Higher Education Authority, a statutory body mandated to regulate all higher education institutions and ensure institution adherence to standard guidelines for providing quality higher education.

3.1.3. The Movement towards Decolonization

Over the past few decades, there has been a renewed call to undo colonial practices transparent in all areas of human endeavors. For the education sector, this has been inspired by the stakeholders' realization that the power relations and attitudes to knowledge production and consumption, as were perpetuated in the colonial era, continue to influence the structures of the modern education systems. This arises from the reality that colonialism and education are closely interlinked, as the role of education in colonialism is undeniable. Moira (2021) asserts that historically, education systems were used – and abused –to control colonies. As such, the content and practices of education have colonized minds, given how the knowledge systems developed in the Global North, based on an ideal rational scientific model, dominate educational thinking and practices in the Global South (Mahler, 2017). In this regard, the Global South has mainly seen the birth of a movement that seeks to challenge and change the narrative, as seen in the growing debates on the decolonization of education in former colonies.

The movement to decolonize higher education is gaining scholarly attention as conversations around the topic are just beginning. Championed by stakeholders, it is a sad reality that many institutions of higher education were founded on and continue to benefit from the violent dispossession of indigenous land and, by extension, relegation and exclusion of knowledge systems deemed too local to have an impact on mainstream knowledge (O'Brien & Mudaliar, 2022). This trend continues to hold water in our modern university education systems extending the devastating effects of coloniality in education to stifling academic freedom and creative and critical thinking among lecturers and students. Moira (2021) advances that in a quest to address the persistent inequalities that remain as legacies of the colonial experience, education today requires decolonization across five separate areas: teaching, research, institutions, estates, and reparations. She argues that education can live up to its potential as a transformative space for individuals and societies by decolonizing each of these spheres. Cupples and Glynn (2014) remark that universities worldwide, especially those in postcolonial settler nations, have begun to acknowledge their need for a more inclusive approach toward indigenous cosmologies and epistemologies, lest they continue to alienate indigenous students.

As a newly independent African country emerging from decades of colonialism under the British invasion, Zambia had aspirations for self-governance not only in political leadership but also in the administration and management of the education system. It is of the essence to state that the education system Zambia inherited had a colonial

legacy. In other words, the education system was established to serve the interest of the colonizers. The education structures and knowledge production were influenced and controlled by the colonizers. Achola (1990) equally argues that at the time of independence from Britain in 1964, the education system in Zambia was, as elsewhere in Africa, racially segregated and heavily biased against Africans. Initially, Christian missionaries set up schools to teach Africans how to read and write for evangelism. Later, the educational efforts of the apostles were strengthened by the colonial rulers, and white traders needed Africans to serve in subordinate positions in their establishments. In line with the British education policy, there were separate schools for European children and children of mixed races, including Asians (Achola, 1990). The teaching pedagogical approaches promoted rote learning rather than discovery learning, fostering critical thinking and creativity. The emphasis was on primary education, consistent with the British colonial policy to relegate Africans to lower positions (this trend is still prevalent in our present education system). For these reasons, in the post-colonial time, there was an urgent need to realign education to respond to the local people's aspirations. There was a need for human resources to accelerate economic development, and education was central to the production of much-needed human resources. Therefore, after independence, Zambia undertook several policy innovations to educate the people who would later contribute to the country's development (Kelly, 1999). With this historical background, we now turn to the second objective of our study, which sought to capture participant evaluation of the extent of colonization of education.

3.2. The current state of 'colonization' of the education curriculum in Zambia

To address this issue, we sought the evaluation of our study participants on the current state of colonization of the education curriculum in Zambia. The participants provided insightful thoughts centered around four critical dimensions of the higher education system: curriculum content, delivery, assessment, and research in higher education. Below are some of the sentiments expressed by our study participants.

3.2.1. Participant Evaluation of the Content

The participants seemed to believe that Zambia's education curriculum is colonized because its content largely insists on teaching foreign content while downgrading and downplaying the local. One participant remarked:

> . . . If the curriculum is unfamiliar, it means the people are still learning that which is not indigenous. If I may hasten, this is reflected even in the books the learners use. The curriculum - of course, not being racist- still retains the colonial element, the supremacy of the white people. Photos are for white people. Everything is preached to be Western and not localized. So, the curriculum is still under the rulership of the Western powers..... it is like we have adopted something that is not ours, that is foreign. . . there are certain things we might teach that are not local but are from the other side.

Another observed that the content of what was taught throughout the education system was not wholly tailored to the Zambian reality:

. . . okay, basically, I would take it that it is a situation where a country or a society takes up education that was originally tailored for a foreign country. Yes, and then it gets imposed, or the other country or culture embraces it. My experience is that some subjects are irrelevant to us at primary and secondary levels. Yeah. The set-up of these subjects is not something that might help us soon. Moreover, what I mean by that is that someone is studying something that literally will have no impact or effect soon. However, from my experience after tertiary education, the courses I had were essential.

Another participant who has taught in higher education for over 15 years asserted that the education curriculum in Zambia downplays local content and attempts at local knowledge production in preference for foreign content, which does not respond to the needs of society.

The things we learn do not speak to the needs of the society, to the needs of the more prominent native citizens. There is a need to reshape its time and again. We have had curriculum reviews and the like, but we do not go to the extent of kicking out what I would call the cultural imperialism that was cast on us. We are still under that blanket. Everything we are doing is a foreign culture. The whole higher education structure is built on remnants of colonialization. It speaks to something other than the needs of society. I am saying so because our community's needs are very different from how they were in ancient times.

Participants observed that the insistence on content that does not seem to respond to society's needs is indicative of colonization because higher education should meet the needs of communities through innovations and inventions. However, some participants felt that since the world is a global village, it should not be surprising that Zambian learners should be exposed to content from other countries.

. . . I am looking at Zambia being part of a global village. Learners would be interested in having portable qualifications. What they may have learned here should be comparable to learners in Europe. . . In this sense, it means that every person at that level would have the kind of knowledge comparable to wherever and whichever part of the world they find themselves.

Other participants felt that an education system that insists on memorizing and mastering concepts and definitions at the expense of practicality was a typical example of a colonized education system. For instance, when asked to evaluate the higher education curriculum content, one participant stated the following.

Our education system has some forms of colonization because we are much more into theories than practical ones. You find that people, especially at a young age, are more concentrated on teaching about ideas instead of focusing on practicals, whereby if we know practicals, we will be able to develop our education system. We could be more practical. You see, even just the making of laboratory equipment is expensive. It is a colonial way of telling you that you cannot access these things. Why should a

beaker be costly if you are interested in science? It is just one way of telling you that this is not for you. It is not for you.

Other participants attributed this lack of practical application of skills to an inherited curriculum.

Yeah, whatever I think for us, we were a British colony. So I guess whatever our colonizers thought and brought as the best education system, or rather as the ideal education system, the one tailored for their country, whatever they got, we embraced it with both hands with very few, if any, adjustments.

Asked to provide some illustrations of this lack of practical applicability in the content of education, one participant made the following remarks:

If I talk about specific things like, I do not know, your background, let us talk about things we share. Like things, we talk about. Say we talk about Pythagoras' theorem; we talk about calculus, we…like this calculus was invented by Isaac Newton it was created by…. So, all those things are foreign, which is the colonial aspect. So now, if we talk about the element of education that we have. It was perhaps just about record keeping since we were keeping things like animals. We were told that for our ancestors to keep a record of those, they would use a stone. So basically, I think a good part of our education system is colonized.

Participants opined that dependence on donor support made the education system susceptible to donor-driven agendas that may not help to advance the decolonization agenda:

Of our dependency in terms of resources, the country has yet to have its views on what kind of education system it must push as an agenda for its citizens. So based on that, you find that the so-called partners around from all over the world, from all dimensions, especially the global north, would always come in to help to shape your education system seemingly.

Another study participant argued that the "so-called" cooperating partners typically have different interests to serve. As a result, they may often directly or indirectly dictate what should be and should not be included in the curriculum:

Resources are hindering. And then you have the foreign entities which come with their own money and dictate to say you start this program. We want you to do sexuality comprehensive as a program, teach to all and adopt it. However, at the end of it all, you find that those programs that have money end up winning the center stage of education provision because they are being funded and supported by the financial muscle, and those that we want to see come up being suppressed.

Another participant asserted that as higher education institutions often need funding, colonialism was likely to thrive as funding may be tied to how higher education is run. It is no wonder, when commenting on the extent to which the education system shows elements of colonization, it was observed that:

. . . in terms of the time really at our level as the higher learning institution, you may agree with me that most of the courses, most of the content that we teach are still based on what we borrowed after independence. The aspect of funding brings out the extent is high because we need more resources for education. So, we depend on external partners to help us develop our education system. Therefore, they inject or may provide seemingly accessible avenues for us to discuss. However, at the end of it, when you make resolutions, they seem to be done in a way they would like to be okay.

Still speaking about influencing the content of the curriculum, another participant asserted that this transcended to curriculum review exercises in which donor funders were still able to dictate the nature of the review:

We have very few powers if any. The reason is that even when we discuss reviewing our curriculum, we find that the outside world dictates a good part of it. And then maybe the question is that if we say we have the powers, perhaps we would say in very few areas, but to a large extent, I do not think we have any. I feel the west influences that in this context. We have the school of engineering here. Are they taught how to program SIM cards and microchips? They may be taught about waves and how telecommunication is being done, but to the locals, there is no course telling them to say this is the microchip, this is silicon, and this is how to make a SIM card. Because the west knows that once they do that, they lose out on business. That is my perspective. I am echoing an opinion of how far the west goes to streamline curriculum issues. To say this is what we can and cannot provide them.   I do not know who is doing it, but they know what to give and not to provide us.

Other participants felt that it would not be fair to say there is an invisible hand that influences learning programs because, at each given time, institutions would want to design a learning program that would be fully understood, appreciated, and accepted in any other environment.

Living in a world where we are interdependent, you expect that a learner from Zambia can cross the border to go into Malawi or South Africa, or Europe for work or further studies. Its interdependency and portability of qualifications lead to the commonality you see in these qualifications. Therefore, I do not believe there is an invisible influence on what we should be, but we desire to remain comparable.

While a more significant percentage of participant evaluations seem to be unanimous that there is an invisible hand that controls what was added or excluded from the curriculum, a smaller percentage appeared to hold a different view as they argued that the desire for standard curriculums across countries seems to suggest an invisible influence. However, we desire to remain comparable to what is happening elsewhere, which tends to create the seeming result. Having established this consensus, we now turned to the methods employed to deliver the curriculum content.

3.2.2.   Participant Evaluation of Teaching Methods
Participants provided diverse evaluations of the prevalent delivery methods in higher education. Some described the pedagogical approaches as not only bookish but also bearing

a foreign origin that spoke to something other than local tastes and sensibilities. For example, a participant interrogated the delivery approaches in the following manner:

> Who defines the methods? Outside people describe all how we use. Who determines the methods? Let us be serious. Who determines the methods of teaching or the definitions? They speak the language of the colonizers. Please show me a technique in the curriculum that speaks the local people's language. Here are ways of storytelling, folklore drumming, and culture we have abandoned, which we have tagged as backwardness. However, folklore has been there. However, no one will go into us and start using folklore and other songs because they will be viewed as African. Moreover, that is the tag this topic is trying to remove to emphasize Africanness and drag the different cultures.

Some academic staff lamented that the colonized teaching approaches were reproduced and perpetuated by graduates of the colonial system who took up teaching roles in the academy and continued to use the methods through which they were taught in college. They said this tended to perpetuate coloniality in the teaching approaches from one generation to the next.

> . . . Most of us who are teaching in the education system today, we were trained through that kind of education, and there has been some transfer of these elements, okay? How we are taught and the content we went through was the best. So, as much as we would want to respond to the current demands or needs for change, those elements still exist regarding teaching methods and content.

Another lecturer lamented the colonial mentality in the teaching and learning processes:

> We thought engaging students in groups where they can solve problems on their own and so on, they felt, no, as long as we are at the university, we are in class, we are learning these things. We expected the lecturer to come and teach us. So you see how the colonial mentality has permeated the entire system? So those elements are prevalent. However, that is not to say that we should not engage in that kind of teaching, like participatory teaching and discovery, teaching and learning for our students.

Another cited the tendency for academics to copy everything from western countries. She thought that "the tools we are using in education are from what those in other countries were using, and then we just copied that for the sake of us to get that knowledge of education." Other participants bemoaned the tendency to maintain old teaching approaches, including the cup and Jug relationship where the cup is a learner and the jug is the teacher.

> The jug will always want to pour into the cup, so most often, the kind of teaching going on is where the lecturer wants to be the source of information for the learner, and the learner will go and write notes, revise and memorize and write an exam. This learner might not be challenged to do their research and, by study, teach themselves.

That is where the difficulty is, and we need to change that approach to training and teaching.

Added evaluations by our study participants revealed that students are assessed using methods that are not indigenous. This, too, speaks to the extent to which education is colonized.

It is colonized because we did not develop our system. We adopted this from the colonizers. They are the ones who came and told us that we must write a test, you must write an assignment, we have to write an exam, and they had to grade it according to categories A, B, and C, which brings about that class system. And then you would have to sit in. Then they would even grade pupils according to what they think they are. These are good students. These are average students. These are poor students.

Insistence on written assessments was brought into the spotlight with an argument that students who are good at memorization would graduate with distinctions. However, participants noted that such students need something to demonstrate the knowledge acquired because they can only reproduce what they read in a book.

There is a need for competence-based training and assessments. These demand that 90% of the evaluation are practical and should be about demonstrating knowledge and skill so that learners showcase competencies. Unfortunately, some training components are based on written assessment.

More critical participants argued that the aim of university education in Zambia seemed to be to make students pass examinations. Thus, the education system was examination-oriented, asserted one respondent:

That is just a Zambian culture. They do not teach us to know stuff; they teach us to pass the exam. So the practical and theoretical stuff is different when we enter the industry. Yeah. So here you die. Yes.

However, one participant provided a positive evaluation of the assessment

Now, I do not think so because we assess them…we have different estimates; it can be in the form of a presentation, it can be in the form of writing, yes. So, if we talk about colonialism, assessing if we teach what we teach, even our assessment will be colonial.

These sentiments show that the study participants are convinced that the higher education curriculum content was colonized by delivering it to the learners through teaching and assessment approaches. We shall return to this issue in the discussion phase of our report. However, first, we present the participant's views on how research reflects the extent of the coloniality still prevalent in higher education.

3.2.3. Participant views on research

To address this issue, we sought participant views on whether there are elements of colonization in the way research is conducted and disseminated. The responses were lukewarm. One participant noted that the public and private universities in Zambia were not solely in charge of their research agendas: Participants observed that;

> Unfortunately, because the university is centred on this same issue of research funding and so on, you are only sometimes in control of the kind of research you will do. It means you need complete autonomy. You have a situation where you are responding to certain conditions. Yes. So, if I did some research for specific organizations, they also have objectives for that research. So sometimes, these objectives are outside the whole issue of decolonization.

Some participants observed that there were elements of colonization in how research is conducted as it is not based on problem-solving in communities and the nation as a whole.

> Most of these institutions allow learners to carry out basic research to demonstrate an understanding of approaches in research and how to write a research report, not that these research projects are designed around a community problem, around an industrial issue.

Speaking as students who are expected to conduct research for their final year project in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of their respective degrees, a participant noted their ill-preparedness for the undertaking. Sentiments on how research is conducted and disseminated uncovered an apparent need for more understanding from the student's perspectives of what research is. It was claimed that participants' research topics were not their choice as they were imposed with the prescribed readings:

> You discover that when you are given research, they give you prescribed books, the only books they trust. Any information that will come outside the book you are given is considered invalid, so that is colonial. We expect research to do with our logic.

The verbatim above departs from the norm as students in both private and public universities are at liberty to choose a research topic and find a supervisor whose research interests align with the proposed topic. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a consensus as other participants observed that:

> Give me research that will talk about copper because where I am coming from, copper is one of the minerals Zambia produces. You gave me to research tsunamis, and you gave me a prescribed book, but I have never seen a tsunami. That will not make sense. That is why most of our research has yet to take us anywhere. So please give us an examination; do not give me a prescribed book.

While other participants intimated that they are allowed to choose research topics of their own, they remarked that it still comes back to the same owing to the student-supervisor relationship, as supervisors always tilt proposed topics to what is generally acceptable in knowledge production. Students see this as colonization as one insists that:

We choose topics on our own. However, again, the choice is not genuine because you need to go and submit that research for approval. . . They will ask you to recast. Yes. They will ask you to say, no, not this. What about if you look at this? Do they want a particular element to be in your research? Moreover, that happens almost to every researcher. That element they want in the study is where you see an aspect of colonization.

Another participant felt that there were elements of colonialism in how the research was conducted and disseminated:

I do not know if I can put it in words, but I feel this is something we have been trying to figure out, like, as a school of education, what exactly can we give the students that will provide us with the kind of results that we want? I do not know if I can put it, I will say yes, but I do not know how to put it in words. I know that there is something not right. You can see that what they are doing is different. However, then the missing link is what we are still trying to figure out because you find that I need to figure out where we are lagging, but we are doing their research that they do not have a background in. That is why there is an aspect of colonization there.

These sentiments need to provide a convincing articulation of how research in higher education reflects coloniality. Nevertheless, the respondents' views regarding the content and delivery of education show traces of coloniality. This brings us to the second research objective, which sought to identify the efforts that could have been made to decolonize education.

1.1. Efforts to decolonize the curriculum at public universities in Zambia

As stated above, the third objective of our study was to analyze the efforts put in place to decolonize the curriculum. To unravel the issue, we used participant narratives to construct an empirical picture of the measures taken to decolonize education, consciously or by implication. We obtained varied responses which paint a complex scenario with vibrant and diverse interpretations. Participant descriptions of measures range from intentional actions of the state to more covert and latent interventions, in the past, at present, and ongoing. For example, one participant bewailed about the absence of an action plan or roadmap for decolonizing not only education but the entire state apparatus:

Planning? There needs to be a plan on paper. I have never been to those big offices. There is no planning on paper. If there were a plan, 50-plus years after independence, I would have seen something on the street to say this is a physics book written in Bemba; this is a physics book written in Kikaonde, a mathematics book in Nyanja. There is nothing, literally nothing. Go in the streets of Kitwe; those old books are all in English. How do you mathematically speak to a child in the remotest part of the country?

This perception is hardly surprising. We must be aware of any plan instituted with the definite aim of advancing the decolonization agenda. The state has, in isolated instances, referred to the need to decolonize education. Other than these sentiments of public officials, there has yet to be an intentional roadmap for achieving decolonization.

Other participants, however, pointed out that some interventions and actions had been made that could be construed as efforts toward decolonization. One participant, for instance, remarked that:

> Okay, how about at the national level? Some efforts are being made to decolonize our education system. They are there, especially at primary, where they do their learning materials in the local language. That is an emphasis on the effect that they are decolonizing the curriculum. However, you see, the curriculum is suffering defeat, especially in trying to contextualize it so much and let the curriculum speak the language of the people and the medium of instruction be in the language of the people. To me, that is the first step.

Another participant cited the fate of Zambian students who seek education in Asian universities, especially in China, where the local authorities often insist on learning the Chinese language if one was to participate in higher education in the world's most populous nation:

> You might be aware that even our learners in Zambia who go to China study their courses in Chinese. They are subjected to is it one year- one year of learning the Chinese language. First, you are supposed to know Chinese; then, you continue learning. When they return from China, they will speak Chinese, and whatever they get, they have reached the culture.

This, he said, was an example of colonization:

> That is colonization. Which African country has books in science and mathematics written in their language? There is nothing. Everything is in English because it becomes easy to lecture or teach using a foreign language. After all, even those receiving the information can equip the report on time.

Another participant stated that there was an imbalance in how essential services are delivered within Zambia, not even excepting the media:

> Because sometimes, even when our journalists are interviewing our players and they know that this one needs to be educated, they are interviewing them in English. However, compared to the Westernnnnnn countries, they use their languages to communicate with them easily. For example, go to the bank; have you found a deposit slip in the local language? Even in, when you go to China, everything is in Chinese.

Different interpretations were that the efforts to decolonize higher education were negligible. One participant stated that the parties could have been more intentional in decolonizing higher education. He responded the following when we asked him if he had seen any measures to decolonize the curriculum in his university:

> Not deliberate. Yeah, not intentional. However, of course, there is talk about innovations talks about creativity. The University's strategic plan touches on innovation issues and developing demand-driven programs, whatever that means. Okay, so there are all those things, but in terms of systems put in place to go by what is in the strategic plan, very little has been done. Very little has been done. However, of course, the idea of innovation and creativity are things that, in my view, do speak to

the concept of decolonizing because if we must innovate, it means that we have to talk to the current needs and look up to the future unlike so much embedding so much into history and the colonial kind of education. So, our education should respond to current and future needs.

Other measures included the change in approach to worker training. For example, one participant observed that the state had begun to emphasize entrepreneurial courses in the allocation of bursaries and student loans:

> Yeah, we are moving in those directions because right now, when you check again, this is a public university. It is affected by what takes place at the national level in terms of planning with regards to what we should do so you find the education provided, in the end, the graduates, because of that colonial influence, are not getting jobs, so there is a change in terms of approach. You find that even when you check on our enrollments now, we have many students, especially under bursaries, who have been sponsored to do entrepreneurship-related programs, the idea being that when they graduate, they will not depend on formal employment, they will get skills which it is perceived that they will be able to work for themselves. So as entrepreneurs, we are trying to create a class of entrepreneurs who can employ themselves and possibly eventually employ others.

However, some participants offered more theoretical responses to the question: what measures are being put in place to decolonize education? For example, one participant wondered what was meant by the term in actionable ways:

> Let us say I offer mathematics. I offer mathematics. If you look at our curriculum, you talk about pure mathematics and applied mathematics. Even when we talk about decolonizing- I am talking about it from the perspective of mathematics- if I say we decolonize that curriculum, I want to be very frank with you. What is it that we are saying? Are we saying that because the pure mathematics that I am teaching- and, you know, we are going into a situation which is a global society-the thing that we need, like the mathematics that we are teaching, is going to help a student like if they go into training like abroad, which will be very relevant. We have got the digital era, so maybe I can also ask myself to say when we say we decolonize, are we saying all the foreign academic aspects that have been brought into the country we do away with them then we embrace our tradition? Moreover, to our education system.

Others were even less optimistic in evaluating efforts to decolonize education, citing the unavailability of capital to use entrepreneurial skills obtained in college.

> What type of skills do you need where you are, okay? So, these steps are being made to move away from the colonial style of education. However, the only thing is that those efforts are being made, but the results also need to be seen, possibly again, as the same colonial thing. Because even for me to be an entrepreneur after I have been given this education, I need empowerment. So, entrepreneurship requires investment. So here is a person- he has left university with these entrepreneurship skills, but how does he practice them without empowerment?

Another asserted that decolonization was at its formation stage, and there were many *talks and no action*:

> There are many talks and many funny comments, especially on social media, about the decolonization of education. However, if you ask them what they mean by decolonization of education, they will give you different answers. It is… it is good if what we are going to put in will take us somewhere because, in terms of education, our education system has gone down, and we need to do a lot, starting from pre-grade to tertiary. If resources were available, maybe we could have done a complete overhaul. I was laughing- one comedian was being interviewed when he said the use of professors at the University of Zambia is when they cannot do anything with their own money. They cannot invent the machine they can use …which is correct! So how can that start? It still gets back to the funding. How much money is distributed to that research? How many people is the institution sponsoring towards that? So sometimes, it has nothing to do with decolonization or colonization. Sometimes it is just us.

Another urged more pro-action by the actors within and beyond the education sector:

> Decolonization? Get back to the drawing board. What is it that our nation needs? You academicians, after this research, go back to the drawing board. What is it that we need because most of the time, our research ends on the shelves, and we do not implement it? On the shelves. So we need to get back to the drawing board. Where are we going wrong, and where can we make amends? What are our needs as a nation, and where do we want to take our education, maybe in the next five years in the next ten years? Something like that.

The student respondents were also very critical of the decolonization measures attempted by their universities. Most were categorical in stating that their universities did nothing to decolonize education. One participant said that there needed to be more done by her institution to bring about decolonization. Her remarks were as follows:

> I have discovered that we have been told to master and not to; I mean, we have been told more about learning than logical thinking. The institutions have compromised on logical thinking to an extent whereby you cannot think about anything outside what was discovered.

Another student respondent accused his university of teaching theories only from year one through the fourth year:

> When we come to school to pursue our degree in the first year, we learn about theories and other things. However, why is it that we reach the fourth year still retaining the same thing, and they expect us to go and teach the same thing they taught us? It is just like we only master those things. It is not things that we see. After graduating, even when I have not seen these things with my own physical eyes, I will tell my students or pupils that this happens when I do not see it myself.

These sentiments point to a complex picture of the measures taken to decolonize education. Many affordances exist in the academy to advance the decolonization agenda, but there are many lacunae in conceptualizing an actionable set of interventions. The proposals submitted by the respondents range from specifically targeted attention to the content of

education, and the curriculum, to the decolonization of the methods, through home-grown pedagogy buttressed by localized examples and incorporation of circumstances familiar to the Zambian learner. To shed light on this dimension, our next section tackles the reasonable measures that have been taken to help best incorporate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum.

3.3. Reasonable measures to best help incorporate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum.

Participants told us this was long overdue regarding the measures to help incorporate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum. Some had radical ideas on how to incorporate this type of knowledge. One participant argued that there was a need to package the content in education in a locally accessible language for it to be consumed by local actors. Another argued that globalization does not equate to vanquishing the local languages when delivering science content:

> These people argue that we need to produce a graduate who can fit in the world because we live in a global village. How would you marry that? Globalization does not dilute the content of science. You can teach the same content in a different context. Let the science content speak your language. When you go out, you will try to change the language, but you will not change the content. So, it does not mean that when you teach someone in your local language, you are killing their global market- that is a fallacy.

> You can even see India, one of the countries which use the local language to communicate quickly to the students; it is straightforward for them to understand to get them in. However, some words may use different problems, making it challenging to grasp the meaning. So you must go deep.

Another participant from Lusaka said:

> Yeah, the best practice that we should do is we have. As a nation, we have already started revising the curriculum to find the one we want, which will help the learners shortly when they complete their education. They should not languish. They should be able to do entrepreneurial activities to sustain their lives here and there. Still, the most important thing is that we Zambians, inclusive we, are lazy at reading and writing, so if we write, we write our stuff. I am a nutritionist am a food scientist. Okay, so if we are to produce our recipes.

Another asserted that decolonization would require a review of the curricula.

> Curriculum review is cardinal. Within the curriculum review, that is when all those ideas which we talked about. Teaching method, assessment. How to go about the skills oriented. What kind of skills have we written? All those things will come in the curriculum review because they propose that all the universities develop a strategic plan of how they will do that curriculum review where we bring all those ideas back from those stakeholders we are talking about.

Meanwhile, participant number 27 pointed out what incorporating local knowledge into the higher education curricula meant. He asserted that using locally driven literature in mainstream education would be a massive step in decolonization. In the area of

international cuisine, the participant cited an example of locally authored books by a Zambian entrepreneur who later founded a cuisine university of international repute:

> The owner of Silver Catering had written books about Zambian cuisine. Yeah, so far at that level, I have only read their book, but we have many experts that can do that ok, so you, we bring down these things in our way so that we understand them. It is about writing our books to suit the curriculum that we will tailor in such a way that it helps society. Somebody was even arguing that, as you said earlier, most books are donated by these donor countries. They write in their language, and they put their names. If they give an analog in a book, they will use words like Mary and those English names, but if we begin to write our books and use our terms Mulenga Chanda Chansa, what makes us discover a people our identity?

These sentiments were echoed by respondent 13, who remarked that there was a need to draw more heavily on Zambian languages and contexts in the literature that is produced locally, as well as to decolonize the portrayal of Africa in this literature:

> Even in my writing, whatever I am writing, it should be from an African point of view. Mind you. Colonization taught me that I was a savage; according to colonization, I did not have a religion, and I was not a civilized person, all that I believed in, and so on. So by being decolonized, I am trying to portray a picture that Africa is beautiful, Africa is prosperous, and Africa is rich culturally. Even before you came, Africa had these and these and these achievements. We had these and these and these civilizations. So, by being decolonized educationally, I am reviving African culture, which is rich.

Another participant asserted that the most straightforward pathway to the decolonization of education would be to revert to what she described as the *default settings*. This is what she said when we asked her to elaborate:

> The first thing is to get back to the basics. Basics that in our way of living, before we started this formal education, people were surviving through skills like somebody can do building, carpentry, fishing…now all this was a bit silently killed- that people should concentrate on books. So, the bookish aspect of our curriculum should be dismantled so that at once somebody goes into formal school, the emphasis of a teacher should not be the reward of getting better grades- the tip should get better skills. So, what skills do we have in our curriculum? That is where we need to start. Do we have skills which somebody, the moment they spend seven years in primary school, they should be able to stand and say that my seven years in primary school, I can…

These sentiments imply the need to be categorical about which skillset will be obtained by participating in education. Another respondent felt that decolonization of education would also require a change of mindset regarding the outcomes of education:

> Suppose someone got 900 marks in grade seven examinations. The question is, how do you translate them into practicalities? It is not there. Somebody who has gone

up to grade 12 is now even worse there. They are all just waiting to get into universities. They cannot think of anything. These are school leavers. They have spent 12 years in school, in our education system- and they are all waiting to get into university. The university is another extension of the same secondary and primary mentality- to acquire all these papers and then go back home and wait for teacher recruitment.

Another boasted that the African epistemic system had a lot to offer the global canon of knowledge:

We have so much to offer on the world stage. You only talk about the African way or the native way of doing things. However, at the end of it, or again, we must sell our knowledge. We must sell our skills. Moreover, if they are not well understood on the international platform, they are inferior and will not be accepted. So we have left again in the same scenario where if it is honey processed at a farm with local skills and the like, you take it to a trade fair, and mzungus will not buy it. Instead, they bought something well-branded because they saw purity in it. To say this is not going to affect your health in any way. However, all those minerals indicated on them, the sugar levels are so much, and it is not poisonous.

Another participant had a positive evaluation of the efforts to decolonize education. Tracy, an administrator at one of the public universities in Lusaka, remarked that there were obvious ways in which the authorities were beginning to decolonize education through a strong linkage of theory and practice. This is what she said:

Yeah, I think, for now, one thing that has come up is that when we look at our education system, there is an emphasis now on saying that there is a big disconnect between our needs and what our education offers, so now there is a need to say that especially for our students or learners who may not do very well into the academic aspect, we should tailor our education into the things that prevail in the country so that we teach them skills based on what our country is about. So, like, say, tailored to our agriculture system, and these jobs whereby they can do some carpentry or tailoring and the like.

Meanwhile, a respondent from Kitwe remarked that, in higher education, there was no decolonization to write home about. However, he intimated that even though there was no conscious effort to decolonize, there was a growing realization of the need to re-orient the curriculum toward local contexts:

Currently, I know some, but they are outside the university level. I have seen people trying to do something at primary. Secondary, but at the university level, I have yet to see that. Okay, there might be, like what I have said, something which might come. You even feel this is ours, but when you try to interrogate, it is not ours. Some people have told us to use something like I can tell you something. There is this is it sex education? I thought that was ours, but I discovered we were just being spoon-fed. So that is where the issue is. So just seeing this is not a local thing. It means that once funding goes, everything goes to this.

Additional suggestions bordered on the need to take the in-class conversations beyond the four walls by drawing increasingly local examples.

> We know that we have this local context where our teaching should be based on the local context, where we put the examples, like the local context. After we have taught this one, we will go out there and become, for example, a fisherman and be able to use these methods. So, if we start developing like that, things will be okay. Then you can talk about other things, like chemistry, about those equations. We leave them the way they are. However, we can incorporate examples using our local materials. We use our local trees, which are there, which students can quickly get to. So, from there, that is how development can start. However, otherwise, having everything look westernized is where the issue is.

There was a further need to unpack complex issues using the local scenario, as these would lead to an improved understanding of issues in higher education.

> There would be better understanding if we exemplify complex issues using the local, which the learners can understand- they can see. Then we use that to refer to what they can probably never see outside. For instance, we can say, "what is found out there is this, but what you have locally is this." You can even start selecting what the outside world looked at it like in this manner. For us, it is like this so that we can start from there. They can relate what they see locally and what they are taught from that worldview. In most cases, you can even have several stages if you want. You can present things where people can look from the world of view where it is, then you come down, and then you talk about the local and the emphasis now on local, so it means they will not be lost, so they should know the world is like this.

A third participant stated that the local environment was needed to enrich the student's learning experience.

> So, if I am teaching, for example, if I am teaching Zambian History, it means that standards will be based on Zambian History. So, for instance, if I lead the development of mines in Zambia and I want to give examples, I will provide the local mines we have in Zambia.

Another participant intimated that there was a need to promote the hybridization of pre-colonial (also known in some circles as informal or traditional) education and the colonially bequeathed system (known as formal education). The participant, a manager at one of the public universities, stated a need to incorporate indigenous and legal education elements. She noted the following to clarify this proposition:

> A hybrid of the two systems? It is the same thing. I said to study the two items, get the ads, and do a balance. That is the same answer I will give. Moreover, how can this be implemented?

She further clarified what she meant by implementation:

> Implementation means coming up with a new system, which I do not know what you would call the new stuff, which would be not colonization, not decolonization, but a mix. Okay, how is culture made? Moreover, how do customs come to be born? They are born like that. Like in Lusaka, you borrow this culture and system from the Bemba land that for a man to get married, there should be amatebeto or chilanga mulilo, okay? So, you come to this place where it is being practiced by everyone who is not Bemba so that we can do that. We come to this place which will bring this side and this side. And then we will be in the middle, so try and implement that.

She insisted that the disruption to traditional education, when discarded or downgraded during the colonial encounter, should not have happened.

> It is like a man and a woman getting to live together. This one will come with its background. This one will come with its own experience. And then, when they get together, they must mix and come up to this place. So, you keep what you were complete; this one does not discard what, but together, they will come up with one thing so that there is this balance or compromise or place which was not there.

There was also a strong sentiment that one way to incorporate local knowledge is to minimize reliance on donor-funded projects within the higher education sector.

> Yes, that is the point. They tell us what to teach. However, again, as I said, there are a few things that we should do to let them be the way they are because they are what you can do if it was the body of knowledge, which you might not tamper with a lot. However, we have some components which should just be ours. For example, why should somebody talk to us about sexual reproduction and things like that? Something that should be ours should not even be funded from outside. So, if we start from there, then we can see that somehow, it is like we are falling out of what we are supposed to be doing and were supposed to be. So that is the issue. So, most of the things, yes, that is why I talked about 30%, while I told the other one that we can do everything on our own and not follow the western.

The preceding sentiments show tremendous potential for the incorporation of local knowledge in the mainstream higher education curriculum. Several propositions stand out from these responses. First, there is the need for educators to draw on local contexts in articulating classroom content. This would help the learners relate more closely to the content they encountered in class. Such is an example of how the einp0class experiences can be decolonized. The second suggestion was to ensure that this content, though predominantly foreign and theoretical, is concretized by using locally relevant examples to which the learners could relate. A third issue was the need to hybridize the education system by incorporating traditional education in the colonially bequeathed design. One issue sentiment was that the colonial education system disrupted the indigenous forms of education by displacing and othering them. The latter term implied discarding or excluding anything deemed traditional or local from the mainstream education system.

3.4. How decolonization can help improve Zambia's education and skills sector and respond to national aspirations

The final objective of our study was to explore participant proposals on how decolonization can improve Zambia's education and skills acquisition among the learners and respond to national aspirations. The participants provided generous feedback on the matter. They proposed several ways decolonization could significantly transform Zambia's education and skills sector. Their proposals are presented in the pages that follow.

3.4.1. Re-orientating student mindsets

The study participants advanced several propositions: One participant asserted that the starting point in the decolonizing of higher education in Zambia and improving the skills sector lay in changing the attitudes and beliefs of the people.

Well, the improvement starts with us, the academicians and students we train in our education. Decolonizing education will change our mindsets. To think of this decolonization, what is it all about? What is it we want to transform, in terms of which area? However, once we set our minds towards that decolonization, which is in line with transformative education, we can set intelligent objectives to help us reach the intended goal of decolonizing the education system.

Another suggested a re-wiring of the graduate mentality around their after-college life in the world of work:

> You know our students today are too much into bookish knowledge, receive that understanding, it remains in the book, it cannot translate into anything, and even make a teaspoon whatever. However, the mindset of the students is just white-collar jobs- if I am not deployed, then I will have nothing to do. Nevertheless, the education system we are discussing is trying to help students acquire skills. In that case, they gain the knowledge, of course- but also, they come up with the skills that can help them to create their jobs so that even when they are not deployed, they do not engage themselves in committing suicide as if that is the end of the world.

The study participants also asserted that decolonizing education would entail transforming the minds of students and academics so that they both became critical thinkers and agents of change. The academy could then lead the country in setting goals that would reflect national aspirations. These goals, they continued, are entrenched in the indigenous cultural values and beliefs and our local general knowledge systems. One participant remarked that:

> That one is quite important because if we follow specific guidelines and rules that certain people lay, it means that whatever we do, we will do to please those people. However, still, then, when there is that decolonization, it will help us because we will set our own goals and objectives. We will tailor things the way we want our nation to be tutored.

From these participants' views, one can infer that there was a strong feeling among academics, managers, and students that decolonization of education would enable Zambians to become architects of their destiny, stipulating what they want without following prescribed guidelines from foreigners.

3.5. Decolonization and the promotion of critical thinking and innovations.

Education's role in cultivating critical thinking and innovation among learners and lecturers alike was closely linked to taking ownership of their trajectory. However, in its current formulation, some participants felt that higher education needs to help develop critical thinkers, analysts, or researchers. For example, one participant bemoaned the lack of imagination that characterizes the teaching of history, a subject that he teaches at the university:

> That is the one thing for me. So, almost everything that we learn is the way we understand it. Take history. My subject could be more problematic, you know. We still teach our children about the causes of Bantu migration and its effects. Just get any course outline of southern African history; for example, it is fundamental things that do not help us to think, do not help us to develop critical reading skills, critical understanding, critical analytical skills. They do not allow us to develop these things. Moreover, that is because of the nature of the education system we inherited, which was just created to develop lower-order skills. So decolonizing our education would mean that we transcend those foundational objectives that we produce.

Other respondents had additional suggestions on how to decolonize:

> We can decolonize our education to such an extent that we change what we need to see; instead of wanting our students or pupils to get basic skills about the causes of the first world war and the results of the first world war. We can decolonize that and use those opportunities to create critical thinkers, People who will question where we are coming from but also where we are now.

> Elements that are unnecessary to our learners can be outside the curriculum. All we need are learning items that respond to the needs of the people and programs that empower learners with skills and competencies that help them live meaningful life and improve the livelihood of the communities in which they are.

Another observed that the texture of public debates in Zambia was currently not impressive:

> Like in Zambia, for example, there needs to be a more public engagement culture, even among highly educated people. At least, too, people in grade 12, undergraduates, you know. They cannot sit and say I am afraid that is not right critically or write anything about it; few people do that. So decolonizing education needs to move away from acquiring knowledge because you want this person to know something. We need to move beyond that. We need to be more critical.

These sentiments were echoed by another respondent who remarked that education in Zambia was not entirely permissible for critical thinking and analytical skills. She attributed this to the colonial education system, which taught the learners just enough to be functionally valuable:

> This is the colonial aspect of developing people who know a little bit, literate people-

we need to transcend that in many ways. We have beaten it, but it is still a big problem, you know? Our reading culture could be better; our writing culture needs to be corrected because of the nature of our education.

Another remarked that the few innovations that are attempted in education fail because they are mostly predicated on western thinking:

Decolonization will help us create a more critical citizenry who can write and think deeply. However, it is different in sciences, you see. What part of colonialism and colonial method of education has done is that it privileges western knowledge in terms of sciences and all these things, right? So, it is like chasing the wind. We introduce science programs based on western knowledge and skills, and we need to catch up to that level of where they are.

Another concurred with the accusation of excessive mimicry:

It is just like window dressing, so we need to think critically. What kind of science do we need? What kind of scientific skills do we need? When we transport what they already have simply because it is part of…. colonialism, part of coloniality, it embeds the superiority of western knowledge. Moreover,…our education system…. when people say this time in Zambia we are privileged in science and technology…. the ICT thing that they introduced there are many challenges, the…..just introduced they seem to be backing away from it because of the nature of the education that we are chasing. There are some factors with western knowledge. They are way ahead of us, so we need to think within ourselves about what we can offer.

These participant propositions suggest that the decolonization of education in Zambia could enhance intellectual skills such as critical thinking, analytical and evaluative skills. The participants uniformly felt that these skills needed to be improved in the learners because of the things they learn and how they are taught. It was also noted that the bodies governing higher education in Zambia ensure that the skill set imparted to students matches what the industry needs.

We are now developing national occupational standards which tell us the knowledge, competencies, and skills required to perform a particular job in an industry. Those standards are to be used in curriculum development.

The participants also asserted that decolonizing Zambia's education would help identify the country's skillset that responds to the needs of the society. It was further indicated that Zambia has not yet determined what is needed in terms of skills because foreign entities are still doing many things. A respondent interviewed said: "We need to be self-sufficient. In short, we need to be self-sufficient in many areas. Even when we must compete with the Western world, we still need indigenous skillsets." The understanding is that decolonization will help improve the skills sector as it opens opportunities for identifying local survival skills that respond to the indigenous people's needs.

In the findings phase of our report, we have presented various sentiments expressed by our study participants on the subject matter under investigation. As a result, there are varied

and exciting interpretations of the state of colonization in education and how to counter its negative influence. Premised of these perceptions, we now turn to the discussion phase of our report. Thus, in the following section, we discuss and analyze these findings to uncover the patient implications.

4.0.Discussion of Findings

In the following pages, we analyze and interpret the findings of our study considering the research objectives.

4.1.The current state of 'colonization' of the education curriculum in Zambia

There is a general feeling among the participants that the education curriculum in Zambia retains some elements of colonization. Participants felt that the content taught in Zambia's education, especially in higher education, is primarily dominated by content that does not respond to local needs and aspirations. The courses and programs taught in the sampled private and public universities mainly teach the range that the graduates or products of the system fail to apply in communities and for national development. It might be prudent to review some of the programs to eliminate the content perceived to be foreign. Although some university programs identify as home-grown, teaching foreign content appeared to be a matter of choice between the local and the seemingly global content.

Most participants felt that some programs needed to be more responsive to the needs of Zambian society. Equally problematic was the apparent relegation of local content to the backstage while mainstreaming foreign content, which is seen as having a global appeal. Some participants seemed to justify the dominance of foreign content with arguments that leaned on the reality that, as a country, we are interdependent on other countries and their content since we live in a global village. However, the relegation of local content translated into a loss of identity. This was confounded by the teaching of theoretical and bookish knowledge significantly removed from the realities which graduates confront in their after-college work lives.

Western theories and authors dominate educational content at the expense of local actors. Most of the programs in higher education continue to be more theoretical than practical, which renders them removed from local realities and, thus, unactionable in the quest for development. The strong orientation of the system towards the passing of examinations emphasizes theoretical dimensions devoid of real practical applicability in the local context. The participants placed the blame solely on what they described as a colonially bequeathed curriculum.

Past and ongoing attempts to reform the curriculum have yet to address a deep-seated epistemological bias toward western ideals. Efforts to rid the curriculum of the remnants of colonialism have therefore been hampered by recourse to donor-funded and western-driven reform efforts with unfavorable outcomes for local content. While the need to reshape the current higher education curriculum has risen continuously, cultural imperialism continues to compromise the incorporation of home-grown content and theories in the mainstream academy.

The participants also claimed that the methods used for curriculum delivery are predicated on western learning styles, which are somewhat divorced from the realities of African contexts. Local tastes and sensibilities should be given more attention during content development and delivery. The unbalanced system replicates itself from generation to

generation as participants in the colonized delivery system take up teaching roles and perpetuate these styles.   Participants argued that storytelling, folklore, and drumming would be ideal pedagogical approaches. However, the indigenous tag these approaches continue to bear makes them virtually inadmissible to the mainstream curriculum. Local knowledge production is considered inferior.

4.2.Efforts to decolonize the curriculum at public universities in Zambia

The sentiments expressed by our study participants paint the measures toward decolonization as largely rudimentary. Although varied interventions are cited as evidence of efforts to decolonize, there is minimal agreement on what constitutes that decolonization. Two important characterizations emerge from the responses. The first is that although the steps to decolonize were ongoing, they were restricted to the lower levels of the educational stratum. Participants were almost unanimous in saying the continuing efforts to decolonize were commendable and times but needed more entrenchment if they were to bear any fruit. There was a vital sign that he

It is hardly unexpected that people have this viewpoint. We have yet to be aware of any program explicitly designed to advance the goal of decolonization. The government has mentioned the need to decolonize schools on several occasions. However, there is no real strategy for decolonization; only declarations from public personalities can be discovered. Many participants argued that specific activities and behaviors could be considered decolonization initiatives. Another speaker raised the issue of Zambian students wanting to study in Asia, notably China, where it is typical for local authorities to require students to learn Chinese to be admitted to universities in the world's most populous country.

Several alternate interpretations contend that efforts to decolonize educational institutions were, at best, minimal. According to one of the attendees, the parties' efforts to decolonize higher education could have been more deliberate. The participant made this statement. In addition to other initiatives, a new plan for employee education was implemented. According to one of the responders, the state has shifted its focus to subsidizing educational possibilities for entrepreneurs by expanding the number of scholarships and loans available. Interestingly, this is viewed as an effort to decolonize. Those who hold this view probably think of colonization as the general deficiency of the education system.

However, several of the respondents supplied more generic explanations. Some individuals could have been more optimistic when evaluating decolonization efforts in the universities. They named a need for more resources as a barrier to using college-learned business skills in the real world. Students who participated in the study were equally critical of their institutions' attempts at decolonization. Most students were adamant that their educational institutions were not making any steps to decolonize the learning environment.

These feelings paint a complicated picture of efforts to decolonize the educational system. The academic environment offers many potentials for furthering the decolonization agenda; nevertheless, we need to conceptualize a compelling set of interventions to implement those opportunities. This creates a significant gap in our ability to advance the decolonization agenda. Respondents suggested several changes, ranging from restricting the focus of the curriculum's material to decolonizing teaching practices by using locally

relevant examples and bringing situations that Zambian students are already familiar with.

Ultimately, this points to the need for a relatively intentional and equivocal colonization agenda resting around specified parameters. For the decolonization effort to gain traction and bear fruit, there is a need for a clear definition of the aims and protocols of the action and a conceptualization of measurable outcomes and indicators. In addition, the agenda needs to be benchmarked based on international best practices, such as reclaiming the purposes of education. This implies recognition that the colonial project had its primary rudimentary aims of education. The purpose of education in its early colonial conceptualizations was to teach reading, arithmetic, and numeracy for direct functional purposes, to serve the colonial state as clerks and interpreters. Reclaiming the aim of education would mean making it work to help the updated and decolonized needs of a country that has been weaned from its initial colonial foundation. The reclamation of the aims of education was a recurring theme in the responses of our study participants on "what needs to be done to further the decolonization agenda." This implies a recognition that, currently, higher education may not be servicing genuine societal needs in a decolonized country. Based on our conversations with study participants, we can identify the following best practices concerning efforts to decolonize:

i. Testimonies: Testimonies are a formal means of presenting oral evidence about, often in the case of, localized knowledge, painful events, and experiences.
ii. Storytelling: Storytelling passes oral histories, traditions, beliefs, and values throughout generations, creating a collective story of all local people in Zambia. It is also a valuable form of research, as it allows for many voices and different accounts of events to come forward, each with value, and conveys aspects of culture in a unique way that leaves control of the narrative within the hands of the storyteller.
iii. Indigenizing: This will involve re-associating and reconnecting places and ideas with local knowledge and disconnecting them from their colonialized narratives. Higher educational institutions could use this approach by incorporating indigeneity in classroom conversations.
iv. Revitalizing: This would involve revitalizing languages that are either "dead" or "dying" with very few speakers, including the two main ones, Luba and Lunda. For example, almost all the 73 tribes in Zambia trace their origin to the Luba-Lunda Empire in present-day Congo. Erasing the use of indigenous languages was a key strategy of colonialism, as language conveys essential aspects of culture. Revitalization will encourage using these and other local languages, educate speakers and publish works in Indigenous languages.
v. Creating: Creating and imagining transcends a need for basic survival. It allows for hopefulness for the future and develops solutions to problems from a local perspective.
vi. Negotiating: Negotiating requires working strategically toward long-term goals. Current negotiations tend toward self-determination and return. Higher education institutions need to work toward having precolonial history taught correctly.
vii. Envisioning: This term conveys a sense of hopefulness. Indigenous people and cultures have survived, persisted, and will continue to work toward a better

future. Higher educational institutions can contribute to this vision by educating Indigenous knowledge in culture, arts, language, food, and sustainability.

viii. Reframing: How issues surrounding local knowledge are framed has caused difficulties in addressing those issues in meaningful and productive ways. Reframing requires using a broader context that considers the history and the impacts of imperialism. Colleges and universities need to problematize the narratives of settler colonialism and assert that Indigenous knowledge deserves equal respect.

ix. Restoring: Restoring is rooted in healing and takes a holistic approach. Given the epistemic violence, we uncovered under 3.1. there is a need to restore some of the knowledge displaced by colonialism. The therapeutic method has been used in South Africa to address Apartheid and in Canada to address the harm done to Indigenous people. This process seeks to address suffering and promote healing.

x. Reading: This strategy requires turning a critical eye toward Western accounts of history and understanding the need for multiple narratives and lenses through which to view history.

xi. Writing: The writing of local stories by local authors is a vital aspect of decolonizing methodologies.

These best practices are based on our synthesis of participant evaluation of the efforts to advance the decolonization agenda in higher education.

4.3. Reasonable measures to best help incorporate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum.

Participants told us that attempts to assist in integrating local knowledge into higher education curriculums were long overdue and should have been adopted a long time ago. Some people made audacious proposals about how to employ this type of knowledge. Some emphasized that incorporating locally produced literature into mainstream educational activities would be a significant step toward decolonization. This would be a considerable achievement. It is worth noting that participants advocated for the inclusion of Zambian-authored books as a means of enriching the world culinary curriculum. The books were published by a Zambian entrepreneur who eventually founded an internationally recognized culinary academy. Other participants expressed similar sentiments, observing that it was required to draw more heavily on Zambian languages and conditions in locally produced writing, in addition to decolonizing the portrayal of Africa in this literature:

Another developing viewpoint was that reverting to "default settings" would be the most straightforward path to decolonizing educational institutions. It was argued that this would be the simplest way to achieve decolonization. These attitudes suggest that it is critical to be specific about the skill set created due to involvement in educational opportunities. This could imply that decolonizing educational institutions would entail a shift in thinking about educational institution outcomes.

These ideas show a huge opportunity to include local knowledge in the regular higher education curriculum to improve the decolonization goal. A couple of propositions jump out from these remarks. First, there is a need for innovation and inventiveness in

educational content. This would be carried out by integrating local knowledge into the mainstream academy. This would be accompanied by a cessation of categorizing knowledge as local vs. conventional. The act of creating and imagining goes beyond the requirement for fundamental survival. It supports optimism about the future and the development of innovative solutions to challenges from an Indigenous perspective.

Looking deeper into participant sentiments, we can see that one aspect of incorporating local knowledge was legitimizing indigenous understanding, according to participants, would help both the academy and research outcomes if taken seriously. Participants discussed how to 'pack' indigenous knowledge to make it more acceptable to the academy and how to include academics' everyday lived experiences into knowledge development—in these conceptualizations, legitimizing meant setting up what the university knows and how it uses what it knows, evoking ideas of the institution's role as a site of knowledge creation.

Respondents expressed optimism about local knowledge's credibility in higher education curricula. Participants also claimed that not incorporating Indigeneity and Indigenous knowledge into their research would result in poor research outputs. Recognizing Indigenous knowledge explicitly in the institutional policy addressing research and engagement efforts will confirm Indigenous knowledge as a legitimate type of knowledge in the eyes of academics and students.

The rising awareness of Indigenous knowledge signaled a movement toward the maximization of indigenous knowledge at the university and the beginnings of knowledge production decolonization. This method of decolonization has the advantage of recognizing and respecting various paradigms of expertise while avoiding the mistakes perpetrated by Eurocentric knowledge systems in silencing, dislocating, and marginalizing the African knowledge system. Indigenous knowledge can contribute more meaningfully to students' after-college production when engaged, as in this case, through harmonization. The preceding ultimately points to the need to give local knowledge its legitimacy in the academy so that the pedagogical approaches could begin to appropriate the fruits of this knowledge. This is critical for developing the skills sector in the Republic of Zambia. It is to these skill sets that we now turn.

4.4. How decolonization can help improve Zambia's education and skills sector and respond to national aspirations

Our study sought to establish the contributions decolonization can make to improving education and developing skills to respond to local aspirations. Decolonization can enhance the education and skills sector. It can, for instance, change the mindsets of students, academics, and the general populace. One cannot help but agree with participant observations that the colonially bequeathed educational system focused on theory instead of empowering learners with practical skills. Hence, even after 58 years of independence, the system continues to train the learners only for white-collar jobs. Implementing the decolonization agenda in the education and skills sector will create a sense of pride and appreciation for indigenous skills and knowledge systems. The current education system must be revised based on colonial heritage and understanding. It was created at a particular moment and for specific purposes.

The decolonization of education in Zambia can instill a sense of ownership among the locals. It can create critical thinkers who would be bold enough to question certain things imposed on the local people by foreigners. It can also promote critical thinking and encourage innovation and creativity among the learners. There is a general view that decolonization would liberate the learners' minds. This would ultimately create an avenue for producing cadres of thinkers who can interrogate local and global issues to meet societal needs.

Localizing the local knowledge systems will identify the local skillset that resonates well with national aspirations. Our findings suggest that Zambia's skills sector is strongly influenced by foreign content. While we are inclined to agree with this interpretation, the study also brought out efforts that the gatekeepers in education, institutions such as policy bodies, and regulators are tirelessly making to ensure that higher education in Zambia meets the needs of society. These efforts include formulating national occupational standards, a product of discussions between the industry and academic institutions.

5.0. Conclusions and Recommendations
5.1. Conclusions
This study has revealed that content and education approaches continue to reflect colonially bequeathed ways of knowing, which do not speak to society's local needs and problems. What the participants describe as foreign content relegates and subtly overlooks local knowledge and, therefore, robs students of the much-needed skills to solve the issues of their society through innovations and inventions. The content is not only bookish but is based on memorization and needs more practical application of the knowledge learned. This makes an engineer from Zambia's public universities depend on engineers from the west for projects being undertaken in the country. Zambian graduates rarely invent cutting-edge solutions to problems because their training remains too theoretical and excessively focused on what the learners should know. The participants contend that this is because the original colonial intention was that the indigenous learners should not surpass their western counterparts. Consequently, research and knowledge in Zambia are often considered inferior as there is a constant dependence on the west for knowledge production and funding. In most cases, universities have no research funds, and donors' funding often perpetuates colonization by dictating what the research funds should be used for.

The agenda to decolonize Zambia's education system is welcome as it can improve the skills sector by changing people's mindsets. It can also promote critical thinking and innovations. Decolonization can break down the dependency mentality among Zambians on foreign expertise. Decolonization can redefine and re-engineer skills production, focusing on what is relevant to the nation's aspirations. It can also lead to a critical review of interactions with former colonial powers for the nation's benefit.

5.2. Recommendations
The following are the proposed specific recommendations calling for action:
1. Higher education institutions should embark on a curriculum review to dislodge the remnants of colonization. These colonially bequeathed epistemic systems downgrade the African student as inferior to their counterparts in the global north.
2. We further recommend that public and private universities in Zambia should make a conscious effort to ensure that only what responds to the local needs and what

makes a student holistic is preserved in the curriculum. This does not suggest doing away with what the colonizers left; it simply entails removing all the harmful colonial elements in the curriculum.

3. There is a need for improved funding for research in higher education. This should be accompanied by revamping and improving the existing research centers to promote local research. In addition, the government must establish research-validating systems to authenticate locally produced knowledge. This would depart from the current trend where local researchers rely on foreign validating systems to validate locally produced research.

4. As decolonization is a complex undertaking that transcends the mere review of the curriculum, the Ministry of Education must inaugurate and sustain expedite the implementation of the decolonization agenda in Zambia and ensure that the process takes an inclusive and multi-sectorial approach.

5. In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the Ministry of Education must develop a roadmap for decolonization benchmarked on the best practices identified in this report. This roadmap should outline systematic ways of eradicating the colonial elements from the current education system and realigning it to respond to national aspirations.

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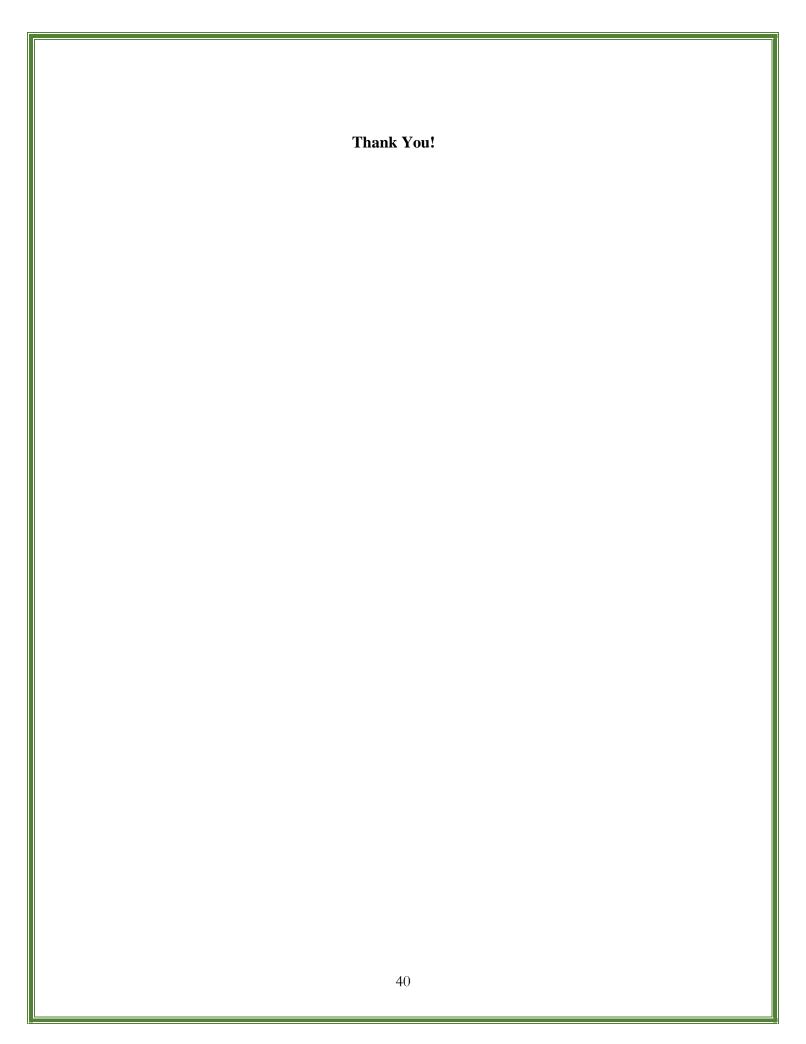Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

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Appendix 1: Interview Protocol for University Managers

DECOLONISATION OF EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA AND BEST PRACTICES IN AFRICA

i. What is the name of the university?
ii. What is your position at this university?
iii. How long have you been working for this university?
iv. What does the colonization of the higher education curricula mean to you?
v. To what extent do the Zambian higher education curricula have elements of colonization?
vi. How has the country's colonial history shaped the content, methods, and approaches to higher education?
vii. Are you aware of any measures that could have been put in place to decolonize the curricula at this university?
viii. What management mechanisms are in place at the University to foster the process and benefits of decolonizing the education curricula?
ix. Do you think Zambia, as a sovereign state, has the power to determine what should be added and excluded from its education curriculum?
x. Do you think colonization is prevalent in the teaching methods and content of higher education curricula?
    a. Explain your answer.
    b. What would decolonized teaching methods look like?
xi. Do you think how students are assessed in universities in Zambia reflects elements of colonization?
xii. Give examples of such forms of assessments.
xiii. Would you say research conducted in public universities in Zambia is marginalized compared to research from western universities? Explain your answer
xiv. Are there elements of colonization in the way research is conducted and consumed in universities?
xv. What does the term decolonization mean to you?
xvi. What management mechanisms are in place at the University to foster the process and benefits of decolonizing research outcomes?
xvii. Is it necessary to decolonize education in Zambia?
xviii. Do you have any specific suggestions on how to decolonize education?
    a. How to integrate local knowledge into higher education curricula.
xix. Are you aware of any efforts toward decolonizing higher education in Zambia, including teaching methods and assessment approaches?
xx. Describe these measures, if any.

Thank You!

DECOLONISATION OF EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA AND BEST PRACTICES IN AFRICA

i.   What is the name of the university?

ii.   What is your position at this university?

iii.   How long have you been working for this university?

iv.   What, in your view, is the decolonization of education?

v.   How can decolonization help improve Zambia's education and skills sector and respond to national aspirations?

vi.   Comment on the extent to which higher education continues to/does not reflect the colonial elements.

vii.   Do you think the Zambian education curriculum has elements of colonization?

viii.   Do you think Western countries still influence what should be added and excluded from the education curriculum in Zambia?

ix.   With examples, describe the extent to which the education curriculum in Zambia is colonized.

x.   What management mechanisms are in place at the University to foster the process and benefits of decolonizing the education curricula?

xi.   What affordances do you, as an academic, envision in the ongoing attempts to decolonize higher education in Zambia?

xii.   How can the decolonization of education in Zambia help us discover our identity as African people?

xiii.   Are there policies supporting the University/Faculty/School's engagement with the decolonization agenda, and what is the content of these policies, if there are any?

xiv.   Based on your understanding and interpretation of the current state of colonization, what best practices do you, as an academic, propose to enhance the decolonization agenda?

xv.   What mechanisms/strategies do you have in place to capture and maximize decolonization practices within your research, and what are the benefits?

xvi.   Do you think colonization is prevalent in the teaching methods used in universities to deliver content to learners?

xvii.   Describe the extent of colonization in the assessments that students are subjected to in the universities in Zambia

xviii.   Are there elements of colonization in the way research is conducted at this university?

xix.   Are there elements of colonization in the pedagogical approaches at this university?

xx.   Are you aware of any efforts instituted at this institution to help decolonize higher education?

xxi. Suggest measures that can be implemented to integrate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum
xxii. Describe how decolonization can help improve Zambia's education and skills sector and respond to national aspirations.
xxiii. Explain how decolonization can be implemented in Zambian public universities.

Thank You!

DECOLONISATION OF EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA AND BEST PRACTICES IN AFRICA

i. Explain the meaning of colonization of the education curriculum.
ii. In your opinion, does the Zambian education curriculum have elements of colonization?
iii. Do you think Western countries influence what should be added and excluded from the education curriculum in Zambia?
iv. With examples, describe the extent to which the education curriculum in Zambia is colonized.
v. Explain how colonization is prevalent in the teaching methods used in this university.
vi. To what extent would you say that coloniality is reflected in the assessment systems you are subjected to at this university?
vii. Are there elements of colonization in how research is disseminated through prescribed and recommended readings in the various courses you take in this institution?
viii. How do you, as a student, understand decolonization?
ix. Are you aware of any efforts in this or another university toward decolonizing institution-based policies, procedures, or content?
    a. Do you care to explain your answer?
x. Do you think the teaching methods used to deliver your content at this university have been decolonized? Explain your answer
xi. Do you think the campaign to decolonize education in Zambia is motivated by the need to do away with inherited/colonial-linked curriculum?
xii. How can the decolonization of education in Zambia help us discover our identity as African people?
xiii. How can the decolonization of education in Zambia make the local people appreciate their culture?
xiv. What affordances do you, as a student, envision in the ongoing attempts to decolonize higher education in Zambia?

Thank You!

DECOLONISATION OF EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA AND BEST PRACTICES IN AFRICA

i.   What is the name of the institution you work for?
ii. What is your position in this institution?
iii. How long have you been working for this institution?
iv. What do you look for when approving a curriculum?
v.   Do you think the Zambian higher education curriculum has elements of colonialism?
vi. If so, what are some of the colonial elements you see in higher education curricula?
vii. Are there efforts to eliminate colonial elements in the higher education curricula?
viii. Have you put in place measures to ensure curriculums submitted to you do not have elements of coloniality?
ix. If so, highlight some of the measures.
x.   Do you think Western countries influence what should be added and excluded from the education curriculum in Zambia?
xi. Would you say the teaching methods and approaches in higher education reflect colonial elements?
     a. Do you care to explain your answer?
xii. Would you say the way students are assessed in universities reflects colonial elements?
xiii. Give examples of such assessments.
xiv. Are there elements of colonization in the way research is conducted and consumed in universities?
xv. Does the government support efforts toward the decolonization of the higher education curriculum?
xvi. To what extent would you say the government is ensuring that the higher education curriculum is decolonized?
xvii. What measures is the government implementing to integrate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum?
xviii. Describe how decolonization can help improve Zambia's education and skills sector and respond to national aspirations.

Thank You!

DECOLONISATION OF EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA AND BEST PRACTICES IN AFRICA

Participant Recruitment Memo

The Zambia National Education Coalition is studying the decolonization of Education in Zambia. The proposed research seeks to generate data that may be used to further the discussion around the decolonization of education in Zambia and across the African continent. The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To provide a background to the Zambian education system
2. To show the current state of 'colonization' of the education curriculum in Zambia.
3. To analyze the measures taken to decolonize the curriculum at public universities in Zambia.
4. Identify reasonable steps to help best incorporate local knowledge into the higher education curriculum.
5. To analyze how decolonization can help improve Zambia's education and skills sector and respond to national aspirations.

This memo invites you to participate as an interview respondent in this study. If you choose to participate, you will retain the right to terminate your participation in the study at any time.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

There are no serious risks involved in participating in this study. However, it may be uncomfortable and painful to recall any unpleasant events, conflicts, or tensions in your past experiences. To minimize or avoid these risks, you are at liberty to decline to answer any question during the interview.

Confidentiality

This study's audio files and text transcripts will be strictly confidential. The researchers will also ensure that in any report or publication made from this study, there will be no information that could make it possible for anyone to identify any of the respondents in this study. Therefore, pseudonyms will be used throughout this study. Physical and electronic research records will be stored securely, and only the researchers will have access to the documents. Audio recordings will only be accessed by the researchers and will be used for educational purposes only. They will be erased once the transcription is completed and verified.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Zambia National Education

Coalition. If you decide to take part, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time.

Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
- Participate in a semi-structured one-on-one interview with the researchers. The discussion will be conversational and will last approximately 30 minutes.
- Let the researchers record the entire conversation we will have in the interview or take notes for the duration.

ABOUT US

The Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) is a Coalition of non-state actors working in the Education and Skills Sector. It is a recognized institution advocating for improved access to quality education by all citizens. The organisation is involved in research, advocacy and member capacity enhancement on different aspects of Education and Skills Sector in Zambia.

VISION

"A sustainable and inclusive education system that responds to national aspirations and fosters an environment for self-fulfillment"

MISSION

"ZANEC is a coalition of education organisations promoting quality and inclusive education for all, through influencing of policy, building consensus, holding duty bearers accountable and strengthening the capacities of stakeholders in the education sector"

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With Support from: SAIH | Norwegian Students´ and Academics´ International Assistance Fund