

Article

Zambian Civic Education Teacher Students in Norway for a Year—How Do They Describe Their Transformative Learning?

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Abstract: Through 10 years of cooperation between the University of Zambia and the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, 24 students of Civic Education (Social Sciences) from the University of Zambia had an opportunity to travel to Norway to have a different learning experience of Civic Education. In this study, we sought through qualitative questionnaires and interviews to understand how the former Civic Education teacher students describe their experiences and received benefits during the 10 months they spent at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. The study established that transformative learning takes time, but of paramount importance was that the students were able to critically reflect and act as change-makers at an individual, school, and/or society level. The study also noted that international student mobility can increase students' transformative learning under certain conditions. Therefore, our study concludes that crucial factors for transformative learning consist of the combination of cultural mentoring, teaching practice, critical discussions, and critical theories. Additionally, the study notes that reframing our perspectives as learners, teachers, and researchers can lead to increased awareness of moral imperatives for satisfying human needs, ensuring social justice and respecting environmental limits as citizens in a global world.

Keywords: transformative learning; international student mobility; Civic Education; Freire; Zambia

1. Introduction

According to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly goal number 4, "Quality Education," and goal 4C concerning international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, this study sought to understand how former Civic Education (Social Sciences) teacher students from the University of Zambia describe the benefits and transformative learning of one-year study in Norway. The authors of this article are from the two universities of Western Norway University of Applied Sciences and the University of Zambia. The two authors have cooperated for more than 10 years and have been key persons in facilitating the movement of Civic Education students from the University of Zambia to Norway. Civic Education is the study of the theoretical, political, and practical aspects of citizenship, as well as its rights and duties.

To increase intercultural competence, critical thinking, and transformative learning through student mobility, Civic Education teacher students from the University of Zambia had an opportunity to study part of their Bachelor's degree at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences through the Norwegian Quota program. The program offered courses in "Global Knowledge" and "About Norway in Norway." Theories were applied into practice through four (4) weeks of practical placement in two

different secondary schools and interviews and research-based project work. “Global Knowledge” was a tailor-made course for incoming teacher students from Zambia and outgoing Norwegian students for their three months stay in Zambia. Consequently, Zambian and Norwegian students learned and discussed the same theories for four weeks before they separately did their practice and project work in Norway and Zambia, respectively. They also shared experiences and their acquired knowledge in the last weeks of the program before examinations. During the stay in Norway, student “buddies” and a cultural mentor were available academically and non-academically from the time they arrived until they left.

This article seeks to underscore the voices of the students who had travelled to Norway and provide some reflections on how they have come to view the relevance of a one-year stay in Norway, a society described as one of the most secular, gender-equal, and egalitarian countries in the world [1,2]. Their experiences abroad, in comparison with their background based on Ubuntu and patriarchal structures [2,3], give them diverse perspectives to appreciate different sides of the world. In this article, we also try to argue how the UN’s sustainability goals, especially when it comes to the understanding of social justice, can be strengthened through international student mobility programs generally and Civic Education especially. Civic Education, as a study of the theoretical, political, and practical aspects of citizenship, as well as its rights and duties, helps the students to act as ambassadors for social change. Therefore, the UN’s sustainability goals can be achieved through relevant knowledge, different teaching strategies, critical reflections, and rich participation in society. This is also in line with what Muleya [4] states about Civic Education—that it has the potential to contribute to the formation and transformation of democratic citizens and societies. It is important also to stress that one of the critical aspects in the revised Zambian Education curriculum is to produce among other things self-motivated, lifelong learners; confident and productive individuals; and holistic, independent learners with the values, skills, and knowledge to enable them to succeed in life [5]. International student mobility has increased globally, and we will argue that especially students in political science, social studies, or Civic Education can be significant change agents in their society through exchange programs abroad. This should not be limited to a few countries but should be considered in all international student mobility programs.

The overarching research question is, how do former Civic Education teacher students from the University of Zambia describe their transformative learning after a one-year study in Norway?

2. Theoretical Perspectives

2.1. Sustainability Goals and Sustainability as Moral Imperatives

Many of the United Nations’ sustainability goals are relevant to the Civic Education teacher students. In this article, we emphasize sustainability goal number 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” However, there is also an emphasis on other goals such as goal number 1, “End poverty in all its forms everywhere,” and goal number 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” Goal number 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” [6], is also relevant for Civic Education teacher students.

In a three-pillar model of sustainability (ecological, economic, and social sustainability), our argument is mainly related to social sustainability. We sought a deeper understanding of how students describe their transformative learning after being abroad for a year. Holden, Linnerud, Banister, Wierling, and Schwanits [7] and Holden, Linnerud, and Banister [8] state that social sustainability cannot separate from environmental and economic sustainability; they depend on each other. In *The Imperatives of Sustainable Development*, Holden et al. [7] discuss the ethical foundations of our common future and builds a model that emphasizes three equally important moral imperatives; satisfying human needs, ensuring social justice and respecting environmental limits. Holden et al. [7] argue that

sustainable development constitutes a set of constraints on human behavior, including constraints on economic activity. By identifying indicators and thresholds, they illustrate how different regions or groups of countries face different challenges [8]. On the global scale, Holden et al. [8] suggest six key sustainable development themes: eradicating extreme poverty, enhancing human capabilities, ensuring “rich” participation, ensuring fair distribution, mitigating climate change, and safeguarding biosphere integrity.

To increase social justice, there is a need to facilitate a transition to rich participation. By rich participation, Holden et al. [8] argue that participation in itself is not enough but should be embedded in a system that makes it possible to transfer individual voices to action. In this sense, participation is a central part of governance, which in its broadest sense, refers to “the intersection of power, politics, and institutions” [8]. Rich participation enables collective processes of monitoring, reflection, debate, and decision that establish the goals to be pursued [8].

Key concepts in Civic Education and our study on transformative learning among Civic Education teacher students are rich participation and social justice. We argue for the relevance of Holden’s et al. [7,8] sustainability model emphasizing moral imperatives that can guide policymakers to achieve global and local solutions to satisfying human needs, ensuring social justice, and respecting environmental limits.

2.2. Civic Education in Zambia

The Zambian Government White Paper, the National Capacity Building Program for Good Governance in Zambia, identified and stated that a need to expand and intensify Civic Education [9] central to the development of good governance. The expansion and intensification of Civic Education resonate very well with the argument that Muleya [10] makes on the subject that Civic Education is essential. It creates opportunities and possibilities among the general citizenry to learn how they ought to relate with one another as well as respecting divergent views and supporting each other whenever the need arises in the community. From this point, it is clear to note that the Zambian Government was justified in having Civic Education as a compulsory subject in the revised curriculum. In other words, it can be argued that the educational policy innovations in the curriculum have been driven by the desire to democratize the teaching and learning environment in schools. As a result of this development, the call for more critical, active, and participatory approaches to the teaching of Civic Education has become imperative [4]. The Zambian curriculum further does emphasize the need for learning-centered methods, life-long learning, and a desire to democratize teaching and learning in schools [4].

Civic Education in Zambia has now become one of the compulsory subjects in the school curriculum. The re-introduction of Civic Education at the level of secondary education aims at renewing an ethos of critical and creative thinking among students, which was seen to be greatly lacking in previous iterations of Civics in Zambia [4]. The reintroduction of Civic Education rose out of the need to produce learners who would be well versed in the ideals and practices of a democratic community. Muleya [11] has further expanded the above point that understanding about Civic Education is important in that it creates opportunities and possibilities among the general citizenry to learn how they ought to relate with one another as well as respecting the divergent views and supporting each other whenever need arises in the community. As a matter of fact, this was central to the revised curriculum of 2015 in which emphasis is on teaching learners about how they can live as true citizens in the community, following the ideals of what may be referred to as transformative citizenship education. Banks [12] states that transformative citizenship education aims to challenge mainstream conceptions of citizenship by engaging students in critical analysis of assumptions about membership, identity, and community.

Carmody [13] has argued that there were important deficiencies in education for the promotion of democracy, social responsibility, and justice. The need to retrain teachers in line with the objectives of Civic Education is a critical element in the revitalization of Civic Education in the Zambian school

curriculum [4]. Civic Education, in general terms, provides possibilities for engaging students in civil and political issues. However, in Zambia, as observed elsewhere by Kennedy [14], students are often marginalized and silenced through the use of repressive state apparatus such as the police service or force. The experiences of the students who travelled to Norway allowed them to learn how to be assertive in many ways and to speak out rather than being silent when wrong things are taking place in the community.

In the last 10 years, 24 Civic Education teacher students at the University of Zambia have been selected to do their second year of their Bachelor's of Arts degree in Civic Education in Norway. After graduation, they will be teachers in Civic Education in Zambian secondary schools. The authors of this article have played a key role in identifying, conducting interviews, and preparing the students for a year at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Campus Sogndal, through a quota program. An overview of their second year study program is described in the table below. Table 1 shows the courses that were being offered at second year of study at University of Zambia and the corresponding courses at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Table 1. An overview of program, contents, and theories for second-year Civic Education students from University of Zambia. The first row shows the original program in Zambia, and the following rows show the two courses the exchange students did in Norway as an alternative.

Program, Assessment and Teaching Strategies	Contents for Zambian Students	Theories
Second year of Civic Education, the University of Zambia (for Zambian students who did not travel) Two essays and a written exam, 3 h lecturing + 1-h tutorial for each course (2 Civic + 2 Others)	Citizenship; Constitution and Human Rights; Social and Economic Development; Sociology of Education; Education Psychology + A teaching Subject	Kapur, Principles of Politics, Government of Zambia and Mung'omba, Zambian Constitution, Harvey, Stanlake, and Harwick, Modern Economy.
About Norway in Norway, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (30 ECTS; Autumn for Zambian/international students in Norway) One essay, one assignment and one written exam, six hours lecturing a week, and four hours tutorial.	Social and Economic Development; Citizenship; Constitution and Governance; Entrepreneurship and Economy; Norwegian Culture and Language	Gosta Esping-Andersen, Norwegian, Nordic, and International Approaches to Social Welfare and Politics, Economy, and Norwegian Culture and Language.
Global Knowledge, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (30 ECTS, Spring for Norwegian and Zambian students in Norway) A project report (data-collection and research-based) and an oral exam. Lecturing, student presentations, group work, project work, discussions, and individual tutoring 10 h in a semester.	Human Rights; Millennium and Sustainability Goals; Intercultural Understanding; Globalization and Different Societies; Learning Theories; Gender and family policy; Ubuntu and Different World Views; Comparing Norwegian and Zambian History, Politics, Education and Social Welfare	Freire: Pedagogy of the Oppressed; Aas: Female Culture; Giddens: Modernity and Self-Identity; Dahl/Jensen: Intercultural Communication and Learning theories; Carmody and Phiri about Zambian Politics and Education

2.3. Freire—Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Critical Theory

Freire is one of the first scholars to argue that education and learning are political and, as such, can never be neutral [15]. Freire has contributed significantly to the realization that a school is a place where more than a formal curriculum is acquired. His theory has helped to deploy a critical pedagogy in the classroom, which creates an understanding of power, oppression, domination, and ideology. Central to the formulation of pedagogy of the oppressed, was the problem of the “oppressed consciousness” and the “oppressor consciousness”; the way they looked at the world and themselves; their beliefs, ethics, fears, and motives; and how these, in turn, drove their behavior [16].

Paulo Freire's view of education as a way for the oppressed to read and transform the world has inspired those who work in education, as well as those who struggle in the Third World [16]. Teacher students as “citizen scholars” are expected to take critical positions and to relate their work with major social issues in the society to create hope for learners to transform society to be better [17].

Paulo Freire created a pedagogy on behalf of the excluded, the ragged, the oppressed, which above all fought against the relations and conditions of oppression through a theory of knowledge

situated in the world, for the world, and with the world. Based on consciousness-raising of reality, he systematized political, ethical, scientific, and philosophical education, to enable decisions, options and a commitment that offers the possibility of liberation for all women and all men and, dialectically, the transformation of society [16].

Freire [15] emphasized how teaching methodologies and social structures are interlinked. Freire's concept of the Banking-method, a top-down approach where the teacher/leader knows, and learners/employees do not know, has been and still is in use in many classrooms and societies globally. Freire's problem-posing method emphasizes the learners' experiences and life-world. In addition, a dialogue should take place and base on humanism, equality, and willingness to listen to the other person's explanation from his/her life orientation [2,15]. Concepts as generative themes, dialogue, consciousness, breaking silence, liberation, and action are all central for his theory and the transformation from unconsciousness oppressed to liberation. Freire's book has been on the reading list for all "Global Knowledge" students in Norway, both Zambian and Norwegian students. To pass on Freire's important message, we have used different teaching strategies like reading individually, discussing the book in groups and presenting the critical aspect in class. This book's importance for many Zambian students will be discussed later in this article.

According to Freire [15], if you divide people into two groups, the oppressors and the oppressed, the oppressors are those who have, and the oppressed are those who do not have. Yang [18] emphasizes that Freire's theory mainly is a class theory with limitations on gender, culture, and intersectional approaches, but others, like Stromquist [19], underline that, from a gender perspective, Freire's path to consciousness-raising is crucial for emancipation and empowerment of women. Freire advocated breaking the culture of silence, a piece of advice of particular relevance to the feminist struggle, as it meant gaining a voice to address previously taboo or invisible subjects such as domestic violence, rape, and sexual harassment. When students engaged in problem-posing activities in the classroom, many of them were inspired to explore new forms of learning and establish horizontal relations with their peers. Through consciousness-raising, many educators and students alike have grown to be more attentive to cause-effect relationships, not taking social life for granted, but questioning it [19].

As we will discuss later in this article, Freire's theory has been essential to so many students who went to Norway. Both female and male students find the book powerful to understand and change their perspectives as Civic Education teachers. Yang [18] highlights the lack of gender in Freire's theories, but as Stromquist and others [20] have discussed, Freire included gender in his later work, and many have been inspired to develop gender theories from his thoughts. Aas [21] is one of them, and for our teacher students, they were encouraged to read Freire in light of gender approaches like Aas [21] and others [2,22].

2.4. Gender and Intersectionality

It is necessary to make different cultures visible to be able to understand the factors determining our lives and the way we communicate. Male and female culture has been described differently according to five dimensions [21] and can be used as an indicator of gender inequality in a society. Aas's [21,23] five dimensions are language and communication; leadership and organization; relations to technology and resources (finance); self-evaluation; and time perspective, availability of own time, future, and planning possibilities. The relevance of her theory has been discussed in Bergersen [2,22]. Aas's five dimensions are still useful to make female culture visible and create awareness of how social structures can oppress females as a group.

The concept of self-efficacy has been referred to people's perceptions of their capabilities to manage a task successfully [24]. Perceived self-efficacy can be defined as the self-belief that one can perform a difficult task and cope with adversity, in various domains of life. In Petersdotter et al.'s [24] study, students' general perceived self-efficacy slightly raised after an academic stay abroad. These results are in line with previous research, which has shown a rise of domain-specific self-efficacy through abroad experiences [24]. In our research, all Zambian students who answered a question about self-efficiency

confirmed the rise of self-efficiency from a year abroad. During the interviews, mainly the female students described how their self-efficiency had played an essential role for them to be empowered to change as teachers and individuals.

In addition to the theory of female culture, Aas has developed a tool to identify and disclose five master suppression techniques men have used in patriarchal societies against women and minorities to sustain their position. These oppression patterns were, according to Aas [25], methods employed to obtain or maintain negative power over other people, or ways to assert oneself by oppressing other individuals. The five techniques Aas defined were invisibilising; ridiculing; withholding information; damned if you do damn if you don't; and heaping blame and putting to shame. Later, several more techniques were added, and the concept has been used to describe and analyze social interactions in other unequal power relations besides gender. Both Aas's and Freire's theories of oppression have influenced approaches like intersectionality, wherein different minority labels are interlinked in an oppressed way and to disclose oppression techniques as tools for action.

Intersectionality is an analytic framework, which attempts to identify how interlocking systems of power affect those who are most marginalized in society. While the theory began as an exploration of the oppression of women of color within society, today, the analysis can apply to all social categories. Intersectionality is how gender, age, class, and ethnicity/tribe are used in the construction of the Other [18]. As African teacher students in Norway, intersectionality can be a tool to understand some of the students' transformative learning during and after they stay in Norway. Critical consciousness, empowerment, and responsible citizenship will now be discussed in light of transformative theories.

2.5. Transformative Learning and Social Mobility—Transformative Intercultural Learning

Mezirow's rendering of transformative learning emphasized the importance and centrality of experience, understanding one's frame of reference, the role of disorienting dilemma, the importance of critical reflection and critical self-reflection, the role of rational discourse, and dialogue in communicating with others [26]. Transformative learning leans on Freire's theory of critical consciousness and his ideas of disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, critical self-reflection, and critical discourse [27–29]. Calleja [26] has gone deeper into how Mezirow has been influenced by Thomas Kuhn's philosophical conception of paradigm, Freire's conception of conscientization and consciousness growth, and Habermas' domains of learning and the discussion of language as communicative action. Mezirow [27] defined transformative learning as the process whereby adult learners critically examine their beliefs, values, and assumptions in light of acquiring new knowledge and begin a process of personal and social change called reframing in perspective. Mezirow [27] describes "perspective transformation" as the process of becoming critically aware of how and why pre-suppositions have come to constrain the way people perceive, understand, and feel about the world.

Mezirow [27,28] indicated that meaning perspectives operate as perceptual filters that organize the meaning of the learner experiences. Merriam [30] stated that transformational learning is about change, dramatic, fundamental change in the way we see ourselves, and the world in which we live. Transformational learning induces more far-reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning, especially learning experiences that shape the learner and produce a significant impact, or paradigm shift, which affects the learner's subsequent experiences. A paradigm shift with a new meaning structure questioning previously held values and beliefs [31].

Moreover, through perspective transformation experiences, adult learners shift their understanding or assumptions to cope with new information that they then apply to their lives. Adult learners learn how new ideas and information can have an impact and "unbalance" their beliefs, values, and ways of understanding. The radical changes they experience are often significant steps to a lifelong journey toward their full potential. Perspective transformation can occur because of an acute personal or social crisis. These experiences are sometimes stressful, painful, and can cause individuals to question the core of their existence [15,28].

Based on Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning, Nerstrom [32] has developed a simpler model with four stages. The four stages are (a) having experiences, (b) making assumptions, (c) challenging perspectives, and (d) experiencing transformative learning. Transformative learning then becomes a new experience. This model provides a visual representation of how transformations are constructed. Furthermore, the model also identifies transformative learning as a continuous cycle of learning. Once transformative learning occurs, individuals are more receptive to experiencing it again, and it is unlikely that adults revert to their prior beliefs [32].

Nerstrom [32] states that transformative learning is complex and has been recognized as three distinct or possibly competing concepts—a process, an outcome, and/or pedagogy. As a process, transformative learning is often discussed in terms of Mezirow's 10-phase process. As an outcome, it constitutes a new lens through which to see oneself or others. As pedagogy, transformative learning provides a paradigm of education that fosters a powerful shift in beliefs or values [32]. In this article, we see transformative learning as both a process, an outcome and a pedagogical approach. Freire's and Aas's theories of oppression are fruitful to understand why changes can be painful and take time, but also how resistance and challenges can reframe your perspectives.

2.6. Transformative Learning and Intercultural Competence through International Mobility

International experience alone does not necessarily make students intercultural competent or give them new perspectives, transformation is a slow process, and some might elaborate on an existing point of view. Transformation is less common than making new things fit into existing frames of references [29,33].

Intercultural competence can be defined as dealing with cross-cultural contact in general [34,35]. Bergersen [2] defines cross-cultural competence with three aspects—intercultural consciousness, cross-cultural understanding, and intercultural communication. Intercultural consciousness is the awareness of your worldview. Cross-cultural understanding is to know your own historical and cultural background (values and norms) and the knowledge and willingness to understand people with a different background than yourself. The last part is intercultural communication skills, which include awareness of how the importance of context in communication can differ and how verbal and nonverbal communication can differ in meaning and significance [2]. Transformative learning and intercultural competence necessitate a change in the way we see ourselves and in the world we live. Critical consciousness and reframing of our perspectives are vital factors. To study abroad might give students' transformative intercultural learning, but some important factors should take place.

Berg et al. [36] summarize a literature review about intercultural learning abroad. Some of the most critical factors are, first, cultural mentoring and a competent cultural mentor. Second, underline the importance of providing learners with cultural content, such as value orientations, communication styles, nonverbal communication, conflict styles, and ways of learning. Third, provide opportunities for students to reflect on intercultural experiences, challenge their cultural assumptions, and shift their frame of reference to their particular cultural context. Fourth, engage with the host culture through an internship, international classes, and project work [36].

3. Research Methodology and Key Findings

Since 2009, an open-answer questionnaire has been sent to all 93 Zambian students who went to Norway for a year from 2007 to 2016. Several individuals and group interview took also place in the same period. These are Zambian students from education, social work, and nursing. From 93 students, we received answers from 46 Zambian students. Their experiences and learning outcomes after a year in Norway indicate that students express that they have empowered themselves with a higher self-efficacy, and their intercultural understanding was enriched with diversity in teaching strategies and opened their mind-sets [2,37,38].

To gain insight into how Zambian Civic Education teacher students describe their experiences, reflections, and transformative learning after a one-year study in Norway, a follow-up study was

made in 2017. The design has a qualitative approach, with structured open-response questionnaires and semi-structured individual and group interviews and an ethnographical thematic data analysis with inductive open coding [39]. Based on reflections and insight from a group interview with six former Civic Education students in March 2017, a revised qualitative open-response questionnaire with twenty questions was sent to all 24 Civic Education teacher students who went to Norway for a year. We received answers from 16 students (eight female and eight male students). Distribution of questionnaires by email and additional information through Facebook did not reach all, and therefore some former students could not give us an answer. A few others did not answer the questionnaire for unknown reasons.

Based on the answers from the questionnaire, an interview-guide was designed, and group interviews with 11 of the same 16 teacher students took place in July 2017. We grouped the students according to gender—a female group with six students and a male group consisting of five students. The reasons for this strategy were based on results from their answers and to make an environment for them to discuss more freely. In the group interviews, they discussed and agreed on three essential learning outcomes from their stay in Norway and three areas, in which they have changed. A follow-up with five individual interviews (three males and two females) took place in March 2018 with a more in-depth discussion on how they have changed their references of perspectives and how they reflect on who they are now. All 11 were invited, but only five were able to come for the interview due to long-distance, health condition, and other issues.

Key questions in interviews and questionnaires focused on how Zambian teacher students reflect on their transformation as a person, a teacher, and as a citizen in Zambia after a year in Norway. We asked them to describe values in Zambia and Norway and how these values can be interlinked to learning and teaching. We also asked them how they see Civic Education and Sustainable development interlinked and how Freire has had an impact on them at a different level.

To sum up, findings from answers from 46 of 93 former Zambian students who went to Norway for a year led us to a guided interview and a group interview in March 2017 with six Civic Education students. A revised questionnaire based on contributions from the group interview was distributed to all Civic Education students. Sixteen of 24 former Civic Education students answered the survey, a follow-up group interview with 11 of the same 16 students took place in Zambia some months later, and finally, a follow up with five individual interviews from the same 16 took place in March 2018.

3.1. Teacher Students' Learning Outcome of One Year Stay in Norway

We will here present some general findings based on the relevance for this article and the frequency of similar answers. We will exemplify with quotes based on our gendered analysis.

When we asked the teacher students in our questionnaire “which benefits of the stay in Norway will you emphasize?”, the most frequent responses from the 16 answers were values like timekeeping, respect other people’s opinions, work hard, to gain new knowledge, change your mindset, and get new perspectives. Some gender differences appeared in the answers to this question. Interestingly, from the 16 responses, no female but three male students mention gender equality as a benefit from their stay. Four students, all males, emphasized economy, entrepreneurship, and egalitarian governance in practice. One male student answered, “My benefits have been to see new ways of doing things in a different context and to observe an egalitarian and corrupt-free governance system.”

Six of the eight female students emphasized new approaches to be a teacher, and only one male student did the same. One female expressed that she is now able to analyze and see things from different perspectives and has been empowered with knowledge and skills. Two quotes can illustrate what teacher students expressed as essential learning outcomes from the year abroad, first a female teacher, 42 years, who went to Norway in 2011–2012.

“To work extra hard, dialogue with people and respect other people’s opinions, to save money and be an entrepreneur, believe in me.”

A male student, 38 years, who went to Norway in 2015–16 said,

“To be too social robs your precious time, all citizens need to participate for a country to develop, Female folks should not be oppressed, hard work pays off not laziness and honest people develop more than corrupt people.”

In the questionnaire, they were asked: “What did you learn from your stay in Norway that is useful today in your classroom?” All 16 mentioned learning-centered methods. One answered, «At practical placement, students were close to their pupils, very friendly and they did not raise their voice to learners. This has I adopted in my classroom here in Zambia.”

Some were more specific: “Use teaching like a jigsaw method which allows the learner to teach one another, as it covers more work in a short period.” Another said, “The variety of teaching methods and not regarding pupils as objects who should be taught using problem-posing. This helps pupils to be critical thinkers as they are not viewed as mere receptacles.” Others mentioned a change from the past: “Avoid at all cost to monopolies the Banking concept way of teaching pupils.”

All of the students described themselves as changed as Civic Education teachers. From theories like Freire, Aas, Giddens, and learning theories, they were able to explain different learning strategies and critically reflect on their role as a teacher. In addition, they mentioned examples from Norwegian classrooms as important for their new perspectives. To go deeper into how they have changed the way to see things, we asked the students to come up with three changes they could all agree on in their group. In the group discussions in July 2017, when 11 students were divided according to gender, the male group agreed on teaching and learning approaches, modesty in doing things, and fight for equality as the most critical changes in their way of seeing things after a year in Norway. The female group discussed the same question and answered that the essential learning outcomes are democracy in teaching and learning, punctuality/time management, and equality.

3.2. What Did the Teacher Students Learn in Norway That Changed Them in the Way They Are as a Civic Teacher and a Citizen in Zambia?

While the students were in Norway, they discussed gender, tribes, and political issues based on their ethnocentric perspective. A few might not have changed the frame of references much in practice, but from the 16 survey answers we got, most of them bring out examples and reflections which shows changes. Like a few quotes can indicate: Their assumptions of changes in their mind-set are described like this:

“I became more democratic, my role as a teacher has really changed, and I promote the freedom of expression on the part of the learners as much as I can. They feel free with me and use my first name. I am also much more liberal in all I do, and my self-efficacy has grown. I also treasure time so much.”

Female, 39, a student in Norway 2010–2011

Her focus is mainly on liberating herself as a woman and changing her role as a teacher. Another answer from a male has another approach, a more political, and to be a change agent at the society level. He says,

“I am a different person now. I got a new face to see, tribalism in Zambia must change, and we have to find answers to national challenges. I have learned that those who create problems should also find solutions, and all can do something. People tell me I am now more difficult because I speak out.”

Male, 31, a student in Norway 2014–2015

Another male is more concerned about waste and sustainability at the individual and society level, and he expresses himself,

“I have changed, I don’t waste food anymore, and I eat the leftovers the next morning. I have changed the way I look at how we do things in Zambia, and the change can start with us who travelled and learned.”

Male, 35, a student in Norway 2015–2016

Another male teacher has his perspective at the class level, and his agency is to empower girls. From his interview, he emphasizes that,

“After Norway, I see how girls are abused in a new perspective, and I am now responsible for a club with a focus on Human Rights for the girl child. Boys and girls can change the mindset about what is right and wrong.”

Male, 37, a student in Norway 2015–2016

A female teacher also has her perspective mainly at the classroom level and the role of being a teacher, and she says,

“The variety of teaching methods. Pupils should be taught using Freire’s problem-posing method. This helps pupils to be critical thinkers.”

Female, 40, a student in Norway 2012–2013

An analysis of 16 survey answers and answers from interviews based on gender differences shows that female students see oppression related to their learners, and how they are oppressed as females. On the other hand, male students seemed to see how they, as men, oppress others, and how their tribe is oppressed in politics and society.

In the focus group in July 2017, when we grouped them into gender groups, we asked how the year abroad has changed their perspectives. The changes in the male students were to be more tolerance in case of different views or opinions. For female students, a more open mind, be able to do critical thinking, and to be more tolerant of other people’s views were their changes. The male group had many discussions, and they found it more challenging to agree on a few things than the female group. A similar pattern could be observed in classroom situations in Norway. As one male student, 39 years, who went to Norway in 2014–15 said, “It has been hard for me to change the way we discuss, I am raised to argue for my opinion whatever others say, to lose or change your opinion is a sign of being weak.” For males, to be seen as one who changes his mind could be one reason for them to answer the way they did—to be tolerant but not as learner-centered, as the female emphasized in their answers.

3.3. Reframing Perspectives and Changing the Mindset at Different Levels

We asked the Civic Education students to divide their answers about transformative learning at an individual level, school level, and society level. We found a variety of responses and levels of reframing their perspectives. As a follow-up from their answers in the first questionnaire we sent, we included a few questions related to how Freire’s book has had an impact. We did this in both the new survey in 2017 and the two interview rounds.

From interviews and questionnaires, all of the participants mentioned Freire’s banking concept, problem posing, and dialogue as a solution in the classroom. They changed in the role of teacher, and especially female former teacher students expressed the change in them to become a facilitator and listen to learners. They also mention empowerment at work. All emphasized the need to strengthen self-esteem and self-efficacy as a teacher. Some men realized how they have oppressed women and have changed as a father, husband, brother, and male teacher.

Transformation is a slow process, and changes take time. Some teacher students who went to Norway more than five years ago bring up many areas of change. Their transformative learning and focus shifted from the individual and the classroom to new perspectives of the society and the

role they can play as Civic Education teachers. They talked about how they want to bring changes as Civic Education teachers and discussed politics, corruption, gender politics, and marriage. Some emphasized how they were motivated to continue with studies and try to reach a higher position to make a difference for the country. The UN's sustainability goals number one, four, five, and 16 are all relevant for their reframed perspectives. Some of the students reflected on how sustainable development goals related to poverty, gender, teaching, and access to justice can relate to oppression strategies at individual, school, and society level.

One female student, 39 years, who went to Norway in 2010, express her reflections in an individual interview in 2018, she says,

Freire has influenced me in so many ways. To read the book in Norway, where we could see gender equality made it so powerful . . . Gender is my focus now in all I do, even in my Master about re-entry policy for pregnant girls. Poverty is interlinked to oppression, will always say yes, and then be more oppressed, particular for women in Africa . . . Oppression is, for me, related to gender. Our culture with dowry is a way to oppress women you have bought something . . . In Norway, I could see marriages where men and women were equal. Most women in Zambia are oppressed, and the husband beats many. When girls come to me, I tell them to report the men, and I tell them about Human Rights. After reading Freire, I opened my eyes, and teachers oppress pupils. I learned a lot and to treat everybody well. Humanity . . . with Freire I understood more of oppression and power in culture and society, not only in family and classrooms.

A younger male student, 32 years, who went to Norway in 2014, express himself with these words:

On a personal level, I understand that every opinion from other people is important, good or bad . . . My Mum is now my inspiration and I help her like I never did, and I do not feel shy to show that. I do not want to oppress my mum, learned that from Freire . . . At an institutional level, I have seen that all tribes are important and do not provide tribalism . . . Learn, accumulative, learn from others . . . I ask myself, why do we have school inspectors in Zambia? They question your skills . . . As a teacher, I used to punish my learners, and now I ask them to sit down and reason together. I tell them to respect others . . . I am actually facilitating youth groups in my district now, voluntary. I tell them about Freire and the importance of thinking critically . . . Freire is "almost as powerful as God," he has really changed me in all I do, and I will fight oppression for the rest of my life.

Theoretical tools to understand a society, which can appear as upside down at times, are crucial for the Zambian teacher students' reflections and reframing their perspectives. After reading Giddens' [40] and Freire's [15] books, they had theoretical tools to see how individual decisions, social justice, governance, education, and learning strategies can all be linked to a type of society. Their teaching practice and stay in Norway gave them important practical examples to open their mind-set.

Many students found one year stay in Norway with theory and practice challenging, and they came home as a changed person and a teacher. Gender awareness, time, and learner-centered methods are all part of their improved practice. As one expressed himself, "To read Freire changed my life." Both while they were in Norway and after they return to Zambia, many, especially male students, went through hard challenges. Different strategies were used; oppressing other Zambian students, males from a different tribe, younger males, and all females. One male teacher discussed this openly after returning to Zambia in a group with other male students, and he said, "Gender policy has gone too far in Norway; there it was us males who were oppressed by women. The Bible is very clear, the man should be the head of the house, but I did not see that in Norway. Things were upside down in so many areas." Another younger male student argued back, "But can you not see that is gender equality, and that is our goal in Zambia too. From reading Freire, I could understand why you tried so hard to oppress the females and me in the group, but we spoke out, and there you were a minority with your

traditional behavior.” Others tried to balance the discussion. They were surprised themselves to see that they had tools to discuss, tolerate different arguments, and critically reflect how their age and background, which could also play a role in how they looked at gender roles and equality in general.

To reframe your perspective [27] and go through consciousness and liberation processes are painful and can be an existential crisis [15]. What you took for granted is no longer valid, and things are more or less upside down. Some teacher students changed their frame of references and transforming intercultural learning. Others went back to their prior understanding and kept some of their references of understanding based on tradition, relatives, and religious beliefs. One asked me the following question, “Freire has changed my life and the way I see things, but I still want to be a Christian person and follow the Bible, so do I have to choose between Freire and the Bible?” Another said, “This year in Norway with powerful books like Freire and Giddens has not only been an eye-opener to me, it has changed my mindset totally, but I will still read my Bible and want to be a good Christian, nobody can take that away from me. This process has been painful, and with my newly acquired knowledge, I know I cannot continue to be the teacher I used to be. Knowledge can be tough to carry.”

Some of the female students found it difficult to understand why so few Norwegians went to Church but on the other hand, had Christian behavior in so many ways. As one expressed, “I have started to reflect on the way we think we are Christians or good people just as long as others see us in Church or the way we dress. In Norway, it seems to be more important what you do in daily practice than how you look and say things. I think I have started to like this perspective, and back in Zambia, I do more than I talk, and I have started to question political speeches, us teacher students, and leaders in the way we use big words but practice something else.”

Essential factors mentioned by the students to reframe their perspectives and achieve transformative intercultural learning were the fact that Norwegian and Zambian teacher students were in the same classroom for four weeks before and two weeks after they did their teaching practice. Many did also mention how effective facilitation on their project work, to have cultural mentors, and general social support made it easier for some to transform intercultural learning through involvement and an open mind.

They also mention theories like Freire, Giddens, Aas, Weber, intercultural understanding, and learning approaches. Freire gave the students tools to analyze themselves, Norwegian and Zambian society critically, and the tools to make a difference as teachers and human beings. Many students reflected on the importance of quality in education, gender awareness, and participation in society for sustainable development. The influence of Freire related to gender shows that female students focused on empowerment at work and liberating themselves, while male students mainly focus on helping learners, being change-makers in the community, and liberating others.

The students who went to Norway mentioned the importance of reading Freire both in Norway and later in Zambia in their last year of Civic Education. The same book appeared on the Zambian reading list, partly because of the cooperation and changes in the frame of references among us scholars and educators. This is one of many consequences of more than 10 years of collaboration between the two institutions.

In addition to Freire, they also emphasized the importance of intercultural understanding as a learning outcome they did not expect. Dahl’s [41] intercultural communication gave them tools to see the importance of how society, power, and communication are interlinked [2]. Other critical reflections were how society interlink to learning and how to reduce oppression starting with themselves as good role models regarding gender and human rights as teachers. Their thoughts and answers indicate a strengthened ethical awareness of our common future and the importance of moral imperatives like satisfying human needs, ensuring social justice, and respecting environmental limits [7,8].

4. Discussions and Conclusions

Civic Education in Zambia has been strengthened at all levels of the education from primary level with social science, secondary level with Civic Education, and at University level with Civic

Education as one of the most popular studies at School of Education at Bachelor level and with a master in Civic Education. In Civic Education, as in other learning areas in the Zambian curriculum [5], learner-centered methods, critical reflections, local context, and civic responsibility are all emphasized as essential approaches to the general learning outcomes. Our findings describe Civic teacher students' transformative learning in different areas. As teachers, all 16 mentions the importance of observing, participating in, and reading about different learning theories, education policies, and Freire's book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The year abroad gave them the tools to implement the new Zambian Curriculum and learning approaches, both generally and in Civic Education more specifically.

Local, national, and global perspectives are essential for sustainability. Sustainability goals and the moral imperatives—satisfying human needs, ensuring social justice, and respecting environmental limits—should be contextualized to the current country. We argue that Civic Education can play a key role in raising awareness and knowledge about how these moral imperatives can be addressed to policymakers at a local, national, and global level.

Through a one-year international student mobility to a different society, we found some students who had become change agents in their society, through transformative learning. Some, mainly females, are change-makers at the individual and family level, some, mainly males, are at school and classroom level, and others are change agents at the individual, school, and society level.

They use theories [15,40] and experiences from their year in Norway to advocate for social justice and rich participation. Holden et al. [7,8] argue that social justice is one of the essential moral imperatives. Female teacher students demonstrate through both Freire's liberation and Aas's gender perspective, and they claim for social justice for themselves, learners, and the voiceless in the society. Some of the male teacher students argue theoretically for social justice as Civic Education teachers. They were also able to reflect on how they are oppressors at family, school, and society level and that this insight acquires actions to change their behavior and daily practice. A few students learned to reduce the waste of resources and were concerned about environmental limits. They had reflections on the reasons why Zambians should bring back traditional ways of living with less consumption, be creative, and develop entrepreneurial skills where you can. Generally, humans' needs and how all societies have their challenges (economical or psychological) did all the students concern about. Additionally, reading Giddens helped some of the teacher students to appreciate the collectivistic Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes contributing, belonging, and sharing [2,42,43].

Berg et al. [36] have summarized what can increase students' transformative intercultural learning. Many of the same factors did our teacher students mention had an impact on their learning outcome in Norway. The same four essential elements for intercultural transformative learning Berg et al. [36] emphasize will now be discussed. First, Hammer [44,45] has mentioned the importance of cultural mentoring and a cultural mentor with intercultural competences to be a key factor. Kumi-Yeboah [31] shows the same in his study among African international students in the US. Our teacher students had a cultural mentor, with them from the time the interview took place in Zambia to when they left Norway. The same person was available academically and non-academically most of the time for the teacher students. They had student "buddies" who played a more important role for the youngest students who went out on the weekends. Lack of intercultural competence among these "buddies" made their contributions rather poor as cultural mentors. From students' evaluation reports and interviews, we strongly argue in the same line as Hammer [45] and Berg et al. [36] that cultural mentors with intercultural competences are crucial for international students' learning outcomes.

Second, providing learners with cultural content, such as value orientations, communication styles, nonverbal communication, conflict styles, and ways of learning, is crucial for transformative learning [36]. As described in the introduction, the teacher students came for a year and took a course "About Norway in Norway" in first semester and "Global Knowledge" in the second semester. Teacher students expressed that they did not understand the role of being a student and the context of communicating before they had intercultural communication theories [41]. They also mentioned the need for contextualized teaching and learning theories, comparing education and politics, read

Freire, understand contextualized human rights, and see gender policy in practice as essential to understanding cultural differences. “Global Knowledge” is a tailor-made program for Zambian and Norwegian mobility students. Through continuous assessment and improvements, the program gave the teacher students’ better support than regular study programs. Emphasizing more on intercultural communication is one of the improvements made in the students’ course in Norway. This is mainly because of how they misunderstand each other in observed classroom situations and students’ evaluation reports [2,37,38].

Third, our program provides opportunities for students to reflect on intercultural experiences, challenge their cultural assumptions, and shift their frame of reference to their particular cultural context [36]. Discussions in the same classroom, ethical cases, and other constructivist learning strategies and meta-communication about the differences in learning strategies related to societies have helped students in their learning processes. Freire [15] argues for dialogue and generative themes, and students’ selected examples, like homosexuality and polygamy from a Zambian and Norwegian perspective, challenged them at both a theoretical and value-based level. In Bergersen [37], a broader discussion about intercultural classrooms and context-sensitive learning takes place based on the same teacher students in a “Global Knowledge” classroom.

Fourth, we promote engagement with the culture into the study program, like an internship, studying with host students, and projects [34,36]. All Zambian teacher students had a minimum of four weeks of practice in rural Norwegian schools. They stayed at the same place as Norwegian students, and they were encouraged to participate in sports and be a member of different student clubs. As already described, they were in the same classroom as Norwegian teacher students’ part of their study and had student “buddies.” The most significant impacts for our students were their practical placement in schools and cooperating with Norwegian students in the same class. Very few came close to other Norwegian students where they stayed, and for economic reasons, not many were members of student clubs or went out on the weekends.

Transformative learning from a gender perspective shows interesting differences. Not surprisingly, according to Stromquist [19], Aas [21,23,25], and Bergersen [2], females responded mainly on how their year abroad changed them as family members and as teachers. Their focus was on how the year increased their self-efficiency, to be more independent and ambitious, and at the same time, be friendlier and in dialogue with their learners in the classroom.

Yang [18] discusses the limitations of Freire’s theory to female African students in Sweden and how oppression related to gender and race can be visible and conscious through intersectionality as a framework. Zambian female students did not express the same experiences in interviews; they emphasized the opposite. They mentioned the freedom they felt as women to be in Norway, away from family, relatives, and norms in Zambian society. They found Freire’s theory very useful to understand gender and power relations and used this approach to change their oppression. Similar to Kumi-Yeboah [31], the female students started to speak out, increased their self-esteem, and increased their participation both in Norway in the classroom. The liberation process has been tough for some, and as one says, “My friends tell me that I have changed so much, and many have stopped being my friends. But at least my family understand my changes now, and they have accepted that I am a more independent and less oppressed woman now.”

The male students, on the other hand, experienced racism, ethnicity, and gender as surprising and contrary to the status have in Zambia. These experiences are similar to the stress and different worldview abroad that the male students in Rahyns’s [46] and Kumi-Yeboah’s [31] studies experienced as black students in America. Only male students mentioned racism as experienced in Norway, and they were shocked to encounter how some fellow Norwegian male students could even say that they were not welcome to a party because of the color of the skin. Somebody in Norway asked them if they were refugees, something they understood to be negative, and only male students expressed this as an experience. To experience your status has decreased as black, as a man, and in the role of being a student, gave some male students cultural stress. As mentioned earlier, some male teacher students

emphasized the importance of gender equality and have changed the way they treat female learners, colleagues, and family members. Some were conscious about their transformation, others were not, and a few did not change their role of being a man.

Both males and females received examples of oppression and power relations at the individual and society level through the theories of Freire on class and Aas on gender and intersectionality in order to see race, tribes, gender, and class interlinked. As predicted from the same theories, male teacher students with the highest status in the group had more resistance to discuss and change their frames of references. From questionnaires and interviews, many of the male students expressed the will to change the society at the community, national or school level in Zambia, and very few saw the need for them to empower others at an individual level, in contrast to what most of the females wanted. As in Rahyns [46], some teacher students' experienced racism, culture shock, and oppression, which made them conscious of the importance of actions and activism. The male students emphasized changes at society and classroom level to liberate others through changing oppressive structures.

Our study concludes that transformative intercultural learning takes time, and the impact appears after many years. Time is essential to address sustainability discussions and how much time it may take to strengthen the moral imperatives with rich participation and social justice at local and global levels. Many of the teacher students have empowered themselves in different areas. From the eight females, two have completed and three have started their Master's degrees in Education or Civic Education. At least three of the males have engaged themselves in society at the national, school, or local community level related to social justice and human rights. A few have not changed their references of understanding or gone through transformative learning. However, all of the students agreed on learning outcomes for a year abroad, and many have transformed the way they see and do things in their daily lives as responsible citizens.

Nerstrom's model identifies transformative learning as a continuous cycle of learning. Once transformative learning occurs, it is unlikely that adults revert to their prior beliefs [32]. In our study, the critical factors for transformative learning were a combination of practice observation, discussion, and reading *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Furthermore, Freire's critical theory was a valuable tool to analyze different societies and different approaches to develop intercultural competence and a deeper understanding of how a Civic Education teacher can stimulate learners in Zambia to develop critical thinking and to be responsible citizens in order to reach sustainability goals and social justice at a local and a global level. In our exchange program, Zambian students studied for a year in Norway as Civic Education teacher students reframed their perspectives at different levels, and we argue that some of these Civic Education teachers can be significant change agents for a more sustainable global world.

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