

## MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR TRANSFORMING POWER AND KNOWLEDGE TOWARDS GLOBAL CIVILIZATION

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### Abstract

*Multicultural education plays an important role as a tool for transforming power and knowledge in creating an inclusive and harmonious global civilization. This article explores how multicultural education can serve as a catalyst in addressing ethnocentric bias, reducing knowledge gaps, and promoting cross-cultural collaboration. The research approach used is qualitative with a descriptive-analytical method, combining Foucault's power theory approach and multicultural pedagogy. This article highlights the importance of integrating values of diversity, equality, and respect for culture into the education curriculum. The transformation of power through education enables the empowerment of individual agents in society, while the distribution of knowledge based on multiculturalism encourages the formation of an inclusive collective identity. This study shows that systematically designed multicultural education can enhance intercultural dialogue, promote tolerance, and strengthen global stability. By emphasizing the values of social justice, this article recommends the adoption of a multicultural approach in global education policies to promote holistic human development and build a civilization based on collaboration and peace.*

**Keywords:** Multicultural Education, Power, Knowledge, Global Civilization.

### مستخلص البحث

يلعب التعليم متعدد الثقافات دوراً مهماً كأداة لتحويل السلطة والمعرفة في خلق حضارة عالمية شاملة ومتناغمة. تستكشف هذه المقالة كيف يمكن للتعليم متعدد الثقافات أن يكون بمثابة عامل مساعد في معالجة التحيز العرقي وتقليص الفجوات المعرفية وتعزيز التعاون بين الثقافات. إن المنهج البحثي المستخدم هو منهج كينفي ذو منهج وصفي تحليلي يجمع بين منهج نظرية القوة لفوكو والتربية متعددة الثقافات. تسلط هذه المقالة الضوء على أهمية دمج قيم التنوع والمساواة واحترام الثقافة في المناهج التعليمية. إن تحويل السلطة من خلال التعليم يمكن أن تمكن الأفراد الفاعلين في المجتمع، في حين أن توزيع المعرفة القائمة على التعددية الثقافية يشجع على تشكيل هوية جماعية شاملة. ووضح هذا البحث أن التعليم متعدد الثقافات المصمم بشكل منهجي يمكن أن يعزز الحوار بين الثقافات ويشجع على التسامح ويقوي الاستقرار العالمي. ومن خلال التأكيد على قيم العدالة الاجتماعية، يوصي هذا المقال باعتماد نهج متعدد الثقافات في سياسات التعليم العالمي لتعزيز التنمية البشرية الشاملة وبناء حضارة قائمة على التعاون والسلام.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التعليم متعدد الثقافات والقوة والمعرفة والحضارة العالمية.



## INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education plays a crucial role in shaping an inclusive and tolerant society, especially in the era of globalization marked by intense cross-cultural interactions. Through multicultural education, individuals are invited to understand and appreciate cultural diversity, which in turn can become a tool for transforming power and knowledge towards a more harmonious global civilization. This approach not only enhances problem-solving skills creatively through various perspectives but also reduces stereotypes and prejudices through direct interactions between individuals from different backgrounds.<sup>1</sup>

The implementation of multicultural education in schools, for example, aims to create an inclusive environment where students learn to appreciate and accept differences, thereby enhancing intercultural tolerance.<sup>2</sup> Thus, multicultural education significantly contributes to building a more just and equitable global civilization. In the era of globalization, interactions between individuals from various cultural backgrounds are becoming increasingly inevitable.<sup>3</sup> The cultural diversity that characterizes global society presents both challenges and opportunities in building a more inclusive and harmonious civilization. In this context, multicultural education becomes a strategic tool for transforming power and knowledge. Multicultural education not only aims to understand diversity but also to dismantle unequal power structures through a more critical understanding of different histories, values, and cultures.<sup>4</sup>

The multicultural approach enables the transformation of the education system to not only focus on the homogenization of values but also create space for dialogue and empowerment. Thus, this education makes a significant contribution to creating a global society that is respectful, just, and equitable. Multicultural education also instills values of democracy, social justice, and tolerance that are essential in building a peaceful world order.<sup>5</sup>

The main objectives of multicultural education in this context include developing critical awareness of structural inequalities related to cultural, ethnic, and identity issues. Forming a deep understanding of the importance of appreciating diversity in building social cohesion, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Allyvia Camelia and Nikmah Suryandari, "Multicultural Education: A Global Perspective", Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan 3, no. 6 (November 13, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Nieto, S. (1997). *La luz en sus ojos: Creando comunidades de aprendizaje multiculturales*.

<sup>3</sup> Baidhaw, Z. (2005). *Multicultural-oriented religious education*. Erlangga. <https://books.google.com>

<sup>4</sup> Jannah, U., & Harahap, L. (2023). *Multicultural Guidance to Enhance Multiculturalism Among Students at Pondok Pesantren Kauman Lasem Gang Kauman, Karang Turi Village, Lasem District* (PhD Thesis, UIN Surakarta).

<sup>5</sup> Domelina, T., Susanto, K. R., & Karolina, A. (2021). *The Concept of Multicultural Education in Islamic Education According to Abdurrahman Wabid* (PhD Thesis, State Islamic Institute of Curup).

transforming the education system into a space of empowerment to achieve social justice and promote a more just and balanced global civilization.<sup>6</sup>

## METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the role of multicultural education as a tool for transforming power and knowledge towards a global civilization. This method was chosen because it is capable of uncovering deep and complex data related to the concept, implementation, and impact of multicultural education. Data were collected through literature studies, in-depth interviews, and participatory observations, focusing on multicultural educational institutions, national education policies, and their influence on the global mindset of students. This research refers to the critical paradigm to examine how power and knowledge are reproduced and distributed through multicultural educational practices. This paradigm helps uncover the relationship between education and the underlying social structures.<sup>7</sup>

The research subjects are educational institutions that implement a multicultural-based curriculum in Indonesia. The selection of subjects was conducted through purposive sampling, taking into account the diversity of students' backgrounds and the socio-cultural context of the institution. In addition, secondary data such as educational policy documents, books, and journal articles were used to strengthen the analysis. The data analysis technique uses thematic analysis, which involves the process of identifying, coding, and interpreting patterns or themes in the data. This allows researchers to explore how multicultural education can function as a tool for the transformation of power and knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this research employs method triangulation, which involves combining various data collection techniques to ensure the validity of the findings. Internal validity is strengthened through thematic discussions with education experts, while external validity is achieved by comparing the research results with similar studies in various countries. In data interpretation, the researchers also consider the context of globalization that influences the dynamics of multicultural education, thereby being able to offer relevant recommendations for the development of an inclusive global civilization.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Huber, J., & Reynolds, C. (2014). "Desarrollando la Educación Multicultural Crítica a través de la Pedagogía Transformadora". *Estudios Críticos en Educación*, 55(1), 50–62.

<sup>7</sup> Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2000), 7. (2000). II.

<sup>8</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Kemmis, *Action Research and the Politics of Reflection* (Londres: Routledge, 1988).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Transformation of Education as a Pillar of Power

The transformation of education serves as a main pillar in building a strong and competitive national civilization.<sup>10</sup> Through curriculum updates, teaching methods, and technology integration, education can become an effective tool for transforming power structures in society. This approach enables the creation of superior, creative, and innovative human resources, which in turn strengthens a nation's position on the global stage.<sup>11</sup>

#### 1. Education as a Tool for Redistributing Power in Society.

Education plays a crucial role in the redistribution of power in society by functioning as an agent of social change. Through education, individuals acquire knowledge and skills that enable them to actively participate in social, economic, and political life, thereby reducing the dominance of certain groups and promoting equal opportunities. For example, inclusive education can enhance social mobility and reduce social inequality by shaping more progressive social values.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, educational institutions play a role in reproducing existing culture and social structures, but they also have the potential to transform them. By adopting a critical and reflective curriculum, education can equip learners with an awareness of existing power structures and encourage them to become agents of change who challenge the status quo. This aligns with the view that education can serve as a means of cultural and social reproduction, but with the right approach, it can also become a tool for significant social change.<sup>13</sup>

However, the effectiveness of education as a tool for redistributing power greatly depends on how the education system itself is organized and implemented. If education merely reflects and reinforces existing power structures, then its role in power redistribution will be limited. Therefore, conscious efforts are needed to design and implement education that truly empowers, emphasizing the values of equality, justice, and inclusivity, so that education can serve as a main pillar in the social transformation towards a more just and equitable society.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [https://Disdikpapatengah.Id/Berita/Detail/Pendidikan-Sebagai-Pilar-Utama-Membangun-Peradaban-Bangsa?Utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://Disdikpapatengah.Id/Berita/Detail/Pendidikan-Sebagai-Pilar-Utama-Membangun-Peradaban-Bangsa?Utm_source=chatgpt.com), n.d.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.uny.ac.2024>.

<sup>12</sup> Nazmi, M. M., & Pulungan, Y. L. (2024). *The Role of Education as a Tool for Social Transformation*. p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Nazmi, M. M., & Pulungan, Y. L. (2024).

<sup>14</sup> Mu'allimah Rodhiyana, "Pendidikan dan Perubahan Sosial", *Spektra: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Sosial* 6, no. 1 (April 20, 2024): 93–105. <https://doi.org/10.34005/spektra.v6i1.3688>.

## 2. Social Structure Changes Through Inclusive Education Access

Access to inclusive education plays a significant role in transforming the social structure of society. Inclusive education ensures that all individuals, regardless of economic background, gender, disability, or ethnicity, have equal opportunities to learn and develop. With equal access, marginalized groups that were previously sidelined can improve their quality of life through the skills and knowledge they acquire. For example, UNESCO notes that inclusive education not only improves literacy and job skills but also encourages the active participation of minority groups in decision-making at both local and global levels.<sup>15</sup> In addition, inclusive education narrows the social gap by reducing disparities in access to resources and opportunities, making the social structure more egalitarian.

The transformation of social structures through inclusive education is also evident in how society becomes more aware of the importance of diversity and equality. Through a curriculum designed to value diversity, individuals from various backgrounds are taught to respect and cooperate with each other. This not only builds social cohesion but also creates a more stable and harmonious society. With the increasing level of education among marginalized communities, they can contribute to socio-economic dynamics, thereby increasing social mobility.<sup>16</sup> Inclusive education thus becomes a catalyst for the formation of a more just and equitable social structure.

### Knowledge as the Foundation of Ideal Civilization Development

#### 1. Dissemination of Knowledge Based on Universal Values such as Justice and Tolerance

The dissemination of knowledge based on universal values, such as justice and tolerance, is an important element in building an inclusive and harmonious society. This knowledge, which transcends cultural and religious boundaries, enables the creation of a collective awareness of the importance of equality and respect for differences. For example, the concept of justice in various traditions, including Islam (*al-adl*), teaches the importance of granting equal rights to all individuals without discrimination.<sup>17</sup> The value of tolerance, on the other hand, helps create a healthy space for dialogue within a diverse society, thereby minimizing identity-based conflicts. By instilling these values through the education system,

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<sup>15</sup> UNESCO, *Educación para Todos: Informe Global de Seguimiento* (París: UNESCO, 2020)

<sup>16</sup> "John Field, *Social Capital and Lifelong Learning* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2005), 72.," n.d.

<sup>17</sup> "Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 89.," n.d.

media, and public policies, society can understand the importance of living together in diversity.<sup>18</sup>

Knowledge based on universal values also encourages the active participation of individuals in building a just social structure. Education that instills justice and tolerance trains individuals to think critically about injustice and advocate for their own rights as well as those of others.<sup>19</sup> At the global level, the dissemination of these values creates a stronger network of international collaboration to address common issues, such as climate change, economic inequality, and human rights. In this way, universal values become the foundation for creating a stable and peaceful global civilization.

## 2. The Role of Digital Technology in Improving Global Education Access and Quality

Digital technology has become a major catalyst in improving access to education worldwide, especially in previously marginalized areas. With online learning platforms such as Coursera, Khan Academy, and edX, students from various backgrounds can now access high-quality materials without geographical or financial barriers.<sup>20</sup> Digital technology also enables the implementation of inclusive education through features such as closed captions for students with hearing impairments or AI-based applications that adjust teaching methods to individual needs.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the provision of technological devices, such as affordable laptops and free internet connections in rural schools, has helped reduce the digital divide that has long been an obstacle to equitable access to education.

On the other hand, digital technology also significantly contributes to improving the quality of education through personalization and innovation in the learning process. With data analytics, teachers can monitor students' progress in real-time and provide appropriate interventions according to their needs,<sup>22</sup> Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) based learning platforms also enrich the learning experience by allowing students to visualize abstract concepts and engage in interactive exploration. Additionally, global collaboration through digital technology allows students and teachers from various countries to share ideas and solutions to common educational challenges. With wise utilization, digital technology

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<sup>18</sup> "John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 56.," n.d.

<sup>19</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 89. (n.d.).

<sup>20</sup> UNESCO, *Informe de Seguimiento Global de la Educación: Tecnología en la Educación* (París: UNESCO, 2022).

<sup>21</sup> Salman Khan, *The One World Schoolhouse: Education Reimagined* (New York: Twelve, 2012), 62. (n.d.).

<sup>22</sup> Tony Bates, *Teaching in a Digital Age: Guidelines for Designing Teaching and Learning* (Vancouver: BC campus, 2019).

not only opens access but also strengthens the quality of global education, making it more inclusive and relevant in the modern era.

## Case Study of the Implementation of Inclusive Education Programs in Developed and Developing Countries as an Example of Educational Transformation

### 1. Inclusive Education in Developed Countries: Finland

Finland is known as one of the pioneers of inclusive education in the world. The education system in this country places inclusivity as a main pillar, with special attention given to the diverse needs of students, including those with disabilities, immigrant backgrounds, and special learning needs.<sup>23</sup> What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland? Schools in Finland are equipped with support staff such as psychologists, counselors, and trained teaching assistants to provide individual support to students. This system aims to ensure that no student is left behind, regardless of their background or abilities.<sup>24</sup> The personalized approach to learning in Finland allows students to learn in a way that suits their needs, creating an inclusive educational environment that supports individual potential.

### 2. Inclusive Education in Developing Countries: Indonesia

Indonesia has shown progress in the implementation of inclusive education through the Inclusive School program initiated by the government. This policy allows children with disabilities and special needs to attend school together with other children in a single educational environment. National Report on the Development of Inclusive Education,<sup>25</sup> main challenges in Indonesia are infrastructure gaps and limited resources, such as trained teachers and supporting facilities. However, local initiatives such as the use of application-based technology for students with hearing disabilities, as well as collaboration with non-governmental organizations, have helped improve access and the quality of inclusive education.<sup>26</sup> Inclusion in Indonesia: New Hope for Children with Special Needs, this program not only supports the transformation of education but also raises public awareness about the importance of inclusivity as part of social development.

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<sup>23</sup> "Pasi Sahlberg, Finnish Lessons: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland? (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011), 85.," n.d.

<sup>24</sup> "Pasi Sahlberg.

<sup>25</sup> "Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Indonesia, Laporan Perkembangan Pendidikan Inklusif Nasional (Jakarta: Kemendikbud, 2021), 42.," n.d.

<sup>26</sup> "Anies Baswedan, Inklusi di Indonesia: Harapan Baru Untuk Anak-Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (Jakarta: Kompas Gramedia, 2018), 56.," n.d.

## Discussion

### The Relationship Between Theory and Findings

#### 1. The Relevance of Power Theory in Positioning Education as a Tool for Social Transformation

The theory of power proposed by Michel Foucault highlights how knowledge and power are interconnected and shape social structures.<sup>27</sup> In the context of education, this theory is relevant for understanding how education can be used as a tool for social transformation by distributing power through knowledge. Inclusive education, for example, provides access to marginalized groups, thereby shifting their position in the social hierarchy. Findings show that education based on social justice can create individuals who are not only skilled but also critical of injustice.<sup>28</sup> Thus, education becomes an effective tool for dismantling unjust social structures and building a more egalitarian society.

#### 2. The Implications of Knowledge Distribution on Global Societal Stability

The equitable distribution of knowledge across all layers of society significantly contributes to global stability. When knowledge is disseminated inclusively, individuals from various backgrounds have equal access to opportunities for development. This reduces social and economic disparities that often trigger conflicts,<sup>29</sup> Knowledge based on universal values such as tolerance, justice, and diversity also fosters the creation of a more harmonious society. For example, through global education programs such as the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which emphasizes quality and inclusive education, countries have shown improvements in social cohesion and international cooperation.<sup>30</sup> With equitable distribution of knowledge, the global community can build a strong foundation to face shared challenges such as climate change, cross-cultural conflicts, and economic crises.

## Challenges and Opportunities

#### 1. Barriers to Transforming Education: Cultural Resistance and Access to Technology

One of the main obstacles in transforming education is cultural resistance. In some societies, traditional values often conflict with modern educational approaches, including technology-based education and multicultural curricula.<sup>31</sup> For example, in a highly patriarchal culture, education for women may still be considered less important. This creates challenges

<sup>27</sup> "Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 27.," n.d.

<sup>28</sup> "Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), p. 45.," n.d.

<sup>29</sup> "Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 45.," n.d.

<sup>30</sup> "United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022* (New York: UN, 2022), p. 32.," n.d.

<sup>31</sup> "Helen Longino, *Studying Human Behavior: How Scientists Investigate Aggression and Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 93.," n.d.

in promoting equal access to education. Moreover, limited access to technology poses a significant barrier, especially in developing countries. The uneven digital infrastructure, such as poor or expensive internet connections, limits access to online learning and education-based technology. These barriers reinforce the digital divide, which directly impacts educational inequality.<sup>32</sup>

## **2. Opportunities Generated by Technology-Based Education and Multicultural Curriculum**

On the other hand, technology-based education offers great opportunities to expand access and improve the quality of learning. Digital technology enables remote learning that can reach students in remote areas. In addition, AI and VR-based technology provides a more personal and interactive learning experience, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of education. The multicultural curriculum also creates opportunities to build a more tolerant and inclusive society. By introducing students to cultural diversity and global values, this curriculum helps reduce prejudice and enhance cross-cultural collaboration.<sup>33</sup> Multicultural and technology-based education, if implemented effectively, can be a powerful tool for social transformation to create a more stable, just, and sustainable global society.

### **Contribution to the Ideal Civilization**

#### **1. Education as the Foundation for an Inclusive, Peaceful, and Sustainable Civilization**

Education plays a key role in building an inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable civilization. Through education, values such as justice, tolerance, and sustainability can be taught from an early age, creating a society that respects diversity and encourages cross-cultural cooperation.<sup>34</sup> In the global context, education helps address social and economic inequalities, which often become the root of conflict and instability. Education also supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the fourth goal (SDG 4), which emphasizes quality and inclusive education as a pillar for eradicating poverty and supporting socio-economic development.<sup>35</sup> Thus, education not only becomes a tool to enhance individual quality but also serves as a foundation for building a just and resilient social structure.

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<sup>32</sup> “UNESCO, The Digital Divide in Education: Challenges and Recommendations (Paris: UNESCO, 2021), p. 41,” n.d.

<sup>33</sup> “Tony Bates, Teaching in a Digital Age: Guidelines for Designing Teaching and Learning (Vancouver: BC campus, 2019), p. 120,” n.d.

<sup>34</sup> “Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 45.”

<sup>35</sup> “UNESCO, Global Education Monitoring Report: Technology in Education (Paris: UNESCO, 2022), p. 33,” n.d.

## 2. Strategies to Improve the Quality of Education as a Tool for Global Change

To make education a tool for global change, a strategy is needed that includes the development of a curriculum based on global values, the utilization of digital technology, and the strengthening of teacher capacity. A curriculum oriented towards universal values such as justice and diversity will help students understand their roles in the global society.<sup>36</sup> Digital technology also plays an important role by providing access to education for communities in remote areas and enhancing the quality of learning through interactive methods.<sup>37</sup> In addition, training for teachers to understand the diverse needs of students can enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education. These strategies, if applied consistently, can make education a catalyst for global change that contributes to a more just and harmonious civilization.

## CONCLUSION

Multicultural education plays an important role as a tool for transforming power and knowledge in building an inclusive, just, and sustainable global civilization. By instilling values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and social justice, multicultural education is capable of creating individuals who not only have cross-cultural understanding but also contribute to the stability and harmony of the global community.

As a means of transformation, multicultural education distributes knowledge fairly, empowers marginalized groups, and eliminates discriminatory power hierarchies. In a global context, this approach facilitates dialogue between nations and cultures, thereby creating collaboration that supports world peace. The implementation of multicultural education, whether through curriculum integration, innovative teaching methods, or the use of technology, is key in addressing globalization challenges such as cultural conflicts, inequality, and intolerance.

Therefore, multicultural education must continue to be developed as a strategy for social transformation, by strengthening universal values that can overcome cultural and political barriers. By making it the foundation of the education system, a peaceful, stable, and sustainable global civilization can be achieved.

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<sup>36</sup> “Martha C. Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 89.” n.d.

<sup>37</sup> “Tony Bates, *Teaching in a Digital Age: Guidelines for Designing Teaching and Learning* (Vancouver: BC campus, 2019), p. 120.” n.d.

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