

## Preface

Extended education continues to gain visibility as an international field of research, policy, and practice. Opportunities to present research findings and exchange innovative practices are increasing worldwide, supported in large part by the efforts of the WERA Task Force on Global Research in Extended Education (WERA TF) and the Global Extended Learning and Youth Development Association (GELYDA).

In June 2025, the University of Iceland hosted the annual GELYDA Conference, the Science and Practice of Extended Learning, Youth Development and Wellbeing, in Reykjavík, bringing together researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and civil society representatives from diverse contexts. Later that year, Linköping University in Sweden hosted the 2025 WERA Task Force Global Research in Extended Education Conference, Extended Education in the Future-opportunities and challenges. The field's growing international recognition was further demonstrated in March 2026, when an extended education session was featured at the 30th Congress of the German Educational Research Association (GERA), one of Europe's largest educational research conferences. The 2026 GELYDA Conference, hosted in Seoul, Korea, further strengthened international exchange in the field, while preparations are already underway for the next WERA TF Conference, scheduled to take place in Vienna, Austria, in 2027. These developments reflect the growing strength of international collaboration and scholarly exchange in extended education.

This issue includes six General Contributions and one article in the Development Section. All six research articles successfully completed multiple rounds of rigorous peer review and revision before being accepted for publication. Together, these contributions reflect both the diversity of research perspectives and the vitality of contemporary scholarship in extended education.

The first article, by Lea Ringskou, Noomi Matthiesen, Thomas Szulevicz, and Svend Brinkmann, examines declining wellbeing among children and young people in achievement-oriented societies. Drawing on research in Danish leisure-time centres and youth clubs, the authors propose “achievement-liberating pedagogy” as a response to the pressures of performance and self-optimization. Their work highlights how extended education can foster community, meaningful participation, and activities valued for their own sake.

The second article, by Sabiha Sultana, explores the integration of problem-based learning and community-based service learning in Bangladeshi elementary science education. Through a multi-stakeholder case study, the research demonstrates how experiential and socially relevant learning can strengthen communication, collaboration, and critical thinking while connecting classroom learning to community concerns.

In the third article, Gijs Custers, Erik-Jan van Kesteren, and Oisín Ryan investigate the impact of extending the school week in Dutch primary education. Using synthetic control analysis, they find limited effects on educational outcomes and identify implementation challenges that may constrain the effectiveness of expanded learning time initiatives.

The fourth article, by Larry E. Suter, analyzes relationships among out-of-school-time participation, tutoring, academic achievement, self-efficacy, and social status among U.S. high school students. The findings reveal complex patterns of association and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how different forms of OST engagement influence student development.

The fifth article, authored by Lisa Isenström, examines human rights teaching in Swedish School-Age Educare Centres (SAEC). The study identifies three complementary forms of teaching—direct, embedded, and approach-based—and demonstrates how each contributes to knowledge development, conduct formation, and rights-based experiences within extended education settings.

The sixth article, by Helene Elvstrand, Lina Lago, and Kristina Hellberg, investigates the role of Swedish School-Age Educare Centres (SAEC) during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in supporting pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. The findings highlight both the central role of SAEC staff in pupils' everyday lives and the challenges created by pandemic-related restrictions.

In the Development Section, Kolbrún Þ. Pálsdóttir and Gil Noam reflect on GELYDA's first in-person international conference, held at the University of Iceland in 2025. Their report examines how the conference brought together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from across the world to explore key issues in extended learning, youth development, and wellbeing. Highlighting themes such as whole-child development, quality programming, workforce development, and international collaboration, the authors demonstrate how extended education is emerging as a coherent global field. The article offers valuable insights into current international trends and future directions in extended education.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I extend my sincere congratulations to the authors whose work appears in this issue. Each contribution underwent multiple rounds of rigorous peer review and revision, and the published articles reflect the authors' commitment to advancing scholarship in extended education. I also offer my deepest appreciation to the reviewers who generously contributed their time, expertise, and thoughtful feedback throughout the review process. Their efforts not only strengthened individual manuscripts but also helped maintain the scholarly quality of IJREE.

As IJREE continues to grow as an international forum for extended education research, we warmly encourage scholars from around the world to submit their work to the journal. We welcome diverse perspectives, methodologies, and research contexts that advance understanding of extended education and its contribution to children's lives.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the indispensable contributions of our editors and editorial staff. Their dedication to supporting authors, coordinating peer review, and upholding the journal's academic standards often remains invisible to readers, yet it is essential to every issue we publish. Without their dedication and service, the continued success of IJREE would not be possible.

Sincerely,  
Sang Hoon Bae, Editor-in-Chief  
International Journal for Research on Extended Education (IJREE)