

Conference report of the 1st WERA-IRN
EDUCATION Conference:
*Extended Education from an International Comparative
Point of View* at the University of Bamberg

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From November 30 to December 2, 2017 the first WERA-IRN EXTENDED EDUCATION Conference, *Extended Education from an International Comparative Point of View*, took place at the University of Bamberg. WERA is short for *World Education Research Association*, and it is an organization of major national, regional, and international education research associations, among others dedicated to developing networks. The purpose of *International Research Networks* (IRNs) is to advance education research worldwide on specific scholarly topics. The WERA-IRN EXTENDED EDUCATION is a collaborative group of scholars working on this research topic. Its aim is to bring together different research perspectives from all over the world to learn from each other and to initiate international comparative research in this emerging field of educational research.

More than 100 participants from 16 countries

To our great pleasure, more than 100 delegates from 16 countries took part in the conference: From Europe we had guests from Germany, Switzerland, Serbia, Russia, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, and Finland. There were participants from the United States and from Australia. We also welcomed guests from Asia: from Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong in China. In all these continents and countries, there is an emerging field of activities and programs out of regular school hours focusing on the social, emotional, and academic development of children and adolescents. These programs are educationally structured to make it easier for the participants to learn specific contents. In recent years, the term EXTENDED EDUCATION has been established internationally for this field of education to an increasing degree.

Enriching and interesting keynote speeches

During the conference, we heard enriching and interesting keynote speeches. Three co-keynote speeches took up an international comparative perspective.

Prof. Dr. Ludwig Stecher, University of Giessen, Germany, and Prof. Dr. Anna Klerfelt, Jönköping University, Sweden, held a co-keynote speech comparing the developments of extended education and research in this field between Germany and Sweden. In Sweden as well as in Germany, an extensive system of state run programs for extended education is established. Although the goals and organization of the programs slightly vary, there are common institutional features. Several education-related problems are also similar and occur during extracurricular activities at German all-day schools as well as during goal-oriented educare in Swedish school-age educare centers. The presentation began with a short history of the development of the (state run) extended education sector in Sweden and in Germany. It showed that all-day schools and educare centers both have a long history reaching back to the end of the 19th century. Additionally, Klerfelt and Stecher pointed out that the various aspects the respective programs are aiming at are in most cases not very different in both countries. Aside from these similarities, there are as well some main differences with regard to the societal expectations. In the second section of the presentation, Klerfelt and Stecher focused on some of these differences in detail. They showed that in Germany (modern) all-day schools are seen as an educational remedy to support students academically (the recent rise of the German all-day school is mainly based on the bad performing of German students in the first PISA-round 2001). In Sweden, school-age educare is implemented in every school and is less focused on academic achievement. It is part of the whole cultural system and its curriculum is based on the societal values such as equality and understanding and compassion for others. In the following, Klerfelt and Stecher gave a short overview of research projects and findings on German all-day schools and Swedish school-age educare centers. They showed that there is a large amount of research literature on these provisions but also many open questions that research has to deal with in the nearer future. This holds, as Klerfelt and Stecher pointed out, in particular with regard to research on extended education on an international comparative level.

The second co-speech was held by Dr. Denise Huang, CEO of The National HLH Foundation Taiwan and Prof. Dr. Marianne Schüpbach, University of Bamberg, Germany. In this contribution, Taiwan and Switzerland on two different continents with different cultural backgrounds were compared regarding the developments in extended education. Confucianism influences Taiwan not only relating to the national development goals and political loyalty but also regarding culture and education. Other researchers identify differences between western countries and Chinese societies in the dimensions individualism and collectivism. Considering these aspects, the speakers presented the development of extended education in a western country, Switzerland, and in Taiwan, a country shaped by Chinese societies. The co-speech started with a description of the current situation of extended education in Switzerland and Taiwan. Furthermore, the traditional school scheduling, the starting positions and expectations of extended education, as well as the current structure of the offerings in this field were described and an overview of research in the field of extended education in both countries was given. Afterwards, the speakers focused on the cultural differences in general and similarities and differences in the field of extended education. They ended with remarks on the challenges for future research particularly from an international comparative point of view.

The third co-speech entitled *Comparison of extended education and research in this field in South Korea and Japan* was held by Prof. Dr. Sang Hoon Bae, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea, and Prof. Dr. Fuyuko Kanefuji, Bunkyo University, Japan. In this case, the developments of extended education in two Asian countries were compared to each other. South Korea and Japan are both countries where extended education programs and offerings are greatly flourishing nationwide. Unlike most countries in Europe and North America, the governments of these two countries have traditionally shown a strong intervention to and support of extended education. It is also obvious that collaboration between public schools and the local community are recently emphasized and supported by both the government and the public. Despite such similarities, many aspects of policies and practices in extended education also differ between the two countries. These experiences may be considered for future development of extended education. For a better understanding of extended education systems and practices of South Korea and Japan, the two speakers presented information and data about a) the historical development and societal backgrounds of extended education, b) the goals of extended education and the relationship with regular curricular activities – e.g. with for-profit private tutoring in the education market, c) the current situations in relation to participation rates, types of popular programs offered, major providers, related supporting systems and regulations, etc. as well as policy environments, d) research findings in the area of extended education, e) current issues and future directions for the development of extended education in both countries. Finally, the speakers drew conclusions for the development of policies and practices from the cases of the respective partner country. Suggestions for future research were also presented.

Prof. Dr. Deborah Vandell, University of California, Irvine, USA, held a keynote speech about the future of extended education from an international comparative point of view. Over the last 20 years, there has been a growing international awareness of the importance of out-of-school time in the lives of children and adolescents. In her presentation, Vandell proposed a conceptual three-level framework that may be useful in generating discussion, formulating research questions, and encouraging international collaborations with the ultimate goal of advancing research and practice in extended education. Similarities and differences between U.S. perspectives and studies of extended education in Europe and Asia were explored. In the last section of her speech Vandell proposed some next steps for research and practice.

The last keynote speech held by Prof. Dr. Eckhard Klieme, German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF), Frankfurt, Germany, was entitled *Adolescents' extra-curricular activities, well-being and educational outcomes: comparative findings from PISA 2015*. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is widely known for its assessment of student competences, providing country rankings in student achievement as well as comparative indicators for equity in education. Recent waves of PISA additionally attempted at assessing the contexts of learning and have increased steadily in both number and depth of facets covered. The most recent wave, PISA 2015, allows for studying a broad spectrum of individual, school-related, family-related and social factors through questionnaires administered to students and school principals (Kuger, Klieme, Jude, & Kaplan, 2016). Klieme was being in charge of the development of frameworks and questionnaires in PISA 2015. He provided an overview of instruments and findings related to

extended education, such as the average amount of non-mandatory (extra-curricular) learning per week varying from 2 to 10 hours per country, with European students investing considerably less time than students from other continents. Whether students do work for pay before or after school is a very strong indicator of their socio-economic background, which explains many disparities between and within countries. Thus, extending the perspective of comparative educational research beyond regular, mandatory classroom activities helps to understand cultural contexts and equity issues in education.

Besides the keynote speeches, several symposia, presentations of papers, posters, and a concluding panel discussion took place during the conference. We hope that this conference will be the starting point for future international comparative research in the field of extended education. We are especially grateful for the support of our partners at the Mercator Foundation and the German Research Foundation. Without them, it would not have been possible to hold the conference in this form.

First business meeting WERA-IRN EXTENDED EDUCATION

During the Bamberg conference, the first business meeting of the WERA-IRN Extended Education took place. The network reaches back to 2010 when a group of international experts launched the *Network for Research on Out-of-School Time and Extracurricular Educational Research* (NEO-ER). Since 2010, this group has organized four international conferences (two in Giessen, Germany, and two in Seoul, South Korea), and published an international volume on research on extended education (Ecarius et al., 2013). In 2013, the members of this network launched the *International Journal for Research on Extended Education* (funded by the German Research Council) and in 2016, they organized an international workshop for postgraduate researchers in this field at the University of Marburg, Germany, in cooperation with the University of Giessen, Germany. The workshop was held by Prof. Dr. Ludwig Stecher, Prof. Dr. Sabine Maschke and Prof. Dr. Ivo Züchner. In order to enhance and to broaden international collaboration in this research field as well as to synthesize the current state of research worldwide, the group successfully applied for becoming an IRN within the WERA under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Marianne Schüpbach and Prof. Dr. Ludwig Stecher in 2017. Currently, the network consists of 68 members.

Second conference at Stockholm University, Sweden

The second WERA-IRN EXTENDED EDUCATION conference entitled *Extended Education – Practice, Theories and Activities* will take place at the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Stockholm University, Sweden, on September 26 – September 28, 2019. The organizers are Prof. Dr. Rickard Jonsson, Professor in Child and Youth Studies at Stockholm University, Prof. Dr. Anna Klerfelt, Associate Professor in Education with specialization in School-age Educare/Extended Education at Jönköping University and Dr. Anna-Lena Ljusberg, Assistant Professor in Child and Youth Studies at Stockholm University.

References

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