



# THE GLOBAL EXTENDED LEARNING AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

## We are Excited to Announce the Formation of: Global Extended Learning and Youth Development Association (GELYDA)

The Global Extended Learning and Youth Development Association (GELYDA-pronounced GELIDA) is a new international organization dedicated to understanding, supporting, and improving expanded opportunities for learning, development, and thriving in schools, after school and summer programs, and communities. Our association aims to establish an inter-continental field of extended education that strengthens young people, their educators, and families wherever they live and learn. We plan to achieve these ambitious goals through strong translational research, systematic evaluation, and the use of evidence that will support practitioners and policymakers.



“Extended learning and youth development” refer to opportunities and activities that take place outside of the traditional school day and setting or enrich the experiences of students during and school hours. It encompasses a wide range of programs, initiatives, and experiences that aim to support the holistic development of young people and their educators. These include afterschool and out-of-school time programs, full-day schools, extracurricular activities, such as adventure and nature projects, sports and arts-based youth development, summer learning, community education, and more. We are committed to the fact that children spend only a fraction of their waking and learning hours in school and that the work schedule of parents typically does not correspond well with the school schedule of their children. Thus, extended learning and development is an essential educational, public health and public safety concern, a fact that should bring it to the fore of policy, practice and research in every locality, country the global community.

## The Association values:

**Equity:** We are committed to promoting equitable access to extended education opportunities for all children and youth, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, socio-economic status, ethnicity, or any other characteristic. We strive to address and reduce educational disparities through inclusive and targeted approaches. We also recognize that equity often means urgent access to food, health care and social services increasingly linked to schools and extended education programs.

**International Work and Collaboration:** We believe in the power of collaboration and the international nature of our work. The International Association creates a meeting ground where people from diverse continents, countries and regions can come together, responding to their unique contexts and exploring solutions that can cross-fertilize across traditional boundaries.



**Evidence-Informed Practice and Enhancing Scholarship:** We value the importance of evidence and research in informing our practice and policy decision-making. By considering the diverse contexts of different countries and regions, we can draw upon a wealth of knowledge and best practices to develop evidence-informed strategies that are effective and sustainable. Moreover, we emphasize enhancing scholarship, particularly through international comparisons, to gain deeper insights into the impact and effectiveness of extended education practices worldwide. This scholarly endeavor allows us to learn from each other's successes and challenges, leading to continuous practical improvement and advancements in the field.

**Innovation:** We embrace innovation and seek to push the limits of education. By encouraging experimentation and the exchange of ideas between continents, countries, and regions, we can foster creative solutions that address present and emerging challenges and crises, such as was the case during the COVID pandemic.



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**Inclusivity:** We are committed to promoting inclusivity and diversity within our Association and the extended learning and development community. By valuing and celebrating different cultures, perspectives, and experiences, we create a welcoming and supportive environment that empowers all individuals and groups to contribute to the advancement of extended learning and development worldwide. Importantly, we create conditions under which practitioners, policymakers and researchers truly talk and walk together.

**Holistic Learning Approach:** We recognize extended education not only as a time when learning happens but also as approaches and methods of informal, relational, and deep forms of learning. We believe that learning is a continuous process that occurs in various settings and through meaningful interactions with peers, mentors, and the community.

**Social and Emotional Development and Thriving:** Central to our work is the recognition of social and emotional development as essential components of extended learning and youth development. We prioritize the cultivation of life skills and assets, such as social competencies, empathy, emotional awareness, and resilience, creating a safe and supportive environment that fosters personal growth and enables children and youth to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

**Mental Health of Children:** Reducing the epidemic of child abuse, neglect, violence, and suicidality is high on the agenda of the extended learning and development community, primarily through young people being less isolated and in relationship to caring adults in safe settings with access to food, health and mental health services when needed.



## The Extended Association will achieve its goals through the following key strategies:

- Providing multiple platforms for extended education research and evaluation: This includes conferences, workshops, webinars, and publications that enable researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share and learn from each other's experiences, practices, and research findings.
- Fostering evidence-supported practices and policies: The new association will promote evidence-supported practices and policies, steering innovations in the field that enhance the learning, development, and thriving of children and youth beyond the traditional classroom setting both in and outside of schools, afterschool and summer programs, and communities.
- Building international networks of extended learning and development researchers, practitioners, and policymakers: The new association will create opportunities for members from around the world to network, collaborate, and learn from each other. This will include online forums, discussion groups, communities of praxis, and other interactive opportunities that enable members to share ideas, best practices, and resources across borders, disciplines, and focus areas.
- Supporting and collaborating with national and regional associations and groups working in this and related fields: Connecting research and practice associations within regions to promote and improve the generation and use of evidence and the further development of the field.
- Identifying and supporting early career, practitioners, and policymakers around the world: Through special opportunities to share their work and mentors to support them, the association will help identify and enhance the next generation of leadership for our field.
- Exploring opportunities to build worldwide databases and cross-national studies: The ability to examine similarities and differences across countries and regions is key to developing a global understanding of the processes and impacts of extended education and sustain the positive impacts over time.
- Support communities to build integrated systems for learning and resilience by highlighting the role of extended education in community building and by providing tools to create systems and programs for young people and their families as close to home as possible.



- Building close relationships with international organizations and NGOs: Organizations such as the World Bank, OECD, UNESCO, UNICEF, and others are critical to growing the field and increasing funding for low-income countries to develop more models and create research on the use of expanded education in their context.

To achieve our goals and to support every person working in this field, we need to build an active membership that will grow substantially over the next five years. Membership in our Association offers a range of benefits, including:

1. Access to a global network of extended learning and development researchers, practitioners, and policymakers: Members can connect with professionals from around the world, share ideas, best practices, find colleagues and mentors, and collaborate on projects and initiatives that have local, national, and global impact.
2. Opportunities for sharing research, reviewing, and publishing: Members will have opportunities to showcase their research, receive feedback from peers, and support for publishing their work in a variety of places, including the independent International Research on Extended Education Journal.
3. Professional development resources: Over time, the new association will provide members with a variety of resources to support their professional development, including coaching, mentorship, and job search assistance, especially for junior members.
4. Development of a website and regular communication vehicles, such as “Extensions,” the magazine of the Association to be launched in 2024: Connecting and communicating among members is critical to the success of the association.

In conclusion, a central aspect of the Global Extended Learning and Youth Development Association is the interconnection between research and evidence-based practice and policy, serving as the signature of our organization. We are committed to far-reaching efforts that have an inter-continental impact, enhancing extended education in diverse countries and regions, and partnering with international organizations to shape global strategies for the development, learning, and thriving of children and families. Our Association actively seeks funding to support international scholarship, drive practice innovation, and facilitate policy changes. Join us in this transformative journey to create a world where expanded opportunities for learning, development, and thriving are accessible to all. There are no fees involved at present and for the next 24 months. We will passionately pursue these values and goals, dedicated to realizing our vision of a brighter and more inclusive future for young people and the adults that surround them.

For more information or to join GELYDA please write to [GELYDA.association@outlook.com](mailto:GELYDA.association@outlook.com)

**Sincerely,**  
**The Founding Steering Group**

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