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Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy



**Title of the special issue**

**Equity in extended education: analytical, comparative and critical perspectives on policy, pedagogy, and practices**

**Deadline for completed manuscript submission: 31.01.2027**

**Deadline for abstract submission: 15.05.2026**

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## Details about the special issue

### Background

With the growing perceived diversity of the child population, more and more societies across the world are confronted with the expectation of eliminating disparities in education and ensuring equal opportunities to education for all children (Bae et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2017), especially for those in disadvantaged situations (UNESCO, 2017), e.g. those from low socio-economic family backgrounds (Bellibas, 2016), ethnic or linguistic minorities (Bates, 2023), children with special needs (Dyson, 1997), migrants and refugees (Schmidt et al., 2025), children living in rural or remote areas (Zhang et al., 2015), those affected by gender-based discrimination (UNESCO, 2020), as well as children impacted by cultural biases and stereotypes (Baker, 2005) or intersecting forms of disadvantage (Maroto et al., 2019). Despite significant policy efforts and resource investments in many countries, persistent equity gaps remain a pressing concern (Mullis et al., 2023; OECD, 2023).

Recent evidence suggests that educational disparities are not only reproduced but sometimes even amplified in out-of-school and extra-curricular contexts (Zhang & Bray, 2018), raising critical questions about how *extended education* contributes to or counters inequity. *Extended education* encompasses various educational and care opportunities that provide children with supervised activities designed to encourage safety, learning, and development during periods that extend beyond formal education (Schübach & Lilla, 2025). Current studies covering various national contexts indicate that extended education is playing an increasingly vital role in addressing the challenges and opportunities encountered by the growing diversity of participants at all levels, including children, staff, leaders, parents, and organisations (Krejčík et al., 2025; Ning et al., 2025).

In the Nordic context, where comprehensive welfare models traditionally emphasise universal access and social equity (Hansen & Gustafsson, 2020), extended education has developed distinctive features, such as Iceland's Frístundaheimili (leisure-time centres), Sweden's fritidshem (school-aged educare centres), Norway's and Denmark's SFO's (after-school care programs) and various forms of leisure- and youth clubs, that explicitly aim to support all children and youth regardless of background (Haglund, 2023; Pálsdóttir, 2024; Petersen et al., 2023; Ringskou, et al., 2020). However, even in these contexts, research reveals growing concerns about inequity in the provision of quality, with studies documenting significant disparities in learning environments across socioeconomically different areas (Boström & Augustsson, 2016) as well as in exclusionary processes (Lago & Elvstrand, 2019). Similar tensions can also be observed in the field of extended education within broader global contexts. Examples include after-school programmes in South Korea (Bae et al., 2019) and the US (Huang et al., 2017), extra-curricular activities in Russia (Kosaretsky & Ivanov, 2019), community schools in the UK (Kerr, 2022), all-day schools in Switzerland (von Allmen et al., 2019), out-of-school science education in Canada (Burke, 2020), and private tutoring in China (Zhang & Bray, 2018), both in-person and on digital platforms.

Despite the importance of the topic, fundamental questions remain underexplored regarding equity in extended education: Which policy frameworks and pedagogical innovations have been pursued, by whom, and toward which specific goals? How do

different welfare regimes, educational systems and cultural contexts shape equity understanding and outcomes in extended education? What role does technological development, including digital tools and Artificial Intelligence (AI), play in either advancing or undermining equity in these settings? How do practices on the ground align with or diverge from policy intentions, and what can comparative analysis reveal about different implementation strategies?

### Call for Papers

Against this backdrop, we invite theoretically grounded, empirically rigorous and critically engaged scholarship that explores how equity is conceptualised, negotiated, practised, and enacted in the diverse formats of extended education offerings. Among others, we particularly encourage comparative, international and multidisciplinary perspectives across different welfare regimes, educational systems and cultural contexts worldwide.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

1. **Policy frameworks, discourses, and implementation:** comparative analysis of policy approaches to equity across national contexts, tensions between universal extended education ideals and stratified access, governance structures and their impact on equity outcomes, policy responses to technological development and digital divide in extended education.
2. **Pedagogical innovations and practices:** inclusive and diversity-sensitive pedagogies, learning environment design with equity considerations and resulting policy needs, professional development approaches and their role in policy negotiation, digitalisation in practice and emerging structural and policy challenges.
3. **Access, participation, and outcomes:** barriers to participation for marginalised groups and strategies to address them, fee structures and subsidies and their impact on socioeconomic equity, geographic disparities in availability and quality, dropout and retention patterns across different populations, long-term educational and social outcomes for participants from diverse backgrounds in extended education.
4. **Partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaboration:** collaboration between extended education providers, communities, and external organisations in promoting equity, family engagement strategies across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts, the role of civil society organisations and NGOs in equitable extended education offerings, public-private partnerships and their implications for policy concerning extended education.
5. **Curriculum, offering planning, and cultural relevance:** culturally responsive and sustaining approaches in extended education programming, representation and inclusion in curriculum materials and offering planning, language policies and multilingual approaches, integration of local knowledge and community perspectives in extended education planning and implementation.
6. **Staffing, workforce, and professional issues:** diversity, recruitment, and retention of practitioners from underrepresented groups, working conditions and professionalisation and their impact on equity, competencies needed for equity-

oriented practice, volunteer training, as well as (multi-)professional collaboration between staff in promoting equity in extended education.

7. **Funding, resources, and infrastructure:** resource allocation mechanisms and equity outcomes, physical and digital infrastructure and accessibility considerations, material resources and their distribution across different settings, and sustainability of equity-focused initiatives concerning extended education.

**Important:** Please note that contributions focusing primarily on praxis-oriented recommendations are not encouraged. Contributions focusing on topics other than policy (e.g. topics 2-7 in the above list) should address the political ramifications in their conclusion.

### Submission Guidelines

Submissions must align with the thematic scope of this Special Issue as mentioned above and adhere to the general instruction for authors of the *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. This includes compliance with policies regarding peer review, ethical standards, manuscript structure, word count, formatting, and the use of third-party material.

Please note that submission platforms and open-access policies are subject to updates; authors will be notified of any changes in a timely manner.

### Review Process

#### Phase I: Abstract Submission & Screening

Authors must submit an abstract (maximum **500 words**, excluding references) by **May 15, 2026**. The abstract should provide sufficient detail to evaluate the quality and relevance of the proposed paper, including summaries of all planned sections and preliminary results. Abstracts should be submitted by **email to [haiqin.ning@fu-berlin.de](mailto:haiqin.ning@fu-berlin.de)**, with copies sent to [marianne.schuepbach@fu-berlin.de](mailto:marianne.schuepbach@fu-berlin.de) and [DTG@via.dk](mailto:DTG@via.dk).

#### Phase II: Full Manuscript Submission

Papers that pass the initial screening will proceed to formal peer review. Full manuscripts (ca. 6,000 – 8,000 words) must be submitted between **1 and 31 January 2027**. Due to the scheduled migration of the journal's submission platform, the (guest) editors will provide specific instructions for the second phase before the submission window begins.

## Timeline

### Phase I: Abstract submission & Screening

- Abstract Submission Deadline: May 15, 2026
- Notification of Abstract Results: About June 15, 2026

### Phase II: Manuscript Submission & Review

- Full Manuscript Submission Window: January 1 – January 31, 2027
- Peer Review & Revision Period: February – August 2027
- Final Acceptance Notification: July – September 2027

### Phase III: Publication & Dissemination

- Expected Publication Date (Online First and Open Access): September 2027 – January 2028
- Promotion & Dissemination: Starting September 2027

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**This CfP on the journal homepage:**

<https://think.taylorandfrancis.com/special-issues/equity-in-extended-education-analytical-comparative-and-critical-perspectives-on-policy-pedagogy-and-practices/>