

Comparative Perspectives on Extended Education Models for the further development of All-day Primary Schools in Germany

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The last 10 to 20 years have seen numerous efforts to expand education and care opportunities to extend the school day and to expand learning in almost every modern country in Asia, North and South America, Europe, and Australia. The field of *extended education* encompasses various programs born from distinct societal impulses, designed to enhance the learning experience beyond traditional school hours (Schuepbach, 2018).

“Extended education represents a multitude of programs/activities/offerings, among other things, that provide children and adolescents with a range of supervised activities designed to encourage learning and development, for children to be supervised and safe, and extending the regular school day. Some of them pursue general goals, such as psychological well-being and social competence, others focus on specific educational outcomes and goals. They are extracurricular, meaning that they are non-credential and voluntary. They can be offered in school-, faith-, and community-based settings, for any age range, and can be held before school (in the morning), between school hours (lunchtime), after school (afternoon), on weekends, or during school vacation” (Schuepbach, 2018, p. 135).

In the international context, there are various models of extended education programs in primary education that are similar to the concept of the all-day elementary school in Germany. However, there are not only similarities but also differences in the forms, concepts, and characteristics within or between countries (Schüpbach & Lilla, 2025). Based on the definition of the field of Extended Education (see above), Schuepbach (2018) has therefore developed a tool for characterizing extended educational programs, which has since been expanded (Schüpbach & Lilla, 2025). On this basis, extended educational programs (available in various countries) can be systematically characterized.

Building on the characterization tool for extended education programs by Schüpbach and Lilla (2025) as a conceptual framework for analyzing research in this field and

identifying the distinct features of various extended education formats worldwide, in this paper we characterize and analyze using content-structuring content analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2024), key characteristics of the predominant models in Germany, Australia, Sweden, and England. Further we explore developmental trajectories that potentially offer insights for the future of the German all-day primary schools.

The results show, that several developmental pathways are of central importance: first, the clarification of the purpose of extended education, ensuring alignment with educational aims; second, a renewed focus on reducing educational inequality, particularly among disadvantaged students; and third, the professionalization of pedagogic staff, which is crucial for the effective implementation and sustainability of these programs.

Through a comparative lens, the contribution underscores the potential of international perspectives in enhancing the qualitative development of all-day primary schools in Germany. It also emphasizes the importance of adapting global insights to the local context, particularly in addressing the challenges faced by disadvantaged students and ensuring that extended education can serve as a tool for greater educational equity.

Keywords: extended education offerings, out-of-school time, after school program, comparative education