

Dr. Amy Jo Dowd 33 Pondview Road, Rye, New York 10580 USA

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EDUCATION

- **Harvard University Graduate School of Education.** Doctorate in Administration, Planning and Social Policy, International Education, 2001. Dissertation: [Learning Requires Qualified Teachers, Good Teaching and Community Support in Malawi](#); Master of Education focused on applied education research methods and measurement, 1997.
- **Stanford University, and Stanford Graduate School of Education.** BA in International Relations, Middle East area concentration, 1990. Master of Arts in International Development Education, 1991. Thesis: *Early Childhood Care & Education: Women's Labor Force Participation and the Provision of Quality Care in Urban Egypt.*

EXPERIENCE

Consultant then Director of Research, Brink Foundation Nov 2024-present

Advise on the development of an implementation research fund and participate in two rounds of grant-making and grantee support. propose, win and launch an evidence hub on gender and learning – a new evidence-based funding mechanism to better understand whether and how what we know about the relationship between educational attainment and life outcomes holds for learning and life outcomes – and join it as director of research.

Consultant, Gates Foundation May 2022-present

Scope and advise on grant strategy supporting [implementation research](#), early childhood and equity investments targeted at improving primary school foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa and India. Compare research investments to inform improvements. Support the launch of a [new fund](#) to motivate government and implementation partners and enhance their capacity to generate real-time evidence for adaption and improvement.

Consultant, EIDU March – July 2025

Support edtech firm that digitizes national curricula in partnership with governments in creating an R&D vision, including scaling across thousands of schools in Kenya and piloting in Nigeria, and innovating with AI to tackle barriers to high quality education like formative assessment, differentiated lesson planning and consistent teacher coaching.

Lecturer, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education July 2023-May 2024

Taught International Educational Development Program courses: 1) International Early Childhood Policies and Practice, 2) International Education in Practice, 3) Global Governance and Cooperation in International Education.

Consultant, Global Partnership for Education July 2022-June 2024

Member of the Independent Technical Advisory Panel. Responsible for the data and evidence elements of low-income country partner education sector plan reviews to support GPE's system transformation approach.

Head of Evidence, LEGO Foundation February 2020-October 2021

Consolidated MEL and research teams into one 17-member evidence group, created and led a team to invest \$10M in distance learning in 2020 COVID response and led a review of 2020 COVID investments to inform 2021 decisions. Directly managed five of 15 investment initiative leads, devised and implemented an adaptive management approach to maximize impact and learning across all 15 initiatives. Working in a matrix, supported all initiative leads to integrate evidence investments and interrogate their equity and diversity. Enhanced evidence team skills for data use as well as support for partners in evidence-based decision-making. I can lead diverse teams, boost growth and stimulate inquiry.

Consultant, LEGO Foundation July-December 2019

Using evidence to inform foundation priorities, I reviewed 26 early childhood learning impact studies and collected authors' perspectives on play in classrooms observed to identify lessons for [increasing impact and reducing inequity](#). This report set the stage for investments to strengthen research on and measurement of the role of play in learning.

Senior Director Education Research, Save the Children February 2013-June 2019

Generated evidence on impact and equity for Save the Children's program streams in early childhood, early grade

reading and math, youth development, and socio-emotional learning. Built, funded and managed an eleven-person research team to support data-driven continuous improvement and advocacy for systemic change. Built country team capacity for rigorous evaluation and applied research. Led open-source metric development ([IDELA](#)) and contributed to SDG measurement and achievement with a focus on equity. From 2016, acted as department Innovation Champion to create an organization-wide innovation pipeline. From 2014 represented Save the Children on Learning Metrics Task Force and the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning contributing Save the children expertise to measurement of Sustainable Development Goal 4. I can build teams, systems and metrics; innovate and represent.

Senior Advisor Education Research, Save the Children

March 2011-January 2013

Oversaw Save the Children's research agenda and learning outcomes research. Coordinated, conducted and supported a growing research team of seven staff as well as graduate (SUPER) Fellows and university partnership mechanisms in applied research on early childhood, early grade reading and math, and the use and generation of evidence in the application of Literacy Boost's teacher and community interventions. Guided development and field testing of new programs ([Numeracy Boost](#), [Emergent Literacy and Math](#), [Youth in Action](#)) and represented Save the Children's contributions to the evidence on what works for children and their families. Expanded SUPER to reach partner NGOs (Room to Read, INEE, ARNEC) and support their use of applied research for program improvement and impact. I can leverage evidence-based program quality and continuous improvement across partner and aspects of systems change.

Education Research Advisor, Save the Children

October 2006-February 2011

Invented the Save-University Partnership for Education Research (SUPER) Initiative, a network of university-country team applied research collaborations on topics of mutual interest and benefit. Oversaw the Department of Education and Child Development research agenda, built the evidence base for programming and contributed to the global debate on quality education for all. From 2007, spearheaded reading assessment use and the development and testing of [Literacy Boost™](#) to enhance teacher training, the print environment and community reading to benefit children's reading. Formulated a technical partnership with World Vision to scale this approach to more than 40 Save the Children and 15 World Vision sites. I can devise, test and scale evidence-based solutions and share them with partners.

Research Consultant, American Institutes for Research

March – June 2003

Conducted data analysis, authored [reports](#) on longitudinal math learning and school attrition using five waves of data gathered from the original cohort of students from my dissertation in Mangochi, Malawi.

Research Consultant, Save the Children

January 2000 – October 2001

Supported the Malawi Field Office staff in data collection, entry, cleaning, analysis, write up of results and presentation about the Quality Education through Supporting Teaching (QUEST) program. Designed the expansion of QUEST into more districts and in partnership with the government at local and national levels, the parastatal Malawi Institute of Education and the US-based American Institutes for Research. I build demand and capacity for evidence.

Education Specialist, Save the Children

May 1998-December 1999

In cooperation with field offices and ministries in East and Southern Africa and the Middle East designed and funded basic education projects. Promoted systematic documentation of learning impact to improve educational access and quality. Developed both Save the Children and ministry partner staff capabilities in creating and implementing agendas for learning from community-based educational innovation. Authored a summary report of Save the Children education work 1996-2000.

Research Consultant, Harvard Institute for International Development

January-February 1998

Conducted quantitative data analysis of language and math achievement among Standard 2 students in Mangochi, Malawi, presented findings to the Malawian Ministry of Education and at international conferences.

Teaching Fellow, Harvard University Graduate School of Education

September 1996-May 1997

Microeconomics: A Policy Tool for Educators with Dr. Richard J. Murnane; *Intermediate Statistics* with Dr. Judith D. Singer; and *Education Policy and Planning: An International Perspective* with Dr. Kai-ming Cheng.

Summer Associate, World Bank Africa Technical Department

May-August 1996

Conducted and presented a [review of Early Childhood Development \(ECD\) program and policy efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa](#), drawing implications for World Bank design and investment efforts in this area. I use evidence to set direction.

Education Specialist, then Program Manager, Save the Children

April 1992 - August 1995

Supported the growth of Strong Beginnings, a global initiative in community-based basic education and early childhood development, centrally and in target countries (Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Egypt, Jordan, West Bank/Gaza, Nepal, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan). Created annual budgets, workplans and tracking systems. Managed Education Office Team and presented papers and facilitated sessions at national and international conferences independently and in collaboration with colleagues. Conducted a review of SC Education Office work from 1991 to 1995.

Acting Country Office Director, Mozambique, Save the Children

December 1993 - February 1994.

Temporary assignment to address an array of outstanding management, administrative and program reporting issues. Established and trained staff in systems for grant compliance, program reporting. Developed a strategic vision for basic education in Mozambique. During this time and after, I spent time in neighboring Malawi and launched village-based schools in partnership with the Government of Malawi.

AWARDS

- 2019: Comparative and International Education Society George Bereday Award: [most impactful article](#) for shaping the field, analytic merit, policy implications, concern for theoretical constructs and implications for future research.
- 2017: Save the Children Presidential Award for Innovation Team creation of innovation pipeline
- 2012: Save the Children Presidential Award for creation and testing of Literacy Boost
- 1995: Harvard Graduate School of Education Merit Scholarship
- 1989: Center for Arabic Study Abroad Fellowship to study Egyptian dialect at the American University in Cairo

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

- August 2006-present. **Director**, The Reinhold Foundation.
- May 2021-June 2025. **Board Member, Board Chair Oct 2023-June 2025**, [Come to Believe Network](#).
- October 2019-2021. **Member**, [Learning at Scale Advisory Group](#)
- 2021, 2022. **Judge**, Jacobs Foundation/MIT Solve-a-thon [Leveraging Evidence for Action to Promote Change](#)
- 2016-2019. **Member**, [Global Alliance for Monitoring Learning](#)
- 2015-2018. **Steering Group Member**, [Education Equity Research Initiative](#)
- 2012-2016. **Trustee**, [The Windward School](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Peer review articles

- Dowd, A. J. (2024). "Everyone is talking about it, but no one is doing it": How implementation research is – or isn't – informing adaptation towards scale in international education. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 108, 103068. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2024.103068>
- Dowd, A.J., Bartlett, L., Khamis-Dakwar, R. & Froud, K. (2020) [Measure Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension in International Reading Efforts](#). *Comparative Education Review*, 64(2): 309.
- Dowd, A.J. & Bartlett, L. (2019). [The Need for Speed: Interrogating the Dominance of Oral Reading Fluency in International Reading Efforts](#). *Comparative Education Review*, 63(2): 189-212.
- Halpin, P. F., Wolf, S., Yoshikawa, H., Rojas, N., Kabay, S., Pisani, L., & Dowd, A. J. (2019). Measuring early learning and development across cultures: Invariance of the IDELA across five countries. *Developmental Psychology*, 55(1), 23–37. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000626>
- Zuilkowski, S. S., McCoy, D. C., Jonason, C., & Dowd, A. J. (2019). Relationships Among Home Literacy Behaviors, Materials, Socioeconomic Status, and Early Literacy Outcomes Across 14 Low- and Middle-Income Countries. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 50(4), 539-555. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022119837363>

- Pisani, L., Borisova, I., & Dowd, A. J. (2018). Developing and validating the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA). *International Journal of Educational Research*, 91, 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2018.06.007>
- Borisova, I., Pisani, L., Dowd, A. J., & Lin, H.-C. (2017). Effective interventions to strengthen early language and literacy skills in low-income countries: Comparison of a family-focused approach and a pre-primary programme in Ethiopia. *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(3–4), 655–671. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1255607>
- Dowd, A.J., Friedlander, E., Jonason, C., Leer, J., Sorensen, L.Z., Guajardo, J., D'Sa, N., Pava, C., & Pisani, L. (2017). [Lifewide learning for early reading development in twelve African and Asian sites](#). In McCardle, P., Mora, A., & Gove, A. (Eds.), *Progress toward a literate world: Early reading interventions in low-income countries*. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 155, 31-49.
- Wolf, S., Halpin, P., Yoshikawa, H., Dowd, A.J., Pisani, L., Borisova, I. (2017). [Measuring school readiness globally: Assessing the construct validity and measurement invariance of the International Development and Early Learning Assessment \(IDELA\) in Ethiopia](#). *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. 41, 21-36.
- Amente, A., Yenew, A., Borisova, I., Dowd, A. J., Pisani, L., Dang, S., & Anís, K. (2017). Save the Children's Emergent Literacy and Mathematics Initiative: Supporting Educators' and Parents' Efforts to Improve Young Children's School Readiness. *YC Young Children*, 72(4), 31–34. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/90013702>
- Dowd, A.J., Borisova, I., Amente, A. & Yenew, A. (2016). [Realizing Capabilities in Ethiopia: Maximizing Early Childhood Investment for Impact and Equity](#), *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 17:4, 477-493.
- Bartlett, L., Dowd, A.J. & Jonason, C. (2015). [Problematizing Early Grade Reading: Should the Post-2015 Agenda Treasure what is Measured?](#) *International Journal for Educational Development*. 40:C, 308-314.
- Dowd, A.J., & Pisani, L. (2013). [Two Wheels are Better than One: The importance of capturing the home literacy environment in large scale assessments of reading](#). *Research in Comparative & International Education*, 8:3, 359.
- Wagner, D. A., Lockheed, M., Mullis, I., Martin, M.O., Kanjee, A., Gove, A. & Dowd, A.J. (2012): [The debate on learning assessments in developing countries](#), *Compare*. 42:3, 509-545.

Policy/practice reports

- Dowd, A.J., & Stjerne-Thomsen, B. (2020). [Learning through play: increasing impact, reducing inequity](#). Billund: LEGO.
- Dowd, A.J., Pisani, L., Dusabe, C., Howell, H.J. (2018). *UNICEF Think Piece Series: [Leveraging the enthusiasm of parents and caregivers for lifewide learning](#)*. UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, Nairobi.
- Dowd, A. J., Pisani, L., Seiden, J., D'Sa, N., Noble, F., & O'Grady, M. (2018). *Beyond Access: Exploring equity in early childhood learning and development*. Save the Children. <https://idela-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IDELA-Report-2018-4WEB.pdf>Links to an external site.
- Dowd, A.J., Pisani, L & Borisova, I. (2016). "Evaluating Early Learning from Age 3 to Grade 3" in [Understanding What Works in Oral Reading Assessments](#). Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).
- Omoeva, C., Moussa, W., Dowd, A. J., Mulcahy-Dunn, A., Alexander, K., Cumiskey, C., ... & Network, P. (2016). Practical recommendations for equity analysis in education. [https://www.edulinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/Practical Recommendations - FINAL 1 .pdf](https://www.edulinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/Practical_Recommendations_-_FINAL_1_.pdf)
- Dowd, A.J., Friedlander, E., & Guajardo, J. (2014). Opportunity to Learn (OTL): A framework for supporting learning? In N.V. Varghese (Ed), [From Schooling to Learning: A Report from the International Working Group on Education](#). Paris: UNESCO IIEP.
- Dowd, A.J., Friedlander, E., Guajardo, J., Mann, N. & Pisani, L. (2013). [Literacy Boost Cross Country Analysis Results](#). Washington, DC: Save the Children.
- Friedlander, E., Dowd, A.J., Borisova, I. & Guajardo, J. (2012). [Lifewide learning: Supporting all children to enjoy quality education](#). NY: UN Women & UNICEF.
- Dowd, A.J., O'Donnell, N., Ochoa, C., & Borisova, I. (2010). [Community Strategies for Promoting Literacy](#). Washington, DC: Save the Children and World Vision.
- Miske, S.J. & Dowd, A.J. (1998). [Teaching and Learning in Mangochi Classrooms: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Information to Study 12 Primary Schools in Malawi](#). Washington, DC: Creative Associates.
- Colletta, N.J. & Reinhold, A.J. (1997). [Review of Early Childhood Policy and Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa](#). Technical Paper no. 367. World Bank, Washington, D.C.

Chapters/book reviews

- Pisani, L. & Dowd, A.J. (2022). "Diversity and equity in education: Policy, practice, and options for reaching children at the bottom of the pyramid" In Daniel A. Wagner, Nathan M. Castillo and Suzanne Grant Lewis (Eds). [*Learning, Marginalization, and Improving the Quality of Education in Low-income Countries*](#). Paris: UNESCO IIEP.
- Dowd, A.J. (2021). "Book Review: Collaborative Cross-Cultural Research Methodologies in Early Care and Education Contexts edited by Samara Madrid Akpovo, Mary Jane Moran, and Robyn Brookshire." *Journal on Education in Emergencies* 7 (1): 196-198. <https://doi.org/10.33682/1kxn-8s2a>
- Dowd, A.J., & Pisani, L. (2018). Early learning and development at the bottom of the pyramid. In D. Wagner, R.F. Boruch & S. Wolfe. [*Learning at the Bottom of the Pyramid*](#). Paris: UNESCO-IIEP.
- Dowd, A., Pisani, L & Hsaio, C. (2018). [*Optimizing Early Childhood Potential for All: Pursuing Holism in Measurement, Policy and Practice*](#). In A. Petersen & S. Verma (Eds), *Sustainable Development Goals: Using Developmental Science to Improve Young Lives Globally*. New York: Springer.
- Friedlander, E., Dowd, A. J., Guajardo, J., & Pisani, L. (2017). [*Education for All or Literacy for All? Evaluating student outcomes from Save the Children's Literacy Boost program in sub-Saharan Africa*](#). In A. Abubakar & F. van de Vijver (Eds.), *Handbook of Applied Developmental Science in sub-Saharan Africa*. New York: Springer
- Dowd, A.J., Gustavson, C., Moran, E. (2014). Excellence or Exit: Transforming Save the Children's Child Sponsorship Programming. In: Watson, B., Clarke, M. (eds) *Child Sponsorship*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137309600_5
- Dowd, A.J., Namathaka, L. (2007). Malawi, 1994–2003: Training on a National Scale. In D. Glassman, F. Wood, J, Naidoo, (Eds.), *Community Schools in Africa: Reaching the unreached*. Germany: Springer.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- Dowd, A.J. & Bartlett, L. (2021) [*Comparative and International Education Society George Bereday Award Webinar: The Need for Speed: Interrogating the Dominance of Oral Reading Fluency in International Reading Efforts*](#).
- Dowd, A.J. (2020). [*Play in Pursuit of Impact and Equality*](#). Invited webinar in the University of Cambridge Play in Education Development and Learning (PEDAL) Research Centre September Speaker Series.
- Dowd, A.J., Pisani, L, Dusabe, C. & Howell, H.J. (May 2018). Comissioned webinar on: [*Leveraging the enthusiasm of parents and caregivers for lifewide learning*](#). UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Region.
- Dowd, A.J. & Pisani, L. (March 2017). *Early learning and development at the bottom of the pyramid*. Invited paper at U Penn meeting: Learning at the bottom of the pyramid: Science, measurement & policy in low-income countries in an era of global change.
- Dowd, A.J. (January 2016). *ECD Evidence for Scale*. Invited panel at NYU Global TIES Conference: Evidence for Scale: Research Methods to Support the Implementation of Quality Education and Early Childhood Development Programs at Large Scale in Global Contexts, Abu Dhabi.
- Dowd, A.J. (March 2015). *Lifewide Learning for Early Reading Development in 12 African and Asian sites*. Paper presented at the CIES Annual Conference, Vancouver, BC.
- Dowd, A.J. (March 2015). *Fluency and comprehension: How fast is fast enough?* Paper at CIES Annual Conference, DC.
- Dowd, A.J. (March 2014). *Practice, opportunity to learn and reading: parent and social factors in literacy acquisition*. Paper presented at the CIES Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada.
- Dowd, A.J., (June 2012) *Evidence Supports Extending Opportunity to Learn*. International Working Group on Education Invited Panel entitled: Investment Priorities & Interventions to Enhance Learning Outcomes: From Schooling to Learning, Washington DC: World Bank and UNESCO IIEP.
- Dowd, A.J. (May 2011). *Fluency, accuracy and comprehension across the globe, unpacking the utility of 60 words per minute*. Paper presented at the CIES Annual Conference, Montreal, Canada.

LANGUAGES: Fluent in Portuguese, knowledge of Egyptian dialect and Modern Standard Arabic.

COMPUTER SKILLS: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, STATA.