

Country profile prepared for the
Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007
Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education

Eritrea

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

Compiled by:
UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE)
Geneva, (Switzerland)

2006

This profile was commissioned by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report as background information to assist in drafting the 2007 Report. It has not been edited by the team. Information included in the series of profiles has been compiled by the IBE. In several cases data have been revised and/or expanded thanks to the helpful support of Ministries of Education and UNICEF offices worldwide. The views and opinions expressed in the present document are not necessarily those of the EFA Global Monitoring Report or UNESCO. The profile can be cited as follows: "Country Profile commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong foundations: early childhood care and education". For further information, please contact: efareport@unesco.org

ERITREA

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) programs

A. GENERAL INFORMATION, STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

Starting age of compulsory education (if applicable):

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) the compulsory education age range is 7-13 years.

1. ISCED 0 PROGRAMS (USUALLY, PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION)

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programs:

Pre-primary-education, which refers to Kindergarten, Rural Children's Centers linked with Outreach Activities. In addition, Parenting Enrichment strategy (focusing on remote areas for children between the ages of 0 to 3 and 6 through the enrichment of parents).

1.2. Normative age group(s) covered by ISCED 0 programs:

- 4-6 years of age, Kindergarten
- 5-6 years of age, Rural Children's Centers and Outreach Activities.
- 0-6 years of age, Parenting Enrichment.

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	16.1	2004/05
Net enrolment ratio	11.4	2004/05
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	<i>Not available</i>	

Source: MOE-EMIS Office. A total of 31,107 children enrolled, of whom 15,571 are girls.

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group, 2002/03 (percentage, also including the first years of primary education when applicable):

Less than 3 years of age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7
0.0	0.2	2.9	5.4 0.1(*)	3.0 8.9(*)	0.1 38.8(**)

Source: UIS estimation. (*) Enrolled in primary education. (**) Primary education enrolment ratio.

Less than 3 years of age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7	Age 8
0.0	727 (2.34%)	7,441 (23.98%)	12,452 (40.14%)	9,545 (30.77%)	871 (2.81%)	71 (0.23%)

Source: MOE-EMIS Office estimate (2004/05).

1.3.3. Teachers, 2004/05:

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
843	97.6	68.3	40.0	65.5

Source: MOE-EMIS Office.

1.3.4. Funding: Not available

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	...

1.3.5. Main source(s) of financing:

- The Government
- Parents
- The Community
- Missions

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

No other national programmes besides those listed above.

2.2. Normative age group(s) covered by other ECCE programs:

Not available

2.3. Estimate number of children covered by other ECCE programs:

Not available

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING ECCE PROGRAMS (INCLUDING ISCED 0)

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

With regard to ECCE there is a policy declared by the State of Eritrea, drawn up and implemented, in turn, by the Ministry of Education.

3.2. Official body/bodies in charge of supervision or coordination:

The Ministry of Education

3.3. Other entities involved in the provision (e.g. municipalities, local governments) and main types of providers (e.g. public, private, mixed, community-based, etc.):

National communities and private organizations in the form of Christian missions, Islamic Awkafs, private citizens and the National Union of Eritrean Women

Early childhood education (ECE) is largely a community responsibility with the government giving functional support, i.e. developing policies, guidelines, programmes, monitoring and teacher training activities. It is envisaged that the development of ECE provisions and centres will become a major task, but not at the expense of substituting the role and responsibility of parents and the community in early childhood upbringing and education. In addition, the overall tendency is to encourage non-governmental organizations and non-formal activities in this field.

In 1996, many kindergartens run by the municipalities were transferred to private institutions and communities, and some were closed immediately due to lack

funds. Access to kindergarten is very limited. Most establishments are situated in urban areas—especially in Asmara—and are controlled by religious institutions.

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

Kindergarten teachers, community care givers, ECCE supervisors, Resource Center directors, parental committees, adult educators and volunteers

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

Pre-service training, in-service training, plus the organization and implementation of workshops, seminars and conferences. Between 2002 and 2004, 211 kindergarten teachers completed pre-service training (The training period being 8 months). Moreover, 275 community caregivers were trained for a month between 2001 and 2005. Obviously such programmes are backed up by shorter courses lasting more or less two to three weeks.

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

In Eritrea the term Early Childhood Care, education and Development is understood to encompass a holistic view of the needs of young children as they grow and mature. The ECCD guiding principles include:

- All round development;
- Assurance of the basic human rights to every child;
- Early intervention as a basis for development;
- Activity-based practical learning;
- Respecting individual responses to differing needs.

The overall policy of the MOE regarding education emphasizes the importance of providing equal access to quality education for all nationals. The ECCE policy gives much attention to the need and importance of early and extensive investment in health, care, cognitive development and socialization.

ECCE has been regarded as a cornerstone for basic education work and is organized at three alternatives: Nursery, Kindergarten, Rural Children's centre and outreach activities and the Parenting Enrichment intervention. The commitment and investment of government in the establishment of formal pre-primary education has been very extensive and substantial.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

Through the establishment of Rural Community Children's Centres and outreach activities as well as the Parenting Enrichment intervention strategy steady efforts have been made to reach children who do not have the chance to get access to pre-school education.

3.8. Special projects/programmes aiming at expanding or improving ECCE:

There is a comprehensive project called 'EDEL Children's Services' whose aim is to increase access for children and improve the quality of ECCE services through an integrated approach.

3.9. Information concerning the curriculum (if applicable) or the contents of ECCE programs

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

The promotion of the holistic development of children and the improvement of their socio-emotional and educational preparedness for school entry, by imbuing in them creativity and individual self confidence. Objectives and aims also include the acquisition of life skills.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

The curriculum emphasizes the holistic development of the child which includes the physical, cognitive, social and emotional dimensions. Curriculum areas consist of context-appropriate themes rather than about subjects to be thought separately. The themes reflect children's interests in the form of learning corners. Teachers act as facilitators of the learning areas and help children's initiatives.

The teaching-learning methods are based on child-centered pedagogy and a developmentally appropriate approach. These place the child at the center of planning with the idea that every thing on the curriculum may reflect the child. The purpose of the developmentally appropriate approach was to keep young children away from rote memorization and routine drill; instead practice the learning of life skills. Methods of the learning strategy include story telling, songs, rhymes poetry, drama and other forms of art or play.

3.9.3. Average number of hours per week and average amount of weeks per year:

- For the Kindergarten: 15 hours per week and 32 weeks per year;
- For Rural Children's Centers: 6 hours per week and 32 weeks per year;
- For Outreach Activities: 2 hours per week and 32 weeks per year;

(The Parent Enrichment strategy was intended to be implemented by Community Caregivers. The plan did actually start; but did not develop as planned. One of the reasons was that not yet published in mother tongues. Now that manuals are ready, there are plans for the activity to start as soon as possible. The activity will be carried forward with the cooperation of the Department of Adult Education.)

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

- Up to 1999, some of the government services providing institutions were not built as required. They lacked appropriate physical facilities. However, in the year 2000 the ECD 'EDEL Children Services' project was launched and several of the centres now operating meet the required standard.
- All of the thematic work has been translated into eight local languages.
- Neither needs assessment and nor situational analysis was done up to the year 2000. However, in 2002 a long-term consultant was hired, who made a needs assessment and a situational analysis. Moreover, the consultant in collaboration with ECCE Panel members made an impact assessment in 2004.
- In 2002 regular pre-service and in-service training started. And hence forward courses have been organized and implemented on behalf of Trainers of Trainers, supervisors, community caregivers and resource centre coordinators.

[Main Source:

Eritrean country report on the status of ECD. (ND, presumably 2001). Available at:
<http://www.ecdву.org/> (August 2005.)]

C. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REGARDING ECCE (TO BE COMPILED IN COLLABORATION WITH UNICEF OFFICES WHERE POSSIBLE)

4.1. Parenting programmes are usually addressed to parents and families of children less than 6 years of age. Please provide information about any parenting programmes in your country according to the table below:

Type of programme	Yes or No (note for each programme)	Please estimate the number of beneficiaries (if possible)
Parenting education through early learning centres and child care centres	Yes, the MOE	
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	Yes, the MOH	
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	Yes, the MOH	
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	Yes, Adult education	
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	Yes, radio and television via the MOI. The theme is entitled "Our children our future".	
Other (please specify)		

Are any of these programmes targeted specifically toward the vulnerable, poor, disadvantaged or excluded? If so, which ones? (Please provide/attach any additional and relevant information if available).

The Parenting Enrichment Program normally targets the disadvantaged and remote rural children.

4.2. Is there a national-level system for monitoring children's development or school readiness prior to entering primary school?

No

4.3. Is there a policy on early childhood (ECCE, ECD, etc.) that has been accepted? If not, is there one under development?

Both policies have been developed. The Integrated ECD policy, however, is still awaiting approval by the policy steering committee.

[Information revised and additional data provided by UNICEF, December 2005.]