

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

Namibia

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

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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

NAMIBIA

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 6-15 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

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

3-5 years of age

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	13	2004/05
Net enrolment ratio	<i>Not available</i>	
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	<i>Not available</i>	

Source: Ministry of Education.

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group (percentage, also including the first years of primary education when applicable): Not available

Less than 3 years of age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7

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)
2,418	33	45	12	33

Source: Ministry of Education.

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: Not available

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD)

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

0–6 years

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:

National ECD Policy in place since 1996. Policy was reviewed in 2005. Reviewed document to be indorsed by cabinet and enacted by parliament in 2006.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia has made a commitment towards the well being of the children of Namibia by becoming one of the signatories to The Convention on the rights of the child. Not only that, Namibia has ratified various international conventions and Treaties, demonstrating the Government's commitment to fulfilling the rights and promoting the well-being of children and their families. These include:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations Against Women (CEDAW)
- Education for All (EFA)
- Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for children.
- Declaration and Plan of Action of the world for children
- Millennium Development Goals

It is worth nothing that within the National Programme of Action for children of Namibia (NPA), there is a section on Early Childhood Protection and Development which strongly supports ECD activities. It reads, "Early Childhood Development is of such importance for the growth of children to their full potential, and for the advancement of women, that it must be the subject of a national programme involving Government, Churches, non-Governmental agencies and the general public. Such a programme must be mounted despite the limited financial resources available to Government". (NPA, p. 95)

The Government has also initiated a number of national policies, plans and programmes that will address the developmental aspects namely:

- Education for All Action Plan
- Vision 2030
- National Development Plan II (NDP II)
- Third National Medium Term Strategic Plan on HIV?AIDS (MTP III)
- The National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children
- The food and Nutrition Policy
- The Reproductive Health Policy
- National Integrated Early Childhood Development policy.

The national integrated early childhood development policy will strive to speak directly to the issue of young child's development in order to make the public more aware of the situation of young children. It will also clarify the roles, responsibilities and relationships between government Ministries, Non-governmental agencies, faith

based organizations, the private sector, communities and families for the betterment of children's lives:

- Mobilize and allocate resources for ECD programmes, within the government and from others.
- Provide guidelines and standards for those wishing to develop quality ECD programmes.

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

The responsibility for pre-primary education was transferred from the Ministry of Education to local communities under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing in 1995. With the creation of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare in 2000 recently changed to Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, pre-primary education and early childhood development, catering for the less than 6 years age group, were assigned to this new Ministry with the Ministry of Education, being responsible for curriculum content.

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.):

Pre-school education establishments are operated by the local communities and NGOs. There are both formal ECD centres, and non-formal ECD centres, and non-formal-home-based care programmes, thus making the concept 'enrollment' difficult to interpret. The existing institutions are mainly concentrated in urban areas with catering for only 19,253 3-6 years olds out of the total of 48,930 nationwide.

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

- At National level there are 3 ECD Coordinators in Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and the National ECD NGO Association.
- Chief community Liaison Officers who are the overall coordinators at regional level with Community Liaison officers and Community Activators under them.
- National Trainers (currently only 7 operating from 18 who were training) responsible for training of Care givers Nation wide
- Communities, parents, NGOs involved with different levels of the quality of service
- Early childhood development caregivers
- Day-care mothers
- Home-based custodial care for children whose parents go to work

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

- They should at least have grade six (6) education.
- They should have at least six weeks of training in early childhood development before they start working with children.
- They should receive continuous refresher courses.
- They must have training in first aid
- They should not use drugs
- They should not consume alcohol during working hours.
- They should not abuse children, verbally, emotionally, sexually and physically.
- Be sensitive to children's social and cultural values and differences and respect them
- They should be positive and joyful individuals who take keen interest and pleasure in working with children and in assisting them to develop their full potential.

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

The National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy was adopted by Cabinet in February 1996. It addressed the establishment of early childhood programmes in relation to national development, and defined the respective roles of the government, NGOs, parents and the local communities in the provision of support for early childhood development.

The sector embarked upon a process of review of the National ECD Policy. This review was carried out through a long process of consultations at the national, regional and community levels among a broad range of relevant stakeholders. As a result of this process, a comprehensive draft document has been completed. In parallel to the policy review process, high-level discussions are taking place within government concerning the possible reallocation of responsibilities between the MGECSW for children 0-4 (year early) and Ministry of Education for children 5-6 years (i.e. pre-primary education). Since such a decision should be reflected in the reviewed policy document, the latest draft of the ECD Policy is considered, at this stage, as a working document.

It is envisaged that after integration of inputs received from the process, the revised policy document could be adopted by Cabinet and enacted by parliament in 2006.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

Enrolment of children with disabilities in early childhood development centres is highly encouraged. Early Childhood Development centres with children with disabilities will receive priority in training and will be provided with necessary materials to help those children.

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

Mentoring Project: Experienced and well-run ECD facilities (kindergartens) share their knowledge with less developed facilities, particularly home based facilities in the poor areas of town/settlements. They employ a small cadre of part-time volunteers,

who in turn visit an agreed number of poor ECD facilities, according to an agreed schedule, to disseminate knowledge and skills.

Family Visitors: The project seeks to reach caregivers and parents of children (through a cadre of community volunteers) who by virtue of their family's economic background do not have access to information that will enable them to make informed decisions to enable them to survive, develop and be cared for.

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

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

In the process of developing and piloting a curriculum. The aims for developing the ECD caregivers curriculum is to provide an opportunity and appropriate training for untrained caregivers so that children in Namibia at pre-school level have access to ECD centres where well trained personnel offer suitable and appropriate services.

This curriculum will provide the ECD caregivers with knowledge and skills to prepare the child for school and life challenges.

It should also equip the ECD caregivers with the necessary information, knowledge and skills to perform their task with diligence.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

The approach to teaching and learning should be based on a paradigm of learner-centred education, described in policy documents, e.g. towards Education for All: A Development Brief for education and Training, 1993, etc. This approach ensures optional quality of learning when the following principles are put into place by the ECD caregivers:

- The aim of the ECD caregiver is to develop learning with understanding, skills, attitudes and abilities to contribute to the development of society.
- The ECD caregiver should acknowledge that learning must involve and build on the child's prior knowledge and experience.
- Children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process through play, participation, contribution, production, discovery, exploration and observation.
- At the same time, the ECD caregiver should acknowledge that each child as an individual has his/her own needs, experiences, abilities, etc.
- The ECD caregiver must be able to sense the needs of the children and shape learning experiences accordingly
- ECD caregivers should be able to organize children to work in groups, in pairs, individually, or as a whole class in accordance to the task at hand.
- The ECD caregiver should know that it is important that children develop their personal, social and communication skills.

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

Operating hours 07:00 am – 13pm = 6hours x 5 days = 30 hours

09 – 2pm

09 – 17pm

e.g. 7:00 am – 13 pm equals 30 hours per week. Centres normally don't operate over the weekends. Average amount of weeks per year: about 38 weeks per year.

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

The curriculum for Early Childhood Caregiver will be piloted for one year during (2006) to see the relevance of its contents. The ECD – Policy which was introduced in 1996 is now under review. In the interim years since its introduction, the policy has inspired and guided the development and expansion of ECD strategies and programme interventions. The review of ECD policy was called in 2004. The purpose of the review was to give cognisance to many of the profound socio-economic changes that had taken place over the preceding decade. The reviewed policy document has retained many of the original premises and principles. Combined with realistic implementation strategies, the reviewed policy has the potential to take IECD (Integrated Early Childhood Development) in Namibia forward into the next decade and beyond. The popularization workshops with regard to the reviewed IECD policy will be conducted this year (2006).

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	36,000
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	Yes	5,600
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	Yes	5,400
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	no	
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	No	36,000
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).

1. Parenting education through early learning centres and child care centres (see mentoring project)
2. Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development (see family visitors)

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?

Yes, the policy adopted in February 1996 was reviewed in 2005.

[Information revised and additional data provided by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, December 2005–February 2006.]