

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

Lao People's Democratic Republic Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

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LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

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 6-10 years.

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

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programs:

Pre-school education (*enseignement préscolaire*)

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

3-5 years of age

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators (*source: UIS*)

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio (GER)	8.5	2003/04
Net enrolment ratio (NER)	7.9	2003/04
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	7.9	2002/03

Note: For 2005, the GER is estimated at 8.2 as well as the NER. A total of 45,328 children are enrolled in kindergarten (Ministry of Education, January 2006.)

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group (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
0.5	5.1	7.6	9.9	0.0 76.0(**)	0.0 89.9(**)

UIS estimation. (**) Primary education enrolment ratio.

1.3.3. Teachers, 2003/04:

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
2,507	99.5	82.2(*)	100(*)	82.2(*)

Note: For 2005, the total number of teachers is 2,702 of whom 99.5% are female. The percentage of trained teachers (all) is 83.6%. (Ministry of Education, January 2006.)

(*) Data refer to 2002/03.

1.3.4. Funding:

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	7.28 (2002)

Source: UIS.

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:

Early Childhood Care and Development

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

Crèches accept children from the age of two months to 2 years.

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

6,790 children covered by community-based initiatives (ECD project)

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

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

Not available

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

The Ministry of Education has responsibility for both infant/toddler programs and preschools, along with some support from the international NGOs.

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.):

Not available

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

Not available

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

Not available

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

Set up “grade 0” in primary school in remote areas, where no kindergarten is available.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

Not available

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

In the Basic Education Project (1992-96) under the Government of Lao PDR/UNICEF Master Plan of Operation, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) pilot project was initiated in 10 villages in Houaphanh province. The project has expanded to 55 villages in 2 provinces (Houaphanh, 35 villages, and Xiengkhuang, 20 villages).

Under the Lao PDR/UNICEF Master Plan of Operation 1998-2002, ECD was a focal point. Under the Master Plan of Operation, Village-Based ECD and the Media and Child Development will be covered. The Village-Based ECD project was to expand to 115 villages in 20 districts of 6 provinces (Houaphan 35 villages; Xiengkhouang 20 villages; Khammuane 15 villages; Savannakhet 15 village; Champasack 15 Villages; Attapeu 15 villages). Redd Barna was also supporting this project in 30 villages of 2 provinces. The objectives of the project were:

- to assist the Ministry of Education to design and deliver cost-effective, village-based child development programmes;
- in the context of the village development, assist villages to design and implement more integrated and comprehensive child development programmes,
- to increase the capacity of parents and caregivers to help children in impoverished areas learn basic language and psychomotor skills and prepare for success in school;
- to increase the health and nutritional status of children in the project villages through training of parents and caregivers.
- through linkages with the village planning committees, set goals for food security and labour distribution to increase mothers' time with children.
- assist villagers to plan for the well-being of children under age 6 during change brought about by project, new government policies, or emergencies.

Some 120 ECD trainers and 290 volunteer caregivers have been trained and are working in 145 villages of 8 provinces.

In the third period the Lao PDR/UNICEF Master Plan of Operation 2002-2006, the School-Based on ECD project under the Basic Education Project, and the Community-Based on ECD under the Development of Young Children and Women project were initiated:

The School-Based on ECD project purpose is to develop children in school, and to prepare 5-year-old children to learn before going to primary school. The Community-Based on ECD project aims at supporting parents to stimulate children for early learning.

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

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

The objectives of early childhood care and education are: (i) providing cognitive, physical, and social stimulation, and (ii) preparation for primary school.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

The learning areas (kindergarten) are the following:

- Language
- Introduction mathematics
- Art and graphics
- Introduction to science
- Story telling
- Poems
- Game playing
- Songs
- Silence activity
- Playing

In terms of teaching-learning methods a child-centered approach is used and learning is promoted through play. The focus is on five main activities: movement and rhythm, circle activity, art and graphics, playing in corner, out-door playing, and games.

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

At the kindergarten level, the average amount of time for one activity is:

- 10-15 minutes for 3-year-olds;
- 15-20 minutes for 4-year-olds;
- 20-25 minutes for 5-year-olds.

Seven hours per day, five days per week, 36 weeks per year.

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

Preschool education was introduced in the mid-70s through the establishment of two types of programs: one for the under 3s and another for the 3-5-year-olds at places of work. The expansion of early childhood care and development is in its early stages in Lao PDR. Achievements have been made predominantly in urban centres and economically developed communities. In remote, rural areas, children do not have access to pre-school education in any form.

[Information revised by the Ministry of Education, January 2006.]

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

Information is not available

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		
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits		
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development		
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes		
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children		
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).

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

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