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# **Cameroon**

## **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes**

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## CAMEROON

### Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

#### 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 to 11 years.

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

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

##### 1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programmes:

Nursery education

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

4-5 years

##### 1.3. ISCED 0 programmes: statistics and indicators (source: UIS)

###### 1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	19.6	2003/2004
Net enrolment ratio	<u>Not available</u>	
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	<u>Not available</u>	

Source: UIS

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group, 2002/03 (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

UIS estimate. (\*) Enrolled in primary education. (\*\*) Primary education enrolment ratio.

### 1.3.3. Teachers:

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
8,882	97.4	61.0	...	...
8,882 teachers in 2003/2004; the breakdown by gender is not available, but a breakdown by system is: 6,097 in the French-language schools and 2,785 in the English-language schools; 3,622 in public schools and 5,260 in private schools. [Source: UNICEF]				

### 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:

3.3% of the Ministry of Education's basic budget is allocated to formal pre-school education (private and public).

## **2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMMES** (*Generally preceding ISCED 0 programmes*)

### **2.1. National definition of other ECCE programmes:**

The Young Child Survival and Development Programme, under the Cameroon/UNICEF 2003-2007 Cooperation Plan.

### **2.2. Normative age group(s) covered by other ECCE programmes:**

Children between 3 and 6/8 years.

### **2.3. Estimate number of children covered by other ECCE programmes:**

Not available

## **B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING ECCE PROGRAMMES (INCLUDING ISCED 0)**

### **3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:**

The pre-school level is formally regarded as the primary level of the education system.

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

In regard to primary and nursery education, decision-making in respect of the curriculum involves the Education Inspectorate-General, which makes proposals on the basis of contributions from education stakeholders, and the Minister of Education, who formally takes the decisions.

### **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.):**

With a view to increasing the people's awareness of early childhood care and learning in formal settings, consciousness-raising seminars and workshops are organized on primary health care and on the management of early childhood programmes. There are many organizations providing early childhood care, some in the government sector, while others are quasi-governmental (nursery schools run by the National Social Security Fund, etc.) or private sector, being denominational, secular, informal, community-based (Community Pre-school Centres (CPCs)) or run by associations (NGOs).

### **3.4. Type of personnel involved:**

Teachers, CPC leaders, special teachers, parents.

### **3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):**

Primary and nursery education staff receive initial training in Primary Teachers' Training Colleges and are subsequently given further training in the New Approach to Teaching (NAP).

Recruitment to the two types of school stopped in 1987 and operations were suspended in 1991. Only the Primary Teachers' Training Colleges reopened their doors in 1996, training teachers whose recruitment was not guaranteed by the State. The training lasts three years for holders of the BEPC (one year for those who already have a School-Leaving Certificate or *baccalauréat*), followed by two years' probation. These courses lead to a Nursery And Primary Teaching Certificate (CAPIEMP).

### **3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:**

- Establishment of the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB)
- Recognition of the community provision (Community Pre-school Centres) in the MINEDUB organizational chart
- Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy Framework Document, currently in preparation

### **3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:**

- Implementation of the Convergence Strategy in Adamaoua Province, as part of the 2003-2007 Cameroon/UNICEF cooperation programme. This strategy aims to achieve synergy of action and to secure partnership in order to promote,

- guarantee and enforce the rights of young children (0-8 years) in Adamaoua province – one of the country's poorest regions.
- local NGOs setting up Community Pre-school Centres to allow the most underprivileged children access to pre-school facilities.
  - a preliminary version of the policy document on the School Enrolment of Children in Need of Special Protection Measures (EBMPS) has been produced and is being validated.

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

Implementation of the Convergence Strategy in Adamaoua province (which includes parent education in the integrated care of young children and pre-school community education) to promote school attendance.

### **3.9. Information concerning the curriculum (if applicable) or the contents of ECCE programmes**

#### *3.9.1. Objectives and aims:*

There is a Cameroon nursery school curriculum, which aims:

- to foster the child's overall development in all aspects: psychomotor, social, emotional and cognitive;
- to prepare the child for primary school;
- to contribute to the child's socialization.

#### *3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:*

(Programme being updated/drawn up)

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

(Programme being updated/drawn up)

### **3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information**

The number of children enrolled in early learning and early childhood education programmes fell during the 1990s, from 93,771 in 1990-1991 to 91,708 in 1997-1998. This situation is said to be the outcome of the adverse effects of the economic recession which had affected Cameroon since the late 1980s and led to a drastic reduction in the funds allocated to education. In 1999-2000, 113,648 children were enrolled, 65,916 of them in the private sector.

It is to be noted that pre-school facilities are still concentrated in the major urban centres: Yaoundé in Central Province, Douala in Coastal Province, and Bafoussam in Western Province. These centres alone account for nearly 79% of pre-school pupils enrolled and they are the centres of economic activity as well. The provision of nursery schools, above all at the instigation of the private sector in towns, is linked to the country's rapid urbanization. This situation has made disparities between social groups more acute, as rural children have little opportunity to benefit from early learning programmes.

Owing to its high cost, pre-school education remains the preserve of a small, affluent segment of the population. School fees in the public sector have risen from CFA F2,500 in 1990 to CFA F7,500 in 1996, and in some cases amount to CFA F250,000 [€38] per pupil in the private sector.

In recent years the public authorities have made efforts to improve the provision of education for this age group, with support from various partners including:

- private sector partners, through the building and equipping of many schools in the major urban centres;
- UNICEF, through its programme to boost basic education and extend early childhood facilities to the countryside and to disadvantaged areas;
- French Development Cooperation, through its continuing training programme for pre-school supervisory staff.

**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	<u>Not available</u>
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	Yes	<u>Not available</u>
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	Yes	<u>Not available</u>
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).**

Yes, as part of the Convergence strategy (see 3.7) a parent education programme has been set up, based on the Behaviour Change Communication. Under this programme parents are informed about young children's basic rights (vaccination, registration of births, food hygiene, personal hygiene, malaria prevention, pre-school early learning, HIV/AIDS and special care for 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?**

There is no policy, but an Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy Framework Document is being drafted under the coordination of the Ministry of Planning, Development Programming and Territorial Development.

*[Data revised and additional details supplied by UNICEF, December 2005.]*