

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

# **Niger**

## **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](mailto:efareport@unesco.org)*

## NIGER

### 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 7 to 12 years.

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

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

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

Pre-school education.

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

3-5 years. Non-formal education (Koranic pre-schools, Children's Refuges and community early learning centres) is provided to children aged 2 to 8.

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

###### *1.3.1. Enrolment:*

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Year</b>
Gross enrolment ratio	1.6 (F=1)	2004/2005
Net enrolment ratio	1.2 (F=1)	2002/2003
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	7.0	2004/2005

*Source:* Ministry of Education and Literacy Instruction.

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

<b>Less than 3 years of age</b>	<b>Age 3</b>	<b>Age 4</b>	<b>Age 5</b>	<b>Age 6</b>	<b>Age 7</b>
0.0	0.5	1.3	1.7	0.6	0.0
			1.0 (*)	12.2 (*)	56.1 (**)

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)
839	97	96	92	96

Source: Ministry of Education and Literacy Instruction, for 2004-05. The percentage of trained teachers applies only to teachers trained for the primary stage of education. Only seven of the teachers working in pre-school education have completed the three-year training course at the National Social Training Institute (INFS) in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The others, trained for the purposes of primary education, became pre-school teachers after a short course of around 15 days.

### 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:

Public kindergarten (3/4 of all pre-schools): the staff are paid from the national budget, pupils' parents paying CFA F6,000 (US \$10) per child per year; there are an estimated 12,542 children in the public system, amounting therefore to US \$125,420 of funding from pupils' parents; some 612 teachers in the public system are paid by the Government, amounting to an estimated US \$445,000 in 2004/2005.

Community pre-schools (5%): 15 schools, funded by the pupils' parents and other members of the community, with initial funding from NGOs or other development agencies.

Private pre-schools (20%): 61 schools financed entirely from children's enrolment fees (pupils' parents); fees vary from CFA F10,000 per year to CFA F10,000 or more per month.

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

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

Koranic schools (an estimated 50,000 or more) form part of the non-formal education system. There is no official curriculum for such schools.

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

In principle, 2 to 8 years.

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

Figures are not available; it is estimated that over 500,000 pre-school children attend Koranic schools.

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

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

Niger's Education Act (Law No. 98-12 of 1 June 1998) establishes the general principles of the country's education system, including pre-school provision. There is no legislation at present on the non-formal schools.

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

Two ministries have responsibility for the organization and management of formal early childhood education: the Ministry of Basic Education, which organizes and manages pre-school education in nursery classes and kindergartens; and the Ministry for Social Development, Population, Promotion of Women and Child Protection, which manages the reception centres for abandoned children or those in difficult circumstances, and also children's nurseries.

### **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 in Niger is essentially urban and fee-paying in all cases, whether provided by the public or private sector. It is the only level of education in which the private sector is predominant, accounting for 32% (2004/2005) of pupil enrolment. These numbers are rising by 3.1% a year, while the annual growth in public enrolment is barely 1% on average per year.

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

Primary teachers, play leaders in community early learning centres and women inspectors of kindergartens and nursery classes. Mothers enrolled to teach in children's refuges. Koranic teachers.

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

At present Niger has no training school for kindergarten teachers or nursery class supervisors. Pre-school staff are recruited from among primary schoolteachers in the formal education system.

In the non-formal system (the community pre-schools and modernized Koranic schools), training is the responsibility of the Kindergarten Inspectorates, or by NGO project managers. Training organized by the Pre-School Division and the Koranic Schools Division covers the following aspects of integrated development: rights, gender, peace

and security, pre-school education, day-to-day life skills, community commitments, HIV/AIDS, health, hygiene, nutrition, and other subjects.

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

Sectoral Policy for the Development of Early Childhood Education in Niger issued in October 2004. Multisectoral Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Development (validated in December 2005)

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

“Children’s Refuges”, designed for poor children and/or mothers in difficult circumstances, and reception centres for orphans and vulnerable children.

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

The aim of the UNICEF/MEBA joint project is to expand pre-school education to include the Koranic schools and to increase the number of community early learning centres in rural areas.

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

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

Pre-school education forms part of basic education and is provided for children aged 3 to 5 or 6. It is designed to be an early initiation to school, lasting for one to three years; Its general aim is to build children’s capacity to take charge of themselves and look after their own and their country’s future, through the following objectives:

- fostering the flowering of the child’s personality by supplementing and extending the non-formal mode of education provided within the family;
- contributing to the child’s psychomotor, social and emotional development;
- promoting the child’s hygiene, health, nutrition and protection;
- detecting any disabilities and preventing some diseases;
- preparing children to take their place successfully in their sociocultural environment.

It also aims to build mothers’ capacities in various fields to give each child a good start, strengthen a participatory approach and ensure that communities take responsibility for the management of early learning education.

The objectives and aims of non-formal early childhood education are being drafted. The Pre-School Division supports a community-based approach to extending coverage to as many children as possible, with the aim of improving basic conditions and thus reducing child mortality rates.

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

There is no official early childhood curriculum. The teachers, trained for the primary level, do their best and use unadapted textbooks to teach reading, writing and arithmetic. They attend a short two-week training course before beginning to teach in pre-schools.

The official programme dates from 1989, but its teaching approach is unsuitable and does not cover many aspects of children's personality. Teaching methods are generally free and include both traditional skills and modern methods.

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

In general, 25 hours per week, 32 weeks per year.

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

Annual kindergarten fees per child are different in the private and public sectors. In the latter, the annual cost was CFA F6,000 in 2005. In the private sector it ranges from CFA F15,000 to CFA F387,000, depending on the school.

Other children are taught, in a non-formal but well-structured framework, by *marabouts*, Koranic schoolteachers. The Koranic schools provide an environment in which the children learn to read and recite verses of the Qur'an, under the responsibility of the *marabout*. This fosters further learning afterwards. Parents enrol their children in such schools to be given an Islamic education and, above all, to be better prepared to take their place in life. From the age of three, children are often entrusted to the *marabout* for a long period.

As the Koranic schools are not included in the Ministry of Education's or even the Ministry of Social Development's school list, the children attending them are not included in the State's own enrolment figures for early childhood care and early learning; they are therefore not included in official enrolment statistics, except for those attending the five modernized Koranic pre-schools, which are registered under the community-based approach.

**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	About 1,000. This began in ten rural centres in October 2005. It raises parents' awareness of child development, health/ nutrition, hygiene/ sanitation, childhood diseases, HIV/AIDS, etc.
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	Yes – raising the awareness of parents of malnourished children in nutrition recovery centres during the 2005-2006 crisis.	Not available
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	No	
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	Yes	All women attending a literacy centre
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	Yes	<i>The Little School</i> , a weekly one-hour broadcast (viewable only by children with access to a television set.
Other (please specify)	Yes	A parents' guide to education is being drafted by the Early Childhood Education Division in cooperation with UNICEF

**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 – the parents of malnourished children, parents affected by the food crisis.

**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?**

Sectoral Policy for the Development of Early Childhood Education in Niger, October 2004. Multisectoral Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Development (validated in December 2005, to be finalized early in 2006).

*[Information revised by the Ministry of Education and Literacy Instruction and UNICEF, January-February 2006.]*