

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

# **Tunisia**

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

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## TUNISIA

### 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 16 years.

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

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

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

Pre-primary education.

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

3-5 years.

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

###### 1.3.1. Enrolment:

|  | Percentage           | Year      |
|--|----------------------|-----------|
| Gross enrolment ratio  | 21.8                 | 2002/2003 |
| Net enrolment ratio  | 21.7                 | 2002/2003 |
| Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience | <u>Not available</u> |           |

(\*\*) UIS estimate.

###### 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                      | 16.1  | 19.0  | 29.3    | 0.0       | 0.0       |
|                          |       |       | 7.9 (*) | 95.9 (**) | 97.4 (**) |

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) |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 5,745                    | 95.2               | ...                                  | ...                                    | ...                                      |

(...) Not available.

### 1.3.4. Funding:

|   | 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 PROGRAMMES (Generally preceding ISCED 0 programmes)**

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

Not available

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

Not available

### **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 statutory basis for pre-school education is to be found in the Act of 23 July 2002. Article 16 of the Act defines *pre-school education* as “education provided in establishments or specially designated places to the children from three to six years of age”. It is aimed at socializing children and preparing them for school. The final year (the 5 to 6 year-old age group) is a year of preparation for the primary stage of education.

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

Pre-school education and the training of all those who supervise work with children and young people or with physical education and sports are the responsibility of the Ministry of Youth, Childhood and Sport.

Kindergartens come under the Ministry for Women, the Family and Childhood; the Koranic schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs; and the year of preparation for primary school under the Ministry of Education and Training (see 3.10 below).

### **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.):**

There are municipal kindergartens. The number of private kindergartens has risen sharply.

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

There are two categories of kindergarten teachers:

- specialists (859): graduates of the institutes run by the Ministry of Youth and Childhood and a number of primary teachers (first stage of basic education; and
- non-specialists (2,300): this category consists of those who have completed the seventh year of secondary education or more, but who have not received any basic training in this area; training courses are organized to prepare them for these duties.

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

Not available

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

In view of the interest shown in pre-school education, the decision was taken recently to make the preparatory year generally available for five-year-olds and to integrate it into basic education as from the 2001/2002 school year.

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

Not available

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

Not available

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

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

The aim of pre-primary education is to complement the family environment in children's psychomotor, mental and emotional development and in building their capacities for self-expression. It also aims to stimulate their creativity, enrich their imagination and facilitate their integration into their social environment.

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

The kindergartens organize various activities such as games, theatrical, musical, and handicraft activities, plastic arts, dance, cookery, gardening and rearing animals. The basic principles in this area are respect for the child's personality, independence and freedom of movement and expression, and the inculcation of a sense of responsibility.

The pre-schools use a project-based method and the physical space is organized in such a way that the various activities interact with and complement each other and the child has considerable freedom of choice.

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

Five days per week, 23 hours per week.

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

Despite the improvement in the coverage of kindergartens (from 7.1% in 1990 to 12.6% in 1998 and 14.25% in 2000) the rate is still considered low, since most 3 to 6 year-olds do not attend kindergarten. There has also been a fall in the number of municipal kindergartens (250 in 1990 and only 155 in 2000) and a sharp rise in the number of private kindergartens (from 262 in 1990 to 1,168 in 2000). This is the result of a policy introduced to promote all private enterprise and of many incentives and advantages under the current investment law (MEN, 1999 and 2001).

Pre-school education is provided primarily in the three settings below:

**Kindergartens.** These are socio-educational institutions under the supervision of the Ministry for Women, the Family and Childhood and belong either to the private sector, the quasi-public local authorities or specialist associations. Kindergartens are governed by official specifications introduced on 28 March 2003 which set out their mission, the conditions on which they are established and their operational standards.

**The "Kouttab".** These educational institutions also cater for 3 to 5 year-olds and their task is to initiate them into learning the Qur'an as well as reading, writing and arithmetic. They are under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

**The preparatory year.** The preparatory year is an integral part of basic education, but it is not compulsory. It is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Training, and is provided in public primary schools or in private or quasi-public institutions. (*National Report on the Development of Education, 2004.*)

**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: Not available**

| Type of programme  | Yes or No<br>(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).**

Prevention and care programmes generally target categories at risk of social exclusion. In that connection, the regional units for social promotion (DPS and CDIS) act to protect and rehabilitate their target constituencies, and their social resettlement.

Educational and rehabilitation activities are organized for adolescents and young people at risk of exclusion by the Defence and Social Integration Centres (CDIS). Social protection units organize support programmes for families with problems (illiterate adults, families at risk of dislocation) to improve the educational skills of

such families, foster dialogue and establish relations of mutual respect and understanding among all family members.

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

Not available

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

Not available

*[Information revised by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Solidarity and Tunisians Abroad, January 2006.]*