

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

# **Maldives**

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

**Compiled by:**  
UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE)  
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## MALDIVES

### 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 6-12 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 (kindergarten)

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

4–6 years of age

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

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

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Year</b>
Gross enrolment ratio (GER)	47.8	2003/04
Net enrolment ratio (NER)	44.8	2003/04
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	68.5	2002/03

*Note:* According to the Ministry of Education, in 2004 the GER is 74.3%, the NER is 69.4%, and the percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience is 64.8%.

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	35.6	47.0	49.8 5.2(*)	8.2 77.0 (**)	0.4 87.0(**)

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

1.3.3. Teachers, 2002/03:

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
499	95.6	49.7	31.8	50.5

Note: According to the Ministry of Education, in 2004 the total number of teachers is 549 (of whom 93.1% female) and the percentage of trained teachers (all) is 35%.

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:

Play-based learning and parents' awareness programmes.

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

0–3 years (parents' awareness programmes)

**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:**

*Not available*

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

ECCD Unit, Educational Development Centre.

**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* (See also point 3.6 below.)

(Pre-primary schools are entirely administered by the private sector. However, the government organizes and provides teachers training locally and some subventions primarily in the form of teachers' salaries. There is an increasing demand from the atolls for the establishment of pre-schools at a wider scale. The government strategy is, however, to strengthen the programme of assistance to traditional pre-school centres in order to promote and develop early childhood care and education.)

**3.4. Type of personnel involved:**

Teachers (in addition to the parents and the community)

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

Mainly in-service training and training of trainers

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

The Republic of Maldives attaches importance to early childhood care and development. Prior to the advent of modern day pre-schools, the traditional *edhuruge* (gathering of children in a private home to learn to read the Koran) discharged this function. *Edhuruge* is a home-based educational service provided by respected

members in the community. In general it is free and family members help the teacher. Even where a symbolic small fee is charged, no records are kept of those who are unable to pay.

Attendance in *edhuruge* is flexible. Children may attend short sessions three times a day at times convenient to them and the teacher. The admission age ranges between 3 and 15 years. Because of this wide range, a child-to-child approach is generally adopted with the older children assisting the younger. Each child is assigned work according to his/her own ability. While the immediate function of the *edhuruge* is to help children read the Holy Quran properly and to develop a love for the Quran and the Islamic religion, the *edhuruge* is more than a Quranic school. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is also an important component of the *edhuruge*.

Among the weaknesses of the *edhuruge* are: too much emphasis on rote learning; low qualifications of teachers; limited space and inadequacy of furniture; and lack of stationery and learning materials. Despite the introduction of modern types of schooling, the *edhuruge* still survives and provides the first formal learning for more than half of the population in the country. The National Development Plan 1994-96 has identified areas of intervention within a policy of maintaining its uniqueness as a voluntary community education service. It is also part of the government strategy to encourage home-based and community-based approaches to early childhood development.

### **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 programs**

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

To date, no official curriculum has been developed.

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

Not available

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

Five days per week, 15 hours per week.

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

In Male', primary education is preceded by a two years of pre-primary education (lower and upper kindergarten). In the other atolls this form of pre-primary education is now becoming common, especially in highly populated islands.

Currently there are 137 pre-primary schools in the country, with an enrolment of more than 12,000 children. Pre-primary education is in the process of evolving from an elite alternative, primarily restricted to Male', to more commonly available opportunity for all the smallest populated islands. Quality distinctions between Male' and the atolls are significant, and substantial differences exist between the best and worst pre-school programmes in most of the atolls. Nevertheless, substantial improvements have been made in both the quality and the broader availability of pre-primary education

**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 (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).**

*Not available*

**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?**

A draft Educational Act has been prepared, under which provision is given for ECCE.

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